

# NETWORKING works



The Overseas Nurses Network launch was awarded the second place in the UNISON Scottish Organising Awards for Membership Participation. Campaign for 2002

newsletter of UNISON Scotland's Overseas Nurses network

issue no.1

April 2003

## Overseas network up and running.....

to prevent exploitation.

overseas to work in Scotland, which he hoped participants would find very helpful.

### Meeting

At a meeting in UNISON House, 14 West Campbell

Street, Glasgow on the 11th December 2002, a group of overseas nurses came together to form the Scottish Overseas Nurses' Network. The meeting also launched the Overseas Nurses' web-page, part of the UNISON Scotland site at; [www.unison-scotland.org.uk/nhs/overseas](http://www.unison-scotland.org.uk/nhs/overseas)

In 2001, 15,064 overseas nurses travel to the UK from outside the European Union (EU), to work for the health and private care sectors, along with 1,091 nurses from the EU taking the total to 16,000 foreign nurses being recruited into this country.

The government target of an extra 20,000 nurses by 2005 set in the NHS plan published in July 2000 has already been achieved, more than two years ahead of schedule, thanks to the overseas recruitment. Now the ministers have set a new target, of recruiting extra 35,000 nurses by 2008. They are the overseas nurses on whom the National Health Service now depends and though they might not realise it they hold the future of the Labour Government's Health plan in their hands.

There is a global shortage of nurses and a global market that governments, commercial agencies and enterprising individuals are exploiting. Countries in the developing world are discovering a valuable export in skilled medical labour. This form of immigration is not new and over the years shortfalls in workers, especially in the first, world are met by exploration of human resources from developing nations.

The government issued a directive banning all NHS trusts from recruiting in the developing nations.

The loop hole in the Government's ban on NHS trusts was that it did not extend to commercial recruitment agencies, which many critics say are doing the NHS's dirty work. Some nurses have alleged exploitation by recruitment agencies, which have charged fees of more than £2000 to bring them to Britain. The Government has set up an international help-line for overseas nurses where they can report problems or seek assistance

The Network aims to act as an information point providing information on a wide range of issues, such as Trade Union, employment, legal and welfare rights as they affect overseas workers. It will also be able to give advice on professional nursing issues. It will be used to consult this group of members, provide trade union training where appropriate and generally support them in any difficult circumstances they may find themselves.

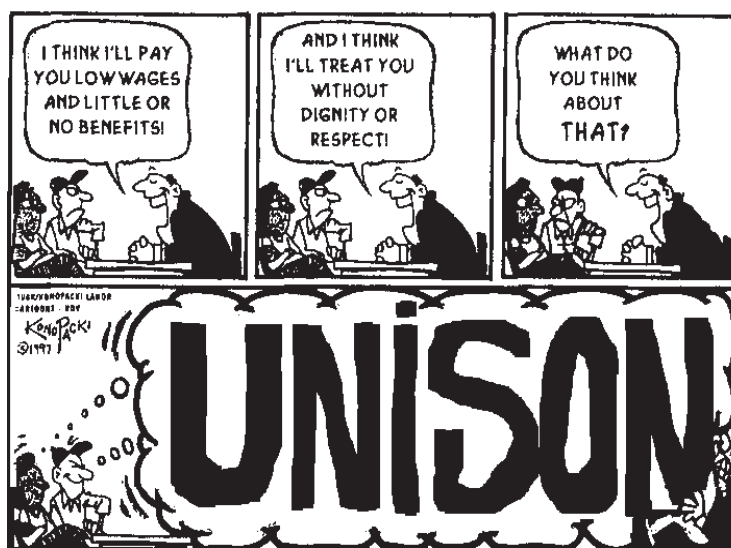
**Matt Smith**, Scottish Secretary, also welcomed those in attendance to the meeting and felt the initiative would provide a useful bank of information to assist those coming from

*The Network aims to act as an information point... on a wide range of issues, such as Trade Union, employment, legal and welfare rights...*

**Robert Baughan**, Assistant National Officer outlined the history of UNISON's involvement with overseas nurses, most of whom work in private nursing homes and who regularly suffer abuse of their employment and human rights, UNISON's campaign has resulted in over 500 overseas nurses being rescued from exploitation in private nursing homes and being found jobs in the NHS. In addition, as a result of pressure from UNISON, the Department of Health has now set up a national help-line, which aims to be a one-stop advice service for overseas nurses recruited to the UK. Robert stressed that UNISON had every right to be proud of its achievements on behalf of these workers.

**Mukami McCrum**, Director of the Central Scotland Race Equality Council told of one particularly distressing case she had been involved in which had involved a group of nurses from South Africa who were exploited by a nursing home in her area. She welcomed the creation of the network which she felt would make it easier for nurses to gain access to the information they required to make their lives easier and hopefully to move to employment in the NHS over time.

*continued on page 2*



## Murder of overseas nurse prompts safety review

A Filipino nurse has been murdered in nursing accommodation, leading to calls for better security. Debbie Remorozo, 26, a member of UNISON's Oldham Health Branch, was found by colleagues at her flat in Oldham, Greater Manchester. She had been working as a staff nurse at the Royal Oldham Hospital.

**'UNISON and Oldham Health Trust are devastated by the news'**  
Terri Evans

'UNISON and Oldham Health Trust are devastated by the news,' said UNISON branch secretary Terri Evans.

'Debbie was a lovely, conscientious colleague and our thoughts go out to her family and to the Filipino

community in the UK.'

Remorozo was part of the second batch of nurses to come to Oldham from the Philippines, where there is a surplus of trained nurses.

'The safety of the staff is of concern to the trust and the union as is the safety of all trust employees,' said Evans.

Oldham Health Trust is now working with police to ensure the safety of other nurses at the Summervale House nurses' accommodation where Remorozo was killed.

Police have appealed for witnesses, who may have seen or talked to Remorozo before her death on Sunday 16 December, to come forward.

## Overseas health workers face racism in Ireland

The economic boom in Ireland has rapidly transformed it from a country of emigrants into one attracting immigrants.

The arrival of thousands of new faces from all over the world has been accompanied by a surge of racism. Many workers enter Ireland using a permit which their employer has requested on their behalf. They are therefore dependent on their employers and cannot leave their jobs if they wish to stay in Ireland.

In March 2002 the International Confederation Trade Unions set up an Anti-racism Task Force. The complaints the Anti-racism Task Force have received generally concern insults, humiliating comments, graffiti written on foreign workers' lockers, jokes at their expense, or ostracism from other workers.

The Trade Union Movement has been particularly effective in informing workers about their rights and in combating certain forms of discrimination at the workplace, such as illegal deduction of a part of migrant workers' wages to pay recruitment agencies in their countries of origin. Informing workers of their rights can be difficult if English is not their mother tongue, however we find ways of communicating with them.

This is very important, since workers from discriminated groups do not always enjoy the same social contacts as their Irish colleagues. If an Irishman thinks some deduction from his salary looks unusual, he will mention it to his family or friends at a pub, who will advise him to contact a union. However, foreign workers do not always have such options and sometimes do not earn enough to go to pubs.

Source: INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF FREE TRADE UNIONS (ICFTU) Brussels 19th December 2002

## Overseas network

continued page 1

Andy Carter, Director of Human Resource for Greater Glasgow Primary NHS Trust was also very enthusiastic about the initiative whilst outlining the Trust's policies towards nurses from overseas.

He said that the Trust were happy to encourage applications from overseas nurses working in private nursing homes and drew attention to the Glasgow Hospitals job adverts in the local press.

*"I am glad that there is a trade union for these workers"*  
Andy Carter

The launch of the Overseas Nurses' Network is obviously only the beginning. Much work will need to be put in by branches and officers to publicise the initiative and bring in nurses from over Scotland into UNISON.

Bridget Hunter, Head of Nursing at UNISON Scotland also welcomed the formation of the network. She pledged the support of UNISON for any nurses who found themselves in difficulties and wished the initiative every success.

**UNISON Scotland's Overseas Nurses web page can be found here:**

[www.unison-scotland.org.uk/nhs/overseas](http://www.unison-scotland.org.uk/nhs/overseas)



The Overseas Nurses Network web page has links to:

- NHS employment
- Ethnic Minority Law Centre
- Commission for Racial Equality
- UNISON International

# UNISON to the rescue!

**Sofi Taylor**, was working on this newsletter at the Resource Centre when a phone call came through from West Campbell Street, which took priority for the rest of the day. A nurse had turned up looking for help!

She was recruited from Tanzania to work for a private home in 'Glasgow' which turned out to be over a 100 miles out of town. To be honest it was at the English border, in fact, Carlisle was nearer!

"F" was told that her pay would be £16,000 per year and her travel would be paid. But she received nothing for her travel which was over £1000. She was also made to sign a contract for £11,000 per year, and all that for taking full responsibility for a 100 bedded home.

"F" was told to give up her passport, which she refused. ( Good for her!!!) She was also warned that if she spoke to anyone about her situation she would be deported. "F" escaped into Glasgow for help and went to the Immigration Service. They advised her to approach UNISON.

With UNISON's help, and the Dumfries & Galloway Police, we managed to get "F" her clothing and personal belongings. She was also able to travel to London where she has a friend. She phoned the Network to thank UNISON staff members Diane and Mary for their help and support on the day she turned up at UNISON's Regional Headquarters in West Campbell Street.

*"I will find work, I will work hard but before that I will join a UNISON branch in London . UNISON helped me so much"*

'F'

"I will find work, I will work hard but before that I will join a UNISON branch in London . UNISON helped me so much" said "F".

'F' was trained in Glasgow and Glasgow UNISON did not let her down.

## Nursing home sacks South African nurse

**T**' is from South Africa, she had been working in Scotland for the same private nursing home for a while. One day, she was sent to work in another home owned by the same company.

It did not turn out to be a good experience. She only worked there for 2 days and was sent home. She was told that everyone everyone had complained about her. She was instructed to attend a meeting the next day. 'T' was worried. On the advice of a friend, she came to the Resource Centre to get help. She became a UNISON member.

She received representation at the meeting but the management hung her out to dry. There was no appeal procedure and no right to challenge what was said about her. So much for her Human Rights ! The right for a fair hearing does not appear to exist in this home.

'T' lost her job and her rights at the same time. But with the help of her friends, she found another job. 'T' wants justice and she wants the private organisation that ran the home to review their policy to give everyone the right of appeal.

The Network is working with Dave Watson of UNISON to look into this issue. We need to recruit more members at all these homes to allow us to have a recognition agreement so as not to allow this form of injustice to happen again.

What 'T' found was friendship and support from the union at time of need. " It was like being back home and I enjoy a good Trade Union fight". said 'T'.



'Networking works' is the newsletter of the UNISON Scotland Overseas Nurses Network.

We would like more overseas nurse members to participate in the production and distribution of the newsletter.

We also need you to contribute to its content. If you have any information that you would like to share with col-

leagues, please send it in.  
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*Glasgow G3 7RH*  
☎: 0141 243 2120

Editor: *Sofi Taylor*

*The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily the views of UNISON Scotland or the Editor.*

If you are not already a member of UNISON, then JOIN!



Application forms are available from UNISON Direct on FREEPHONE:

☎ 0800 5 97 97 50

or from the Network

☎ 0141 243 2120

You are invited to the next Overseas Nurses  
Network Meeting at  
**UNISON House**  
14 West Campbell St  
Glasgow  
24th April 2003

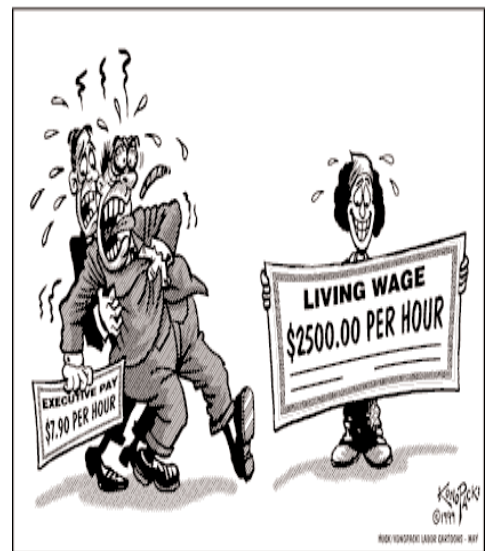
The evening will start from **8.30pm to about 10pm**,  
food and drinks will be served from 8pm onwards.

The two speakers for the evening are:  
**Aaliya Seyal,**  
Advice and Development Officer  
Ethnic Minority Law Centre  
on "Immigration rights in Glasgow"

**Wilf Sullivan,**  
Acting Head of Membership Participation Unit  
UNISON LONDON  
on "Racial Discrimination"



**IF THERE WAS JUSTICE IN THE WORLD**



If you know another  
overseas nurse  
working along side  
you, bring them  
along to the net-  
work meeting. *They  
don't have to be a  
UNISON member.*

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