



Contributing to the common good

Statement from PSI Caribbean affiliates on International Migrants' Day

December 18, 2012

As we observe International Migrants' Day, we say a heartfelt thank you to the many migrant workers who sacrificed and worked hard to build better lives for their families both at home and abroad.

"The population of the diaspora is in big part made up of teachers and nurses recruited from the Caribbean who have gone to the UK working assiduously to support their families. This is often at great sacrifice to children who are left with relatives. So while they make their contribution to their adopted societies, they risk breaking up their households. These are sacrifices by the migrant worker often ignored when we use remittances to measure their worth," says Wayne Jones, PSI Titular member for the Caribbean.

"Without migrants, much of the development – the experiences and engagement and understanding of different cultures and customs - that we see today would not have happened. Migrants are an asset two-fold – at home and in their adoptive countries" says Jillian Bartlett, PSI Caribbean's women's titular.

In the 1950s and 1960s, large numbers of Caribbean nationals made their way to the UK, seeking a better life (both in terms of wages and career opportunities) for themselves and their families back home. In the majority of cases they worked in public services. They provide the valuable services that helped to develop their adoptive countries – health, transportation, education, social services, etc. Today's migrants continue to contribute to improved standards of living in both their home and host countries.

And in times like these when economic and social conditions get worse, people point accusing fingers at migrant workers. Some use physical violence and migrants increasingly experience racism and xenophobia. And especially now, those who provide the range of valuable public services are even more so under attack. Their lives, their very existence is being threatened.

PSI's Caribbean affiliates commend UNISON on its work in protecting and defending the rights of migrant workers. And the need to protect those rights is even greater. Many of your key activists are themselves migrant workers.. We encourage and urge migrant workers in the public service sector to join UNISON.

Working together and joining in migrant worker networks is essential in protecting your rights and influencing public policy on migration. If we want a better life for all, we cannot ignore the rights of migrants and their families.

This is your day sisters and brothers. Thank you!

Jillian Joy Bartlett and Wayne Jones, PSI Caribbean Titulars