

**Public Services International:  
Promoting Workers' Rights and Equity in the Global Health Care Workforce**

Public services, such as health, social services and education, are losing large numbers of skilled workers to migration. Structural changes and decreasing investment in the public sector have increased the pressure on public sector workers to give up their jobs, with many eventually resorting to migration, as evidenced by trends in the health and education sectors. The participatory research on migration and women health workers conducted by Public Services International (PSI) in 2003-2004 showed the effects of structural reforms on women health workers as they struggle with heavy workloads, low and inequitable wages, violence in the workplace, inadequate resources, and the responsibility of caring for their families. For these reasons, many women health workers have migrated or are considering migrating to work in the developed countries. However, when asked about their choices, the overwhelming majority of the workers replied that they would prefer to stay in their home countries if they could earn a living wage.

PSI recognizes the rights of individuals to migrate, while considering that this decision should be based on equal opportunity for quality health care employment in their country of origin, as well as the available and correct information on the options for employment and migration. While acknowledging the positive aspects of migration, PSI is equally concerned of the negative impacts of migration on health care systems in developing countries and its impact on health care workers, the majority of whom are women. As the global union federation of public sector trade unions representing more than 20 million workers engaged in the delivery of public services, PSI works with its affiliated unions in promoting gender equality and antidiscrimination policies, international solidarity, education, organizing, collective bargaining, social dialogue, advocacy and exchange of information and resources. PSI is currently running a project on Women and International Migration in the Health sector, implementing the abovementioned activities through union to union bilateral cooperation in 16 migrant-sending and receiving countries, namely: Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago, Chile, Ecuador, Ghana, Kenya, South Africa, Fiji, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Netherlands, United Kingdom, Canada, USA, Japan and Spain.

PSI advocates for a gender-sensitive and rights-based approach to labour migration policy, as promoted in international human rights norms and labor standards embodied in the UN International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, the ILO Conventions on Migrant Workers (C97 and 143) and the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights At Work, together with its core Conventions. Furthermore, PSI calls for the adoption of a World Health Organization Code of Practice on the international recruitment of health workers in order to address unethical recruitment practices currently undermining the integrity of public healthcare systems and protection of workers' rights.

For more information, visit [www.world-pri.org/migration](http://www.world-pri.org/migration).