

Extract from Precarious Work and the Public Service of Barbados

VI. Recommendations

Precarious employment undermines the power of the trade union movement and the response to this threat must be strategic and multi-pronged. The strategic options available to the Unions are:

1. Prioritise the organisation of precarious workers.
2. Adopt internal structures and practices aimed at including precarious workers.
3. Conduct greater research to capture the reality of precarious employment in their respective jurisdictions.
4. Scale-up bargaining wherever possible – employer, sectoral, national, international.
5. Increase member education and make the case about precarious workers to those with more secure status.
6. Negotiate a “status transfer” process to give precarious workers priority when there are permanent posts to be filled.
7. Call for precarity pay for example an ex – gratia as a percentage of yearly earnings.
8. Improve access to training for vulnerable workers – including the establishment of a sectoral training fund for precarious workers.
9. Promote and support social and economic policies which combat precarious work and promote full employment.
10. Ensure access to non-wage benefits and move towards “social rights”.
11. Build capacity to safeguard, strengthen and promote collective bargaining to ensure that the influence of the trade union is not eroded.
12. Continue protecting the rights of persons with disabilities and those living with HIV and AIDS in the workplace.

Recommendations for young workers’ groups/committees

The youth have always been most disproportionately affected by labour precariousness during periods of economic deterioration, and are the last to recover jobs when there is economic stabilization. The youth must participate and add their voices to the fight against precarious work to ensure that their concerns are prioritised and good quality work is available to them in the present and future. Some of the strategies which young workers’ committees could employ are:

1. Educate and organise young workers in precarious employment.
2. Conduct greater research to capture the reality of precarious employment for young workers in their respective jurisdictions.
3. Intensify the recruitment of young workers (both permanent and temporary) into the union, to strengthen their position as part of the workforce and to strengthen the bargaining power of the union itself.
4. Educate school leavers about the benefits of the union.