



## Report of the Meeting

### Health & Social Services Sector: Strategy Consultation 18-19 November 2013 ILO, Geneva, Switzerland

#### The Strategy Consultation agreed and committed to nine priorities for the Health and social services sector of PSI:

1. **Fight privatization**, notably by:
  - tracking **MNEs** and privateers
  - building action against the impact of **FTAs**
2. Focus on **Tax Justice**, tax avoidance and evasion, including the **FTT**
3. **Map** the sector to support priority action areas
4. Pursue **migration as a cross-cutting issue**, and track recruitment agencies and labour brokers, exposing their profits
5. Protect social care workers, and disseminate good practices for organizing
6. Respond to attacks on **Trade Union Rights**, and advance **strategy** at the ILO
7. Launch a **Nurses' Forum** to address specific professional issues
8. Develop **projects** that address health and social services issues
9. Launch a global PSI campaign for the human right to health advocating for **health and social services available to all**, highlighting that both the SPF and UHC must be, **above all, publically provided and funded**.

The strategic consultation was convened to review and renew the health and social services strategy for PSI, given that PSI affiliates had adopted a broad *Programme of Action* at Congress in 2012, including 4 resolutions on health, and, that after wide consultations early in 2013, had agreed a set of priorities in *Working for the Alternative*.

This report summarizes the conclusions of the consultation and highlights the action points for 2014 for PSI and PSI affiliates.

Four major priorities were identified as central to PSI's advocacy and action, namely:

- Fighting Privatization
- Influencing Global Policy
- Upholding Trade Union Rights
- Organizing and Growth

The relevance of these priorities to the health and social services was a basis for the consultation:

**Fighting privatization** Large shares of government budgets are expended on health and social services, making the sector attractive to business interests. The financial crisis and austerity cuts opened the door more widely to for-profit interests. The case of Greece showed the deep changes that could occur in a few years. It is hard to fight multinational companies in national isolation; knowledge and information-sharing is part of the solution.

**Influencing global policy** Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) (notably the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), the EU–US Free Trade Agreement and the Trade In Services Agreement (TISA)) are globally jeopardizing public services. To the contrary, increased diversification of health and social care needs of populations provided greater opportunity for comprehensive integration of health and social care; PSI must strengthen their links and treat them as one sector. At the same time, PSI needs to organize and grow outside traditional health care settings to encompass the variety of social service work.

**Upholding trade union rights** Advocacy and action during 2012-2013 showed up numerous violations faced by health and social service unions: countries are increasingly affected by anti-union policies, including murder of union leaders. PSI ran a successful mission to Guatemala to support health and social service workers.

**Organizing and growth** The potential for growth in health and social services will benefit from an integrated approach, paying attention to occupational health and labour migration that are of particular relevance to the sector.

Given existing **PSI activities in the sector** in international migration and **the global political framework** regarding access to health through universal coverage and social protection floors, there are many reasons to broaden the scope of the sector's work to global issues and to seize opportunities to strengthen the sector through PSI's new campaign priorities in relation to Tax Justice and FTAs. For example, social service administrations will be called on to implement the transfer programme provisions of the social protection floors.

**Strategic discussions** The consultation comprised discussions regarding strategies for the health and social services sector over the two days, notably on:

### **1. Addressing privatization (2 sessions):**

The meeting identified **methods and means to counter privatization**, through research, communication, dissemination, monitoring, naming and shaming privateers, strengthen alliances, training and education, and national lobbying. Collectively, the participants highlighted the particular dangers of **Free Trade Agreements (FTAs)**, damaging penetration of **Multinational Enterprises (MNEs)**, harmful effects of **labour brokerage** and **private employment agencies**, and the **need for Tax justice**, including financial transactions taxes (FTTs).

At the same time, the consultation agreed to uphold the **fundamental principles** that:

- health is a right and a public good
- the first and ultimate responsibility for rights is that of the state
- government has the primary role to provide health and social services

The meeting agreed that as well as **denounce** privatization and privateers, PSI must **promote** alternatives. Practices to **denounce** include privatization language that disguises intent and lacks transparency; business objectives because they are incompatible with the mission of health; outsourcing of essential services; the lack of quality control and the lack of standards; inaccessibility, unaffordability and ineffectiveness of privatized health; and the lack of accountability of private sector interests.

Practices to **promote** include public services of quality, i.e. Quality Public Services; the pro-patient and pro-community mission; the fundamental equity, solidarity, and social justice of public services; the foundation of public services in democratic public funding; the roles and benefits of public administrations; potential for remunicipalization, renationalization, recapture and return of services to public hands; and the concept of health as a right and as a public good.

**The bridge between PSI campaigns and organizing and growth** It was agreed that the success of PSI campaigns would greatly influence the ability of affiliates to increase membership and of PSI to increase the number of affiliates. It was also agreed that building strong unions and creating strong federations were important means to successfully conduct campaigns.

### **2. Organizing and growth**

Background for this discussion was provided in a presentation on **mapping sectors**, and a presentation on the **integration of migrant health workers**.

Based on the ensuing discussion, the following action points were agreed:

- labour migration issues to be mainstreamed in PSI's work
- promote greater investment in human resources for health and social services
- further development of good practices, notably:

- organizing migrant workers
- *Pre-Decision Kits* that affiliates in destination countries (e.g. USA, Finland) are interested to replicate and are a pioneering tool, useful for organizing
- diffusing the Migrant Desks pioneered by PSI unions
- develop an international PSI passport that makes union membership portable and meaningful to migrant workers
- map recruitment agencies, to identify “bad” agencies and campaign for ethical recruitment, based on the WHO Code, and the regulation of recruitment agencies
- engage with licensing bodies in destination countries to defend the qualifications, employment and working conditions of migrant workers
- monitor labour migration clauses and provisions explicit and implicit to trade agreements as well as to privatization, outsourcing and other moves taken by MNEs
- link migration issues to the QPS campaign, highlighting equality and access for all, and ensuring a sustainable health and social service workforce for social protection

### 3. Projects for union development

Background for this session was given in a presentation on **current PSI projects**.

Based on the discussion, the following points were agreed:

- mapping is a useful purpose and outcome of projects
- it is critical to build and reinforce union leadership; materials to be developed
- sharing challenges strengthens unions, including websites and exchange of information on issues such as the FTAs and MNEs
- unions can share organizers as solidarity support from one union to another

### 4. Other actions

The discussion generated a number of ideas:

- regional workshops to share and elaborate on global issues
- development of research and informational materials to lobby against FTAs, based on the principle that workers are not a commodity
- development of research and informational materials to lobby against MNEs
- development of nurse-patient ratio campaigns
- focus on Tax Justice, tax avoidance and evasion, and the role of the FTT
- link migration to human resource issues underlying the labour demand of MNEs and the consequences of FTAs for service workers, as well as to conditions of work of nurses, and nurse-patient ratio issues
- global PSI days of action, and global dissemination of positions

## Review and priority-setting

Overall, the priorities for action were agreed as follows:

1. **Counter privatization** which requires action and work on **MNEs**, and on the impact of **FTAs** on health and social services
2. Highlight the dimension of tax avoidance and evasion, and the need for **Tax Justice**, including the **FTT**, and its potential to pay for universal health coverage and social protection floors
3. **Map** health and social services
4. **Protect social care workers**, including organizing social care services in the health and social care sector and identifying specific policies
5. Approach **migration as a cross-cutting issue** that is a result of trade agreements such as GATS and the perception of labour as a commodity; track and expose **recruitment agencies** and labour brokers
6. **Projects** to respond to the need to build health and social service networks in all regions and globally
7. Always respond to attacks on **Trade Union Rights**, and develop strategy at the ILO
8. Create a **Nurses' Forum** to address specific professional issues, e.g. nurse-patient ratios
9. Launch a global PSI campaign for the human right to health, to strengthen the concept of **health and social services available to all** that are, **above all, publically delivered and publically funded**, and ensure that our message is delivered as the PSI contribution to the **SPF and UHC**

The call for engagement in respect of follow-up yielded proposals and suggestions from participants:

- To share information from existing research and publications on MNEs and FTAs (AFT, FIQ, UNISON, DENOSA); on tax justice (EPSU, UNISON); on recruitment of health workers (FIQ); on pre-decision kits (NSWNMA)
- To support a nursing network that can promote nurse-patient ratios (FIQ, UNISON, EPSU, NSWNMA, AFT, TEHY)
- To campaign for nurse-patient ratios and for the FTT under the leadership of some nurses' affiliates (NSWNMA, FESPROSA)
- Affiliates to contact social care service workers inside health unions

At the same time, it was suggested that:

- RECs were occasions for back-to-back seminars on the issues of trade and taxation
- PSI to address the emerging issue of first line responders from the public services in disasters and emergencies, under the leadership of the Deputy General Secretary
- PSI to initiate mapping work for growth and organizing linked to projects
- PSI to develop a proposal on next steps, and to define an agenda for collective input
- PSI to establish a webpage for the Nurses' Forum
- PSI to develop a global campaign and launch event; proposed slogans were invited
- PSI to convene a sector meeting in the last quarter of 2014 in conjunction with the campaign launch

**Annex 1**

**Public Services International  
Health & Social Services Sector: Strategy Consultation  
18-19 November 2013  
ILO, Room III, Geneva, Switzerland**

Monday, 18 November 2013 - Day 1

9h00	Opening remarks: Welcome; purpose of the meeting and agenda	Rosa Pavanelli, General Secretary
9h30	Introductions by participants: Self-introduction of affiliates and introductory remarks on the major health sector issues	3 minutes per participant
11h00	Health and social service sector activities, the political framework and PSI campaign priorities	Odile Frank, Health and Social Services Officer
11h30 (to 12h30)	Addressing privatization 1: Campaigns against privatization and for re-municipalization (restoration of public services), campaigns against FTAs, and funding of health systems	open discussion
14h00	Addressing privatization 2: Following privatised health and social care service workers and organizing/reunionizing	open discussion
15h00	<i>Summary of discussion points, good practices and actions for follow-up by 1) affiliates; 2) PSI to assist affiliates; 3) PSI to push the global agenda</i>	
15h45	Organizing and growth 1: Mapping sectors - goals and methods	David Boys, Deputy General Secretary
16h00	Organizing and growth 2: The integration of migrant health workers	Genevieve Gencianos, Migration Coordinator
16h15	Organizing and growth 3: The integration of the social care services	open discussion
17h15 (to 17h30)	<i>Summary of discussion points, good practices and actions for follow-up by 1) affiliates; 2) PSI to assist affiliates; 3) PSI to push the global agenda</i>	

Tuesday, 19 November 2013 - Day 2

9h00	Projects related to the health and social care services sector: current situation and future plans	Jasper Goss, Projects Coordinator
9h30	Linking issues in the health and social care services sector to projects for union development: moving forward	open discussion
11h00	Addressing issues in the health and social care services sector: other possible avenues for action	open discussion
12h00 (to 12h30)	<i>Summary of discussion points, good practices and actions for follow-up by 1) affiliates; 2) PSI to assist affiliates; 3) PSI to push the global agenda</i>	
14h00	Review of follow-up by affiliates and priority-setting	
14h30	Review of follow-up by PSI to assist affiliates and priority-setting	
15h00	Review of follow-up by PSI to push the global agenda and priority-setting	
16h00	Closing remarks from affiliates	
17h00 (to 17h30)	Closing remarks	Rosa Pavanelli