

## Essential But Disposable Labour

### Podcast Transcript

#### Episode 3: Packing Hope in a Bag

**Sarah Guinta:** Welcome to essential but disposable labor, migrant workers exploited in Canada. The goal of our podcast is to center the voices of migrant workers who come to Canada for dignified employment only to find themselves in situations of exploitation and precarity in a limited number of bi weekly episodes. We will join in conversation with former and current workers, immigration specialists and front-line advocates to understand the systems and policies that perpetuate this labor market. In their own words, workers tell us their stories, dreams and realities and share what folks at home can do to make Canada a more equitable place for all. Thank you for being here. Let's get started.

Hi everyone and welcome back to the podcast. Today our discussion will focus on the countries of origin and the push and pull factors that often force people to migrate in order to sustain themselves and their families. An important part of this conversation is to acknowledge that Canada is a colonial nation that sustains its economic wealth through destructive industries such as mining both within and outside of Canada. These industries extract resources and wealth overseas and play an essential role in creating force displacement and loss of livelihood. This in turn then forces local populations to seek employment elsewhere. So it's with this context in mind that we look at these countries of origin and how Canadian companies influence some of these systems of exploitation.

I'm joined by our co-host Jesson Reyes.

**Jesson Reyes:** Hi, Sarah.

**Sarah:** And we're fortunate to be chatting with Elizabeth today who's been gracious enough to share some of her story with us. Welcome Eliza.

**Elizabeth:** Hi. Thank you for letting me be part of this podcast. Thank you for being here, everyone.

**Sarah:** So to start off drawing from your own experience, would you share with us some of the struggles people in the Philippines may experience that may make them seek opportunities overseas.

**Elizabeth:** During the nineties where I originally left Philippines for another country which is France. Me and my ex-husband used to be hotel workers during that time. We also have our two children. Our first born, was one year old and then I got pregnant again with another one. We were both on strike. We lost, we don't have job. It is then that we decided for me to go out of the country to seek of greener faster as everybody are like saying then.

**Jesson Reyes:** Yeah, like what Elizabeth said, right, what we talk of the Philippines, specifically we're talking of a country with over 110 million people as its total population. And a significant number of its population are working and living overseas as what we what we would refer as overseas Filipino workers or migrant workers. The main push factors for many Filipinos to work abroad is really rooted in chronic poverty, lack of employment that would provide, you know, decent salary and decent livelihood. And also the political situation that have been sort of present in the Philippines even as, as early as you know, in the, in the seventies, eighties, up until today. There are many factors that push Filipino migrant workers to seek opportunities overseas.

**Sarah Guinta:** And that is a beautiful segue really into my next question. What is the political situation in the Philippines like now? And how does that impact people's decision on what they do next? Whether they migrate or not?

**Jesson Reyes:** I could start. I think when, when we say the political situation in the Philippines, it's important to understand the history, the complex history of the Philippines. First and foremost, it's a country out in, in, you know, in the Pacific in Southeast Asia. It's a tiny country that is rich in history as far as far as years and years of colonialization between the Spanish and then afterward, the United States, and then for a few years there by Japan. Within these years and centuries of being under these colonial rules, the Filipino people have also been struggling for their independence, up until today. The Philippines became an independent country in 1946 outside of, you know, the US ruling. However, since then to today, the Philippines remain as what we would call a semi-colonial, semi-feudal country.

That analysis stems from the fact that the Philippines remains to be under major influence by the United States in as far as its colonial sort of nature. And also, semi feudal because for a country that is where 75% of its total population live off of agriculture, where many of its population are farmers or agricultural workers, the owners of the land that are available in the Philippines remain in the hands of less than 10% of its population. So, there's a big disparity or a contradiction between the landowners and the land and the feudal sort of relations remain. So that's when we say the political situation in the Philippines, it's in this context that the Philippines, a very rich country still remains a poor nation as far as you know, the livelihood of its people. I'll pass it on to Elizabeth and maybe she can share about her own experience.

Elizabeth: Yes. Actually, as I was saying, because me and my husband doesn't have a job and my two children, we don't have like food to feed them, right? So, we need to look for other opportunities. That time it was only like going abroad that will resolve our concern. But only to find out that when I was already in France, I left my three and four-year-old daughters, also undocumented in a country makes me really, so I don't know what kind of feeling that is, like you are homesick because you left your, your very young kids while taking care of other, other people's Children. There's a lot of things that happened. The relationship of the family is like got distance your relationship with your children. It's, it's still so unsure, even if I already have a job that I was sending back home. I feel not, not really happy with what I decided to, to do. Especially like being undocumented is so scary in that host country until I decided to come to Canada because I was told that I will be able to sponsor my children, eventually, even if I started as a live-in caregiver where I don't have assurance that I'll be able to get documented.

But eventually after 10 years, that was a long wait for me to be with my children and it really affected them and even me in the long run. So that was the cost of being brought to another country because of the political situation back home.

**Jesson Reyes:** And Sarah, I just, just to put into context what Elizabeth is saying. That the Philippines is one of the countries currently that boasts itself for having what we call a labor export program where the government itself is seen as a, as a as a global leader in terms of exporting its people in a very systematic, very organized way. You know, of course, Philippines is not the only one, but Philippines is recognized as, as a, as a country that systematically encourages its population to work abroad. For instance, we have agencies, government agencies like the Philippine Overseas Employment Agency whose main responsibility is basically to act almost as a recruitment agency for Filipinos to seek job openings abroad. So much so that **Migrante International** has put it that every day, there's at least 4900

Filipinos leaving the country looking for work. And then Elizabeth and her experience is just one of many, right, that also is included when we say people's decision to migrate. It simply isn't just an individual decision, but there is sort of an external factor that pushes you to migrate or at least encourages you to migrate.

**Sarah Guinta:** And I think that that's so important to share because I think that that context doesn't make it to the average Canadian human living here, for example, having to arrive at the decision that you have no choice but to leave your country of origin in order to make a living. But also to be wholeheartedly, encouraged by so many factors at home to participate in this system. That's not something that the typical Canadian I think understands about this system and how systemic it is the way you said and the the actual factors that are pushing and pulling people. And yet sometimes the conversation is kind of phrased in a way that makes it seem as though it's a choice and that this context really adds a lot of layers of nuance to that in a way that I think is really important and so on that kind of wavelength. What is Canada's role, do you think in the forced displacement of Filipino people?

**Jesson Reyes:** For Canada and Philippines, first and foremost, there's in the last StatsCan information, there's about 950,000 and plus, I think, Filipinos living in Canada now as of 2022 or last year. So, it is a growing number. It's actually the third largest immigrant population next to India and China. And historically speaking Filipinos have been migrating to Canada even before the temporary foreign worker program, of course, as permanent residents. There's a historic relation between the two countries. On the other end of the spectrum, though, Canada's interests in the Philippines primarily lie on the richness of the natural resources that the Philippines offer. Specifically, the raw materials that are available in the Philippines. Today there are hundreds of mining companies in the Philippines that are operating and taking raw materials, transforming it into products. Despite the fact that the Philippines have in its constitution, sort of a 60% 40% ownership when it comes to mining or just getting natural resources. This has not contributed to impactful economic increase for the Philippines. It has taken raw materials. It's also like what you said, displaced a lot of communities in the Philippines. And maybe, you know, I let Elizabeth share a little bit about her experience in her hometown. But what we see in our work is now whenever there is an area that is to be mined or that is to be explored by Canadian mining companies or, or, or Australian mining companies for that matter, there is a community that is being displaced. They are promised jobs, they are promised roads, but the bigger picture is that they now have to live and work elsewhere, which as we know is sort of a cycle of movement because when they end up being in the city, there are also no jobs there. I think this is the cycle that we see.

**Elizabeth:** Yes, I live in a province where farming is our way of living. And when you say farming, most of the pesticides and everything that you use in the farm are so expensive. And at the same time when they buy our product, which is rice because it's really main, mainly rice and other vegetables, there's nothing left, not enough left for the family. So, what happened is that we're not landlords. So, we only tie a little bit of land but then that's what we used to moorage these days just to be able to go abroad, which is so scary because we are undocumented in, in, in France. What if we get deported? Our land is gonna be taken, taken? And and then that's, that's more so scary for us that we will have no more property at least to survive.

**Jesson Reyes:** If I may add also another layer when it comes to force displacement. So, as Elizabeth spoke about the economic aspect, right of Canada's role, there is also an increasing role of Canada in the Philippines and in that region specifically when it comes to providing foreign aid and also military

assistance. I guess in the guise of peace and stability in that region. And we want, we want to highlight this because normal Canadians, everyday Canadians may believe that Canada plays an important role in peace and stability of the world. And Canada plays a sort of as a peacemaker. But in the last few years, maybe, maybe in the last few decades, Canada has increasingly played sort of a more than just a peacemaker but actually an aggressor when it comes to this region.

And what we mean by it is that through different military agreements with ASEAN, ASEAN countries and, and even the role of Canada in NATO. There are partnerships and collaborations where Canadian, if I'm not mistaken, I believe it's the RCMP who have an agreement to do some joint military training with the armed forces of the Philippines. And as well as in there was even a time, I think in 2018 where a few Canadian helicopters were donated to the Philippine Armed Forces of the Philippines to be able to combat emerging terrorism in this region. And while we believe that of course, that is, that is an important contribution for any country. It should also be seen and it should be, I guess taken with a grain of salt, especially with how the current government in the Philippines define what terrorism is, you know, which is have become very broad. Actually, it's being used to brand any dissenters, including activists, right? For as long as you are going against government policies and government rules, the Philippine government, especially during the Duterte administration and even now during the Marcos Junior administration, could brand any activist as a terrorist. We want to just shed some light on the fact that Canada has a, has a responsibility to ensure that these military equipment and military aid and training is used appropriately in humanitarian operation and not to aid in stopping dissenters and activists.

**Sarah Guinta:** And I think that that those layers of nuance to this is really important in creating a full picture that I don't think is typically seen in its entirety. And I get the impression that maybe you may hear something on the news about this Indo Pacific strategy and trade agreements and how this is supposed to be a greater presence for the Canadian military, but also the business community to expand ties in that region. And so it's typically under the guise of something like counter terrorism or increasing trade and improving the economy and relationships between Canada and these other countries. However, ultimately, there are huge resource extraction stakes and huge economic advantages to trying to maintain control in that area and have a greater presence. So understanding that nuance of the conversation, I think is something that's often left out from the average news story with that. What are the challenges Filipino workers are experiencing once in Canada that might be specific to, to their experience?

**Elizabeth:** I could share my experience since I came to Canada in 1995. I came as a living caregiver with two-year contract being working with, with a working permit. Well, there was not a lot of requirements before but the, the separation. The main thing that I as an OFW (Overseas Filipino Worker) leaving the country, the main main difficult experience that I really experience is like the long separation. Can you imagine like 10 years being away from the little kids that I left when I left the country? And at the same time, as I have said, I'm taking care of other people's Children after I get my my permanent residency, I thought it's gonna be OK.

But as I, being a single mom also that time, as I go through the pay and, and the situation in Canada. It was not what I thought when I was thinking of that in the Philippines that I was like, ok, there's going to be a better future, better salary, better wage for my children. So, I might as well sacrifice to be away

from them. But especially now that I am not a caregiver, but I went three jobs just to make both ends meet. Lately, I am employed in a big company and I, I experienced like discrimination.

There's still, there's still a lot of like casuals in at workplace. There's a lot of like issues like workload discrimination from the management where they just terminate you for no reason. Like, no, not valid reason, but at work right now, they just terminated a co-worker who did not really do so, like, she was so, so stressed that "I did not kill anybody. I was actually working so, so hard..." And for one mistake, a very minimal error, she got terminated.

Same thing like when, what we experienced back home before. So, I said, oh, I thought Canada is a better place but it turned out no, especially with like having three jobs to survive. Exploitation is still...Yeah.

**Jesson Reyes:** Yeah, just I think that what Elizabeth just shared is a it's experiences of many, many Filipino migrant workers in Canada. The usual sort of entry point is through the Temporary Foreign Worker Program. And there are struggles within that takes place that just coming into Canada by yourself, long separation from family, even after receiving your your status, thinking that you will have a relatively better life than what you lived during the first few years, you will get employed. But even with status, the exploitation continues to happen. Of course, this is not specific for Filipino workers, but there is a particularity for people from the Philippines to be in these types of jobs because there is also a largely significant number of Filipinos working in health and service sectors, minimum wage position. These are good examples of the challenges that our compatriots face here in Canada.

**Sarah Guinta:** and just kind of this myth that, you know, you're coming here under difficult circumstances, you're going to work and then you're going to achieve permanent residency and then the vulnerabilities will end and the challenges will become lessened. And that isn't really the real story. Those vulnerabilities do continue in some instances and, and the discrimination certainly continues to be perpetuated. There are so many factors, I think both in the Philippines as well as in Canada that are contributing to this overall picture. And when we're talking about how people typically fight some of these injustices, it really depends on a strong social structure. And you can see how that social structure has been intentionally weakened both within the political situation in the Philippines, as well as within the policy and immigration structure within Canada, as well as how some of the labor laws are being used. So my question then is how are Filipino workers organizing and advocating to overcome some of these challenges and kind of restrengthen some of those social connections?

**Elizabeth:** As far as my experience, experience is concerned, because at, at my workplace right now, that's the time when I was able to figure out a genuine union as to the other kind of union who protects like the management. Back home, my experience is having a leadership of a union where they really protect their interest. They really, we really fought for our interest. So, I said, why is our union like this here? So, I seek, I seek help from, from back home. Like, where can I find that or a union that we can do the same thing and to, to, to truly help these people because most of the people are even scared at work. They're scared that if they speak, they will be just like myself. I am very vocal with our issues because I am a union officer right now. But because we need more unity at work and more educated that we, if we unite at work, we'll be able to demand our valid rights at work. I I'm really doing my best to go forward to that goal. But as of now, as I have said, they just really terminate and, and give you write ups at the workplace without due process. There's even a collective bargaining already, there's also a union there, but I don't know what else to say or what we can do. But I'm sure Jason could share

and explain on how to help each other because myself, I feel like only very few knows about what the importance of fighting for the rights is. So, I'm looking forward to have alliances or like people who will guide us.

**Jesson Reyes:** I think the good thing, the positive thing when our organization, the Migrant Resource Center Canada (MRCC) as well as Migrante linked up with Elizabeth and her coworkers, they've done the first part and they've done the hard part which is to start a union. They have a union that can be used by the workers to make sure that their rights will be protected. For us, community organizers and activists, we say that what we need to do is we educate, we organize and we mobilize. It's in these three simple things.

Of course, they're not very simple, but it's education to organize and we mobilize first. We need to make sure that we do the, the education to each other. We learn from our experiences and we learn about the history of Canada, Canada being a land of immigrants, originally a land of Indigenous peoples before it was colonized. But even through the years of developing Canada, as we know it, it's a country that has always been built by migrants and immigrants. And we need to respect the role and contribution of migrants and immigrants in that sense.

So even let's say in the Philippines or in the country that we, where we come from, we have to understand also that there are reasons historical things that have taken place as to why Filipinos are pushed abroad. It didn't just happen overnight. And also understand that despite all of this, there is a rich history of revolutionary struggle. There are struggles from everywhere in the Philippines and here that gives us hope and that gives us something to pin our struggles to. So that's one, right?

But after education, we need to make sure that, what Elizabeth said, is that we have to form as an organization because we have this saying that, you know, when you come together where we have this broomstick in the Philippines, I don't really know how it is in English, but it's made out of...

**Elizabeth:** That's made of the stick from the coconut.

**Jesson Reyes:** Right, right. And, and, and it's individually bound. But basically, on its own, it's not really useful. Right?

**Elizabeth:** It's not.

**Jesson Reyes:** Yeah, it's not powerful enough. That's right. But when you bind it together, you're able to clean and it's a very strong piece of material for cleaning. But anyway, that's the point about coming together as a whole, right? So, to form organizations, whether it's in the union or in the community is, is very crucial and to unite on one aspiration. And then lastly is to mobilize and that means to have campaigns and to work with other organizations that are doing similar, right? Because we know that here in Canada, it's not just Filipino migrants that are struggling. We know that many migrants from different countries are struggling. So we think that that's important to, to mobilize to, to join campaigns such as the Regularization campaign, the Status for All, because these are campaigns not only for migrants but just for workers altogether.

And I would say, you know, for us as **Migrante**, as an organization, there is always a need to address the root causes of migration. For us, what that means is to fight for a better, for a just, and a peaceful Philippines. Even though many of us have decided to live and have families here abroad our connection

to the Philippines remains strong. Our families are at home. We dream of a society in the Philippines where we no longer have to leave our families just to be able to survive. As we say it, for us, that starts with creating jobs in the Philippines, jobs that are sustainable. And in order to do that, we need to make sure that, what we call genuine agrarian reform happens. Also, that means land to the tillers are given. That the land is not concentrated to less than 10% of our population in the Philippines. These are all, you know, of course, big things, right? But we as workers and as advocates have to learn about these and so that all our work can sort of be packaged and framed in this way.

**Sarah Guinta:** Absolutely. And I think to that point, do you wanna speak a little bit about what Mirante Organization does we have brought it up a couple of times over the course of our conversation? I think it would be really beneficial to hear about the work that they do.

**Jesson Reyes:** Really, there's a lot of things that **Migrante** does all in the spirit of advancing workers' rights. One is to work with unions to genuinely represent the interests of workers. But for other workplaces and communities that may not necessarily have representation for, especially for example, for temporary foreign workers who are barred from collective bargaining, for example. We believe that the best thing to do is to form your own organization. That's where, I think, **Migrante**, through all its years of experience here in Canada and even abroad anywhere really where there's Filipino migrants were able to provide education on how to organize. You know, we have this educational material called step-by-step organizing that was originally drafted by caregivers from Hong Kong. Because they had to basically come up with a curriculum on how to organize given that they only have one day a week, they see each other one day a week. This is still a document that we follow. And in fact, sometimes we even share this to union organizers, right?

So, build your organization come out to events, to rallies. I think even initiatives like these right podcasts and interviews are all, you know...We hope that these can shed some light to workers in workplaces where if they don't know what to do, they can reach out to us, to Elizabeth, to myself or even to you so that they can know what to do next to better their situation.

**Sarah Guinta:** I think that that's a really wonderful place for folks to start, especially if they aren't particularly familiar with the topic, understanding the work that you both do and that make Migrante does and kind of where the organization has sprung from is, is real so beneficial. So we're discussing this, something that maybe we should touch on. It's my understanding that gender plays a big role in this conversation, particularly the number of workers who are going abroad from the Philippines tend to be women. And if maybe you could shed a little bit of light on what that looks like.

**Elizabeth:** I just really recognize like in the power of women. Yes, which is I believe not really being recognized, the importance of. So if you are asking me, I am really like so, so interested with building like a like a women power movement for us to realize that more women are coming out from the country. Specifically, the Philippines proves that it's not because of the gender that we, we can show our power to change the world. I am looking forward to a woman organization that will show the importance and the big role of women in the whole world.

**Sarah Guinta:** Wonderful. And I agree, I think that certainly that message needs to be amplified and uplifted more because it really is underestimated the the power of not just women as the individual, but in what they overcome on a daily basis, but also as a collective something I I do wonder about as well as for example, Canada's immigration policies or programs that are put together with a particular

economic interest at heart. So, for example, the care living caregiver program, you do see a lot of women ending up in those roles. And so do you have any insight around some of the kind of push and pull factors or what goes into the realities of women, really leaving their homes and their families for such extended periods of time to fill these roles in other places?

**Elizabeth:** I would say that it's insensitive that they chose. Well, I'm not sure if they chose. But like why women? Because the effect really is a lot. Myself alone from being here in Canada since 1995 being a single mother, even when I was still in France, because I was a single mother. Then why women as well? I'm not questioning why me, why not men. But the I'm talking about the impact really is really, is, is, is really devastating for a woman personally. Until now that I am with my children already, there was this emotional separation. Because I was not able to guide them and be with them because we are, I'm working busy working to make, make both ends meet. I didn't have time to really put a very harmonious relationship of a family. So that's the the the worst impact on me personally. But for sure, because I've met also different living caregiver. They have more worst experience. And I cannot just imagine how strong we are that we were able to survive and live fighting until now. Myself because I believe there's a need to fight for those rights to avoid that trauma that's that is that results from, from separation because of like labor exports from back home.

We are really victims. And I, as I have said, I thought if I'll be going abroad away from the Philippines. I thought there's more opportunities here. Only to find out that based from different works that I've been, that's why I'm here to continue to fight for what we are fighting back home because as I have said, we were union officers back home in the hotels that we are.

I am working at and yeah, can you imagine big hotels and going like employees going on strike? There must be something, something really bad going on, right? The companies and then people strike. Why, what's going on because of like I'm just labor practice and, and just benefits. That's what it is around the world.

**Jesson Reyes:** I think just to add, if I may, there's different contradictions at play here when it comes to just the gender. For me, I think gender, the gender aspect of it in the Philippines, as we were saying earlier. The Philippines remains to be a what we call a semi feudal country. A semi feudal nation where the relations between the landowner and the pillar or the farmers is so present, so highlighted. And within these feudal relations, the role of women is really seen as secondary. This sort of culture and this sort of idea remains in the Philippines as much as we say that it's a country that has developed, it's a third world country. But what we call the feudal mentality remains and this is carried by many women who you know who even go abroad, right?

So that's one aspect. In Canada is a what we call a capitalist country, right? You need the workforce, you need vast workforce where women, Canadian women are asked to also work in exchange. That the best alternative is to bring in help to take care of their children. What's interesting is it's another woman from the global South who's looking after the family to just to be able to take away the burden from these women to be able to join the workforce. So, there are different contradictions at play. But I think what's important as far as you know, especially immigration policy is concerned for migrants, is that we need to really expose this gender, this focus on gender-based programming and policies, that for instance, the Liberal, the Liberal government have. Frankly speaking, for as long as it doesn't address the root of the problem of the program, which is to provide status for migrant workers. It's good to



acknowledge women for sure. It's good to acknowledge all all sectors that are marginalized. But at the end of the day, what we need as workers is status.

I want to put that out there too, right. In the same way in the Philippines, that the Philippines can say that yeah, it's, it's progressive as far as women's rights is concerned. But at the end of the day, when the relationship between the land is still very much disproportionate between landlords and land tillers, you know, what are we really addressing?

**Sarah Guinta:** Absolutely. And I think to that perspective that you have, let's say Canadian women entering the workforce require additional support at home in terms of caregiving, hire predominantly women from, let's say the Philippines yet are immediately a Filipino woman who's here under this program. It does not have the same access to supports recourse basic human rights even though they're there to, to also join the workforce. And this tiered system really has intentional discrepancy to it. It really does. It has been formed with an intention to discriminate. And so when we're talking about how we can create more supportive respectful communities as a whole, what does that look like? And the first thing that comes to mind is when you were speaking, Elizabeth, you mentioned, you know, organizing to strike. When you were working at the hotel, the hotel workers were organizing to strike just for basic things like benefits and, and basic acknowledgment of labor rights. Now, often times I find here, the commentary around strikes often immediately jumps to something along the lines of how does this inconvenience me my day, my work and so often the commentary is around, you know, I was hoping to do this, this and this and now I can't because there's a strike happening. And so it often centers the experience of someone experiencing the inconvenience of having to face this strike. But really the most important thing is listening to the message of what's happening here. And so I think when we're talking about respect and building support sort of communities, that's what that kind of looks like to me. But what might that look like for, for the two of you?

**Elizabeth:** Actually, at work specifically at work, our collective doesn't really allow us to strike because we are in the health industry. So it's like, there's nothing really no venue at all to like a no better venue to show the unity of the workers which makes it helpless and you need to like after all, even if there is a union. Yeah, why is that? We're taking care of the seniors who are helpless at work and we don't want them to suffer. But what about us? Like we also have family to feed. We also have families to work hard for like they don't care about our life. They kind of like protect their interest from having these seniors to be protected in, in exchange of their profit. So yeah, we're actually helpless and doesn't exist.

**Sarah Guinta:** And it continues to fragment that voice, keep that voice fragmented as opposed to United.

**Jesson Reyes:** I think just to add quickly, we said that it's important to unionize. It's important for us. That's actually we think that should be the baseline, right is to have an organization in your workplace. But it's also important based on experience of Elizabeth and many other unionized workers that it's not enough just to, to be able to have a union to continuous education of workers and politization of workers, even though they're already unionized needs to happen. And and that's where, I think **Migrante** has been quite helpful in providing this sort of education to many workers.

Unfortunately, you know, in our experience, sometimes there are unions that do not do what they're supposed to do. There are unions that once this collective bargaining agreement is signed and is ratified, it stops there and then it becomes a, we often hear in MRCC: "Well, my union only collects juice and

invites me to the CNE (Canadian National Exhibition) every year. That's it. And then that's the only activity that we do as union. And we said, well, that's not right. That's not good. That's the only activity that you do because, you know, you have to be aware and, and actually be hands on. I think at Elizabeth's experience in the union is, is an example of how our workers can be very active in their union and basically tell the union what should we do rather than the union telling the workers what they should do.

So, when the union is, is sort of passive, it creates also that culture in mainstream society that this will be an inconvenience for me. If the union is aggressive in providing education and really showing the other workers that they need, there is a solidarity component that's needed, then maybe the general public will be more sympathetic and will be more open whenever they hear a strike looming. But yeah, that's, it's, it remains to be a challenge to this point.

**Sarah Guinta:** And I think we all can have a role to play in the commentary and messaging that we also put out there in our various networks and how we, how we communicate our support for the issues that are being fought for from a personal standpoint. Thank you so much to the both of you for sharing your expertise as well as your lived experience. I think you both shared parts of yourselves today that we're very special and informative and really help us understand the broader elements of this conversation and the most important pieces to take away. And I think that that brings immense value to the work that we all do and hope to accomplish. So, thank you both so much for sharing.

**Elizabeth:** You're very welcome.

**Jesson Reyes:** Thank you, Sarah.

**Sarah Guinta:** That concludes this week's episode. Thank you to our guests for the experiences and stories they have shared and to our listeners for your interest and support. Please like follow and share this podcast with your networks, talk soon and take care. This has been a podcast from the collaborative network to end exploitation. Find us online at [cnee.ca](http://cnee.ca). Our theme music is by the musician bio-Unit. This podcast is funded by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Toronto.