

ORGANISING PUBLIC SECTOR WORKERS

1999.1

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Organising public sector workers

Public sector workers have two options as their world and their workplaces are reorganised around them: they can either sit tight and try to defend the status quo or they can seize the initiative and try to influence the shape and direction of those changes. It may come as a surprise to some unions to know that there are still people who choose the first option. This paper is written on the premise that the second option is the only one which will defend and strengthen public sector trade unions and make them relevant for the globalised 21st century.

If unions do not take the organising initiative, employers and governments certainly will and they will structure the workplace, define the coverage, size, shape and nature of unions to suit their interests and not those of workers.

Organising does not just mean recruiting new members and retaining them. It also includes determining the shape and nature of the public goods and services which our members deliver so that workers and the communities they serve can see that the union is relevant to the needs of a changing world, is reflecting the interests of all workers and the people who use their services and has a vision of the future which ensures the centrality of unions in that future.

This means that unions have at last three major tasks facing them:

- They must work harder on keeping the loyalty of existing members so that, faced with opposition from hostile governments or the need to redefine their coverage as sectors change or as unions merge or compete for membership, public sector unions will be seen as the obvious choice for workers who want to have their voice heard.
- They must be prepared to reorganise in the face of public sector reform, restructuring, contracting out, privatisation, etc. This will mean following their members out into the private sector; it will mean a refocusing on the work our members do, away from a concern about who the employer is and towards a concern about the nature and quality of the work that we do. That is, public services are not public services because the **employer** is a public authority but because the services or goods we produce are for the **public good**. Even if our members are employed by, for example, a private water company, our attitude has to be that water

is a public good, that the public authorities remain accountable for its universal delivery, that questions of service quality and equity remain public responsibilities and that, in appropriate cases, regulatory issues to deal with these and related matters are public responsibilities. This allows, indeed requires, public sector unions to focus on questions of service quality and public accountability. By definition, in some countries, such an approach will result in disputes with unions which use outdated concepts of public versus private ownership to determine the issue of union organisation.

- By implication, the first two tasks mean that public sector unions have to have a dynamic approach to determining their future. Rather than regarding the future of public sector trade unionism as merely a matter of how long we can retain all public services in public hands, it means that unions must play an active role in deciding the nature of work, the nature of the relationship between the providers of public goods and services and the people who use them and the social and ethical responsibilities of employers. Rather than allowing the commodification and commercialisation of an increasing number of atomised services for sale, we have to reinvent production, with people as the priority – the people who use the service and the people who provide it.

Some strategists in public sector unions argue that failure to address these issues by public sector unions will see both the union disappear (or become irrelevant) and the public services themselves diminish in size and become poorer in quality.

Keeping the members loyal

Organising new members, keeping the loyalty of existing members in the face of privatisation or the intermingling of whole or parts of unions whose sector or industry is merged with others all consume resources and energy. This can limit to a union's ability to deliver good traditional bargaining results. International trends require unions continually to prove their members' loyalty. All of these developments suggest that unions should be paying close attention to the continuous battle for the 'hearts and minds' of our members. New methods have to join the time honoured ones.

Intermingling of existing union representation through health care restructuring is already happening in many countries and this kind of activity can be safely forecast in the social services, municipal services and education sectors in the near future.

In Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland in Canada, PSI's affiliate NUPGE had an example of government-forced intermingling votes (a vote in which workers in separate unions are forced to choose membership of one amongst competing unions), in which both UPSE and NAPE, NUPGE components, learnt some lessons from their campaigns:

- the personal approach to members – personal contact, as opposed to just mailings of information - was emphasised;
- most of the direct member contact was from and by activist members; the role of union staff was more in planning and strategy, which led to the feeling that fellow workers were leading the organising - that workers were talking to their colleagues - rather than the campaign being conducted by professional union staff;
- it was important to both campaigns that the union was seen as an 'agent of change' in the workplace and with respect to the delivery of the programmes involved, not opposed to all change, but constructively involved in restructuring;
- both unions emphasised the importance of their role in the larger issues, being seen to be involved in the debate about health care in general on behalf of their members and speaking out on behalf of good social policy;
- both local autonomy – the ability to make local decisions on local issues - and involvement in and representation by a strong national organisation

were important to members;

- polling was used both to get information about members' views and as a method of showing members they were being consulted;
- it was important to think ahead, to plan strategically, to be the first off the mark;
- in successful organising, the whole union organisation has to be involved; there needs to be long-term and strategic planning with leaders and staff; and
- it helps to analyse the strengths and weaknesses of other unions that are sure to be involved in intermingling votes.

The implications of active organising

In order to maintain union density in 'public service' industries such as health care, corrections and public works, public sector unions need to make inroads into the private sector, where this involves following the work. However, with the kinds of restructuring taking place today - full privatisation, special operating agencies, devolution, regional boards, joint enterprises, NGOs, etc. - it is necessary to re-define both our concept of public services and our objective.

If a service was or even should be a 'public service', then the technical form of delivery can't determine whether public sector unions should be involved; the old days of line departments of a municipality delivering all public services is substantially gone. To stay ahead PSI affiliates need to see public services as our responsibility, however they are delivered. We would not accept that, just because Suez-Lyonnaise takes over a food operation to complement its hospital contracts, all workers in the pre-existing food workers union should switch to the original Suez-Lyonnaise construction union and/or its ITS.

This raises an issue which, at one level, can be the source of inter-union rivalry in some countries, which is counter to the national custom and practice but which public sector unions must actively consider. All PSI unions must have a determination to grow in size, strength and effectiveness wherever possible and PSI should develop mechanisms by which affiliates seeking ideas or even direct assistance from other affiliates to achieve this objective can do so. Any other assumption is an invitation to extinction. But, in countries where there is no law or agreed union practice to prevent a union moving outside its traditional areas of coverage/jurisdiction, then public sector unions should seriously debate the pros and cons of extending their coverage beyond their current boundaries if they can effectively organise unorganised workers into the union movement. For example, public utility unions should actively organise all new utility plants in the public and the private sectors.

As implied above, there are some countries which restrict unions in their coverage by either preventing more than one occupation or sector from being organised by one union or stopping a union organising members in both the public and the private sector. In some places, this can be overcome by creating a federation or confederation which can provide the potential to achieve some

economies of scale. In other cases, it may be a matter of unions campaigning to get such legislation changed since, in fact, such restrictions are a breach of ILO standards on freedom of association.

However, the focus in these organising debates which have a potential to pit unions against one another should be on how unions and ITS can co-operate to organise more of the workforce, especially those in the informal sector, and to deal more effectively with, especially, transnational companies (TNCs) which span countries and sectors. In the end, the objective is to increase the level of union density so that unions can more easily force TNCs and industries to behave in a more worker-friendly manner. In fact one of the factors leading to privatisation is the low level of unionisation in the private sector in general, which means lower wages and less expensive benefits when work is moved into the private sector. Unionisation in the private sector - with better wages and benefits resulting - can therefore be a major factor in preventing some privatisations because the savings from cheaper work are no longer there.

Unions need to share ideas internationally on new models of public service delivery to ensure the work captures all the possibilities, and to ensure that the employment effects of the various models are correctly understood.

This means that the leaders and staff of the union have had to learn new skills and embrace a new philosophy. In order to organise effectively and efficiently, unions must target their research (to decide whether to organise) and therefore must be familiar with the related industries. In general, this means we now need to know about industry trends, the company players, the workforce (union vs. non-union). When it comes to potential targets, we need to know ownership, financial condition, sources of funding, prior and current union history, and other regulatory matters such as health and safety records. In addition, the organisers will need to ascertain worker interest and community support. Individual unions such as AFSCME in the USA are starting to collect this data but PSI can and does play a major role in facilitating contacts among unions in a flexible manner through affiliates' access to and contributions to its databases on TNCs which are moving into the public sector.

In fact, it is this TNC intrusion which has demanded that PSI fulfil this latter role more comprehensively.

Whilst individual governments or public authorities were the focus of union organising, campaigning and bargaining, PSI could do little more than help affiliates to exchange information and/or experiences about new trends. The new activism of TNCs has made that essential: any lack in information about the strategy, practice, structure and operation of a TNC in any country will be detrimental to workers in other countries. It therefore becomes crucial that PSI develops global strategies, data-bases and networks as well as nominate campaign co-ordinating unions to deal with TNCs, governments and international institutions in the interests of workers.

This attention to the private sector is increasingly permeating all other PSI work, beyond the original public utilities focus, as private sector methods of management, work organisation, industrial relations and performance management permeate more of the traditional civil service sector. Almost all operations in the core civil service can be contracted out and/or commercialised in one way or another; more and more government departments are using private sector approaches to budgeting and costing of services. This means that even civil service unions have to become familiar with TNC/private employer ways of strategizing and with the activities of TNCs which are competing for contracts, public procurement, etc. It has led to a vast increase in the amount of work which PSI is doing on these matters in public services, public utilities, health services and the trade union rights of public sector workers.

Similarly, many union staff may have to develop other skills including knowledge of private sector bargaining laws. In many cases, unions newly organising in the private sector are not winning first contracts once they organise a group of employees. Again, it requires a different skill set.

The break-up of centralised public services and the replacement of the unitary public service delivery model lead to major changes in the bargaining process which unions have to accommodate as well. Where unions have been used to negotiating one large collective agreement covering the entire public service, they may now have to negotiate several smaller agreements to cover the same number of members. Options for the actual bargaining process have to be considered in these situations; either by legislation or by agreement, unions

may want to opt for sector negotiations where one collective agreement covers several different bargaining units in the same sector.

There are both advantages and disadvantages to be considered. Certainly the amount of time, effort and expense required in bargaining several agreements for a series of smaller units is considerable and there can often be more bargaining strength in one large combined process. It can also be easier to achieve common objectives like employment equity in a large combined unit. On the other hand, the very fact of smaller workplaces can make organising easier, can make members' identification with their bargaining unit more immediate, and can give the union more flexibility in meeting the needs of individual groups of workers.

Unions need careful analysis of all of these features if they have a real choice amongst different bargaining options.

The transition (when it happens) from public to private has also involved a new focus on related issues such as pensions. In the United States, many union members lose a lot of pension benefits if they switch from a public sector employer to a private one, even if the private sector employer isn't trying to achieve this. In many cases, employers and unions are limited in their freedom to act on pensions fund issues by existing laws and regulations but it underlines the point that unions have to become educated in sectors/enterprises/issues (many of which are private-sector based) despite the fact that they may be fighting privatisation. This means that they must devise new strategies for dealing with these situations.

Agents for change

Unions have to become active agents for change: in the unions, in the way they operate and communicate, in the way their members approach their jobs.

Take communicating with members (in organising campaigns and otherwise). In the US, about a quarter of union members have computers and have access to the Internet. This means that unions have to rethink how they communicate with members. In the US, house-calls still play the major role in organising drives, but unions also create websites for organising drives. It seems inevitable that unions will soon be communicating via computer/internet networks with potential members in organising drives. In order to convince people to vote to join unions, unions will have to prove that they know the employer and can achieve bargaining victories.

One of the ideas being actively discussed in many countries is the 'organising model' of unionism; a model that moves away from centralised service provision to a reliance on an active membership to resolve grievances and other issues. This idea has advantages, both financial (less of a need for expensive service delivery) and organisational (a more active and involved membership). This is detailed further below under 'Ideas that might help'.

However there are disadvantages if the organising model becomes the only approach. Many small unions in a large federation (or branches in a larger union) are experts at delivering high quality services and this is a big factor in organising new members and retaining the loyalty of members in reorganisations. It is not a question of **either** the organising model **or** the servicing model but a recognition that unions should combine the best elements of both as the circumstances dictate.

Unions should investigate direct services - like life insurance, discounts for services or products - to see if these can be more attractive if they are purchased on the broader scale that national co-ordination would enable.

Similarly on internal restructuring; if a union does in fact change their jurisdiction or membership coverage, does organise in new sectors, does become aggressive with a growth strategy, then part of what they need to look at is their own structure because a structure designed for a narrow jurisdiction will probably not fit a new complex jurisdiction. If public service delivery is changed then the unions that represent formerly direct public sector workers have to change as well.

Mergers are a major part of the current scene and public sector unions need to be players, not spectators if they are to survive and grow. Unions need to track the experiences of other unions with mergers: what models were used, what kinds of agreements, what worked best, what disadvantages should be considered, what was the end result.

If a union is too small and its coverage too fragmented, the members can't get the kind of representation they deserve. In a globalised world the idea of a small independent union taking on the international problems of the day, transnational companies, the World Bank or the World Trade Organisation, etc. seems clearly impractical. Again, this is further discussed in the next section.

Nobody suggests that mergers are easy: the resulting new union may be a strong and effective union but many people will have lost elected or staff positions and status on the way and their fears have to be addressed in a human way. If the resulting new union is too large it may either appear too distant or impersonal to members who identified more closely with the old union; or it may be forced into setting up what appear to be heavily bureaucratic structures to allow all of the former units to see that they have a place. The mergers which were being planned in Germany and the Netherlands in 1999 – producing potentially only two or three super-unions in each country – had raised such fears and some initial parties to the merger discussions withdrew because of some of these fears.

Language may be a factor also: the same word, merger, is sometimes used for widely different situations. Where two relatively equally sized unions join, the result is a merger between more or less equals and all parties would see that they retain equal powers in the new union. Where unions of vastly unequal size come together, it may raise false expectations, especially in the smaller party, if the word 'merger' is used to describe what is essentially a friendly 'take-over'. It is important that the expectations of all of the parties are clear from the outset about the real nature of the combination that will result.

Ideas that might help

PSI has produced a range of resource material which can help unions which see a need to do some of the work described in this paper. This includes material on: planning a union's future; organising and campaigning; and the process of union mergers.

PLANNING A UNION'S FUTURE

The publication *Charting a Union's Future* is a short outline of the kinds of processes a union might want to go through in determining its own future: working out who and what it is now; what are its strengths and weaknesses; who its members are (and who its potential members are); what kinds of issues are likely to be on its agenda over the next few years (both internally as well as those things which governments and employers are signalling); identifying some realistic goals for the medium term; looking at the structures it needs to build to be effective; identifying the resources it will need to achieve its objectives (leadership, staff, skills, allies, assistance from bodies such as PSI, etc.); and, finally, developing a plan to allow all of those things to happen and to be evaluated along the way. For unions which have lower membership amongst women and young people than is potentially possible and/or which have few women and young people at all activist and leadership levels, this resource is especially valuable.

Many unions can use *Charting a Union's Future* as it stands. For those which need educational guidance in handling it, PSI developed *Strategic Planning Modules*. That has now been tried out over a number of years and will be extensively revised and shortened on the basis of field experience in 1999. (Both publications exist in English, French and Spanish.)

ORGANISING

In 1997 PSI published (in English, French and Spanish) *Organising Modules for trade Unions: how to increase worker participation in our unions*. In an educational format, it covers topics such as: recruitment and participation; work-site organising; communication structures inside unions; analysing the factors which make unions powerful; analysing the employers, workers and the community to assess organising potential; what works (and fails) in organising; union campaigns; and identifying under-represented workers in the union.

MERGERS

At the time this paper was being written, PSI was in the process of finalising a manual for trade unions, tentatively called *The Management of Trade Union Mergers*. Starting with a discussion about why unions get around to consider merging with one or more other unions, it does on to deal with: why unions merge; what alternatives there are to a merger; the stages of the merger process (planning it, announcing it, the initial merger process, the physical merger and the after effects of a merger). The purpose of the manual, apart from the obvious implications of the above outline, is to help set the agenda for mergers, to make sure that all the main issues in a merger have been taken care of, to determine a union's negotiating objectives in going in to merger discussions and to manage the education process with members and staff.

Affiliates also have information resources which can be shared with others. The authorship of this paper (Larry Brown, NUPGE, Canada; Marcia Magid, AFSCME, USA; and Mike Waghorne, PSI Secretariat) means that it has a North American, mainly Canadian, focus. Unions with other models and useful case-studies which could be put together along the lines of the one in the appendix, are urged to send copies of these to the PSI Secretariat as the basis of a PSI data-base on organising, mergers, and related issues.

RETAINING MEMBERS' LOYALTY

One means used by some unions to retain membership, even beyond working life, is to allow members retired from the workforce to retain some kind of membership, either full or associate. This can certainly be a mechanism for keeping up the strength of the union and retaining skills and energy which the union needs. However, some unions worry that, unless this is done appropriately, such a policy can give the union an 'old' image which may be off-putting to potential young members and/or that the time and energy which retired members can put in to union work will block younger people, especially younger women who have heavy work and family commitments, from taking leadership positions and/or gaining experience in union work. One solution is the model that has separate retiree organisations within the union, with the retirees having the right to send delegates to the policy conferences and conventions of the union while conducting much of their business within their own organisation.

A Canadian case-study:

Union of Public Sector Employees (UPSE), a NUPGE affiliate in Prince Edward Island

OBJECTIVE

To ensure that UPSE is seen as the ‘union of record’ for all workers on the Island who might consider joining a union.

WHY ORGANISE?

The answer is simple – organising new members makes our union stronger and more dynamic. But what does that really mean for our current membership? What are the real benefits to us in devoting some of the UPSE’s current resources to organising? There are five basic benefits of organising to our members.

First and foremost, organising is a proactive strategy to protect the job security of UPSE members. Consider the restructuring and devolution that has taken place in the direct government sector over the last several years, particularly in the health care and social services. Consider also the constant threat of downsizing and privatisation that our members face. We need to convince government and the public that the most effective way to deliver public services and programs is through government.

The major reason why government decides to involve the non-profit and the private sectors in delivering public programs and services is that it’s ‘cost-effective’ in the sense that workers in the non-profit and private sectors generally are paid less and have less generous benefits. The so-called ‘savings’ therefore comes from reduced labour costs. Organising those workers, however, will result in increasing their wages and benefits – and will provide a disincentive to the provincial government to devolve programs and services.

Perhaps just as important, organising will help improve the quality of services to all Islanders and keep them public. We need not look any further than UPSE’s successful organising drives of the emergency medical technicians employed with Kings County Ambulance and Royal Ambulance in Summerside. Lo and behold, the provincial government has now come out with its own study of ambulance services on the Island, which concludes that ambulance services should be organised under one province-wide system operated by the provincial government. We could have the same results with nursing homes and home care if UPSE were actively organising in those sectors.

Organising will increase UPSE’s profile with the

government and the general public. The larger the segment of the Island’s workforce that UPSE represents, the greater opportunity we have of getting the Union’s message out, and listened to. The more members that we represent, the greater our chances are of not only influencing, but changing public policy. After all, a bigger membership means that we represent a larger share of public opinion.

Finally there is the internal benefit to the union of organising. Organising ensures the long-term sustainability of UPSE’s servicing levels. The servicing demands on UPSE from our current membership continue to grow. We need to ensure that we can continue to offer our members new and innovative services to meet their growing needs. We need to ensure that UPSE is truly a union of the 21st century by embracing many of the new communication technologies that exist and using them to the benefit of our members. To achieve these objectives, we will need increased resources and it’s only fair that those resources come from a growing membership.

A SEVEN POINT ORGANISING PLAN

Organising isn’t just about organising new members. Yes, that’s important, but a truly dynamic Union should look at organising from a much broader perspective. UPSE should consider its approach to organising under the following seven broad themes:

- organising the unorganised;
- following the work of our members;
- strategic planning;
- pursuing potential mergers and/or affiliations;
- intermingling of union jurisdictions;
- community campaigning; and
- winning the ‘hearts and minds’ of our members.

Organising the Unorganised

Organising the unorganised is really the life-blood of unions. In order for a union to be strong and dynamic, it must be growing in terms of membership. If a union is not growing, then at best, it’s stagnant and usually will be an organisation that’s declining in strength and resources.

Following the Work of Our Members

UPSE needs to adopt a deliberate organising strategy of ‘following the work of our members’ - when a service

is privatised or whatever, we will attempt to follow the members to the new employer, whether through successor rights or organising the new unit. If a service was or even should be a 'public service', then it's the view of UPSE that the technical form of delivery can't determine whether we should be involved,

Strategic Planning

UPSE's sister components within NUPGE have been developing innovative strategies/approaches, new techniques, and tools/materials for organising new members. What we need to do is combine the best elements of the approaches and strategies adopted by our sister components with the skills we have in service delivery into a 'made-in-PEI UPSE model'.

Our objective should be to build an empowered active membership that always has organising on their minds; working with the leadership and staff of UPSE, members need to play a role in organising. This is not to downplay the critical role of UPSE in continuing to provide and build upon our membership services.

An important key to achieving success in organising will be our ability to anticipate, plan strategically, shift resources effectively, and position ourselves before and during any organising campaign. This is really what strategic planning is all about.

Pursuing potential mergers and affiliations

Several of the National Union's components have also been using mergers to maintain and/or increase membership levels. There are also numerous examples where two or more unions have 'formalised' closer working arrangements through affiliation and or servicing agreements.

UPSE should be promoting such activity within PEI'S labour movement. After all, consolidating our ranks will assist us in:

- strengthening our organising and bargaining power;
- servicing our members more effectively; and
- mounting more effective social and political campaigns.

Intermingling of Union Jurisdictions

The fact that restructuring, privatisation and devolution of government services will likely continue means that we have faced and continue to face the challenge of

organising the organised.

We have already experienced intermingling earlier in this decade resulting from government restructuring – and came through the experience as a stronger and bigger union. There is little reason to expect that we won't see more of this intermingling in the years to come. It is therefore critical that we continue to develop new and innovative strategies, approaches and techniques to ensure that UPSE is seen to be 'the Union of choice' for already organised members who find themselves in a position to choose the union that can best represent them.

Community Campaigning

We will also need to continue to build on our successes with community campaigning in helping us to achieve our organising objectives. Tying our organising efforts to the effective community campaigns that UPSE runs will help create awareness amongst workers that UPSE speaks to their issues. For example, an anti-violence to women and children campaign will help us in organising transition houses and other women's service agencies.

Winning the 'Hearts and Minds' of Our Members

The barriers and challenges facing UPSE related to our ability to organise new members will only increase in the years to come. Confronted with a harsh economic climate and increasingly restrictive legislative framework for labour relations, it will be more difficult to make wage and benefit gains at the bargaining table.

We need to explore the challenges UPSE faces in convincing not only our membership, but also an increasingly sceptical unorganised workforce, of the value of unions. We need to stay in closer touch with our members on an ongoing basis, not just at contract bargaining time. We need to consider new and innovative services and strategies to win the 'hearts and minds' of our current and future members.

We should investigate direct services - like life insurance, discounts for services or products - to see if these can be more attractive if they are purchased on the broader scale that provincial or national coordination through our National Union would enable. We should also look into the idea of co-op purchasing, using the collective purchasing power of our members to drive

better deals on all the supplies we use, from paper to computers to cars.

CONCLUSION

UPSE needs to place a higher priority on organising whether it is organising our current members whose work has been downloaded to some form of community-based governance, or potential new members employed by the various ‘alternative’ providers of public programs and services, or workers employed in other sectors of our economy.

New organising initiatives will pay off for UPSE! The membership profile of our UPSE will likely change in years to come, but the impact will be positive for UPSE and for our members and their families. Our long-term objective should be to represent more members in more sectors. The more diverse our membership is, the stronger we will be as a union and the more likely we will be the ‘union of record’ for hundreds of potential new members seeking a union home.





Public Services International

PSI is one of the oldest international trade union organisations in the world.

It was founded in 1907 to develop bonds of solidarity between workers in public utilities in Europe, but over its history has expanded to cover almost all areas of public services throughout the world.

PSI's membership currently stands at over 20 million.

PSI's aims however remain much the same:

- To promote co-operation amongst the affiliated organisations with the objective of coordinating their activities directed at establishing social justice, and to promote reciprocal assistance in the pursuit of their aims and objectives.
- To represent and defend the interests of employees in the public service before international authorities.
- To ensure the right of those employed in the public service to form and join professional or trade union organisations for the defence of their rights and interests.
- To uphold the right of organisations representing public employees to participate in the determination of conditions of employment by means of free negotiations.
- To campaign for the implementation of ILO Conventions, Recommendations and Resolutions which have a bearing on the well-being of public employees.

HOW DOES PSI WORK?

The highest authority is the Congress, which is composed of delegates from PSI's affiliated organisations and meets every five years. Between Congresses, PSI is governed by an Executive Board elected from PSI's 25 geographical constituencies. Congress also elects a President - who presides over Executive Board meetings - and a General Secretary - who is responsible for the management of PSI's day to day business.

Regional structures have been created to ensure that the special needs and problems of particular areas are

properly dealt with. Within each Congress period, a special Conference is held in each of PSI's four regions - Africa and Arab countries, Asia and the Pacific, Europe and the Interamericas - in which all affiliated organisations from the region are entitled to take part.

WHAT DOES PSI DO?

In carrying out the fundamental aims of the organisation, PSI organises an extensive programme of education and training for public service trade unionists at all levels. The objective is to help public service unions all over the world to develop into effective, independent organisations, so as to enable their members to play a full role in decisions that affect their work and life.

In addition to education, PSI engages itself in disseminating information on public service and trade union issues and organises a large number of meetings on vocational and technical subjects, including health and social services, energy and water, workers in public administration, privatisation, trade union rights, globalisation, pensions, public utilities, multinational corporations, international financial and trading institutions, etc. Particular attention is given to women and young people in the public service.

Despite all the efforts of the free trade union movement over many years, there are still many countries where basic trade union rights and freedoms are not allowed or are being abused. PSI is consistently campaigning for the respect of human dignity, and the right to belong to a trade union.



The PSI Policy, Practice and Programme series:

1993/1	PSI Water Programme
1993/2	PSI Energy Programme
1993/3	PSI Worldwide Policy Programme for the Health and Social Services
1993/4	PSI Policy and Strategy on the Role of the Public Sector
1994/1	Managers and Public Sector Trade Unions
1994/2	A Public Policy for Science and Technology
1994/3	Environment Action Programme
1995/1	A Public Sector Alternative Strategy
1996/1	PSI Waste Programme
1996/2	Social Services Policy
1996/3	Report on the PSI Survey on Equal Opportunities
1996/4	Going out to Work: Trade Unions and Migrant Workers
1999/1	Organising Public Sector Workers

The PSI Policy, Practice and Programme series includes publications falling into a number of categories: some are fully debated policy papers which have been formally approved by a PSI World Congress; others are more in the nature of discussion papers which have been approved by the PSI Executive Board for release to stimulate debate and feedback so that PSI can further develop its policy in a particular area; others are the production of a PSI specialist committee, such as one on the environment, containing a mix of discussion items and practical suggestions for how trade unions could incorporate work on that

particular subject into their daily practice. Not surprisingly, there is no hard line to distinguish the content of these papers since they are all aimed one way or another at helping trade unions to strengthen their organisational and campaign work on the basis of democratically agreed principles which can be incorporated into a trade union's long term programme of work.

PSI welcomes any feedback on these papers and would be very grateful for any documents which readers care to send to PSI in the event that any revision of the material is undertaken.

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