



PSI GROWTH AND RECRUITMENT

Background

PSI is committed to a growth strategy, whereby we bring new unions into PSI and we support affiliates in recruiting new members. We set a goal of one million new members by 2017, implying 250,000 new members per region.

The logic behind a growth strategy is : Unions that have high sectoral density, i.e., represent a preponderant proportion of workers in their sectors (**health and social services; utilities; local and regional government; national administration, and education, media and cultural workers**), will be better able to win good terms and conditions for their members, and to develop the political muscle to ensure legislation and regulations that are favourable both to their members and to their sectors. In public services, we must be able to develop both workplace power and political power. In many countries, we need that political power to ensure that national legislation, at minimum, recognizes labour rights, including the ratification of ILO conventions 151 and 154. Having these in place will greatly facilitate any union growth strategy.

The same growth logic applies for PSI: in order to have the muscle to influence global and regional bodies, we need the active support and engagement of strong unions which have high density in their sectors. As globalisation accelerates and deepens, PSI needs more sophisticated tools for applying political pressure – notably to counter the corporate and right-wing organisations that want to turn public services into profit centres and want to destroy trade unions. Many of the regional and global bodies are composed of representatives of national governments. When PSI puts pressure, we need national unions to also apply pressure.

Thus, PSI needs to ensure that:

- as many unions as possible in our sectors affiliate to PSI and participate actively
- we help our affiliated unions increase their sectoral density

Recruiting workers employed by private operators

PSI is clear about the role of for-profit operators in public services:

- all workers have the right to union representation, regardless of the legal structures of management
- managing public services for profit presents particular challenges to workers and to service users

PSI is staunchly opposed to privatisation. However, when privatisation happens, our affiliates need to ensure that the workers of the for-profit corporations continue to enjoy union representation. Note that privatisation can affect existing workers in public services (called brownfield privatisation), and it can happen with new facilities, with staff newly hired (called Greenfield privatisation).

Privatisation is often characterized by outsourcing and precarious working conditions. Private operators are also often more opposed to the existence of trade unions, and have many tools to weaken and destroy trade union structures. Union organizing of private operators also helps to avoid 'social dumping', the downward pressure on wages and conditions that are part of the corporate 'competitive advantage' and central to profit maximisation – which is often the case in labour-heavy public services.

PSI is especially targeting the growth of private operators in the health sector. We must ensure that the workers enjoy union protections, and that the union can also stand for quality of care issues. Growth strategies in this area normally consist of a number of well-defined steps:

- research to map the presence of for-profit operators
- awareness-raising among the members of the need to recruit workers in the for-profit operations
- political endorsement by members of recruitment campaigns
- developing solid recruitment strategies and tactics, including allocation of necessary resources
- seeking external support, as appropriate

PSI will support union recruitment efforts on a case-by-case basis, depending on available resources and strategic implications. PSI will also seek to establish a union twinning program, whereby unions with expertise in recruiting among private operators can help those that wish to start.

PSI will provide research support to identify and understand private operators. This will include corporate profiles as well as sector profiles.

In health and social services, PSI will launch a global campaign on the Human Right to Healthcare, which will provide a number of tools for unions in the sector, applicable to recruitment drives.

Some key questions

Does my union represent the majority of workers in the respective sectors and regions (regardless of whether the employer is public or private)?

Does my union have a growth programme with targets, tools, dedicated staff?

Has my union been able to resist the threats of: outsourcing, casualization, privatisation, deteriorating wages and working conditions, etc.?

Have all of the unions in our sectors affiliated to PSI?

Are we able to work with coalitions in defence of universal access to quality public services?

Do members pay dues equivalent to 1% of wages?