

Women health workers speak

PSI and UNISON have co-produced a collection of 14 in-depth interviews with women health workers who have migrated or are considering migrating for work. “ Who Cares? Women Health Workers in the Global Labour Market” is an attempt to give voice to the actual experiences of women health workers and to circulate their stories within and between communities of workers, trade unionists and policymakers concerned about the future of our global health system,” said Kim Van Eyck, author of the book. For copies of the book email genevieve.gencianos@world-psi.org. The final report of the research is also available [here](#), and PSI’s Introductory Guide to International Migration in the Health Sector for Workers and Trade Unionists (2003) is [here](#).

12.3 million enslaved

Some 12.3 million people are enslaved worldwide, according to a new report released by the ILO. The report, “ A Global Alliance Against Forced Labour” , (<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/inf/pr/2005/22.htm>) says that nearly 10 million people are exploited through forced labour in the private economy, rather than imposed directly by states. Of these, the study estimates a minimum of 2.4 million are victims of human trafficking. “ It is only sustained political pressure by people around the world which will bring this iniquity to an end,” says PSI General Secretary Hans Engelberts. If you would like to join PSI and many, many others in opposing such gross injustices, see www.world-psi.org/gcap and www.whiteband.org/

Public-private partnerships in health

The private sector is increasingly involved in health care in developing countries. But do the poor in these countries necessarily benefit from this? Who controls and supervises the partnerships? How sustainable are they? The Wemos online library features a great collection of documents and links on global public-private initiatives. See <http://www.wemos.nl/eng/Content.aspx?type=Themas&id=1533>, or, for further information, email privatesector@wemos.nl

Underpaid?

Comparing pay rates is a notoriously difficult task. It has been getting harder as well, with employment contracts becoming increasingly individualised. However this problem may be about to come to an end. In 1999 three Dutch women developed a comparative Women’s Wage database. This was launched online in partnership with the Dutch union federation [FNV](#) and the

University of Amsterdam. In 2001 the service was extended to include male workers, and more recently it has gone international. [Wageindicator](http://www.wageindicator.org/) now covers nine European countries, and India, South Korea, South Africa, Brazil, Hungary and the United States are coming on-line in mid 2005. This is too big and too important a project to summarise here, but make a point of checking it out for yourself at www.wageindicator.org/

Privatising social security in the US

Is the US social security system really headed for disaster? And if so, are private accounts really a solution? Take a look at this website, which looks at experiences across the Americas: <http://www.socsec.org/>. The changes which President Bush is seeking to introduce will force drastic cuts in retirement benefits for America's workers - whether or not they choose to take part in the scheme. Find out why US unions believe that the proposals are a threat to workers:

- ▶ www.aflcio.org/issuespolitics/socialsecurity/
- ▶ www.aft.org/topics/social-security/index.htm
- ▶ www.afscme.org/socialsecurity/index.html

You can help keep US social security in public hands by signing the this online petition:

http://www.unionvoice.org/campaign/pfizer_schwab

What makes a good job?

Recent research suggests that it is in management's interests, as well as workers', to improve jobs. As management theorist Frederick Herzberg put it in the 1950's: " If you want someone to do a good job, give them a good job to do." If you would like to know more about how job satisfaction relates to productivity, and how this adds to the case for unionisation, see <http://www.world-psi.org/satisfaction>

Gender inequalities compared

A new study from the [World Economic Forum](http://www.weforum.org) looks at the size of the gender gap in 58 countries, including the 30 OECD countries. **The Gender Gap Report** measures the extent to which women have achieved full equality in economic participation; economic opportunity; political empowerment; educational attainment and health and well-being.

| Country Rankings (Top 10) | |
|---------------------------|--|
| | |

| Rank | Country | Score* |
|------|-------------|--------|
| 1 | Sweden | 5.53 |
| 2 | Norway | 5.39 |
| 3 | Iceland | 5.32 |
| 4 | Denmark | 5.27 |
| 5 | Finland | 5.19 |
| 6 | New Zealand | 4.89 |
| 7 | Canada | 4.87 |
| 8 | U.K. | 4.75 |
| 9 | Germany | 4.61 |
| 10 | Australia | 4.61 |

Countries with the smallest gender gap rank the highest (scale 1-7).

The US languishes in 17th place, reflecting minimal maternity rights and state childcare provision, while Switzerland, 34th, is among the lowest ranking European states due to its poor record on higher education for women. The study points to a clear correlation between countries' treatment of women and their relative global competitiveness, and warns: "Countries that do not capitalise on the full potential of one half of their societies are misallocating their human resources and undermining their competitive potential." See <http://www.weforum.org/gendergap>

The casualties of overwork

According to a recent University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing study, 20,000 people die in the US each year because they have checked into a hospital with overworked nurses.

Americans scheduled for routine surgery run a 31% greater risk of dying if they are admitted to a hospital with a severe shortage of nurses. "During National Nurses Week (May 6-12) we should do more than just thank nurses for their hard work," says the [American Federation of Government Employees](#) (AFGE) National President John Gage. "We should do what we can to help them do their jobs more effectively and safely." AFGE has welcomed a bill introduced by Rep. Jan Schakowsky (D-IL), which is intended to help patients receive quality care by requiring hospitals to follow minimum nurse-to-patient staffing ratios. It would also establish staffing requirements for licensed practical nurses, and include whistleblower protection.

KGEU repression continues

In spite of strong opposition from civil society, trade unions and the international union movement, a bill restricting government employees' labour rights and limiting their union activities was passed into law in Korea last year. The repression continues. KGEU President KIM Young Gil was arrested in April after a police search of about 150 days. General Secretary AHN Byeong Soon was also arrested and sentenced to 8 month in prison, with an additional 2 year suspended sentence. A third KGEU official, who had been released on bail after one month in prison, was sentenced to a further six months for his involvement in a strike last year. Another has been accused of fraud by the local government for encouraging members to pay union dues. In Wando County the local government forced union members to withdraw from the KGEU, and 17 union officials have been arbitrarily transferred. One of them, who was pregnant, has had to move to an isolated island. KGEU repression continues...

Corruption and trade unions

PSI works with the ICFTU and TUAC on the UNICORN project (www.againstcorruption.org) - an anti-corruption trade union network run by Kirsty Drew at Cardiff University in Wales. Ms Drew has been invited to a Transparency International Anti-corruption Conference in Guatemala next year and has been asked to provide some examples of trade union studies on anti-corruption work. If anyone has any such studies, please send them to UNICORN at:

unitedagainstcorruption@hotmail.com

Four big unions for South Africa?

The [Congress of South African Trade Unions](#) is actively considering reducing its 21 industrial affiliates into four "super-unions". The plan is partly prompted by membership loss caused by retrenchments. The federation has lost more than 130,000 members in the past four years. The proposal envisages four affiliates: manufacturing; public service and administration; mining, construction and energy; and services. Unions that would be merged in the public sector - the largest of the proposed bodies - include the municipal union, Samwu; the teachers' union, Sadtu; the police and prisons union, Popcru; Nehawu and unions for nurses and doctors. Cosatu's organising secretary, Mncedisi Nontsele, said "sub-sector unions", focusing on education and training, health, criminal justice and infrastructure, would be formed in the public sector. (From <http://allafrica.com/stories/200505230117.html>)

The myth of bureaucratism

A new TUC report shows that the public sector in the UK is delivering services with far fewer managers than the private sector. It also has fewer administrative jobs than financial services. Last year the Government's Efficiency Review identified £20 billion in savings, and included a target for a net cut of 70,000 jobs. The TUC estimates that 90% of this could be delivered through savings in areas such as public procurement, the more effective use of new technology, and better work organisation. This can be done without cutting a single job. The study can be downloaded here:

<http://www.tuc.org.uk/publicsector/tuc-9650-f0.cfm>

Reforming global organisations

There is a broad consensus among unions, scholars and within international organizations that a comprehensive reform of the system of international institutions is required. A recent FES paper "Governance Reform of the Bretton Woods Institutions and the UN Development System" makes concrete recommendations towards an effective Global Governance and, in particular, suggests how the Bretton Woods institutions could embark on the process of reflection and reform underway in the UN. The paper is available at <http://www.fes.de/globalization>.

Members Only

PSI's western European affiliates are reminded that the deadline for registrations for the European regional meeting (Eurecon) is 1st June. Please note that hotels bookings are handled on a "first in, first served" basis. Central and Eastern European affiliates are registered separately, and can ignore this message. Copies of the invitation letter are available at <http://www.world-psi.org/meetings>

Executive Board: Recently you should have received advice that the date for the next PSI Executive Board meeting has been brought forward by one day, as agreed at the Steering Committee. The new dates are: 23-24-25 November 2005. The venue is likely to be the World Council of Churches in Geneva, as the the ILO is not available. For further information email psi@world-psi.org

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PSI World News is brought to you by Public Services International
www.world-psi.org communications@world-psi.org
Tel +33 (0)4 5040 6464 Fax +33 (0)4 5040 7320
45, avenue Voltaire BP9 01211 Ferney Voltaire Cedex France
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