



*Reports of Committees  
and Working Groups*

---

---

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

---

National Aboriginal Council .....	1
National Advisory Committee on Pensions .....	5
National Child Care Working Group .....	8
National Contracting Out and Privatization Coordinating Committee.....	10
National Environment Committee.....	13
National Global Justice Committee .....	16
National Health and Safety Committee .....	19
National Health Care Issues Committee .....	21
National Library Workers' Committee.....	23
National Literacy Working Group .....	25
National Pink Triangle Committee.....	27
National Political Action Committee.....	30
National Post-Secondary Education Task Force .....	32
National Women's Committee .....	35
National Working Committee on Racism, Discrimination and Employment Equity (The National Rainbow Committee) .....	38
National Young Workers' Committee.....	41
Persons with Disabilities National Committee .....	43



## NATIONAL ABORIGINAL COUNCIL

The National Aboriginal Council (NAC) was established in Winnipeg at the 2005 CUPE National Convention. The Council's composition reflects Aboriginal traditions of governance to ensure gender parity, elder advice, indigenous selection processes and consensus decision-making. NAC recognizes late Elder John Shingoose who opened our inaugural meeting held in Saskatoon in 2006, Sister Minnie Denis who assisted us during convention and Elder Thomas Louttit who continues to guide our proceedings.

### Tansi

While we've achieved much over our 10-year existence, we've also had to spend energy battling the newest choices made by federal and provincial governments. The growing concentration of corporate power under capitalism has been accompanied by continuous attacks on the working class and indigenous communities worldwide. Studies show that austerity is hurting public and social services that have given equality seeking groups a chance to find paid work, independence and a chance at equality. Austerity is increasing inequality.

### Mandate

The Council's mandate is to promote and defend the rights of Indigenous Peoples in our union and communities, locally, nationally and internationally.

The Council is made up of elected Aboriginal individuals from regions who have established councils – indigenous people electing their own representation.

At the beginning of our 2013-2015 mandate, we developed a strategic plan. Aside from our face-to-face meetings, we kept in touch through email, Facebook and teleconferences between meetings.

### Indigenous Children – Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and the Child Welfare System

For our 2013-2015 term, NAC members prioritized work on developing understanding and supporting activism on the legacy of abuse suffered by indigenous children under Canada's assimilationist policies.

As part of the outcomes of the *Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement*, the TRC was formed on July 1, 2009, and the federal government made an apology to Aboriginal Peoples for the suffering and abuse borne by Aboriginal children and their families. The commission issued a summary of its final report on June 2, 2015, after

five years of recording testimony across Canada of the survivors of the residential school system.

The Canadian residential school system was implemented as part of government policy in collusion with Christian churches from the 1870s until 1996. Approximately 150,000 Aboriginal children went through the residential school system, and by the time the last school closed in 1996, at least 3,000 Aboriginal children had died in the system.

As a continuation of the horrible treatment of Aboriginal children, the Sixties Scoop between 1960 and the late 1980s saw the forced removal of approximately 20,000 Aboriginal children from their families who were fostered or adopted out, predominantly to non-Aboriginal families. These forced removals led to their loss of cultural identity, contact with their natural families, and access to medical histories. Status Aboriginal children also lost their status in the process.

A third and cruel initiative that involves Aboriginal children is the Millennium Scoop (late 80s – today), where more than 14,000 Aboriginal children are currently “wards of the state” – representing almost half of all Canadian children in foster care. Cindy Blackstock of the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society quotes "There are three times as many Aboriginal children in child welfare care today than were in residential schools at their peak."

To support this work, NAC members:

- Promoted the TRC's final report summary and closing events over social media.
- Attended the Indigenous Adoptee Gathering in 2014. This event was an opportunity for Indigenous people, many of whom grew up separated from their families of origin and culture, to come together in a supportive setting.
- Held a session at our fall 2014 meeting to expand our knowledge on the scoop children and have developed resolutions and strategies around the issue.

### Enough is Enough Campaign

In partnership with the Assembly of First Nations and the Safe Drinking Water Foundation (SDWF), CUPE launched an *Enough is Enough* campaign intended to draw attention to concerns surrounding First Nations water. In consultation with the AFN, CUPE financially supported the provision of Safe Drinking Water Testing Kits to Aboriginal schools

across Canada. NAC members promoted the campaign at provincial conventions, AFN and Metis Assemblies.

### **Networking and coalition-building**

CUPE has made much headway in developing relationships with Aboriginal organizations. We are frequently invited to events not only as observers but also as speakers. It is vital that our union continue to strive to meet with the leadership from indigenous organizations. With stronger relationships and drawing from their expertise, CUPE has been effective in taking action on indigenous issues. As our national strategic plan points out, we must support vulnerable groups in our society to achieve our goals for all – decent pay, dignity, respect, equality, safe workplaces, a healthy environment, and excellent public services. CUPE must focus resources to increase our membership support, increase understanding and build alliances and support amongst indigenous communities for unions.

NAC members were very active in building relationships with Aboriginal organizations. The committee:

- Helped to organize and attended the Saskatchewan Canoe trip honouring the Metis Back to Batoche days.
- Organized tables at the Metis Back to Batoche days in Saskatchewan.
- Attended and organized display tables at the Manitoba and Saskatchewan Metis Federation Annual General Assemblies.
- Attended the Sundance ceremony on Henvey Inlet First Nation in Ontario.
- Assisted in promoting and attended Terrie's Healing Fund fundraiser for children of missing and murdered Aboriginal women.
- Attended the FemNorthNet (FNN) to discuss strategies to achieve social justice and sustainability in northern communities.
- Promoted and attended the Assembly of First Nations General Assembly in Nova Scotia and Montreal and the Special Chiefs Assembly in Winnipeg. Organized tables at these assemblies.
- Provided input into the ongoing work of the CLC related indigenous issues.

### **Environment**

Many Indigenous people define their relationship as belonging to the land, and they see themselves as one element of a fully integrated environment. We need to continue to pressure the federal government on the impact

of mining, forestry, hydro decisions, climate change, fracking, pipelines, fishing, water and many others on the environment and the need to protect traditional lands from exploitation. CUPE must continue efforts to partner with communities and other organizations with expertise on issues related to the environment – land, air and sea.

To support this work, NAC members:

- Hosted a presentation from the Alternate DVP on a KAIROS-led delegation to the Philippines to assess the impact of Canadian mining on indigenous peoples.
- Promoted and raised awareness through social media on indigenous struggles against governments and corporations against the environmental devastation of lands, including Grassy Narrows First Nation, Barrière Lake First Nation, Treaty 8 land in BC, and others.
- Held a session at our spring 2015 meeting to expand our knowledge on CUPE's environmental work and provide advice.
- Hosted a speaker at our spring 2015 meeting on proposed BC dam on Treaty 8 lands on Peace River, and drafted a resolution for National Convention on the issue.

### **Aboriginal Veterans Day/National Aboriginal Day**

We must participate in activities commemorating June 21<sup>st</sup> National Aboriginal Day. This is an opportunity to become better acquainted with the art, agriculture, games, medicines, and other unique aspects of Indigenous cultures. Aboriginal Veterans Day, on November 8<sup>th</sup>, honours the participation of Aboriginal peoples in war efforts. Aboriginal veterans who served in World War II experienced discrimination by the federal government on their return home.

NAC members:

- Participated in June 21<sup>st</sup> and November 8<sup>th</sup> events across Canada.
- Organized display tables at various events promoting these days.

### **Justice**

Studies and reports across the country confirm that Aboriginal peoples experience disproportionately high rates of crime and victimization and are over-represented in the justice system. The costs of justice continue to spiral upwards.

NAC members:

- Worked on the Leonard Peltier campaign through social media and attendance at the LP annual vigils held annually in February in Toronto.
- Promoted awareness about the human rights complaint put forward by Cindy Blackstock's First Nations Child and Family Caring Society (FNFCs) and the Assembly of First Nations, by distributing bookmarks and other campaign material. The complaint alleges that Canada has failed to provide equitable and culturally appropriate child welfare services to First Nations children on reserves and that this amounts to discrimination on the basis of race and ethnic origin.
- Participated on FNFCs advisory committee to help guide the integrity and growth of the "I am a witness," "Jordan's Principle" and "Shannen's Dream" movements. For more information on these movements, please see the FNFCs website at <http://www.fncaringsociety.com/>.

### **Aboriginal Awareness Training**

Equality and anti-racism training is an integral part of CUPE educational programs. CUPE has an Aboriginal awareness course that helps to promote understanding and dispel myths and stereotypes about Aboriginal people. It is important that this training is offered at all schools and promoted to ensure that it is not cancelled for lack of enrollment.

NAC members:

- Hosted a presentation by Union Development at our spring 2014 meeting and provided input into the Aboriginal awareness course.
- Delivered the course as member facilitators in several provinces.

### **Workforce Partnership Agreements**

Partnership agreements promote a workforce which is representative of the Indigenous community. Work needs to be focussed on partnership agreements to overcome under-representation in our workplaces and unions.

- NAC members developed a resolution development of partnership agreements that calls for the 2015 National Convention.

### **HIV/AIDS**

Council members have been involved nationally and internationally on the issue of HIV and AIDS. This is an

important issue for us, partly because there is such a high rate of HIV and AIDS among Aboriginal communities.

NAC members:

- Held many sessions to learn about CUPE's HIV/AIDS policy and provide advice on the development of educational materials.
- Supported the work of the Stephen Lewis Foundation (SLF) in Africa.
- Provided advice on CUPE's attendance at the Canadian Aboriginal Aids Networks Annual General Assembly and hosted a report about the Assembly.
- Participated in the All Nations Hope Society walk.

### **Violence against Aboriginal women and girls**

We have supported the Native Women's Association of Canada's Sisters in Spirit vigils every October 4<sup>th</sup> and the Families of Sisters in Spirit (FSIS) October event. In 2015, CUPE Ontario began a postcard campaign calling for a national public inquiry on the issue of missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls.

NAC members:

- Helped organize and promote CUPE Ontario's postcard campaign.
- Provided advice on working with the many organizations calling for an inquiry into missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls, including the Native Women's Association of Canada, Women of the Métis Nation /Métis National Council, The Assembly of First Nations, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada and the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples.
- Promoted the work of the Canadian Feminist Alliance for International Action (FAFIA) in their goal of building public support for systemic change in Canadian governments and police responses to violence against Aboriginal women and girls.
- Participated in a Healing Camp for missing and murdered indigenous women and girls in B.C. and held a session on the review of the camp in 2014.
- Provided opportunities for members to participate in the Native Women's Association faceless dolls projects.

### **Idle No More**

Idle No More continues to promote systemic change for Aboriginal peoples through events across Canada and social media. Throughout this past term of the Council, members:

- Provided advice on a joint statement with various NGO's in support of the movement, which CUPE became a signatory too.
- Provided advice on CUPE's support for the "First Voices! First Women Speak!" Teach-in focused on a direct connection between violence against the earth and violence against women and supported the Defenders of the Land.
- Contributed to the IDLENOMORE electronic newsletter through social media.

**Political action**

NAC members were active in campaigns to elect progressive candidates in elections at all levels.

NAC members:

Assisted in pulling the vote and encouraging individuals to run in municipal, provincial, school board and federal elections.

We all should remember the significant human rights struggles that Indigenous Peoples have faced and continue to face today. This struggle is shaped by the ongoing legacy of colonialism, including the impact of the residential school system, the two scoop periods, the persistent violation of treaty rights, and the environmental devastation of indigenous lands and waters. The growing list of missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls, and the lack of justice for their families, is a major human rights crisis for Canada today.

The National Aboriginal Council thanks the National Officers, the National Executive Board, the National Staff and the members at National Convention who have gifted us with a clear analysis of the challenges we face and the opportunities for action.

Respectfully submitted by,

**The Members of the National Aboriginal Council**

- LindaHolwell-Tibbo ..... Newfoundland and Labrador
- Diane Obed..... Nova Scotia
- Doris Nason .....New Brunswick
- Daniel Blacksmith ..... Quebec
- Laurence Poulin ..... Quebec
- Joanne Webb..... Ontario
- Frederick Loft ..... Ontario
- Shirley Langan
- Co-chair .....Manitoba
- Roger Procyk .....Manitoba
- Heather Acoose .....Saskatchewan
- David Miller .....Saskatchewan
- Deborah Morin .....Alberta
- Leanne Toderian..... British Columbia
- Dale Whitford
- Co-chair ..... British Columbia
- Joanne Foote ..... HEU, British Columbia
- Martin McKenzie ..... HEU, British Columbia
- Brian Barron .....NEB Liaison
- Gloria Lepine .....Alternate DVP
- Audrey Barr .....Servicing Representative
- Don Moran ..... Senior Officer Equality

## NATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON PENSIONS

### Introduction

The National Advisory Committee on Pensions (NACP) is pleased to present the following report to the Twenty-seventh Biennial CUPE National Convention. Since the NACP was established 26 years ago, the committee has championed the expansion and improvement of our workplace and public pension plans, greater member education on pensions and progressive approaches to pension fund management. Adequate, secure and predictable workplace and public pensions are key parts of a middle class life that should be defended at all costs.

### Serious Challenges on the Horizon

Looking forward, the NACP sees a serious retirement income problem developing in Canada. Far too many seniors, particularly single senior women, continue to live in poverty. One in three Canadian seniors still lives very close to being in poverty. These seniors are largely kept above low-income cut-off lines through federal pensions for low-income seniors. We are failing to achieve a widely-shared decent and secure standard of living in retirement. And looking forward, all of these problems are projected to get worse. Study after study shows that significant portions of future generations of Canadian seniors will not meet basic income replacement goals when they retire. Half of middle class baby boomers are projected to be facing significant drops in living standards when they retire. The picture looks even worse for subsequent generations. It's not surprising that our retirement income prospects are not looking good when we consider the broader trends: workplace pension plans continue to come under serious attack, RRSPs haven't delivered retirement security, wages are stagnant, and personal savings rates have declined while consumer debt has increased significantly. Most importantly, our small public pension system remains too modest to compensate for the fallout from these trends.

### The Campaign to Expand the Canada Pension Plan (CPP)

The labour movement's campaign to expand the Canada Pension Plan continues to be the major priority for the NACP. We recognize that the real pension crisis in Canada is that six in ten Canadian workers do not have a workplace pension plan. Yet, all workers participate in the Canada Pension Plan: an efficient, sustainable, publicly-administered plan. The only flaw of the CPP is that it is not big enough. The average retiree receives just over \$600 per month from the plan. The labour movement has produced a viable, cost, affordable and effective plan for expansion of the Canada Pension Plan. Our plan calls for a doubling of CPP benefits, funded by a phased-in modest increase in

CPP premiums. CPP expansion has the support of the provinces, the public, pension experts and stakeholder groups from across the political spectrum. However, the Harper government has unilaterally ended further discussions on expansion. Harper has instead pursued private retirement options (like Pooled Registered Pension Plans "PRPPs" and Tax Free Savings Accounts "TFsAs") that provide no real security to Canadians, but provide significant profits to the financial industry. Expanding the CPP is the only solution to the impending retirement security crisis and it's clear that Harper's Conservative government is standing in the way. The Ontario government is currently pursuing an expansion of the public pension system at the provincial level with the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan (ORPP). However, the plan has serious drawbacks, most notably the fact that it is not a universal program (those with "comparable" workplace plans may be barred from joining). Whatever the outcome of the federal election this year, CUPE, the NDP, the labour movement and numerous other allies must continue this campaign until CPP is expanded.

### The Need to Reverse Harper's Cuts to Old Age Security (OAS)

As we noted in our report to convention in 2013, undoing the Harper government's attack on the OAS system is a major priority for the committee. In 2012, Harper announced that the age of eligibility for Old Age Security would be increasing from 65 to 67, beginning in 2023. Harper had not campaigned on this change (he actually said he wouldn't cut pensions), nor did he consult with Canadians about it after elected. The OAS cuts were buried in Harper's infamous omnibus budget bill in 2012 and were just five pages of this 452-page affront to democracy. Experts and non-partisan watchdogs like the Parliamentary Budget Officer argued that the OAS system was perfectly sustainable *before* Harper's cuts. Losing OAS payments for two years will make retirement harder at a time when Canadians are increasingly worried about their ability to retire. The cuts will cost middle-class Canadians \$13,000 (in today's dollars) from their retirement funds. The cuts also apply to the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS), the modest supplemental pension only received by low-income seniors (shockingly, one in three seniors receives GIS). The GIS has been remarkably effective at keeping seniors out of poverty. If future generations of seniors lose this pension for two years, many more Canadian seniors will live in poverty. Harper has made a clear choice on pensions: cuts to OAS-GIS (which take billions of pension dollars from Canadians from programs which primarily benefit middle class and low-income Canadians) and expansion of TFsAs (which cost the federal government



billions and primarily benefit wealthy Canadians). CUPE must continue making the reversal of these cuts a major priority going forward.

### **Public Perception of Defined Benefit (DB) Pension Plan**

Across the country, right-wing groups continue to attack “gold-plated public sector pensions,” arguing that they are drains on the economy and are “unsustainable.” These misinformed and misleading attacks are damaging to our efforts to protect DB pensions, both with our own membership and with the public. The NACP would like to highlight positive research from different jurisdictions that tells a very different story about DB pensions. These reports show that the large pools of investment capital in DB plans are actually macroeconomic goods, and are associated with positive job and GDP effects. Workers with decent workplace pensions tend to depend much less on public social and income support programs in retirement, saving the public purse money. We also discussed the basic misinformation that many in the public may believe: that a short tenure with a public employer can net a “full pension” paid for by tax dollars at age 55. The reality is that our pension plans are modest, they are earned gradually through years of work and pension contributions, and that the vast majority of a worker’s pension is paid by accumulated investment returns, instead of contribution dollars. The NACP will continue to work with CUPE and others in the labour movement to ensure that these pro-DB messages become part of the public conversation and are used to discredit the myths propagated by the right-wing. DB plans are both social and economic goods that we should proudly fight to preserve.

### **Provincial Attacks**

The NACP has been shocked by the severity of the draconian attacks that provincial governments have levied against the workplace pension plans of CUPE members. We did not agree with the argument that target benefit (TB) pension plans should replace the defined benefit plans CUPE members have fought hard to establish and defend. TB plans do not provide the retirement security of a DB plan, as they replace an employer’s legal obligation to make good on defined benefit pension promises with non-binding pension aspirations that may or may not be met. In effect, they transfer retirement risk from employers to plan members. Shockingly, these attacks are increasingly targeting accrued benefits – i.e. DB pension entitlements that have already been earned through past service (most notably in the misleadingly-named “Shared Risk” model in New Brunswick). Four provinces have mounted serious attacks of this nature. New Brunswick legislated a conversion of the province-wide public service plan from a DB plan to a TB plan. The NACP has previously reported

that we did not agree that the NB “Shared Risk” target benefit model should be a trend-setter, but other employers and governments (like Prince Edward Island) have followed suit. The Government of Quebec passed an incredibly heavy-handed piece of legislation that essentially imposed a very narrow and employer-friendly set of pension concessions in the form of “negotiation” conditions on hundreds of supposedly standalone municipal plans. CUPE was heavily involved in a massive pushback that was organized against the legislation. Finally, Alberta attempted to force massive concessions in its province-wide plan, with the conversion to a target benefit plan buried in the small print of its proposal. After a pushback effort involving CUPE and a coalition of unions and the Alberta Federation of Labour, the government withdrew the proposed cuts, though the fight is far from over. The NACP expects these attacks to continue, particularly if the federal government moves forward with its proposal to allow retroactive conversions of defined benefit plans into target benefit plans in the federal jurisdiction. On a positive note, the NACP recognizes a positive outcome in Newfoundland and Labrador, where, with CUPE’s leadership, the province-wide defined benefit public service plan was brought out of statute and into a joint-sponsorship structure with a significant funding commitment from government, preserving the defined benefit nature of the plan.

### **Single-Employer Attacks on Pensions and Two-Tier Threats**

The provincial-level trends are also evident in single-employer plans. Across the country, in every sector, employers are attacking DB plans. These attacks seek to reduce employer pension costs (through benefit concessions and member contribution increases) and reduce, or eliminate, employer pension risks (through the imposition of target or defined contribution plans). Often, these attacks have a stark two-tier character where employers propose that drastic pension concessions or plan conversions should be levied on new hires only. These attacks have been successful against several CUPE locals. The NACP views two-tier pension settlements as a grave threat to the next generation of CUPE members, to the solidarity and strength of our bargaining units and to the integrity of the labour movement as a whole.

The committee was very happy about the recent victory of CUPE 2019 in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Newfoundland. During bargaining, the employer had been pushing to close the modest DB plan for new hires only, who would be placed into a DC plan instead, and had offered significant wage increases in the hopes that members would agree to the change. CUPE 2019 stood strong, fought a month-long lockout and ultimately won when the employer withdrew

the proposed pension concession. The NACP believes that we must recognize important victories like this to demonstrate to other CUPE locals that the pension fights that are coming can and should be won.

The NACP also recognizes strong CUPE pension victories in the City of Regina, and the Universities of Regina and Saskatchewan and in the TRIO municipal pension plan in Newfoundland.

### **Pension Funds and Privatization**

CUPE National has longstanding policy against using workers' pension funds to invest in (or own outright) privatized or public-private partnership infrastructure. The NACP recognizes that the pressure to use our pension funds as vehicles for privatization will continue to mount. A developing trend threatens to significantly expand the scope of this basic problem. Recently the Quebec government has announced a policy where the Government and public employees' retirement plan (including the Quebec Pension Plan) administered by the *Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec* would actively own and operate provincial transit projects. Both Kathleen Wynne's government in Ontario and Justin Trudeau's federal Liberals have mused about similar moves with public pension funds. The NACP sees the convergence of a number of troubling trends around this issue:

- 1) Canadian governments need to fund significant amounts of infrastructure over the coming decades,
- 2) the politics of austerity are leading governments to place misguided priority on attaining balanced budgets and avoiding debt,
- 3) the pressure to pursue P3 infrastructure continues from self-interested parties and governments wanting to hide debts "off book," and;

- 4) pension funds are huge pools of capital which many are pushing to invest in P3s.

These trends point to the very real possibility of huge waves of infrastructure privatizations over the coming decades and the committee calls on CUPE to develop resources and policy to combat this trend, to ensure that infrastructure development and renewal remains public, as it should.

Respectfully submitted by,

### **The Members of the National Advisory Committee on Pensions**

Greg Baker .....Newfoundland and Labrador  
Anne Burgess ..... Nova Scotia  
Leonard Crawford ..... Prince Edward Island  
Roland Cormier ..... New Brunswick  
Patrick Gloutney ..... Quebec  
Helen Fetterly  
Co-chair ..... Ontario  
Bob Ripley  
Co-chair ..... Manitoba  
Michael Brockbank ..... Saskatchewan  
Kim Jaedicke ..... Alberta  
Scott Cush  
Alternate ..... Alberta  
Larry Bancroft ..... British Columbia  
Frank Lee..... British Columbia  
Kelly Knox..... HEU, British Columbia  
Donisa Bernardo  
Alternate ..... HEU, British Columbia  
Tim Maguire.....Local 79  
Michael Hurley..... NEB Liaison  
Mark Janson..... Senior Officer Pensions  
Kevin Skerrett ..... Senior Officer Research

## NATIONAL CHILD CARE WORKING GROUP

Since the last convention, the National Child Care Working Group has worked closely with our partners and allies on the *Let's rethink child care* and *Vote Child Care 2015* campaigns. The level of engagement of CUPE members, other trade unionists on the issue of child care is increasing because of these efforts. Support for federal leadership and action on a national child care program, instead of individualized funding arrangements like the Universal Child Care Benefit (UCCB), income-splitting and the Child Tax Benefit, is gaining momentum. Much has been accomplished in pushing a national child care program into the public debate and putting it on the federal election agenda since the last convention.

### ChildCare 2020

In November 2014, the Fourth National Child Care Policy Conference was held in Winnipeg. CUPE was a major sponsor of the ChildCare 2020. CUPE joined the conference steering committee of the Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada (CCAAC), the Canadian Child Care Federation (CCCF) and the Childcare Resource and Research Unit (CRRU). In addition, CUPE was the first major organization to announce substantial funding along with support for conference calls and translation. Sisters Jamie Kass and Margot Young joined the seven person steering committee and Sister Shellie Bird was also on the committee representing the CCAAC.

CUPE is recognized as a long-time champion of universal child care. Brother Paul Moist opened the first evening plenary after the Premier of Manitoba and was warmly received by the nearly 600 participants. The conference started by watching CUPE's "Let's rethink child care" video to bring the voice of parents and highlight their experiences of finding and affording child care.

Keynote speaker Stephen Lewis, co-founder and co-director of AIDS-Free World spoke about child care as the "pre-condition for gender equality and a public good, much like public health care and education". He also took the opportunity to rebuke the Conservative government absurd family tax plan.

The next day a plenary of Canadian and international guests laid out the vision for early childhood education and care including the importance of universality and the economic benefits to society. Thomas Mulcair presented the New Democratic Party's (NDP) vision for a national quality affordable child care program with parents paying no more than \$15 per day.

There were a large number of mini plenary sessions and workshops at the conference on a broad range of policy topics that related to the vision for child care and gave lots of opportunity for lively discussions.

Labour stands united for child care, CUPE joined other unions sending members to ChildCare2020. The CLC, PSAC, CUPW, UFCW, UNIFOR, NUPGE, USWA and along with other unions not only contributed funds but sent delegates.

CUPE held a caucus on the final day with 60 CUPE members and staff attending. Everyone signed up to be active in the next steps of the *Let's rethink child care* campaign leading into the federal election. The conference finale was a lively town hall plenary that engaged participants to find ways to do on the ground organizing and take action in local communities to make universal child care a "vote-determining issue" for the federal election. Participants also passed a resolution unanimously supporting the conference vision document: Child Care in Canada by 2020: A vision and a way forward.

### Let's rethink child care

Our campaign continues to broaden our reach to rank and file members. The Kitchen Table Conversations (KTC) remain a staple of the campaign. This has proven an effective way to talk to members about their own experiences and have them realize it doesn't have to be this way. The KTC was taken to the next stage by moving the conversation from members' own experience to talk about the vision and what we want from the next federal government. It built this vision from the ChildCare2020 conference. Participants discuss how their lives could be different if we had access to quality affordable child care. They also discuss the difference between establishing a program that creates child care services versus tax provisions that only go to individuals to buy a service.

Tools were created on the Rethink Child Care website to help people understand the issue. A calculator was developed where people could calculate their savings with an affordable child care program.

CUPE developed a short animated video to help people better understand the importance of child care. It has been shared through social media.

The committee also developed a longer workshop for activists to give them the tools to organize events and actions in their regions.

CUPE has been proud to be a leader on the *Let's rethink child care* campaign and we couldn't be successful without the engagement of members and staff. We want to thank Shellie Bird (CUPE 1979) for her tireless work building enthusiasm and coordinating the kitchen table conversations. We couldn't have had such success without such dedicated campaign work.

### **Vote Child Care 2015**

CUPE activists participated with coalition partners on a campaign aimed at the federal election. This was an activist and collaborative campaign with individuals and unions in building awareness, gaining endorsements, and taking action to make child care a vote determining issue, *Spring into Action for Child Care* was a major week of action in May to engage communities on the importance of child care. CUPE members participated in many activities including kitchen table conversations, stroller brigades, picnics, chalk parties, and other creative and fun events that demonstrated the need for federal leadership on child care and the importance of child care to families and to the economy.

Many CUPE members got involved in local action networks and pulled together other trade unionists, child care advocates and community members in the *Vote Child Care 2015* campaign.

### **Organizing**

Child care workers remain among the poorest paid, pitted against the rising parent fees and impacted by the fragmented under-funded patchwork of services. The National Child Care Working Group looks forward to providing advice and assistance on how CUPE can organize and negotiate for child care locals. The child care campaign and research showing the positive relationship between unions and quality child care will assist us in our attempts to increase union density in this still largely unorganized sector.

### Advocacy

The Child Care Advocacy of Canada (CCAAC) has been a key partner of CUPE since its inception. Like so many other advocacy groups, the CCAAC has suffered under the current federal Conservative government and no longer

receives federal funding. We encourage CUPE advocates to join us in this wonderful tenacious organization and to support provincial coalitions wherever possible.

### Child care at CUPE events

The committee will continue to promote and implement *Welcome Children*, the manual for providing child care at CUPE functions and work with other national committees and advise the National Executive Board on a family care policy to remove barriers to participation at CUPE events.

### **Farewell and thanks**

This will be the last CUPE National Convention for Sister Jamie Kass. Jamie has been an incredible leader on child care for CUPE and has chaired the CUPE child care committee since its inception. It is difficult to express how much we will miss her advocacy, creativity, and energy on child care issues. Jamie can never be replaced but she will inspire us to become strong leaders and advocates for child care.

Respectfully submitted by,

### **The Members of the National Child Care Working Group**

- Gail Brinston .....Newfoundland and Labrador
- Michelle Lohnes ..... Nova Scotia
- Karen Tsistinas ..... Prince Edward Island
- Sharon Thompson ..... New Brunswick
- Julie Guilbault ..... Quebec
- Jamie Kass
- Co-chair ..... Ontario
- Shellie Bird ..... Ontario
- Lori Schroen ..... Manitoba
- Kristina Atherton ..... Saskatchewan
- Elizabeth Tweedale ..... Alberta
- Randi Gurholt-Seary
- Co-chair ..... British Columbia
- Michael Lanier
- Alternate ..... British Columbia
- Louella Vincent ..... HEU, British Columbia
- Lori McKay ..... NEB Liaison
- Michelle Cohen ..... Equality Representative
- Margot Young ..... Senior Officer Research

## NATIONAL CONTRACTING OUT AND PRIVATIZATION COORDINATING COMMITTEE

Since our union's founding, fighting privatization in all its forms has been one of CUPE's top priorities. As one of CUPE's oldest advisory committees, the National Contracting Out and Privatization Coordinating Committee (NCPCC) has a central role in CUPE's work defending good jobs and public services in our communities. The committee members seek to act as leaders in their regions by sharing knowledge, building on-the-ground capacity, encouraging activism, fostering connections across sectors and issues, and facilitating greater participation in CUPE's anti-privatization education.

The members of the NCPCC share information about successful strategies to fight privatization and promote public services in their regions and through the national committee. They also provide local insights into national trends. Together, our cross-sectoral and regional perspectives provide important input into CUPE's ongoing work to protect and expand public services, and to fight privatization in all its forms.

Since the 2013 National Convention, committee members have tackled privatization issues in their regions. As a group, members have continued to deepen their understanding of new privatization threats, and have strategized on how to strengthen our capacity to take on privatization across the country.

Member education is a top priority for the committee. Over the past two years, members have worked with CUPE's Union Development Department to review CUPE's privatization education resources, and identified ways committee members can help promote regional participation in CUPE's privatization education programs. The committee continues to advocate for adaptable tools, such as brown-bag lunch and learn modules, to allow maximum flexibility on how and where this education can be delivered.

Over the past two years, the committee has continued to learn about new forms of privatization, as well as exposing processes that facilitate privatization. The committee has continued to track and discuss opportunities to fight the federal Conservative government's growing push to force municipalities to privatize through P3s. We have also heard how CUPE is mobilizing to reconnect with members and build our strength to resist legislative attacks on public services and unions that open the door to privatization, such as Quebec's *Bill 10* and *Bill 15*, as well as the sweeping province-wide privatization plans that CUPE members are confronting in Saskatchewan.

Equipped with this knowledge, the committee focuses on promoting strategies for CUPE to engage, educate and mobilize members, starting by identifying and resisting these threats.

In the past two years, this has included hearing from committee members, CUPE staff and other experts on processes that open the door to privatization, with a focus on core service reviews, LEAN management, and shared services. As part of this work, committee members piloted and gave feedback on a new education module on consultant-led core services reviews that can be adapted across sectors.

Emerging forms of privatization such as social impact bonds and asset recycling are another ongoing issue. Through presentations, discussions and shared materials, committee members made the connections between Social Impact Bonds and public-private partnerships (P3s), and uncovered the truth behind the friendly-sounding term 'asset recycling. We are learning from the unfolding story of the possible sale of shares in Hydro One, and CUPE's campaign to stop the privatization of this vital public asset. Members are working to build awareness in their regions and prepare members for the early warning signs of these and other privatization models.

At the same time, committee members continue to stay up to date on developments with more well-known forms of privatization such as contracting out and P3s, as well as hidden forms of privatization such as the use of volunteers. Committee members were briefed on the Ontario auditor general's devastating report on Ontario's P3 program, and discussed how to integrate the report's findings into CUPE's work. The committee has also reviewed and learned from other P3 case studies, including CUPE's analysis of the scandal-ridden Montreal P3 hospital.

Another key committee role is to identify and share information about privatization threats by region and sector as well as nationwide. Since the 2013 National Convention, major issues the committee has monitored and discussed include: the ongoing problems with pension fund investment in infrastructure privatization; the federal wastewater regulations and how they open municipal wastewater treatment plants up to P3 threats; the proposed sale of Hydro One, Ontario's electricity and transmission utility; the threat of erosion of CUPE EMS jobs in some regions from contracting out, as municipalities transfer EMS work to firefighters; and the Dr. Brian Day, or Cambie Clinic, court challenge to Canada's public health care system.

The committee's work is also focused on promoting pro-public solutions. We learn about and share strategies to expand and strengthen the public sector. Since the 2013 National Convention, this has included an in-depth briefing on CUPE's municipal revenues toolkit, which members have championed in their regions as a positive alternative to privatization. Members were also briefed on the latest findings in CUPE's opinion research on public services and privatization, and discussed what this means for CUPE's public messaging and campaign activities.

The committee shares information on privatization trends, threats and wins, as well as any public sector success stories. Some of the successes over the past two years include: CUPE 500's Positively Public campaign in the City of Winnipeg and their recently launched campaign to contract in snowplowing services; CUPE 416's ongoing fight to stop the contracting out of half of the City of Toronto's solid waste collection services; the ongoing success of CUPE 3034's contracted-in solid waste services in Conception Bay South, Newfoundland and Labrador; the success of CUPE 503's many contracting in initiatives in the City of Ottawa; CUPE 1505's lobbying win that protected public water services in Fort McMurray; and the ongoing success of the Greater Vancouver Regional District in resisting P3 pressure and keeping a new sewage treatment plant public. Through these stories we have learned about new technologies and techniques, such as the use of a "hotline" to gather community stories about the consequences of privatization.

CUPE has many resources to help members identify and organize against privatization. The committee is pleased to have supported and provided input into an update to CUPE's member resource on bargaining and privatization, *Our Best Line of Defence*. The guide was launched at CUPE's National Sector Council conference in fall 2014. The committee also continues to promote a growing series of profiles produced by CUPE and the Polaris Institute of corporations seeking to become P3 investors in the water and wastewater sector.

Members are also focused on the power of political action, learning from stories such as the British Columbia municipal elections in fall 2014, when CUPE and other labour and community allies organized to replace a right-wing, pro-privatization council in Prince George with pro-public representatives. Committee members also shared news about positive election results from Ontario and Manitoba. The committee has connected with CUPE political action staff about our municipal, provincial and federal political strategies during and between elections, with a focus on how to elect pro-public representatives, as In the past two years, some committee members have moved on from the National Contracting Out and

well as lobbying strategies to fight privatization with sitting governments. The example of CUPE's *Own it!* campaign in Saskatchewan is an excellent one – CUPE is working together with other unions, organizing in communities across the province and building a network of contacts and activists to make privatization an issue in the next provincial election.

Campaigning in coalition builds solidarity and power. The committee has been in regular contact with organizers of CUPE's major campaigns to protect and expand public health care, bring in public child care, stop water privatization and fight the Canada-EU Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement, and helped promote campaigns in the regions. CUPE's work on child care is an example of the positive, pro-public vision that CUPE can advance, in coalition with community and political allies, to bring about real change. And CUPE and the Hospital Employees' Union work in coalition with the Council of Canadians and local health coalitions has important lessons about the value of member training, door-to-door organizing and community outreach combining into a powerful political force.

Over the past two years, the committee also deepened its understanding of the connections between privatization and equality issues, working with staff from CUPE's Equality and Research, Job Evaluation and Health and Safety branches. A presentation to the committee showed how harassment and bullying is an unexpected consequence of privatization. This ground-breaking CUPE research highlights new dimensions in CUPE's anti-privatization work, and the committee hopes to continue to explore these connections, working to create safer workplaces for everyone.

The committee is also working to make the case for well-paid and secure public sector jobs from an equality perspective. Members learned about research done by CUPE Equality Branch into the demographic profile of low-paid CUPE members in equality-seeking groups including women, racialized workers, aboriginal workers and workers with disabilities. This research helps build our case against privatized jobs with low pay, little job security and no benefits.

Our power lies in our ability to connect with each other, and with those around us. As workers, and as members of our communities, we must continue to build closer connections within our union, and in coalition and solidarity with other unions, community groups, and members of the public.

Privatization Coordinating Committee. We thank Jason Woodbury, Prince Edward Island and Marc Ouellette, New

Brunswick for their work and dedication, along with National Coordinator Mary Catherine McCarthy, who retired earlier this year.

Respectively submitted by,

**The Members of the National Contracting Out and Privatization Coordinating Committee**

Warrick Cluney ..... Newfoundland and Labrador  
Mike MacIsaac ..... Nova Scotia  
Pierre Soucy ..... Quebec  
Dave Hewitt ..... Ontario

Brian Madden  
Co-chair ..... Ontario  
Rebecca Scott ..... Manitoba  
Debbie Hubick  
Co-chair ..... Saskatchewan  
Joyce E. Baker ..... Alberta  
Ian Norton ..... British Columbia  
Cindy McQueen  
Alternate ..... British Columbia  
Barbara Biley ..... HEU, British Columbia  
Mike Davidson ..... NEB Liaison  
Karin Jordan ..... Senior Communication Officer

## NATIONAL ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

### Introduction

CUPE's National Environment Committee provides advice and recommendations for action on environmental issues to CUPE members. Since the last national convention, the committee has focused its work on outreach following the adoption of CUPE's environmental policy, climate change, green/climate jobs, greening the workplace, Earth Day and other environmental days, greening CUPE, promoting environmental awareness, and building alliances. The committee has continued to meet and communicate regularly, often using CUPE's videoconferencing capacity. The following report to the Twenty-seventh Biennial CUPE National Convention outlines our activities.

### Committee activities in the past two years

#### Environmental policy

The committee played a leading role in forming CUPE's first national environmental policy, entitled *Working Harmoniously on the Earth*. Since that policy was adopted in March 2013, the committee has used it as a foundation for further environmental work. The policy calls on CUPE to act on climate change. The committee has helped create a new outreach tool for members on climate change called "Starting to Talk: CUPE Climate Change Conversations" that engages members on the issue to spur workplace and community action. The policy has also been used as a stepping stone to greening initiatives within CUPE at both the day-to-day level and at CUPE events, such as conventions. CUPE's environmental policy calls for strong action on climate change and more public renewable energy among its central tenets. CUPE has called on Canadian political leaders to step up our country's climate change efforts. For example, when Canada's provincial premiers met in Quebec City in April 2015, CUPE urged those leaders to push the federal government to act to cut greenhouse gas emissions that cause climate change. CUPE's environmental policy has also become a model within the labour movement in particular, helping to show how trade unions can be instrumental in pressing for progressive environmental solutions.

#### Climate Change

The committee has responded to climate change in many ways. Principally, the committee has helped develop a new climate change outreach tool entitled "Starting to Talk: CUPE Climate Change Conversations." This tool is centred on a short, interactive visual presentation that covers the basics of the issue, such as the current science, why workers should care and how climate change is affecting

Canadian communities today. "Starting to Talk" encourages CUPE members to share their stories about the environmental changes they have witnessed and experienced where they live. From this grounding point, CUPE members are urged to consider actions to slow climate change and to further open up dialogue on this critical workers' issue.

The presentation/outreach tool is designed to be nimble and can be used at gatherings of just about any size. To date, it has been presented to some national committees and at some CUPE division conventions.

The committee also closely monitored and reported on international climate change negotiations at the last two United Nations Conference of the Parties (COP) meetings on climate change in Warsaw, Poland (COP19, December 2013) and Lima, Peru (COP20, December 2014).

The committee helped put in place various initiatives to green national convention, with the chief step being a full carbon offsetting program for 2013 National Convention that resulted in that convention being carbon neutral.

#### Green Jobs

The committee has been very active in promoting a green jobs agenda for CUPE and Canadian society more generally as a way to reduce environmental harm and chart a cleaner and more sustainable path for the future. Specifically, the committee has been a major contributor to Canada's Green Economy Network (GEN), which is comprised of members from labour, environmental and social justice groups calling on federal leaders and others to green our economy to foster greater green job growth, or, more specifically, climate jobs that directly lower greenhouse gases. CUPE has helped organize and has participated in GEN community outreach roundtable events in Winnipeg, Edmonton, Hamilton and Charlottetown that have brought community, labour and environmental activists together to explore local green/climate job opportunities. In some cases, community-based chapters of GEN have been set up as a result.

#### Greening the Workplace

The committee has encouraged CUPE locals and all workplaces to make changes that reduce the harmful environmental impact of our work. The committee has contributed to a new initiative entitled Adapting Canadian Work and Workplaces (ACW) based out of York University. This endeavour creates model workplace environmental action plans for Canadian workers and has used many of



CUPE's established green workplace steps as the foundation for broader programs across various Canadian workplaces. ACW also aims to measure the effectiveness of green workplace programs and may partner with CUPE workplaces to assess and quantify how green steps cut greenhouse gas emissions and reduce the environmental impact of work practices.

The committee continues to promote its green workplace tools. For example, several hundred CUPE workplaces have used CUPE's workplace environmental auditing tool to measure their workplace's progress. Numerous CUPE workplaces have also set up workplace environmental committees.

#### Earth Day and other environmental Days

The committee has continued to promote environmental action by focussing on Earth Day and other environmental days that draw awareness to environmental issues. The committee changed its Earth Day materials for 2014 and 2015. A Green Workplace contest was established to promote worker environmentalism. The first winner – CUPE Local 402 – won as a result of participating in a local environmental festival where CUPE members demonstrated how public sector work can have environmental benefits.

The committee has also highlighted actions CUPE members and others can take to reduce our environmental impact on Clean Air Day, Buy Nothing Day, Car Free Day, Bottled Water Free Day, and during Earth Hour. The committee has recognized that these days help draw attention to environmental issues, while at the same time the committee has promoted positive environmental change in workplaces and communities throughout the year.

#### Greening CUPE

The committee has continued to improve the environmental performance of committee business by holding meetings by videoconference. This practice drastically reduces the environmental impact of committee meetings, by, for example, cutting carbon emissions caused by travel roughly in half.

The committee was also instrumental in making changes to CUPE national convention to reduce its environmental impact. 2013 National Convention was the second carbon neutral event for CUPE, thanks to an offsetting program recommended by the National Environment Committee. The committee also encouraged other green steps at convention, such as a full auditing of carbon emissions, promoting green transportation options for delegates, reducing paper and other materials leading to less waste

and energy consumption at convention, and promoting public tap water. The committee also helped establish CUPE's first green stewards program that was put in place at 2013 National Convention.

#### Promoting environmental awareness

The committee used communication tools to promote environmental awareness, such as the environment section of cupe.ca. A CUPE Environment Network Facebook group shares information using social media. A new CUPE environment electronic newsletter was set up in 2014.

CUPE environmental activists also took part in civil society events, such as Earth Day rallies and the "Act on Climate" demonstration in Quebec City in April 2014, where dozens of CUPE activists joined with environmental, Aboriginal, social justice and other labour activists to lobby Canadian premiers to take decisive action on climate change.

#### Building Alliances

The committee has continued to work with allies within labour and with environmental and social justice groups to strengthen actions taken on environmental issues. Some committee members sit on the Canadian Labour Congress Environment Committee. The committee also works with the International Trade Union Confederation, Green Economy Network, Climate Action Network – Canada (CAN – Canada), and others. The committee was represented in October 2014 at a CAN – Canada meeting with NDP leader Thomas Mulcair to strategize for leadership on climate change at the federal level.

#### **Conclusion**

The Environment Committee's work is vital to CUPE, the Canadian labour movement and society more broadly as it helps situate workers' roles and strengths in the struggle to confront the climate crisis and move toward a more sustainable and equitable low-carbon future. CUPE must play a leading role advocating for action on climate change, environmental protection, green/climate jobs and sustainability. The National Environment Committee will work to embed environmental awareness and action into all elements of our union. Its new climate outreach tool, for example, will help bring climate change to the centre of workers' concerns and help ensure that CUPE members are part of the solution to the environmental crisis.

In the past two years, some committee members have moved on from the National Environment Committee. We thank them for their work and dedication: Debra Nichol, Newfoundland and Labrador; Doug Elford, British Columbia; Rob Coelho, Ontario; Denis Petitclerc, Quebec;

Denis Brun, New Brunswick; Serge Plourde, New Brunswick (alternate); Victor Elkins, NEB Liaison.

Respectfully submitted by,

**The Members of the National Environment Committee**

Lisa MacDonald.....Newfoundland and Labrador  
Carmel Forde  
Co-chair ..... Nova Scotia  
Donna Gormley..... Prince Edward Island  
Gary Burris ..... New Brunswick  
Sylvie Moreau .....Ontario

Bob Walker ..... Ontario  
Kyle Lucyk ..... Manitoba  
Donna Krawetz.....Saskatchewan  
Derek Benson..... Alberta  
Ken Evans..... British Columbia  
David Wieler  
Alternate ..... British Columbia  
Carolyn Unsworth  
Co-chair ..... HEU, British Columbia  
Carina Ebnoether .....Airline Division  
Don Monroe..... NEB Liaison  
Matthew Firth.....Senior Officer

## NATIONAL GLOBAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

The CUPE National Global Justice Committee is guided by the popular refrain, *act locally, think globally*, which is rooted in the reality that we are all connected as workers. CUPE members are on the frontlines and facing tremendous pressure to defend and strengthen our pensions; to oppose budget cuts, job loss, wage freezes, work reorganization schemes and privatization; and to fight for our right to strike and collectively organize. All workers experience the impact of the global economic system that puts profit over people; it doesn't matter where in the world we live.

In 2014, members and allies from across the country gathered to discuss CUPE's future action for international solidarity. We drew lessons from the campaigns and struggles of our sisters and brothers around the world, and developed an *International Solidarity Policy Statement* that adapts to our changing world and supports strengthening our relationships and actions in solidarity with global struggles. The policy statement was adopted by the NEB in December 2014.

The committee has determined that International Solidarity is a call to action and an essential component of any fight back strategy in our union. It can inform and support our strategies at the bargaining table, against privatization and the imposition of austerity programs because strong social movements are emerging all over the world who are fighting to maintain public services, defending human rights, and promoting economic and climate justice.

International Solidarity is about building alliances amongst equals and about building our power as workers here in Canada and around the world as we continue to face the pressures. Today we support worker-to-worker, union-to-union solidarity in Colombia, Nicaragua, Honduras, Cuba and the Philippines. We are advocating for a sustainable funding to ensure this work continues and are working hard to create opportunities to ensure information about our international work is shared and is linked to CUPE's fight back and organizing efforts.

### **Exposing and campaigning against human rights violations**

An important pillar of CUPE's work, is an international solidarity and a priority for the Global Justice Committee. The committee is working hard to support campaigns calling for *Water as a Human Right*, to realize the eradication of the global HIV/AIDS epidemic, and monitor where trade union and human rights defenders face

violence and repression in their pursuit of democracy and justice.

CUPE participated in a water caravan to Detroit, Michigan to expose water shut offs in low-income communities in 2014. We have been supporting the democracy movement in Burma and the initiatives of AIDs Free World whose priority is gender equality in the pursuit of a world free of HIV/AIDS.

CUPE supported the participation of several CUPE activists on international delegations, including Brother Peter Dawson (CUPE 3902) to Honduras on a Common Frontiers led election observer mission, and Sister Gloria Lepine (CUPE 3550) to the Philippines on a KAIROS led delegation in response to an appeal from Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities in Zamboanga del Sur region who are affected by the Canadian mine TVI Pacific.

### **Support struggles to defend and recognize labour and trade union rights**

By engaging and strengthening worker-to-worker solidarity relationships with sister unions and social movement organizations around the world CUPE has taken the lead globally in calling for the release of two political prisoners and trade union organizers, Randy Vegas and Raul Camposano, from the Confederation for Unity, Recognition and Advancement of Government Employees (COURAGE) who have now entered the second year of their illegal arrest and detention in the Philippines. A CUPE delegation to the Philippine Embassy in Ottawa, Canada took place in 2014 in solidarity with these prisoners.

To mark International Women's Day, CUPE supported Sister Dianne Frittenburg and Sister Joëlle Ravary to participate in a CoDevelopment Canada led labour delegation to Nicaragua and Honduras to meet with our Global Justice Fund partner organizations in 2014.

Through our active engagement with the Global Union Federation, Public Service International (PSI) we supported a seven person delegation, led by Brother Charles Fleury, to Mexico City to attend the Inter-American Regional Conference (IAMRECON) in April 2015. The IAMRECON takes place every five years with PSI affiliates attending from North, Central and South America and the Caribbean. This year's theme was "*Advancing with trade union rights in the fight for quality public services!*".

CUPE is supporting the *PSI Ebola Virus Disease Trade Union Intervention Strategy* to address the need to lobby for proper staffing and training of health workers in West

Africa, to campaign for better health and safety conditions for workers and to promote the rebuilding and extension of public health systems throughout the region of Africa most affected by the Ebola crisis.

### **Challenging global corporate aggression**

We continue to prioritize opposition to harmful International Trade and Investment Agreements and the subsequent actions of predatory multinational corporations whose increasing power is causing harm to workers everywhere.

Following the devastating Rana Plaza building collapse in Bangladesh in 2013, which claimed the lives of over 1,200 workers, CUPE supported the Canadian tour of a labour leader from the Bangladesh Center for Worker Solidarity (BCWS). At our invitation, Sister Kalpona Akter toured across Canada to inform the general public of the current situation of Bangladeshi garment workers producing clothing for multinational corporations, including companies from Canada. This visit led to a Parliamentary/Canadian Labour delegation to Bangladesh to commemorate the first year anniversary of the Rana Plaza building collapse, and provided the opportunity to meet with trade unions, NGO's and government officials in Bangladesh to hear firsthand the challenges they face to protect the safety and rights of workers. Global Justice Committee members have since initiated several regional actions in solidarity with garment workers in Bangladesh.

CUPE supports a network of women's organizations in the maquila zones across Central America who have come together and united around a campaign called "Jobs yes, but with dignity". Over the years, stages of the campaign have included: "Health is our right. Jobs yes, but with dignity" and "Stop workplace violence. Jobs yes, but with dignity". These organizations make clear that maquila workers want to keep their jobs, and therefore boycotting the industry is not the answer. Instead, they are working to change the conditions that these workers face in factories producing garment for the international market.

As the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) near expiration at the end of 2015, the international community is gearing up to agree to a new set of global targets and goals to meet the aspirations of the world's peoples to end poverty and realize global justice. The post 2015 development framework is now being negotiated by UN member states, civil society and the private sector and a new set of goals and targets, referred to as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), have now been identified. There is a great deal of concern within the trade union movement and civil society about the prominent role given to the private sector in these negotiations. CUPE is

questioning whether the post 2015 development framework is about expanding and strengthening the MDG's or whether it is an agenda aimed at rationalizing and legitimizing the expansion of corporate power in the guise of promoting sustainability and addressing the needs of the poor. CUPE is tracking and engaging the Canadian Government in these negotiations and supporting a people's agenda that includes rights recognition, justice, decent work, social protection, and public services.

### **Hold the Canadian Government accountable**

International solidarity also requires us to acknowledge that policies of the Government of Canada not only affect the people of Canada, they affect people all over the world. The fourth pillar of our international work requires us to hold the Canadian Government accountable for their harmful domestic and foreign policies decisions. Canada is signing harmful Free Trade and Investment Agreements with other countries which is having devastating effects on workers and the poor, our development aid is tied to foreign mining corporations who are stealing land and resources globally, and Canada is now signing military procurement agreements and is shipping weapons to countries who are notorious for human and trade union rights violations.

We challenge our government to speak out against human rights violations in other countries just as we challenge them to reform the domestic and foreign policies that are harmful to workers and the public. We have a responsibility to expose the Canadian government when they are complicit in human and labour rights violations abroad.

CUPE called on the Canadian Government to refrain from entering into military operation in Iraq 2014, and also called on them to recognize the need for human rights and international law to be respected and for the end to the unjust and disproportionate violence inflicted on the people of Gaza by Israel in 2014.

We also see the link between the deteriorating living and working conditions in others countries, the actions of our government in these same countries, and the way in which people of diverse origin are being treated here in Canada. Often times marginalized workers in Canada have experienced global poverty and inequality in ways that have render them more vulnerable and easier to exploit than others. The CUPE National Global Justice Committee considers our solidarity with migrant workers in Canada to be a priority and supported CUPE's endorsement of the migrant worker led *Campaign Against the 4 Year Limit on Migrant Workers* and the CUPE National Executive Board resolution opposing the harmful changes to the Temporary

Foreign Workers Program (TFWP) when it was adopted on International Human Rights Day in 2014.

**Conclusion**

Globally, workers and social movements are refusing to accept growing inequality. Climate change, weakened national states and their public sectors, and the death of millions of people due to poverty, war and employment slavery is too high a price to pay for a system that subsidizes and favors the elite of the world. We know that poverty and inequality are not natural or inevitable.

We draw inspiration from movements that sweep the globe and capture our imagination of what is possible, and International Solidarity allows us to take advantage of moments where workers around the world can become a stronger movement. Our international solidarity must be rooted in our struggle for equality here in Canada; solidarity in our workplaces is critical.

Efforts of workers to fight for better working conditions and against privatization is being countered all over the world, and in Canada, with legislation such anti-terror legislation, international trade and investment agreements, austerity programs and temporary foreign worker programs. Our opponents are trying to scare us, silence us in order to undermine our solidarity and our collective power. Often when labour activists and human rights defenders speak out against injustice many experience repression and violence.

CUPE’s international work and the partnerships we have developed through the Global Justice Fund allow us to “link arms” and strengthen our solidarity around the world and here at home. The Global Justice Committee strives to strengthen CUPE by building a deeper understanding of working conditions globally and by encouraging CUPE members to become involved in our international solidarity work locally, regionally and nationally.

A life with dignity is a shared aspiration, and something workers are courageously fighting every day. This is what CUPE fights for, and ultimately what connects us as workers with others around the world, and why international solidarity is important.

For a full picture of the extent of CUPE’s international work please read our yearly *International Solidarity report* available on cupe.ca. You can subscribe to the *Global Justice newsletter* at cupe.ca/globaljustice. Follow us on twitter @cupesolidarity and check in regularly to cupe.ca to read web postings on a host of international issues.

Respectfully submitted by,

**The Members of the National Global Justice Committee**

- Keir Hiscock ..... Newfoundland and Labrador
- Jonathan Fourdraine ..... Nova Scotia
- Shawna Quinn ..... Prince Edward Island
- Debbie Downey ..... New Brunswick
- Sylvain Allard ..... Quebec
- Safia Gahayr
- Co-chair ..... Ontario
- Daveson Haraan
- Alternate ..... Ontario
- Zully Trujillo ..... Manitoba
- Jose Juarez ..... Saskatchewan
- Mario Pailamilla ..... Alberta
- Doug Sprenger
- Co-chair ..... British Columbia
- Tarsam Basi
- Alternate ..... British Columbia
- Betty Valenzuela ..... HEU, British Columbia
- Bill McMullan ..... HEU, British Columbia
- Sarah Pentlow ..... CUSO International
- Mira Claxton ..... Oxfam Canada
- Kathryn Janzen ..... CoDevelopment Canada
- Denis Bolduc ..... NEB Liaison
- Kelti Cameron ..... Senior Officer International Solidarity

## NATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

The National Health and Safety Committee is pleased to present the following report to the Twenty-seventh Biennial CUPE National Convention. Since the 2013 convention, the committee continues to monitor and defend the occupational health and safety rights of CUPE members.

Our focus continues to be to provide members with tools, information and education to fight back against concerted attacks on our working conditions and rights by many of our employers and some governments.

The committee gathered in Ottawa three times since the last convention in April 2014, October 2014, and May 2015. During this period, the committee has undertaken a wide range of activities including:

- Promoting health and safety as a top priority at all levels of the union.
- Providing input to the new Health and Safety Learning Series.
- Supporting April 28<sup>th</sup>, the Day of Mourning activities, nationally and internationally.
- Assisting with the promotion, selection and presentation of the National Health and Safety Award.
- Urging locals to monitor all workplace fatalities and encouraging reporting to CUPE National.

As with our previous reports to convention, it is with great sadness that the committee reports on work-related deaths of CUPE members. Since the last convention, we have received notice that 11 CUPE members were killed as the result of their work at the time this report was prepared. We mourn the loss of:

- Billy (William) Mallock, Local 4848, New Brunswick
- Richard Davidson, Local 116, British Columbia
- Manuel Jupista, Local 389, British Columbia
- Brian Goble, Local 1004, British Columbia
- Dellis Partridge, Local 4946, Alberta
- John Macleod, Local 1867, Nova Scotia
- Alain Bissonnette, Local 503, Ontario
- Harl Hawley, Local 30, Alberta
- Nilo Sanchez, Local 59, Saskatchewan
- Venancio Perez, Local 1483, Ontario
- Stephen Penny, Local 30, Alberta

Each fatality must remind us that prevention of workplace illnesses and injuries together with strong government enforcement and swift and severe punishments for employers are the keys to stopping the death toll in our workplaces.

### **National committee activities in the past two years**

The following is a broader description of the activities that the National Health and Safety Committee participated in this year.

#### Day of Mourning – April 28<sup>th</sup>

This year marked 31<sup>st</sup> year anniversary since CUPE's National Health and Safety Committee first proposed the National Day of Mourning for workers killed or injured as a result of workplace causes. It was CUPE's National Health and Safety Committee who first recommended the creation of a remembrance day for workers killed or injured on-the-job in 1984. The Day was proclaimed by then CUPE National President Jeff Rose at a Health and Safety Conference in early 1985, and in the same year, the Canadian Labour Congress and affiliated unions quickly adopted the day across Canada. The Day of Mourning honours the dead and injured who have been struck down in our own communities. It focuses attention on workers killed, injured, and made sick by their work in the previous year.

The committee helps to promote CUPE's Day of Mourning materials – April 28<sup>th</sup> bookmarks, a Workers' Statement, posters and activity checklists – which are distributed to all locals through general mailings.

#### Violence prevention kit

The National Health and Safety Committee, has helped advised the Health and Safety Branch as they update the Violence Prevention Kit. The committee has reviewed the new guidelines and helped suggest additional items to help broaden the kits scope.

#### Health and Safety Learning Series

The National Health and Safety Committee, has helped advised the Health and Safety Branch and Union Development Department in the development of the new health and safety learning series courses. It is hoped that this new style of health and safety courses will increase the number of members who learn about the basics of health and safety, and encourage them to seek out additional learning and training opportunities.

National Health and Safety Award

Since the creation of the National Health and Safety Award in 1992, the National Health and Safety Committee has selected and recommended each award winner. Over the past two years, the committee has redesigned the award from to ensure greater fairness amongst nominees. The winner is selected by a subcommittee of the whole. We offer our sincerest congratulations to this year’s worthy recipient.

**Conclusion**

The successes of the last two years give us encouragement that CUPE will continue to advocate for and defend members’ occupational health and safety rights. The committee remains confident that our union will to continue to play a leading role in occupational health and safety in CUPE and within the labour movement.

More than ever, the past two years have demonstrated that the fight for healthy and safe workplaces and decent working conditions is not over. Employer and right wing government attacks continue, and are increasing. Just as our employers are coordinating strategies against us, we must improve our collective strength to defend past health and safety gains and secure improvements for the future.

Respectfully submitted by,

**The Members of the National Health and Safety Committee**

- Michael Murphy ..... Newfoundland and Labrador
- Kathy Dauphney ..... Nova Scotia
- Jason Woodbury..... Prince Edward Island
- Minerva Porelle .....New Brunswick
- Don Postar
- Co-chair ..... Ontario
- Kelly Walker
- Alternate ..... Ontario
- Brad Carnduffr..... Ontario, Local 1000,  
.....Power Workers Union
- Tom Nicholls ..... Ontario, Local 1000,  
Alternate .....Power Workers Union
- Walter Gretschnan .....Manitoba
- Dolores Douglas
- Co-chair .....Saskatchewan
- Mark Langlois .....Alberta
- Jaycynth Millante
- Alternate .....Alberta
- Dal Benning ..... British Columbia
- John Fraser ..... HEU, British Columbia
- Shelly Bridge
- Alternate ..... HEU, British Columbia
- Julianne Vondrejs ..... Airline Division
- Don Monroe .....NEB Liaison
- Troy Winters .....Senior Officer Health and Safety

## NATIONAL HEALTH CARE ISSUES COMMITTEE

### Introduction

CUPE members deliver direct health care and support services in nearly every city and town in Canada. With more than 190,000 members in the health care sector, CUPE is Canada's largest health care union.

For 13 years, the CUPE National Health Care Issues Committee has served the National Executive Board and CUPE members by supporting campaigns for good working and caring conditions in the health care sector. The past two years have been focused on protecting, strengthening and expanding Medicare through CUPE's Health Accord campaign, working with health coalitions and other allies, and defending public health care from Brian Day's legal assault on Medicare.

### Health Care Issues Committee activities

The committee has worked hard over the last two years. With the support of the National Executive Board, we held five face-to-face meetings and three conference call meetings and undertook the following activities:

### Health Accord Campaign

We supported Resolution 157 (CUPE Convention 2013) which committed the union to a broad-based campaign for a strong federal role in health care and a new Health Accord. With participation from members in every province and region, and working with our national partner the Council of Canadians the campaign consisted of:

- 14 town halls and workshops in every province
- knocking on 42,500 doors
- distributing 103,500 leaflets
- 59,500 direct mail and mail drops in many communities throughout the country
- led and contributed to around 100 rallies of MP offices across Canada on the dates that marked the end of the Health Accord (March 31, 2014) and the first anniversary of its expiry (March 31, 2015)
- participating in three Canadian Health Coalition MP lobby days/weeks: December 2013, November 2014 and May 2015

The campaign achieved these successes working hand-in-hand with provincial and service divisions, CUPE health care councils, health coalitions, and other unions.

### Background

The federal-provincial health accord expired March 31, 2014. In the last year alone, Canadians have lost \$987 million in federal health funding. The Conservatives plan to

cut another \$35 billion over the next nine years and let the provinces go their own way, with no national goals and no commitment to uphold even current standards. This plan will lead to 13 different health care systems, most of them privatized. Harper is already ignoring Violations of the *Canada Health Act* and has refused to show any federal leadership on important issues like senior's care and Pharmacare.

### Bargaining and CUPE's Health care Sector Council

The committee heard that the top issue of concern on the bargaining side for health care workers was workload, followed by wages and benefits. On the campaign side, the Health Accord campaign was the top priority issue.

### Background

Austerity budgets are leading to cuts to health care funding and pressure to find "efficiencies." Private, for-profit corporations are targeting health care for privatization, which has a negative impact on the quality of care.

Workers are concerned about workload, stress, high injury rates, bullying and violence in the workplace. Attendance management hearings, hospital acquired infections and mandatory vaccinations were also key topics that were discussed.

Another overarching issue is that the right to strike is being limited for health care workers, which creates challenges in terms of bargaining power. Restructuring of health care regions in some provinces is creating challenges in terms of representation.

### Dr. Brian Day Charter Challenge to Medicare

The HCIC has been closely monitoring the court case involving Dr. Brian Day and his Charter challenge against Medicare in the BC Supreme Court. The case is expected to be heard in November 2015. CUPE and the HCIC have been working closely with the BC Health Coalition to support the education of the public about this threat to Medicare, and together we worked with the CCPA to publish a backgrounder on the case in April 2015.

### Background

For-profit clinic owner Dr. Brian Day has launched a constitutional challenge that could fundamentally change Canada's public health care system. Dr. Day wants to accomplish two things with the legal challenge:



## Background

For-profit clinic owner Dr. Brian Day has launched a constitutional challenge that could fundamentally change Canada's public health care system. Dr. Day wants to accomplish two things with the legal challenge:

- change laws so the publicly-funded doctors can charge whatever they want in for-profit clinics (extra billing)
- make it possible for US style private insurance companies to operate in Canada.

Health care should be providing treatment based on need, not ability to pay. Public wait times get longer as private hospitals/clinics poach health care staff away from the public system. For more information, see <http://www.savemedicare.ca/>

## Push for Pharmacare

The committee heard from a number of speakers on the need for a national Pharmacare program, including Marc-André Gagnon (Carleton University). CUPE continues to work with national allies such as the Canadian Health Coalition and the Canadian Doctors for Medicare to advocate for a universal, national, prescription drugs benefit program on the principles of the *Canada Health Act*. Such a program needs to cover all residents of Canada without user fees or other barriers to access.

## Background

Canada is the only country with universal health care that does not also cover prescription drugs except for the province of Quebec which has put in place a public and universal prescription drug system. One in ten prescriptions go unfilled because residents cannot afford necessary medicines. A CCPA report by Marc-André Gagnon estimates that Canada could save \$11.7 billion in unnecessary drug costs with a national Pharmacare program.

## Other activities

Additional activities undertaken by the HCIC and staff advisors include:

- Supported health coalition work to ensure that blood collection and plasma clinics remain non-profit;
- Supported the work of the Atlantic Regional Office in responding to the restructuring of provincial health authorities (Bill 1);
- Supported the celebration of Nursing Week and Health Care Aide/Personal Support Worker Day;
- Supported general work on campaign strategy and political lobbies of the federal parties on health care policies and activities;

- Participated in Canadian Health Coalition's conferences on Continuing Care (November 2013) and on Anti-Privatization (November 2014);
- Participated in CUPE and academic research projects on residential long-term care (CUPE data on beds by ownership type; ACCC national care aide education standards; CUPE-Parklands project on continuing care privatization);
- CUPE National actively participated in an ongoing academic research project on residential long-term care (Dr. Pat Armstrong, York University, "Re-imagining Long-Term Care");
- Acted as a clearinghouse on health policy, monitoring media, journals and web sites and sharing important events and reports through email lists and social media;
- Supported media work on health care; and
- Participated and supported Council of the Federation health care events in 2014 (Charlottetown) and 2015 (St. John's).

Finally, the committee would like to thank the National Executive Board for its support for health care issues over the past two years, and the members and staff who work hard to defend working conditions in health care and protect our public health care system.

Respectfully submitted by,

## The Members of the Health Care Issues Committee

Sherry Hillier ..... Newfoundland and Labrador  
Dianne Frittenburg ..... Nova Scotia  
Wanda Livingstone ..... Prince Edward Island  
Wayne Brown ..... New Brunswick  
Norma Robinson ..... New Brunswick  
Elyse Boivin ..... Quebec  
Pam Parks  
Co-chair ..... Ontario  
Kelly O-Sullivan ..... Ontario  
Debbie Boissonneault ..... Manitoba  
Gordon Campbell  
Co-chair ..... Saskatchewan  
Brenda Reid ..... Alberta  
Chris Losito ..... British Columbia  
Randall Filan  
Alternate ..... British Columbia  
Jim Calvin ..... HEU, British Columbia  
Jodi George  
Alternate ..... HEU, British Columbia  
Marco Lutfy (2014) ..... NEB Liaison  
Michael Hurley (2015) ..... NEB Liaison  
Heather Farrow ..... National Staff  
Govind Rao ..... Senior Officer Research

## NATIONAL LIBRARY WORKERS' COMMITTEE

### Introduction

The National Library Workers' Committee (NLWC) provides advice to the National Executive Board (NEB) on how CUPE can support library workers in public libraries, special libraries, school libraries and academic libraries in colleges and universities across Canada. It monitors privatization and contracting out in the library sector and provides advice on strategies to fight back against these threats.

The committee discusses new and emerging issues in the sector including precarious work arrangements, new workplace technologies, workplace health and safety and workplace violence. Equality initiatives are also integrated into the work of the committee. The committee also provides advice on how CUPE can best support library workers by bargaining improved compensation and working conditions, organizing library workers and advocating against library closures.

### Raising the profile of library workers in our communities

CUPE represents 22,000 library workers across Canada or 80% of all unionized library workers in the country. Approximately 7,000 of CUPE's library workers are in their own local unions. The remaining 15,000 library workers are in bargaining units or are members of locals with municipal, university, college and school members. Half of CUPE's library members work in the public library system while the other half work in libraries in schools, universities, colleges and municipalities. The vast majority of the library workforce, 85%, are women. Racialized workers account for 12% of CUPE library workers. Many workers are in part-time or casual positions.

The committee's goal is to raise the profile of library workers within the labour movement and, more broadly, within our communities. For example, at the national level, the NLWC is working to raise the profile of the many workplace issues that affect library workers through its work with the Canadian Library Association (CLA). The CLA has branded itself as the "national voice for Canada's library communities." CUPE's participation and sponsorship of the annual CLA National Conference and Trade Show, through our information booth, for example, ensures that the voice of library workers, and of organized labour, is communicated to a national, stakeholder audience.

CUPE also hosted a panel presentation and discussion at the 2015 CLA National Conference and Trade Show in Ottawa. The theme of the session was "Library

Privatization – Costs and Consequences" and was moderated by NLWC co-chairs Dawn Lahey of Newfoundland and Labrador and Maureen O'Reilly of Ontario. The guest panelists were Carrie Lynn Poole-Cotnam, treasurer for CUPE 503 at the City of Ottawa, which includes the Ottawa Public Library, and David Macdonald of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

The panelists provided an overview of public-private partnership (P3) infrastructure development in Canada while examining recent trends, the purported benefits, and the various pitfalls. Also discussed was the potential development of the main branch of the Ottawa Public Library via a P3 arrangement. At the time of writing, the City of Ottawa was studying the feasibility of a P3 development and council had not made a final decision. The panel discussion was well received with plenty of good discussion.

### Precarious Work

CUPE hosted a well-attended panel discussion on precarious work at the 2014 CLA National Conference and Trade Show in Victoria, B.C. Panelists included committee co-chairs Dawn Lahey of Newfoundland and Labrador, Maureen O'Reilly of Ontario and Marlea Clarke, assistant professor at the University of Victoria.

The rise of precarious forms of work whether part-time, temporary, casual or contract work is having a negative impact on quality public services in the library sector. Approximately 45 per cent of CUPE library workers work part-time, while the proportion of CUPE library clerks who work part-time is over 70 per cent.

The precarious nature of work means that many CUPE library workers must work more than one job to make ends meet which makes it difficult to achieve a healthy work-life balance. Precarity also negatively impacts employers' ability to attract and retain qualified staff.

Retirement security is a significant issue for the sector. The rise in precarious employment and decrease in full-time work results in lower wages, fewer benefits and less access to pensionable earnings all of which contribute to the real possibility of retiring into a life of poverty for library workers and their families.

### Privatization

The committee continues to monitor privatization threats across Canada. Privatization takes many forms in the

library sector. One of the more common threats is the contracting out of bibliographical services such as ordering, processing, cataloguing and technology. The move to self-service check out is becoming more prevalent which results in staff layoffs. Less common, but concerning nonetheless, is the threat of public-private partnerships (P3s) in the construction and renovation of library infrastructure; the most recent example being the potential P3 development for the City of Ottawa's new, main public library.

### Health and Safety

Library workers are at risk of experiencing, either directly or indirectly, harassment, bullying, and verbal and physical violence; working alone exacerbates this risk. Public libraries are safe spaces for people suffering from mental illness, addictions and homelessness. Library workers are often called upon to work with at-risk and marginalized people and often have little or no formal training in conflict resolution.

In addition, library workers are sometimes unwittingly exposed to graphic internet pornography by patrons using public computers. The committee has incorporated

workplace health and safety into its work-plan and is actively monitoring trends across the country.

Respectfully Submitted by,

### The Members of the National Library Workers' Committee

Dawn Lahey  
Co-chair ..... Newfoundland and Labrador  
Suzanne Nelson ..... Nova Scotia  
Dorothy Peters ..... Prince Edward Island  
Debra Tozer ..... New Brunswick  
Lucie Ruest ..... Quebec  
Janna Munkittrick-Colton ..... Ontario  
Maureen O'Reilly  
Co-chair ..... Ontario  
Joan McMahon ..... Manitoba  
Debbie Mihial ..... Saskatchewan  
Terrill Budd ..... Alberta  
Karen Ranalletta ..... British Columbia  
Judy Henley ..... NEB Liaison  
Joseph Courtney ..... Senior Officer Research

## NATIONAL LITERACY WORKING GROUP

*Literacy is the combination of skills needed to be autonomous in simple everyday life situations. It's the ability to read, write, and calculate, along with other essential skills such as finding, understanding, memorizing, analyzing and using information in texts and documents.*

*Literacy skills help us to function better at work and participate more fully in our union and our communities. CUPE members who upgrade their literacy skills feel empowered and better able to achieve their goals and develop their knowledge and potential.*

*Sadly, in the year 2014 we saw the disappearance of all federal funding and the subsequent closure of most of the national literacy organisations that were our long time partners. We hope that by the time you read this report, elections will have brought a new life to the literacy field with a renewed federal support.*

### **Who we are:**

We are a group of activists and staff who are passionate about workers' right to learn and fully participate in their union, their workplace, and their community. We believe in education and lifelong learning as ways to improve life at all levels.

### **What we do:**

- We promote literacy and clear language in our union and in our community.
- We develop tools and resources to help locals claim the right to learn.
- We develop clear language tools and resources to make our union and the workplace more accessible.
- We work with literacy organizations and other allies to put literacy on the public agenda.

### **Why it matters:**

Do some of your members make frequent errors or omissions in forms and documents? Do they have trouble following written instructions or avoid participating in meetings? Do they have trouble with technological changes or demands for certification?

Challenges related to literacy affect all segments of the population, all ages and all environments. According to the most recent international survey published in 2013 (PIAAC), half of adult Canadians have literacy levels that cause some degree of difficulty in their everyday lives. It is a common belief that literacy-related challenges mainly involve people who are marginalized or unemployed.

Actually, more than half of people with low literacy skills are employed.

CUPE locals that put literacy on their agenda have made it possible for their members to:

- build skills
- adapt to changing job requirements
- bid into better paying jobs
- develop an interest in further learning
- become more active in their union and community

Locals that negotiate upgrading programs are not only helping union members improve their skills – they are also protecting their jobs.

### **What we have been up to:**

Since the last convention, we've been pursuing our important work in the regions and nationally.

Over the last two years, our work has focussed on:

- promoting a culture of learning among all CUPE locals and at the national level;
- creating and promoting tools to raise awareness about the importance of a culture of learning;
- increasing access to learning opportunities for all members.

### **Learning at work:**

In 2014, Employment and Social Development Canada ended its funding of all national literacy organizations in Canada. As a result, most of them have been forced to close their doors. The federal government also replaced the Labour Market Agreements (LMA) with a new program – the Canada Job Fund (CJF). The LMAs transferred funds to the provinces and territories to support the training of vulnerable workers, including workers with low literacy skills. The agreement for the new six-year program was signed in July 2014, after a bitter battle with the provinces.

CUPE commissioned Brigid Hayes, an expert advisor on learning, literacy, and labour to study the ongoing implementation of the Fund in the provinces and territories. Her updated report, published in March 2015, shows that the Fund represents a step backward for Canada's most vulnerable workers. The report showed that:

- The Canada Job Grant is far more restrictive than the Labour Market Agreements.

- The Grant’s criteria, costs, eligible clients, and activities are very specific, removing any provincial/territorial discretion.
- The lack of specificity about who can be trained, and what type of training is supported, could leave out workers with low literacy skills and unemployed workers.
- It’s likely that employers will take advantage of higher priced training (for supervisors and managers) in order to gain full benefit from the Canada Job Grant.
- There are few incentives for employers to support non-employees (creating opportunities for unemployed workers).

One of the biggest problems is that the Fund seems designed to cut funding to provinces who fail to meet the complex spending targets. According to local literacy organizations, fewer employers than expected took advantage of the Fund since its launch.

**CUPE Learning Champions Network:**

The Learning Champions Network is a group of CUPE members who are learners in literacy programs. These members help to promote literacy and inspire potential learners by sharing their learning journeys. They also work with the National Literacy Working Group to make sure that learners’ voices are included in the work we do.

Network members have been busy raising awareness and providing information about literacy at provincial division conventions. The Network also produced a new poster (Workplace Learning: Step by Step Toward a Brighter Future) to promote workplace learning; the poster was distributed through the May 2015 general mailing.

In 2015, two individuals were awarded CUPE’s new Workplace Learning Champion Certificate for their support to Rob Snyder of CUPE 109, City of Kingston. A Learning Champions Network member, Rob Snyder managed to complete his Grade 12 while working full-time as a city bus driver.

**Clear language:**

Clear language continues to be an important aspect of our work. We have updated the clear language workshop and bookmark. The workshop provides hands on skills to improve union communication and to bring clear language strategies to the workplace. The bookmark is a handy reminder of clear language essentials.

Our clear language awareness work is having an impact: two provincial divisions have been re-writing their constitution in clear language.

**New promotional material:**

- The Literacy Program now has its own Facebook page;
- The members of the Learning Champions Network can rely on PowerPoint presentations to promote literacy;
- We have updated material for the Literacy table at CUPE events (posters, contest material, fact sheets, one-pager on literacy and clear language courses, etc.);
- A new quiz challenges literacy myths and helps members learn more about the issue.

**New resources:**

- Steward Learning Series module: Literacy awareness for stewards;
- *Transformations: Literacy and the Labour Movement, Past, Present, and Future* – a new book that documents the invaluable contribution of unions in the history of literacy in Canada.
- Learning in Solidarity.ca – a new website that brings to life the story shared in *Transformations* with an interactive timeline and a series of video clips. In these videos, workers, teachers, union members, and literacy professionals talk about their struggles and accomplishments, and why literacy training is still so important for workers, unions, and society. The website also includes a resource section that represents the most comprehensive collection of literacy resources developed by unions.

Respectfully submitted by,

**The Members of the National Literacy Working Group**

- Dianne A. Martin ..... Newfoundland and Labrador
- Jim Laverie..... Nova Scotia
- Darlene Hynes
- Alternate ..... Nova Scotia
- Karyn Noble
- Co-chair ..... Prince Edward Island
- Parise St-Onge ..... New Brunswick
- Andrew Dukeshire ..... Ontario
- Philip Dembicki ..... Manitoba
- Cindy Jessop
- Co-chair ..... Saskatchewan
- Ruth Shymka ..... Alberta
- Joey Lau ..... British Columbia
- Sarah Bjorknas ..... British Columbia
- Jody Berg ..... HEU, British Columbia
- Danny Cavanagh ..... NEB Liaison
- Isabelle Boucher ..... Senior Officer

## NATIONAL PINK TRIANGLE COMMITTEE

### Introduction

The National Pink Triangle Committee is dedicated to promoting and defending the rights and freedoms of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual and intersex (LGBTTI) persons within our union, workplaces and communities in Canada and around the world. Committee members work for change in partnership with other CUPE equality committees, labour organizations, advocacy groups and activists at the regional, national and international levels.

The committee was created in 1991, taking its name from the pink triangle badge worn by men targeted as homosexuals in the Nazi concentration camps of the Second World War. The pink triangle was reclaimed by the LGBTTI community as a symbol of struggle, survival and pride.

Every province and service division within CUPE is represented on the committee. In 2001, national convention delegates passed a resolution to add designated seats for transgender persons. Three trans representatives currently sit on the committee.

This report will provide an overview of the committee's goals and activities since the 2013 convention.

### Education

LGBTTI persons in our union, workplaces and communities continue to experience discrimination, harassment and violence. We must continually renew and intensify our educational initiatives to promote respect, understanding and acceptance for LGBTTI persons. The committee has through the years advocated for more and improved training and educational resources for CUPE members, leaders and staff.

In 2013, CUPE's education staff began work on a new weeklong human rights workshop, focusing on different equity-seeking groups and issues. Two of our committee members participated in the evaluation of the workshop, providing input on the sexual orientation and gender identity module. The workshop has now been piloted in several regions and is a welcome addition to our educational tools.

The committee is also pleased to see how equality themes have been integrated into the popular Steward Learning Series introduced several years ago by CUPE's Union Development Department. Members have the opportunity to take three-hour modules on challenging homophobia,

being an ally for equality and creating a harassment-free workplace as well as more traditional topics like handling grievances and dealing with management.

It is important that LGBTTI persons model diversity as member facilitators for these and other CUPE workshops. The committee encourages members from the LGBTTI community and other equity-seeking groups to contact the education staff representative in their regions to apply for member-facilitator training.

### Pride events and other awareness-raising initiatives

Committee members lend their support and organizing experience to the Pride celebrations that take place in Canada from June through August each year. These range from the enormous, corporate-funded parades in cities like Vancouver, Montreal and Toronto to modest parades in small towns.

We applaud the CUPE members and elected leaders who take part in Pride events across the country. A strong CUPE contingent including our National President, Paul Moist, participated in the massive WorldPride Parade held in Toronto in late June 2014. We encourage CUPE to increase its visibility in the smaller centres with flags, banners and signage for vehicles a CUPE leaders in Pride parades.

Committee members also seize opportunities throughout the year to raise awareness on homophobia, transphobia and the alarmingly high rates of harassment, bullying and violence experienced by LGBTTI youth and adults. We organized events and circulated letters and statements on commemorative days including the Day of Pink on the second Wednesday in April, the Transgender Day of Remembrance on November 20<sup>th</sup> and May 17<sup>th</sup>, the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia.

Two of our trans representatives, Deidra Roberts and Martine Stonehouse, attended the Moving Trans\* History Forward - Transgender Archives Symposium held in March 2014 at the University of Victoria. That institution has gathered the world's largest collection of materials documenting the struggles and achievements of transgender people. Both of our delegates recorded a short-video for The Queer Story Archives, available on the website [www.onmyplanet.ca](http://www.onmyplanet.ca)

### Community outreach

Building alliances with community organizations and advocacy groups outside our union is more important than

ever at a time when labour rights, human rights and social justice are under attack.

CUPE supports the educational and advocacy work of Egale, the major LGBTTI organization in English Canada. In September 2014, the committee held its fall meeting in Toronto and had the opportunity to attend the Egale Gala, a high-profile fund-raising and networking event.

Quebec's Fondation Émergence is an important force for LGBTTI awareness-raising among francophones. The foundation provides bilingual materials for the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia, sponsors a crisis phone line and support services.

Committee members also work with a range of advocacy and community groups in their regions, including chapters of the family support group PFLAG, the Montreal-based Conseil Québécois LGBT, Gay-Straight alliances in schools and local Rainbow Resource Centres.

### **Legislative and policy reform**

The past two years have seen several important legislative and policy victories for trans persons in Canada, yet they still count among the most marginalized people in our society. They struggle for rights that most of us take for granted, including the ability to earn a living in safety and dignity and to have identity documents that match their lived gender. Several provinces followed the lead of Ontario, Manitoba and Nova Scotia by amending their human rights codes to provide explicit protection for transgender people. Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland and Labrador and most recently Saskatchewan added gender identity (PEI and NL also added gender expression) to the prohibited grounds for discrimination.

The federal government lags behind the provincial trend. The private members Bill C-279 that would provide protection against discrimination and hate crimes based on gender identity in the Canadian *Human Rights Act* and the Criminal Code of Canada is currently stalled in the Senate.

In Quebec, sex reassignment surgery is no longer required to change one's gender on official provincial documents. The Ontario Human Rights Tribunal had ruled in 2012 that sex reassignment surgery is not required to change gender identity on birth certificates.

### **Transgender health and inclusion**

Transgender persons continue to face severe problems in accessing health care services and often risk their personal safety in using gender-specific washrooms and changing facilities.

In many regions across the country, the high costs of sex reassignment surgeries, hormone treatments and other procedures necessary for gender transition are not covered under public health budgets. There is still much work to be done to convince federal, provincial, and territorial governments that trans Canadians must be able to access the medical procedures necessary to align their physical being with their lived identity.

CUPE trans activist Martine Stonehouse has documented her struggles to get funding for her sex reassignment surgery in the film *Transfixed*, which had its North American premiere in May 2015 at Toronto's Inside Out LGBT Film Festival.

More CUPE Locals should be encouraged to initiate discussions with employers about creating "safer spaces" by providing gender-neutral washrooms and changing facilities.

### **HIV and AIDS**

HIV and AIDS is a workplace issue, a human rights issue and a social justice issue. The committee has a long-standing interest in this issue. Committee members participated in the CUPE strategy meetings in 2009 and 2012 that led to the development of a much needed HIV and AIDS policy. On World AIDS Day 2014, CUPE provided financial support for awareness events organized by committee members in partnership with community HIV and AIDS groups.

We continue to monitor the situation of the HIV and AIDS epidemic and advocate for prevention and support measures. It is troubling to see new cases and the ongoing ravages of HIV and AIDS on women, LGBTTI people, Aboriginal people, workers' in the global south, migrants and sex workers.

The NPTC has identified education of our union members as a priority for CUPE. Delegates at the 2013 National Convention passed our resolution calling for the development and distribution of educational materials that address HIV and AIDS prevention, testing, access to care, treatment and support. CUPE is preparing a resource kit for members that will include information on health and safety, bargaining and action, along with a poster. We look forward to seeing these valuable resources available online and in the hands of our members by the end of 2015.

### **Health care and support services for elderly LGBTTI persons**

The committee is promoting education and awareness on LGBTTI aging issues, especially as it relates to the quality of health care and support services. This is a concern for our

aging LGBTTI members who are vulnerable to discrimination and ill treatment by staff, other residents and the public. It also affects CUPE workers who provide services in hospitals, long-term care facilities, or through home-based services and social service agencies. It is important that service providers are trained to understand the needs of LGBTTI seniors.

Promising action-research projects are ongoing in Quebec, Ontario and B.C., such as the Aging Out project supported by the Hospital Employees Union in B.C.

At our September 2014 meeting, we welcomed Dr. Line Chamberland, holder of the Research Chair on Homophobia at the Université du Québec who shared with us the results of her research on the difficulties faced by trans seniors in accessing health and social services. Dr. Chamberland has worked on education and training programs for health care and social service workers as part of the solution.

#### **International Solidarity**

LGBTTI persons in many countries experience persistent violations of their human rights and live in fear of repression, violence and imprisonment. In the lead up to the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi, world attention was focused on Russia's anti-gay legislation. Our committee suggested a letter be sent to Canadian and international authorities to denounce Russia's state-sponsored persecution of the LGBTTI community. CUPE National took a strong stance in solidarity with the LGBTTI community and participants in the Sochi Olympics.

CUPE National sent a delegation including several NPTC members to the 2014 WorldPride Human Rights Conference held in Toronto from June 25 to June 27. The Conference was part of a 10 day global event, the first ever WorldPride held in North America. More than 400 activists, educators, researchers and policy makers from over 50 countries gathered to share stories and research on struggles, gains and challenges facing LGBTTI communities worldwide. It was an impressive and inspiring forum where

we had valuable opportunities for learning, networking and making global connections. The conference did not, however, produce a collective declaration nor an action-oriented report. Our delegation also noted the need to do more to boost the visibility of the labour movement's contribution to LGBTTI rights.

#### **Conclusion**

The committee gratefully acknowledges the support and assistance provided by CUPE leaders and staff. We thank Brother Paul Moist, Brother Charles Fleury, the NEB members and committee Liaison, Victor Elkins. The committee also thanks Sister Daria Ivanochko, managing director, National Services, Sister Elizabeth Dandy, director, Equality Branch, staff person Wendy Johnston as well as Sisters Danielle Wright and Debbie Rebeiro, support staff at National Office.

Respectfully submitted by,

#### **The Members of the National Pink Triangle Committee**

Michael Biggin.....Newfoundland and Labrador  
Julie Van Tassell ..... Nova Scotia  
Brenda Doucette..... Prince Edward Island  
Mike Connors..... New Brunswick  
Line Blackburn  
Co-chair ..... Quebec  
Nancy Hanschmann ..... Ontario  
Lorenzo Dufrane ..... Manitoba  
Donna Smith ..... Saskatchewan  
Michelle Montemurro ..... British Columbia  
Deidra Roberts ..... Trans Representative  
Martine Stonehouse ..... Trans Representative  
Audrey Gauthier ..... Trans Representative  
Gerry Lavallée  
Co-chair ..... Airline Division  
Karen McVeigh..... HEU, British Columbia  
Victor Elkins ..... NEB Liaison  
Wendy Johnston ..... Equality Representative



## NATIONAL POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE

The National Political Action Committee (NPAC) was first established in 2003 and makes recommendations through the Officers to the NEB on CUPE political action. After developing a framework of CUPE political action strategies in 2011, we have been moving forward to increase political action capacity within CUPE, with a focus on the 2015 federal election. As with all CUPE committees, our committee was reconstituted after our 2013 convention.

We began work with the all-committees meeting of the new committee in April 2014. The NPAC met with senior staff from the Office of the Leader of the Official Opposition and from the CLC during the all-committees meeting. We also met with CUPE Communications to discuss the best ways to communicate our messages to CUPE members. Since the focus of this committee's tenure for this term was to engage our members on local, provincial and federal elections in 2014 and 2015, the NPAC adopted the regional mapping carried out by the previous committee. There remains a lot of variation between regions in the degree to which CUPE members are involved and engaged with promoting the NDP, for instance. There are also variations in the levels of engagement on municipal, school board and provincial elections. But the most valuable part of the NPAC's work is continuing to share information about upcoming elections. With three labour council presidents, this NPAC has played a role in ensuring that information about local and regional issues at Federations of labour level are also shared with the entire committee.

The NPAC has tried to integrate CUPE political action initiatives with other CUPE initiatives and campaigns – NPAC members have participated in actions organized by a range of CUPE sectors: for instance, NPAC members have spoken at rallies supporting public health care and organized kitchen table conversations around the need of a national child care program. NPAC members have also been active participants in local lobbies that have been organized by CUPE or the CLC or our allies such as the Council of Canadians, the national and provincial health coalitions on issues such as retirement security, workers' rights and against privatization.

NPAC members who participated in CUPE's pilot election training course in 2012, where 12 members and staff across the country were trained to be voter contact organizers, Election Day organizers and campaign managers, have continued to be deployed into election campaigns. Most recently, staff and members CUPE trained have worked in the Ontario municipal election, the Alberta provincial election and in the federal election. At the time

of the writing of this report, plans are currently under way to hold another training course in 2015.

As per the Strategic Directions adopted in 2013, our ultimate goal with this training program is to help prepare a new generation of trained union activists who will be available to work, where allowed by provincial and federal legislation, to elect worker-friendly school board trustees and worker-friendly governments municipally, provincially and federally.

CUPE NPAC members have participated in the CLC's Election Preparedness Conferences in 2014 and in the CLC's follow-up "Time for Change" tour in 2015. Some of the CLC's conferences have been very well attended and CUPE has had a good presence at many of these events.

The NPAC's focus has to been to ensure that CUPE activists get involved in CUPE's own elections campaigns too – to that end, where possible, CUPE NPAC members have been involved with provincial elections campaigns.

With regard to the federal election, CUPE NPAC members have attended the election-themed breakfast or lunch events at CUPE Division conventions. NPAC members have also provided support to the regionally based staff election coordinators in carrying out CUPE's election plans, which involved connecting CUPE activists to key NDP campaigns in their own regions. NPAC members committed to getting CUPE members from their locals and regions out to the canvassing events that CUPE organized with local NDP campaigns.

The committee sees this work as key to its goal of increase the coordination of CUPE political action initiatives with the NDP. NPAC members have also been involved with the CUPE's election efforts in by-elections and in provincial and municipal and school board elections. Since 2013, members of the NPAC have been involved with provincial elections in British Columbia, Alberta (where Orange has become the new Blue!), Ontario, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island. NPAC members have also been involved in municipal and school board elections in British Columbia, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, Newfoundland and Labrador and Prince Edward Island and a number of by-elections at the federal and provincial levels. Working with the CLC's "Municipalities Matter" campaign, we have been a part of electing hundreds of labour-endorsed candidates at the local level.

Members of the NPAC are also active within the New Democratic Party, at both the provincial and federal levels and serve on a number of electoral district associations in

various capacities. They have attended provincial NDP conventions and spoken up in support of NDP policy positions that support CUPE policy positions on issues such as health care, trade and water rights. NPAC members have also participated in virtual and on the ground actions organized by CUPE National on issues such as the expiry of the Health Accord, threats to workers' rights and to fight back against the attacks on pension plans. They have organized events and rallies with allied organizations such as the Canadian Health Coalition and the Council of Canadians. They have lobbied, marched, protested and fought federal, provincial and local politicians on issues ranging from access to public health care, to support for murdered and missing aboriginal women and against legislation that guts bargaining rights. CUPE NPAC members have been guest speakers at community events, at locals, at Labour Council and CUPE District Council events and at rallies and demonstrations.

The NPAC has continued to work on increasing CUPE member and staff activism within the NDP; with over 630,000 members, CUPE is the largest union in Canada, and we have the capacity to make a difference within the party.

We have also been following the anti-union agenda of the federal (and provincial) Conservatives closely. We welcome CUPE's initiatives to fight back against these attacks, starting with Bill C-377 and encompassing the many other attacks on organized labour such as the passage of C-525 and the many omnibus budget bills which have attacked workers' health and safety, pensions and benefits. The NPAC has had reports on the particular attacks on CUPE's airline sector, which is regulated under the Federal Code, and therefore impacted very directly by the actions of the current federal government. We will be taking every opportunity available to support the Airline Component's 1

in 50 campaign, as well as its newly formed Political Action Committee, seeing this as another way in which to help CUPE members engage in political action.

CUPE's NPAC has continued to keep the focus on political action and member engagement throughout this term and hopes that this work will continue in 2016 and 2017, under the first NDP federal government in Canada.

Respectfully submitted by,

**The Members of the National Political Action Committee**

- Jeanne Clarke .....Newfoundland and Labrador
- Marlene Hunt  
Co-chair ..... Prince Edward Island
- Serge Plourde..... New Brunswick
- Lisa Mason ..... Nova Scotia
- Christine Guay..... Quebec
- Marc Xuereb ..... Ontario
- Colleen Costa ..... Ontario
- Daniel Richards ..... Manitoba
- Carla Smith..... Saskatchewan
- Mike Scott ..... Alberta
- Trevor Davies  
Co-chair ..... British Columbia
- Marcel Marsolais  
Alternate ..... British Columbia
- Barbara Nederpal..... HEU, British Columbia
- Ken Robinson  
Alternate ..... HEU, British Columbia
- Michael Reed .....Airline Division
- Wayne Lucas ..... NEB Liaison
- Archana Rampure .....Senior Officer Political Action

## NATIONAL POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION TASK FORCE

The CUPE Post-Secondary Education Task Force is pleased to present this report to National Convention. We believe that under funding of post-secondary education, and the resulting tuition hikes and skyrocketing student debt, are a national crisis. Reversing these trends, and moving towards a universal access to post-secondary education, is a critical social policy issue for which our Union should advocate for the good of current and future members, and Canada at large.

The task force provides advice on how CUPE can advocate for publicly funded and delivered post-secondary education through an integrated system of public community colleges and universities. It makes recommendations on strategies to increase funding for post-secondary education, resist privatization, and engage employers in coordinated bargaining.

At the last National Convention in 2013, CUPE released the first edition of the booklet *Post-Secondary Education: Our Choices, Our Future*. Since that time, CUPE released a new revised version which reflects the post-secondary policy positions adopted at the 2013 National Convention – in particular our support for the adoption of the *Post-Secondary Education Act* and the elimination of tuition fees. Members of the task force have distributed these booklets across the country – to post-secondary locals, members at large at regional meetings and conferences, and to the public in general.

Our immediate priority has been to increase the visibility of post-secondary issues and the sector in CUPE and to strengthen our profile with other unions and allies in the sector so we can improve our effectiveness to advocate for increased funding for post-secondary education and to reduce tuition fees. In particular the task force has taken steps to develop a working relationship with the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS), who represent over half a million students from more than 70 universities and college students' unions across Canada. Representatives of CFS have, on numerous occasions, attended meetings of the task force, and presented at the [National Sector Council Conference](#) in 2014.

We want to join students and other organizations in campaigns to pressure the federal and provincial/territorial governments to commit to public investments in the sector to achieve:

- Lower tuition fees and reduced student debt;
- Increased funding for student grants and research;
- Increased funding for the operation, building and renewal of our campus infrastructure;

- The prohibition of contracting out; and
- Improving working conditions and job security of precarious workers.

The work of the task force has revolved around developing a campaign advocating for greater funding for PSE, lower tuition fees, and the adoption of the *Post-Secondary Education Act*, coordinated bargaining, privatization fight-back, reversing the casualization of work on campus, and fighting for good pensions.

### Funding

Despite overwhelming evidence that investing in PSE makes sense for Canada's social and economic well-being, the barriers to access higher learning are greater than ever. Universities and colleges have seen the proportion of government funding plummet over the past 50 years. In the 1960's and 1970's 90% of university operating revenue came from government funding. Today, Canada's public funding covers roughly 50% of the cost of university and college education. Across Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) states, the average is 68%.

The task force has advocated for the federal government to take a leadership role in post-secondary education and reverse this trend. This included advocating for the adoption of the *Post-Secondary Education Act* which would enshrine in law the right to post-secondary education and restore a dedicated transfer to the provinces and territories that addresses funding shortfalls and tuition fee hikes.

In response to government underfunding, PSE members in British Columbia developed a campaign called "Where's The Funding?!?" (WTF?!?). This campaign raised awareness of the issue of chronic underfunding of colleges and universities in British Columbia. After being reported to the Task Force, the campaign has spread to Ontario – and there is interest in now making it a national campaign.

The task force took action to raise awareness about the loss of funding to our institutions and to promote the *Post-Secondary Education Act*. The committee has begun development of a toolkit to assist locals in speaking with members and the community about the *Act*, and to assist in lobbying elected officials.

### Tuition Fees and Student Debt

As the federal and provincial governments have abdicated their responsibility to fund post-secondary education, the

burden of payment has fallen heavily on students and their families in the form of increasing user fees/tuition. Between 1990 and 2014 average tuition fees across Canada have seen an inflation-adjusted increase of over 155%. In Ontario tuition has increased over 180%.

As a result of skyrocketing tuition costs, students have been taking on ever larger loans. Today, the federal government issues just over \$2.5 billion each year in new Canada Student Loans. In 2014, the average student debt is estimated to be over \$28,000 – and this does not include any private debt student's hold.

The tuition fee issue is important for CUPE to profile because so many of our members are both workers and students and another large portion are parents of students in post-secondary education. Students and their families are struggling to find ways of covering the cost of tuition and students are left with debts that can exceed \$100,000. Access to PSE is an equality issue. Aboriginal and many racialized groups are underrepresented in post-secondary education and lack of education further worsens inequality.

Through the booklet, *Our Choice, Our Future*, articles in *Counterpoint*, and other materials developed by the task force, we have sought to raise awareness about this growing crisis, and have provided members with the tools to talk about this issue in their workplaces and their communities.

### **Outsourcing, Privatization and Precarious Work**

In addition to creating a student debt crisis, loss of government funding has encouraged universities and colleges to contract out work that was previously done by CUPE members. Food services and janitorial services are often targets of privatization.

However, privatization has moved beyond these “traditional” areas of privatization, and has even begun to occur in student instruction. Several universities have contracted with private-for-profit colleges to offer entry programs for students. The contracting out of student education has resulted in job losses for CUPE education workers.

While we know that contracting out results in less job security and greater casualization of work, we have begun to observe universities and colleges directly engaging in many of the same practices. We have witnessed a trend of failing to fill vacant full-time food service and janitorial positions, and an increased reliance on part-time and casual workers. There are even cases of workers being laid

off, while institutions simultaneously post for casual positions in the affected areas.

The Task Force has shared information about their experience with outsourcing and ideas on how to resist outsourcing, privatization, and precarious work including member mobilization and bargaining strategies.

### **Pensions**

Universities are one of the few sectors in CUPE where workplace pensions are directly employer sponsored. This creates many challenges and opportunities for the sector. Demands by employers for pension concessions has become all too common at PSE bargaining tables – and has resulted in various forms of job action. Members in the sector have held strong and have fought back against these attacks.

In Ontario, the government would like Universities, who each have their own plan, to move into some sort of jointly sponsored plan across the industry. CUPE has been working with other unions in the sector in studying the issue, and have been involved in dialogue with all the actors.

The task force has received presentations from CUPE Research Branch on the most recent pension attacks in our sector, and shared information and discussed strategies from across the country on how best to fight pension concessions, and to improve access to members who are currently excluded. The task force began work on a project to map PSE pension coverage in the sector, taking note of barriers to join the plans.

### **Bargaining**

Our members have faced the austerity agenda at post-secondary bargaining tables across Canada. We are proud of the CUPE locals that have engaged in campaigns and job action to protect the public delivery of services, defend our pension plans, and improve the working and living conditions of members in precarious positions.

The task force shared information and strategies for bargaining the best collective agreements – including make use of the CUPE Collective Agreement Information System (CAIS) to help with the coordination of our bargaining demands.

Respectfully submitted by,

**The Members of the National Post-Secondary Education Task Force**

Theresa Antle ..... Newfoundland and Labrador  
Leo Cheverie  
Co-chair ..... Prince Edward Island  
Kellie Mattatall ..... New Brunswick  
Éric Gascon ..... Quebec  
Marc Lévesque ..... Quebec

Janice Folk-Dawson  
Co-chair ..... Ontario  
Brienne Goertzen ..... Manitoba  
Bill Rafoss ..... Saskatchewan  
Robert Wiznura ..... Alberta  
Laurie Whyte ..... British Columbia  
Michelle Waite ..... British Columbia  
Henri Giroux ..... NEB Liaison  
Matt McLean ..... Research Representative

## NATIONAL WOMEN'S COMMITTEE

### Introduction

The National Women's Committee has worked to promote diverse women's participation and leadership in CUPE and to fight for diverse women's issues in our workplaces and our communities.

Since the 2013 convention, women, especially marginalized women, have been pushed further into precarious and unsafe working and living conditions. Privatization, cuts to jobs and services, unfair immigration policies and increasing harassment and other changes have taken their toll on the security and health of women and other equity-seeking groups.

Facing these challenges, CUPE members and staff continue to work with passion and determination in locals and regions, provincially and federally, to defend hard-won gains and claim new ground.

### The context

Progress on gender equality in Canada has slowed in the last few years and in many areas of our lives, we've seen serious setbacks. Aboriginal, racialized, and immigrant women, as well as women with disabilities and LGBTTQI women, continue to suffer a disproportionate burden of inequality and violence. The federal government under Stephen Harper accelerated the widening gap and the growing insecurity faced by women, particularly marginalized women.

Government cuts to social programs and advocacy groups, both at the federal and provincial levels, have hit women and other equity-seeking groups especially hard. As the majority of providers and users of public services, women experience negative impacts when services are cut, restructured and commercialized. Women, in particular women marginalized by class, racism, ableism, homophobia and transphobia have been worst hit by government austerity programs and the growing power differential between corporations and workers.

CUPE's national membership survey, conducted last year, confirmed what other research has shown: equality-seeking groups are more likely to be in precarious jobs. Women, who make up 68 per cent of CUPE's membership, are twice as likely to hold part-time permanent or casual jobs and more likely to work less than 30-hours a week with no benefits.

Women continue to be under-represented in leadership positions, including in their union, and they face multiple

barriers to participation. This was documented by the National Women's Task Force eight years ago, and the union involvement differential was confirmed by the national membership survey last year. Even though women represent 68 per cent of the membership, they were less likely to report union involvement.

### National Women's Committee activities

NWC members have been active in the fight back against neoliberalism and rising inequality, employment precarity, harassment and discrimination. We have also worked hard to promote women's leadership, education and activism within the union.

At the beginning of our mandate, we developed a work plan, and we have steadily pursued it. We checked in and refined our work plan at each of our four face-to-face meetings and kept in touch through email and teleconferences between meetings. We used these opportunities to share ideas, get feedback and support each other in what can at times be challenging work.

We based our work plan on 2013 national convention decisions and the National Women's Task Force recommendations, keeping in mind campaigns underway in our respective provinces. The following is an account of our major activities.

#### Violence against women

- Promoted the Canadian Labour Congress and Western University domestic violence survey by doing presentations and encouraging members to participate.
- Equipped with the survey results, we are raising awareness on domestic violence as a workplace issue.
- Participated in December 6<sup>th</sup> events to mark the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the *École Polytechnique de Montréal* massacre.
- Encouraged locals and divisions to support campaigns and projects on violence against women led by our allies, and participated in those initiatives ourselves. For example, Walking with Our Sisters, Families of Sisters in Spirit, the Solidarity Campaign led by FAFIA and the Native Women's Association of Canada and the Up For Debate federal election campaign.
- Participated in the Annual Women's Memorial March and other memorials, rallies and events to remember missing and murdered indigenous women, raise awareness and demand a national inquiry and action plan.

### Workplace violence

- Held a session on harassment and violence at our November 2014 meeting, to expand our knowledge and provide feedback to CUPE Equality and Health and Safety staff on resources being developed for locals.
- Distributed the new Equality Branch Stop Harassment guide, pamphlet and research paper.
- Active in our locals and provinces on bargaining, grievances and political action campaigns to address workplace violence and harassment.

### Bargaining equality

- Promoted anti-discrimination, anti-harassment, pay equity and other equality language in bargaining.
- Advocated for an equality lens in bargaining, including in membership surveys and an audit of the collective agreement.

### Fairness project

- Involved in the project as facilitators in several provinces.
- Promoted the project in our locals.
- Heard updates from project staff at committee meetings and provided input, for example recommended ways to build in a stronger gender emphasis.
- Did outreach with community groups, building relationships between women's groups and the union.

### Wage discrimination

- Through bargaining and political action, fought for pay equity and against all forms of wage discrimination.
- Discussed strategies for achieving pay equity, including flat wage increases and examples of where we've been successful in recent years.
- Participated in living wage, minimum wage and fight for \$15 campaigns.

### Precarious employment

- Participated in a focus group on precarity in the public sector led by a researcher with the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (CRIAOW) Changing Public Services project.
- Encouraged our locals to send CUPE National membership lists for the national membership survey.
- Provided feedback to CUPE Research on its presentation of preliminary survey results, particularly regarding persons with disabilities and LGBTQI members.

### Human rights conferences

- Gave input to the organizers of the national human rights conference, through committee meetings and involvement by our co-chairs.
- Contributed to the national human rights conference, for those of us who were able to attend.
- Through our Division women's committees, helped organize equality/women's conferences, breakfasts at conventions and other events.

### Child care and health accord campaigns

- Got regular updates on the child care and health accord campaigns and provided feedback based on our experience on-the-ground.
- Facilitated kitchen table conversations, lobbied for a new health accord and helped organize and carry out other union and public events in these campaigns.
- Contributed to the national child care conference in Winnipeg if we were able to attend.

### World March of Women

- Received updates on the World March of Women from our Quebec sisters and promoted the World March in our own provinces.
- Participated in World March events where they took place in our cities.
- Met with Alexa Conradi, lead organizer, at the human rights conference and helped spread word about the World March – in particular, the April 24<sup>th</sup> international hour of feminist action.
- Recommended that CUPE National support the World March and solidarity with sisters on the cross-Quebec caravan culminating in Trois-Rivières on October 17<sup>th</sup>.
- Collected signatures on fabric squares and scarves to be displayed during the caravan, as a show of solidarity by sisters across the country.

### International Women's Day

- Organized events in our provinces, both at our workplaces and in our communities.
- Participated in IWD rallies and marches.

### Political action and community mobilization

- Supported NDP candidates and campaigns in municipal, provincial and federal election campaigns.
- Participated in other political action activities, between elections.
- Encouraged locals and divisions to get involved in anti-poverty, solidarity-against-austerity, worker assemblies and other union-community labour coalitions.

Equality history project

- Offered feedback on the Equality Branch’s project to document CUPE equality wins over its 51-year history.

Member education

- Heard updates from Union Development Department on its new human rights weeklong course and women’s leadership courses.
- Several members of this committee participated in pilots of the human rights course, at the initial national meeting and subsequent regional schools.
- Those of us who are member facilitators delivered human rights education through workshops and conference events in our provinces and for CLC schools in other provinces.
- Advocated for an intersectional anti-oppression analysis in all education and union activities, raising awareness on ableism, racism, colonialism, homophobia and transphobia.

International Solidarity

- Supported organizations and events related to international human rights legislation and policy, for example the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (UNCOSW), Feminist Alliance for International Action (FAFIA) and Women’s Legal Education and Action Fund (LEAF).
- Participated in campaigns for migrant worker rights and global solidarity.

National Convention

- Drafted resolutions on issues affecting women, for our locals and divisions to consider submitting to this national convention.
- Coordinated with other national equality committees on resolutions of shared concern.
- Provided input to Equality Branch on the equality forum at national convention.

Finally, the committee would like to thank the National Executive Board for its support over the past two years, and all of the members and staff who keep equality front and centre in the union’s activities.

Respectfully submitted by,

**The Members of the National Women’s Committee**

- Susan Shiner .....Newfoundland and Labrador
- Sharon Hubley..... Nova Scotia
- Melissa Bruce..... Prince Edward Island
- Marilyn MacCormack..... New Brunswick
- Joëlle Ravary  
Co-chair ..... Quebec
- Kimalee Phillip ..... Ontario
- Tricia Merritt..... Manitoba
- Kristin Trondson..... Saskatchewan
- Linda Joyce..... Alberta
- Susan Blair ..... British Columbia
- Rose Jurkic ..... British Columbia
- Valerie Sailer ..... HEU, British Columbia
- Carol MacDonald ..... HEU, British Columbia
- Sheryl Burns  
Co-chair ..... British-Columbia
- Debra Kendall ..... COPE
- Annick Desjardins.....Equality Representative
- Judy Henley..... NEB Liaison
- Irene Jansen .....Senior Officer Equality



## **NATIONAL WORKING COMMITTEE ON RACISM, DISCRIMINATION AND EMPLOYMENT EQUITY (THE NATIONAL RAINBOW COMMITTEE)**

### **Introduction**

The National Committee on Racism, Discrimination and Employment Equity (National Rainbow Committee) was established by the National Executive Board (NEB) in April 1988. The committee promotes and defends the rights of all workers of colour in our communities, locally, nationally and internationally, and advice the NEB on issues pertaining to racism and employment equity.

The committee appreciates the ongoing support and commitment provided by our National Officers and members of the National Executive Board. We continue to receive invaluable support and assistance from CUPE staff and members who keep us at the forefront of our fight against racism.

### **The context for our work**

There have been many gains for racialized workers in Canada over the years, but we still do not have full equality. Systemic racism, harassment and discrimination in our workplaces, union and our communities continue to be major stumbling blocks to achieving racial equality.

Canada has a long history of colonialism in its dealings with First Peoples and racialized communities. The systemic oppression faced by racialized Canadians is evident in high rates of poverty, unemployment, over-policing and incarceration. The legacy of mistreatment and abuse of First Peoples in the state-sponsored residential school system continues to have an impact today.

Racial profiling is rampant in our communities. Police shootings people of African descent in Toronto, Ferguson, New York, South Carolina and elsewhere have led to frustration and anger, marking a boiling over of racial tension that's been simmering under the surface for some time. Hiding behind the national-security agenda, Canadian officials at borders discriminate against people from the Middle East and the global South through systematic racial profiling.

Recently, there has been increased intolerance towards Muslims in Canada, as they face prejudice, suspicion and hostility, and bear the overwhelming brunt of anti-terrorism measures. Harper's new "*Anti-Terrorism Act*", Bill C-51 will make racial profiling and criminalization worse,

providing for a range of measures that allow people to be detained based on little evidence.

The recent term of the federal government has overseen a major shift to a low-wage migration/immigration policy which seems to be specifically designed to keep racialized workers in precarious jobs. Every year thousands of racialized women and men enter Canada with work permits under the Temporary Foreign Worker Program and the Live-In Caregiver Program. These workers lack access to basic labour standards, health and safety regulations and citizenship rights, and are pitted against other workers in Canada through a right-wing, racist "divide and conquer" strategy. As trade unionists, we must stand in solidarity with migrant workers.

Looking into the future, racialized workers will continue to become a growing part of the Canadian workforce. It is projected that by 2025, 20% of the population will be racialized and an even more significant number will inhabit our urban areas. Racist immigration policy, a low-wage labour market strategy, and non-recognition of foreign credentials will continue to be key barriers facing newcomers in securing meaningful employment. It is crucial that the labour movement prioritizes the elimination of these barriers.

Through CUPE's membership survey, we can see what systemic discrimination in our society and economy means for our union. The survey confirms that racialized workers are less likely to hold good quality public service jobs. Only 15% of our members are racialized compared to 19% for Canada as a whole. Only 54% of CUPE's racialized members have full-time work and they are twice more likely than the average CUPE member to have casual work. It is very likely that these precarious working conditions are a major barrier to participation in our union.

### **Our activities and progress**

Over the 2013-2015 term of our committee, we developed and implemented a work plan based on CUPE's 2013-2015 Strategic Directions document, the Vancouver Declaration, convention resolutions and emerging issues. The committee also worked closely with the Diversity-Vice President representing racialized members.

The following were our priorities:

#### Employment Equity

- Provided input to CUPE's new human rights course, including a module on employment equity.
- Hosted a presentation on employment equity by the Director of Equality and the Managing Director of Human Resources.
- Protested Bill C-51, the *Anti-Terrorism Act*.
- Hosted a presentation by Deepan Budlakoti, a Canadian who has been unjustly threatened with deportation by the federal government, and developed recommendations for action.
- Attended a migrant workers forum to learn about issues and solidarity actions.
- Promoted discussions on the Temporary Foreign Worker and the Live-In Caregiver programs and the need to revamp these programs.

#### Strengthen the work of the committee

- Reached out to new activists at the National Human Rights Conference, division conventions and local and community events.
- Developed recommendations on the production of new anti-racism materials to promote our work, including the 'Diversity Our Strength' brochure, a new Black History Month bookmark, and other materials.
- Provided advice on the development of criteria for the new Ed Blackman Worker of Colour Award.
- Provided advice on the revision of the guidelines to Diversity Vice-President Selection Caucus at National Convention.

#### Human rights education

- Participated in the development of CUPE's new human rights course.
- Hosted a presentation from the Managing Director of Union Development on CUPE's human rights education and provided advice.
- Provided advice on the program for the National Human Rights Conference.
- Promoted human rights education at regional levels.

#### Equity Audits

- Hosted a presentation on CUPE's membership survey to develop an understanding of the situation of equality-seeking members in our union and to consider the need for action.
- Promoted the need for equity audits at regional levels.

#### HIV/AIDS

- Received a presentation with the National Aboriginal Council on the development of CUPE's HIV/AIDS educational materials and provided input.
- Incorporated an anti-bullying session into one of our meetings.
- Promoted anti-harassment courses for members and CUPE's new Stop Harassment guide and pamphlet.

Many of our members were able to attend CUPE's second National Human Rights Conference in Winnipeg in February 2015. The conference was a huge success and timely in addressing growing inequality, globalization, privatization and the rise of precarious work threatening the progress we've made. We were impressed with the diversity of speakers on the panels, and we were able to connect with many new racialized members at the worker of colour breakout session. In summing up this conference, Brother Charles Fleury said it best: "The more we understand each other – the stronger we are. Our differences do not make us weaker sisters and brothers. Our differences make us stronger."

A good deal of our work in the regions involves reaching out to racialized communities and their organizations. As a public sector union, CUPE's support is rooted in communities. We continue to strengthen our links and work with communities, not only through the services we provide as workers, but by connecting our work as CUPE activists to important activities in racialized communities.

Our committee members across the country play a pivotal role in commemorating days of action such as the International day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Black History Month, National Aboriginal Day and Asian Heritage Month. The following are some of our activities in the community:

- Organized Black History Month events, including BC's first ever event.
- Participated in Pride Parades, including "Don't be Afraid" with Scott Jones a victim of gay bashing in Nova Scotia.
- Planned and organized Carnivals in Toronto.
- Forged links between St. John District Labour Council and the local multicultural society.
- Took Unite for Fairness/Stand Up for Fairness Campaign training.
- Worked on establishing a scholarship to honor Brother Rocky Jones.
- Promoted HEU's work on living wages.
- Joined the OFL in supporting workers at Billy Bishop Airport to demand fair wages and benefits.

- Promoted the African Grandmother’s Tribunal in Vancouver.
- Participated in PEI Celebrate Canada – Canadian Multiculturalism Day.
- Joined a rally to support migrant workers’ rights with UFCW.
- Networked with migrant workers’ rights advocacy groups.
- Participated in a “People’s Social Forum” rally on Parliament Hill to serve notice to Stephen Harper about his replacement in 2015.
- Worked on NDP campaigns in federal, provincial and municipal elections.

**Thank you and farewell**

Our sincere thanks go out to all those who have done so much work on our behalf, in our locals, regions and nationally. Special thanks also go to the support staff in the Equality Branch for providing enormous support and ongoing commitment to our work.

Finally, we wish to thank and bid farewell to all our sisters and brothers who have served on the committee in the past and we wish them all every success in their new endeavors.

Respectfully submitted by,

**The Members of the National Committee on Racism, Discrimination and Employment Equity (National Rainbow Committee)**

- Elizabeth Paris
- Co-chair ..... Nova Scotia
- Mona Yammine ..... Prince Edward Island
- Joseph Theriault ..... New Brunswick
- Charlene Gordon
- Alternate ..... New Brunswick
- Chérie Thomas ..... Quebec
- Amar Bajwa ..... Ontario
- Veriline Howe
- Co-chair ..... Ontario
- Kristin Wagner ..... Manitoba
- Rochelle Sato ..... Alberta
- Michele Alexander ..... British Columbia
- Drew Parris
- Alternate ..... British Columbia
- Tommy Liu ..... HEU, British Columbia
- Sajid Sheikh ..... Airline Division
- Yolanda McClean ..... NEB Liaison
- Harminder Magon ..... Anti-racism Coordinator

## NATIONAL YOUNG WORKERS' COMMITTEE

CUPE's National Young Workers' Committee is pleased to provide this report to National Convention. We have held four meetings since National Convention 2013. The dialogues between new and returning members on the committee has been valuable, sharing diverse ideas, perspectives and insight.

Our agendas have covered issues about CUPE as a union, the wider labour movement, the larger Canadian social justice movement and international labour and global justice. We have learned from each other and been motivated by multiple guests who have participated in our meetings.

Trends we have been discussing and exploring as a committee concern not only young workers, but also concern all workers. The privatization of public services, the increase in insecure work, cuts in the public sector, the wage stagnation matched with an increase in the cost of living, the threats to retirement security and lack of accessibility to post-secondary education and affordable child care are all symptoms of an economic and political ideology that not only affects working youth but affect us all as workers and as citizens.

This new reality puts immense pressure on unions and bargaining committees, resulting sometimes in two-tier agreements that concede our future position as a union, dividing us, and undermining our historic gains for a short-term benefit.

The young workers therefore see the importance of a strong and united movement, with members who are politically conscious and involved in the fight against the austerity and corporate agenda that hurts us all.

Members of this committee are all involved in our divisions, locals and communities in different ways. Along with our allies inside and outside the union, we are working to draw attention to these issues, make change in our unions and mobilize young workers to get involved. Some of us are facilitating workshops, organising events to make union education fun and accessible such as a "pub and learn", promoting mentoring within our region or division, making speeches and hosting booths and caucuses at our division conventions.

We have been continuously supporting our union, our community and our fellow workers beyond the borders of Canada through engaging young members to vote, taking part in international solidarity days, continuing the journey in our own learning through union education, presenting

resolutions at our division conventions and speaking up against injustices.

As a committee, we have also played a strong role in generating ideas for content for CUPE publications focused on young workers as well as in creating interactive scenarios for a future orientation video for CUPE members. The Young Workers' Committee has also endorsed the Expand CPP campaign to increase retirement security for all.

In order to continue to grow as a union and to build strength to face the challenges related to today's political reality, CUPE's National Young Workers' Committee feels that it is imperative to work at:

- Opening the door for more young people to be involved and engaged in their union.
- Looking at challenges faced by young workers as being common challenges for all.
- Showing curiosity in learning more about each other as union members through meaningful listening and being open.
- Using methods of mentoring and two way sharing to make us stronger as an intergenerational movement.
- Sharing and showing the importance of unions as a movement for working people, as a movement of resistance and healing, as a movement of celebration, participation, diversity and creativity.
- Promoting smart succession planning, adapted to new realities and new challenges.
- Allowing for space to challenge and discuss in a positive manner to find ways to move forward together to create strength.
- Increasing participation of young workers in decision making forums in order to hear a variety of perspectives at all levels of our unions.
- Connecting with young people in our unions and in our communities around elections, the importance of voting, and the strength we can have as united citizens.

CUPE's National Young Workers' Committee is happy to be part of creating positive change for workers and protecting public services for our communities. We look forward to continuing our involvement at the local, national and international level to build a strong movement for today and for future generations.

Respectfully submitted by,

**The Members of the National Young Workers’  
Committee**

Colin Hipditch..... Newfoundland and Labrador  
Sarah Smith ..... Prince Edward Island  
Nicole Barkhouse  
Co-Chair ..... Nova Scotia  
Melissa Kennedy ..... New Brunswick  
Alex Hartung ..... Manitoba

Kristin Wagner  
Alternate ..... Manitoba  
Lisa Worobec  
Co-chair ..... Saskatchewan  
Carlo Sia..... British Columbia  
Aaron Young  
Alternate ..... British Columbia  
Shayla Burke ..... HEU, British Columbia  
Kelly Moist..... NEB Liaison  
Monique Ménard-Kilrane..... Senior Officer

## PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES NATIONAL COMMITTEE

### Introduction

The CUPE National Persons with Disabilities Committee (NPWDC) met for the first time in November 2000, following a Canadian Labour Congress conference on workers with disabilities. The group met sporadically until May 2004, when it developed its Terms of Reference and a two-year action plan.

The committee has a mandate to promote and defend the rights of persons with disabilities and to improve their working conditions and accessibility; to promote the principles of CUPE; to raise the profile of CUPE members with disabilities through awareness-raising and educational means; and to participate politically to advance these goals.

On March 11, 2015, the National Executive Board passed a motion to change the name of the group to the National Persons with Disability Committee. Prior to this, the group had been known as the National Persons with Disabilities Working Group. Committee members believe the new name reflects the permanence of the group.

Since the very memorable 2013 CUPE National Convention, the committee has a number of new members, including new representatives from Newfoundland and Labrador, New Brunswick, Ontario, and Manitoba.

At the 2013 National Convention, the group reported on its “A Solidarity of Abilities” disability rights awareness campaign, which lasted approximately two years and involved the production of a variety of educational materials; the development of CUPE’s first National nine-hour “Duty to Accommodate” course; and a variety of awareness-raising educationals and initiatives that NPWDC members spearheaded in their regions.

Regional initiatives included, for example: the BC Division, with CUPE National’s assistance, created a video entitled “Ready and Able: Disability Rights and the CUPE Activist” about members’ experiences with having their disabilities accommodated. In New Brunswick, CUPE staff provided “Duty to Accommodate” training to members, their employers, and activists from disability rights organizations. In Prince Edward Island, Ontario, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba, members spoke at union meetings and Conventions about disability rights.

### Our work, 2013-2015

Pleased with the success of our campaign and the fact sheets, video, luggage tags, posters and presentations that

resulted from it, the NPWDC has continued our activism in a variety of ways since the 2013 National Convention. Most of our activities have been focused on the following areas:

- a) advising on the development new disability-related fact sheets, similar to the four that were produced as part of the disability rights awareness campaign. These fact sheets have been used in CUPE accommodation courses, shop steward courses, at disability events, and at local unions meetings throughout Canada. They are especially timely, since CUPE workplaces are increasingly dealing with accommodations;
- b) considering ways to work with the Canadian Labour Congress and progressive organizations and governments to combat the widespread poverty and economic marginalization within the community of people with disabilities. Examples include employment initiatives and opportunities for people with disabilities, and lobbying for increases to the Canada Pension Plan (Disability) and other resources;
- c) providing advice to ensure that all CUPE conventions, conferences, and educationals are truly accessible and that disabilities and accessibility issues are incorporated into CUPE educationals as well as in their union and workplaces;
- d) working with other equity-seeking groups and committees, to achieve our common goals of accessibility, justice, equality of opportunity, and representativeness in decision-making;
- e) monitoring the progress that the federal government has made or will make to comply with its obligations under the UN Convention of the rights of people with disabilities.

Other key activities include:

### Presentations on disability issues and rights

The NPWDC has benefited in the past two years from presentations on disability issues and disability rights initiatives by Sister Vicky Smallman, Human Rights Director at the Canadian Labour Congress; Nikias Vangelis from the Council of Canadians With Disabilities; Brother Bill Robb Director of the Union Development Department; Wendy Porch from the Canadian Working Group on HIV and Rehabilitation; as well as a “Duty to Accommodate Disabilities” workshop by staff person Sister Conni Kilfoil.

### Education for members, employers and community

A number of NPWDC members made presentations about disability issues to their local unions.

In addition, co-chair Brother Pat Shade arranged for “Accommodation of Disabilities” training for managers, CUPE members, faculty and human resources personnel at the University of Victoria. Co-chair Sister Ann Ramsay was involved in organizing similar training for CUPE members, employers, and the Prince Edward Island Council for the Disabled at Charlottetown, PEI.

### **CUPE National Human Rights Conference**

Committee members Sister Ann Ramsay, Sister Jayne Warner, Sister Valerie Beel, and Sister Debbie Fraess attended the February 2015 Human Rights Conference including a visit to the new Human Rights Museum in Winnipeg, which was enjoyed by all.

### **Mental health education**

Sister Valerie Beel, on behalf of the Committee, attended the pilot Stewart Learning Series courses about “Mental Health in the Workplace” and provided her feedback to the Union Development Department and the NPWDC.

### **Accessibility site audit**

As has been the case since 2007, two members from the NPWDC worked with CUPE National staff to do a two-day site audit of the 2015 National Convention site. This initiative has significantly reduced complaints from members about barriers to the participation of members with disabilities etc.

### **UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities**

The committee has been fortunate to have two visits from Mr. Vangelis Nikias, Program Director at the Council of Canadians with Disabilities (CCWD), who spoke about the importance of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which poses concrete obligations on the Canadian federal government. When Canada’s First Report regarding its obligations under the Convention came out last year, the NPWDC worked with its staff person to complete a draft response to Canada’s First Report.

The committee’s work in this matter was aided greatly by the relationship that we have developed with the Council of Canadians With Disabilities through Mr. Nikias, as well as by discussions held by those members that sit on the Canadian Labour Congress Disability Rights Committee.

### **Luggage tags**

Members distributed the attractive luggage tags, with the message that “Disability Rights are Human Rights”, that were part of the “A Solidarity of Abilities” campaign. When

attending events, these tags have prompted conversations about CUPE’s impressive role in advocating for disability rights.

### **Personal empowerment and political activism**

The NPWDC has succeeded in the area of empowering its own members. Knowing and understanding their collective agreement rights and their human rights has spurred them into activism.

For example:

- Sister Debbie Fraess, from British Columbia who was denied the use of Disability Parking from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. by her strata council, filed a disability-based human rights complaint that led to a successful resolution to the situation, which was deemed that there could be no time restraints put on disability parking. When, as a ferry passenger, she had been unable to leave her car because of the way the ferry was loaded, she complained to the ferry corporation, insisting that they respect her rights. The corporation not only rectified the situation, but they invited her to sit on the BC Ferries Accessibility Advisory Committee, a position she happily accepted.
- Sister Ann Ramsay, from Prince Edward Island played a pivotal role in helping to organize “Duty to Accommodate Disabilities” training for members, employers, and disability activists in her Division. She subsequently was invited to sit on the board of the Prince Edward Island Council of People with Disabilities and later, was the recipient of the Council of Canadians Disability Rights award.
- Brother Pat Shade, from British Columbia, is the Accommodation Officer at his local at the University of Victoria and works with the University of Victoria on accommodation of CUPE members with disabilities. He has also arranged for CUPE accommodation training for joint CUPE/management groups, which has greatly benefited his local.
- Brother Mike White, from Nova Scotia, successfully lobbied a service organization to which he belongs, to create parking spaces reserved for persons with disabilities.
- Sister Susan Kearsey, from Newfoundland and Labrador, wrote a very compelling story about the symptoms of depression and her own struggle with the disability. She shared it with her local and agreed to have it posted on the CUPE National website. She has heard from members that her story has educated and touched them deeply.
- Sister Abby Bourque-Coyle, from New Brunswick, is working with the New Brunswick Equality representative on accessibility issues at her workplace.

Respectfully submitted by,

**The Members of the Persons with Disabilities National Working Group**

Susan Kearsy ..... Newfoundland and Labrador  
Michael Graham White..... Nova Scotia  
Ann Ramsay  
Co-chair ..... Prince Edward Island  
Abby Bourque-Coyle ..... New Brunswick  
Jayne Warner ..... Ontario  
Joanne Dowswell ..... Ontario

Valerie Beel ..... Manitoba  
Laurie Shiels ..... Saskatchewan  
Deborah Stewart ..... Alberta  
Pat Shade  
Co-chair ..... British Columbia  
Deborah Fraess ..... HEU, British Columbia  
Stephen Drost ..... NEB Liaison (until June 2015)  
Odette Robichaud ..... NEB Liaison (as of June 2015)  
Conni Kilfoil ..... Equality Representative