

## A BLUEPRINT FOR THE FUTURE

The primary objective of this 2011 policy paper is to create a blueprint to develop our internal strength with a sensible, smart strategy for making gains in bargaining, for participating effectively in the public debate on services that CUPE members provide, and for making our communities better places to live.

### **The Assault on the Public Sector and the Working Class**

Canada and the rest of the world are emerging from the worst global economic recession since the 1930s. It was one that, just like the Great Depression, shook the foundations of the world financial system. Thanks to stronger regulation and some good luck, Canada wasn't hit as bad as the American and European countries, but there is no doubt recovery will be slower and more difficult than previous recessions. And recent events in the United States may yet drive us into another market failure.

The world economy is being further weakened by the austerity measures many countries are imposing on their citizens to pay for the costs of the financial crisis. These measures, added to a volatile financial system, economic woes in Europe, and political upheaval in the Middle East, are making the global economy increasingly turbulent and prone to market failure with our economy teetering on the brink of another recession. The capitalist system is showing serious signs of failure and now more than ever, is not meeting the needs of the poor, the marginalized and the 99 per cent.

High oil and resource prices are benefitting some segments of Canada's economy but most working families are suffering from higher energy costs and food prices combined with weak job and wage growth.

It is unclear what will drive economic recovery if governments cut back on public spending, shift more costs onto highly-indebted working families and hike interest rates. The recent crisis should have been a wake-up call to change direction, but instead governments have continued to pursue their usual economic policies. Canada, more than any other country, now has the ability to create a stronger, more balanced and equitable economy.

Public services and public sector unions are under attack worldwide – in the United Kingdom, in Wisconsin and many other states in the United States, and in cities such as Toronto. Cuts to public services and programs will be the battlefield on which a class war will be fought over the next few years. Public employees are convenient scapegoats for government’s inability to effectively manage the financial sector of the economy and to stimulate the economy with spending that makes sense.

Public sector workers are being isolated from each other, from their unions, from their communities, from other progressive organizations and voices in the community, and from those who are recipients of their services. Awareness of class position is sustenance for the working class and is essential to maintain our solidarity in defense of hard fought gains by working people.

Those who promote austerity programs place the responsibility for deficits on the backs of workers rather than on capitalist financiers who were responsible for market failures. A variety of economic and social policies are being wielded by the corporate and governing class as weapons against workers solidarity.

These policies include: international trade negotiations such as the Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreement (CETA) between Canada and the European Union; corporate tax cuts; cuts to public services; attacks on pensions; privatization of public services; economic policies that increase the gap between the rich and the poor in every country and ensure that the richest grab a larger portion of total national incomes; pension policies which drive seniors into poverty; attacks on fundamental human rights both domestically and internationally; policies that marginalize workers into casual and part-time labour; and policies that shut down legitimate dissent. Social programs are fundamental in transferring wealth in our society and alleviating inequality. Governments and employers are implementing concerted and targeted measures to destroy social programs.

These measures break the consciousness of workers and their communities – weaken our resolve and capacity to achieve gains for working people. And they are succeeding. The Canadian Payroll Association reports that 57 per cent of Canadian workers are living paycheque to paycheque and that 40 per cent of Canadians expect to retire later than they had previously planned, acknowledging they are not saving enough for retirement. According to Canada Without Poverty a majority of Canadians, including roughly 3.5 to 7.0 million people living in poverty are economically insecure, despite Canada’s status as one of the wealthiest countries in the world.

Moreover, governments in Canada, the U.S. and around the world are slowly but steadily eroding fundamental democratic rights – creating a democratic deficit. Cutting funding for advocacy groups for women, the poor, marginalized and under-privileged, and for those who defend human rights in developing countries is a direct attack on the working class. The intention is to weaken our organizational capacity to respond to threats and to promote progressive alternatives. We must educate ourselves about these attacks and strategies and develop effective responses. We will assist our members to understand the class dynamics behind employer and government policies and bargaining positions. We will build a class analysis into our education work and bargaining work. Our analysis must include a race, gender, sexual orientation, disability and an Aboriginal perspective. The working class includes those who are

on social assistance and the unemployed, workers who are not unionized, as well as unionized private and public sector workers. Social assistance and unemployment insurance payments have been cut significantly over the last 20 years. Unorganized workers have lost significant economic ground and many unions have had to agree to concessions. As a result, public sector workers seem privileged compared to the rest of the working class. The real story is that the economic gap between the wealthy and the working class is ever increasing.

Governments are painting public sector workers as part of the privileged class and are moving to strip these so-called privileges from us. Continuing attacks on wages, benefits, and pensions at Air Canada and Canada Post, and contracting out and privatization strategies in Toronto are evidence of the deliberate nature of the assault.

The magnitude of the coming attack on workers and public services should not be underestimated. Conservative politicians will be emboldened by the attacks in the U.S. and the UK and will follow that pattern. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that employers took 1,579 mass layoff actions in July alone, laying off 145,000 workers, an increase of 3 per cent over June. School districts in many states plan to cut the length of school days, shorten the school week, cut summer school programs, or shorten the school year in response to massive cuts in state funding for public education.

In Wisconsin, the Budget Repair Bills will facilitate privatization and strip public sector workers of their right to collectively bargain. In Ohio, there will be a referendum on a Senate bill that significantly limits public sector workers' collective bargaining rights. In Indiana, Democratic legislators fled the statehouse in February to block a vote on a proposed "Right to Work" bill. Public hearings have been held and the Governor says he may support such a measure if it is brought to the floor in 2012. In Arizona, four anti-labour laws went into effect at the end of July. Two of these laws are anti-Project Labour Agreements against unionization in the construction industry. Other bills threaten freedom of speech by adding new regulations and harsh fines on unions and their members who picket in front of businesses; and the Paycheck Deception bill which prohibits public and private employers from deducting payments from an employee's paycheque for political purposes unless the employee annually provides written authorization to the employer.

In the UK, over 400,000 jobs have been lost with as many as 10,000 more anticipated at Bombardier. The National Health Service (NHS) could lose up to 50,000 positions alone. The job loss toll could easily rise to 600,000. Pay has been frozen, pensions are under attack, and the NHS is being privatized by stealth.

These are only a few facts and illustrations of what we stand to face in the coming two years in Canada. The severity of the situation is underscored by the almost instantaneous response of the federal Conservative government to legislate workers back to work at Canada Post and Air Canada. These legislative tactics were harsh and outside of the bounds of free collective bargaining, setting parameters that were much more stringent than the employer would have established. Provincial governments may well follow suit.

CUPE must engage in this struggle in a manner in which our members understand, raises awareness and develops a cohesive response which is proactive and not solely reactive. We must find ways to wage this struggle on our turf and not on the turf of employers and governments.

CUPE is committed to forming a working group with the objective of reviewing ways in which the Strike Fund and the National Defence Fund may be accessed in situations where labour laws are more and more restraining, and where our right to free collective bargaining is challenged, and where legal action in defence of our rights in the public sector is framed in such a way as to render it less effective. In the face of this new reality, and the tendency of government to veer to right-leaning policies, it is imperative to adapt our support to locals fighting back, whether it is the municipal, education, health care and social services or other sectors targeted by essential services legislation. The working group to be established by the National Officers will include representatives of locals. Given the urgency to act, the working group will make recommendations to the National Executive Board in order to enable our local unions to be better equipped to fight back and better defend our public services.

# Strategic Priority 1a:

## Reaching CUPE Members

---

Strengthening CUPE locals and all aspects of CUPE's structure is essential if we are to meet the challenges that face us in the next two years and the ability to reach our members directly is critical to that success. A national union has the responsibility to accept a major leadership role in the struggles of their members and must have the tools required to ensure that this leadership and strategic guidance can be delivered to the benefit of the members. CUPE will invest in strengthening our union and our membership by devoting the necessary resources to develop the necessary databases and tools to reach the CUPE membership. Existing databases within divisions, bargaining councils and locals will form the foundation of our electronic compilation of contacts. These databases will include names and contact information such as mailing addresses, phone numbers, and email addresses and any other electronic contact information. The collection of this data will conform to privacy legislation and will be used solely for the betterment of the union and its members.

A social media strategy and program will be developed to mobilize CUPE members (including part-time and casual workers), staff and the public on issues. CUPE's web strategy, CUPE's website [cupe.ca](http://cupe.ca), and social media (Facebook, Twitter, and other forms of electronic contact) will be assessed and appropriate changes made to support the goal of reaching the membership and the general public. We will develop materials on both best practices and the potential pitfalls of social media as it is used by our enemies as well as our allies.

CUPE will provide sufficient resources to implement and harness the most effective and innovative tools available. CUPE's Union Development Department in conjunction with the Communications Branch will undertake to develop and deliver training and skills development on social media devices and programs. Our members (including part-time and casual workers) and staff will receive instruction on the practical use of the new tools and education on their potential. New techniques such as virtual town halls will be utilized to gain public support and confidence. Strategic use of predictive dialing will assist us to reach our members and the public.

Building solidarity requires more than the timely and useful dissemination of information on issues. It requires a level of contact that promotes and engenders identification and pride in CUPE and the work that CUPE members do. Additional resources will be devoted to the development of effective electronic and print newsletters across the union. Highlighting the value of the work that CUPE members do will be a priority.

Ensuring that our bargaining strategies and plans are strong enough to withstand the inevitable assault on trade unions and public services is critical to ensuring that our members' fundamental rights are protected. While we have not yet faced the full brunt of the attack on collective bargaining, we must already be planning to fight back and to recapture collective bargaining in Canada. The centerpiece of this struggle must be to ensure that we are doing the fundamentals well and representing our members effectively at the bargaining table.

We will set a path of building bargaining strength leading up to a major CUPE national bargaining conference in the fall of 2012 or early 2013. The conference will address national bargaining trends and strategies in monetary and non-monetary areas with a focus on wages, benefits, pensions, job security, and the impact of working conditions on workers' mental and physical health. A particular focus of the conference will be to advance bargaining strategies to meet the needs of women workers as identified in the Women's National Bargaining Conference in February 2009. The 2012/2013 conference outcomes will include increased skills development within our membership, a plan to achieve gains for women and other marginalized workers, particularly in the social service sector, and a major strategic plan for bargaining in the 2012-2015 period – what works and what will work given the political and economic context.

Plenary sessions at the conference will address 'big picture' economic and political issues. We will hear from a panel of experts on the most recent national and international developments in the struggle to protect public services, and public employees' bargaining rights, and to highlight ways in which we can 'fight smart' against these attacks. Dedicated workshops will address sector and regional priorities, strategies and tactics e.g., the utility of tactics such as "work to rule" will be explored. We will underscore particular solutions to the challenges faced by our members on the front lines of service delivery in social services and health care. Improved wages, benefits and pensions only benefit workers when they have guaranteed full-time hours.

In an overall context of trying to "fight smarter" we need to "bargain smarter" and the national bargaining conference will lay the groundwork for the long-term implementation of a bargaining approach to achieve our goals with new tools and revitalized strategies. We will continue to support centralized, coordinated and provincial bargaining across the country but common front style bargaining can only be successful when each union in the common front has its own house in order. "Bargaining smarter" means ensuring that there is internal solidarity before embarking on a quest for external solidarity. Further, each union must give up some autonomy in order to ensure that the collective strength is realized. The gain, of course, is that each union cannot be picked off one by one.

An indispensable element of “fighting smarter” or “bargaining smarter” is to know which struggles to take on and when we should take them on. Effective strategic planning requires effective communication and organization of information. To this end CUPE will create information databases on key bargaining victories which can be shared quickly throughout CUPE locals and staff.

CUPE commits to a national initiative to increase economic literacy within our staff and membership. A program of workshops and awareness sessions to present the workers’ analysis of the changes and developments in the global and Canadian economies will be developed and rolled out during 2012 beginning with a series of breakfast sessions for all delegates at CUPE provincial divisions. Specific opportunities for education on the economy will be incorporated into all conferences, meetings and other events. A critical examination of capitalist economics and politics is central to advancing economic literacy within the working class. We will also explore new avenues such as training, work-life balance, and literacy which can build community and union solidarity.

CUPE National Standing Committees, Working Groups and Councils are important vehicles for reaching CUPE’s members. We will ensure that the work of these committees is integrally related to the priorities of our 2011-2013 National Strategic priorities as outlined in this document.

CUPE’s health and safety staff will work on revising existing tools and developing new tools for health and safety activists. As part of the revitalized health and safety program, CUPE will host the 11<sup>th</sup> National Health and Safety Conference in 2013 with particular emphasis on emerging health issues in new technologies for public sector workers, safety for our communities, and protection of the environment.

# Strategic Priority 1b:

## Strengthening the Labour Movement

---

Building a broad social movement with shared values is critical for our survival as a labour movement, for the defense of fundamental trade union rights and the promotion of ideals for a better society. If the labour movement and social justice organizations are to maintain and increase influence in the implementation of progressive reforms and in advocating for rights in the workplace and in communities, we must dedicate resources to increasing union density. Organizing low-income and marginalized jobs in both the public and private sectors is critical to eliminating increasing inequalities and to strengthening our ability to resist attacks on the working class. Organizing “wall-to-wall” and “following our work” after it is contracted or privatized are important principles in our plan. We will call on the CLC to lead discussions with all affiliates on the most effective ways to increase union density (number of unionized workers as a proportion of the total labour force) across the labour movement. We call on the CLC to coordinate lobbying of provincial and federal governments to change labour codes, including card check, to ensure a fair playing field to organize workers.

CUPE has always been committed to organizing workers who provide public services and we remain committed to an organizing strategy to increase union density in our sectors. We will devise more effective strategies, education and training to use our steward base to increase our organizing capacity. In order to keep pace with changing Canadian demographics, we will continue our efforts to organize Aboriginal, racialized and immigrant workers into CUPE and to promote representative workforce strategies with employers and governments. Hiring practices of employers are most often not in our control but it is well within our control to represent these workers effectively in the workplace when they are employed. We will work with locals in the sector to develop concrete organizing plans to organize low-income and marginalized workers such as personal support workers and child care workers.

CUPE will not tolerate the raiding of our members by other unions and we will continue to abide by the agreements reached within the CLC and to ensure that other unions abide by those agreements as well. We will protect our current jurisdiction in the face of attacks from outside the House of Labour such as the Christian Labour Association of Canada, and in government or employer forced runoff votes.



In the face of tougher labour legislation and austerity measures which will cut social programs and public services, CUPE will continue to devote necessary resources to ensure that CUPE membership continues on a growth pattern, albeit likely slowed from previous years. One viable option to increase solidarity and strengthen the labour voice is to join together with like minded unions. CUPE will be open to considering and pursuing structural arrangements and agreements up to, and including, mergers with other public sector unions or like-minded organizations subject to appropriate approvals under our Constitution.

CUPE must emerge from the next two years as a stronger union with membership growth, increased solidarity within our own membership and increased solidarity with our sister unions within the labour movement. Building and securing solidarity within the House of Labour is imperative to our success as a labour movement.

CUPE has always sought to improve relationships among CLC affiliates and to work effectively on joint campaigns through the CLC and with other affiliates on sector or issue specific matters. To that end, CUPE will continue to work to build solidarity among public sector unions at the national and regional levels. Further we will continue to build strategic links with private sector unions to take advantage of opportunities to support each other on our respective issues, campaigns and actions.

Strong functioning CUPE provincial divisions with as close as possible to one hundred per cent affiliation of locals is critical to establish CUPE's strength in our regions. This, coupled with strong functioning labour councils, can establish, maintain and build solidarity within the labour movement and in our communities. Over the next two years, CUPE will develop a plan to establish new CUPE District Councils, to re-energize existing CUPE councils to establish a strong presence in CLC district labour councils and to expand our presence and influence in provincial federations of labour. An environmental scan of current participation and activities will be conducted as preparatory to developing a strategy for encouraging locals to join both CUPE district councils, CLC district labour councils and provincial federations of labour. Strengthening CUPE provincial service divisions and bargaining councils will also be a priority. The environmental scan will establish the baseline of participation by CUPE chartered organizations, against which our increased activism will be measured at the 12-month and 18-month intervals prior to the 2013 National Convention.

## Strategic Priority 2: Reaching Out to Community

---

By virtue of the public services we provide we already have a strong bond with the communities within which we work and live. Strengthening this bond is mutually beneficial as strong communities are contingent upon economies that have secure well-paying jobs with benefits. Unions contribute to that reality. Unions are most effective where communities have progressive policies that ensure inclusivity for all members of the community. Community organizations are central to establishing that political reality.

CUPE will work to provide the necessary vehicles and mechanisms to connect with community organizations which include but is not limited to: NGOs of all types, local community associations, women's organizations, health coalitions, child care coalitions, voluntary organizations working in social and public services, disability rights groups, coalitions of racialized community members, anti-poverty associations, the unemployed, migrant and temporary workers, faith-based organizations, environmental organizations, sports organizations, federations of students, organizations working on national and international aid programs, Aboriginal and Métis organizations. Strong communities do not happen in isolation. They happen when organizations and their memberships are involved and share a common vision for our communities. CUPE will provide assistance to locals and members to organize meetings and facilitate coalition building and community outreach. We will continue to provide financial assistance where possible to coalitions and community organizations to enable their projects and advocacy work. We will work closely within our respective regions with those organizations who advocate for those who are in poverty and reliant upon social assistance.

CUPE will build a database of our work with organizations in community associations and coalitions. This information will enable us to engage community organizations quickly on specific campaigns of mutual concern.

The demographics of the Canadian population and labour force have changed significantly in the last decade. Analyses provided by the Equality Department of the CLC show that these changes will have a significant impact on the labour movement including CUPE. Our membership will change and we must change with it by developing new approaches to addressing serious concerns. For example, immigrants, even if highly educated, are under-employed and there is persistent inequality based on gender and race. Racialized workers, Aboriginal workers and immigrants (particularly women) are most affected. It is concern enough that women earn only 70 per cent of what men earn but racialized women earn only about 64 per cent, and Aboriginal women earn only 46 per cent. We know that women in unionized workplaces fare far better than these figures indicate. But our commitment to organizing these workers into the labour movement as outlined earlier is but one tactic that we must employ.

A second course of action involves enhancing our capacity to strengthen community by connecting effectively with community organizations and associations who advocate on behalf of these workers and their families. CUPE will engage racialized people, Aboriginal people and marginalized workers to take the lead in the development of a program of systematic outreach to organizations.

Our program will focus on forging stronger alliances and vehicles of mutual support and collaboration to speak out with a concerted, strong voice on common goals of equality, fairness and social justice. We will collaborate on a program of education on community issues and on the value of unions in addressing those issues.

Our work with national employers' associations such as the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, the Canadian Library Association, and the Association of Canadian Community Colleges is beginning to pay off with increased visibility and credibility for CUPE and increased awareness of our policies in those sectors. This type of "soft lobbying" with employer representatives establishes a non-threatening presence in the community. Our reaching out to community program will continue this work both at the national and provincial levels.

Political action remains an important aspect of our work in communities. In 2011, we were very busy with a federal election and several provincial and municipal elections. Our work paid off at the federal level with the election of 103 NDP members to the House of Commons forming the Official Opposition. We will build on this victory to strengthen and solidify our relationship with the NDP as part of a longer term strategy to ensure that the NDP form a government in the next federal election in 2015. In the interim, we will support the NDP in their role as Official Opposition by providing assistance and advice on all policy related matters on which we have expertise.

While we will continue our focus in 2012-2013 on electoral politics, we will increase our lobbying efforts and actions on issues of concern to CUPE and our communities. We will develop effective strategies for direct action in the following areas: renewal of the health care accord; the Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreement (CETA) between the European Union and Canada; Retirement Security for Everyone and Canada Pension Plan reform; a national child care and early learning program; fair taxation; and environmental measures which promote the creation of green jobs.

In order to coordinate our political action work across the union, CUPE will continue to support the organization of political action committees throughout our locals and divisions, and encourage political action components in the work plans of all standing committees. The development of these committees will mean that our lobbying can be more concerted and targeted while reaching more policy makers and allies in the community. In addition, we will provide training and tools for the development and mobilization of the activist base within our membership.

## **Strategic Priority 3:**

### **Strengthening Our Image**

---

The public image of unions is often not very flattering and we must use all tools at our disposal to understand the many dimensions associated with CUPE's image. We will devote resources to deepen our polling strategy to provide the necessary intelligence to frame and sharpen our messages, and to change them when required. Our polling will focus on the issues most directly affecting our members, on the public perceptions of public services and on CUPE's image. A baseline survey will be conducted with further polling at regular intervals as a measure of our effectiveness.

A union's image is very fragile and can be changed with one false or ill-advised action. We must be cognizant of this fragility and develop a professional approach which extends to our everyday working lives and to our work as a union. We will always be under scrutiny and we should develop protocols for how we act in a wide variety of situations. When we tarnish our image with acts that are not carefully thought out, we risk alienating citizens, community leaders, non-governmental organizations, and politicians who may otherwise be sympathetic to our cause. We will create a process to review actions and campaigns, and develop best practices to solidify our public support. Our "brand" as a union should be one of dedicated defender and promoter of labour rights, human rights, social justice, public services, and tough but fair negotiators and defenders of CUPE members in their workplaces whose arsenal includes the right to strike and other legitimate workplace actions.

The work of CUPE members builds and sustains a strong community. Our work is often hidden and taken for granted. In addition, we contribute to community in ways that are not directly related to the prescribed work of our members. CUPE locals contribute very unselfishly through charitable and other "good works" within our work places and communities. We must continue our efforts to establish CUPE as part of the community. These efforts will include participating in, and supporting campaigns to ensure the end of violence against women and to work with all CUPE chartered organizations to achieve gender equality in our workplaces and society. An investment in our communities is an investment in ourselves.

With positive visibility in the community we can overcome some of the negative stereotypes of unions. We routinely sponsor events in the community – everything from scholarships to festivals to conferences and meetings to marches and parades – and we will continue to do so. If we are part of the community, we need to invest in the community in a way that is not self-serving or selfish. Giving to the collective good is, in fact, a central trade union principle. We must educate our membership as to the history of the labour movement, its core principles and accomplishments.

We will continue to highlight the good works of CUPE members and locals and how these good works make our communities better places to live. We will survey locals to build a database of CUPE community involvement as the basis for establishing an earned media plan to enhance CUPE's image. We will collect and highlight work that is beneficial to communities domestically and internationally e.g., flood relief in Western Canada, an earthquake in Haiti or famine in East Africa.

Solidarity within communities requires that there be mutual respect and support between service providers and citizens who use services. Once this bond is crystallized it is much more difficult for right wing forces to attack and destroy public services and communities.

We must continue to draw attention to the importance of public services to local, national and global economies. In order to celebrate public services with our community allies we will devote resources to re-establish Community Day on June 23 of each year as a major day of celebration of public services and our communities. We will work with CUPE chartered organizations to ensure that each year, the Day has an action component that is more than symbolic. The United Nations has designated June 23 of each year as World Public Services Day "to honour those who accept the responsibilities of service to humanity and who contribute to excellence and innovation in public service institutions." Public Services International and PSI affiliates such as UNISON recognize World Public Services Day as a day to highlight the importance of quality public services in securing quality of life in our communities.

## **Implementation**

The above policy program contains many and diverse recommendations for action within the strategic priorities for 2012-2013. Once adopted by CUPE's National Convention, the chartered organizations within CUPE have an obligation to implement these strategic directions and each branch and department within CUPE's operational structure has an obligation to set priorities within their operations for CUPE to be successful in accomplishing the goals of our vision.

Each action implementing a strategic priority will establish a benchmark at the outset which will allow us to evaluate progress during the implementation period. Benchmarking and progress evaluation is central to being able to make necessary adjustments throughout the process e.g., understanding the current state of our ability to contact CUPE members is essential if we are to develop new ways to contact them. We want to be able to measure both our ability to contact members and the effect that contacting members has.

In addition, we renew our commitment to campaign forcefully and publicly to defend and promote public services and our members' jobs, to secure adequate workplace pensions, reforms and improvements to the Canada Pension Plan, including disability benefits, and to defeat trade agreements such as the Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreement (CETA) between Canada and the European Union. CUPE's National Executive Board will continue to fund these efforts in 2012 and 2013 to at least the same level as in previous years. These campaigns and programs are central to our members and our union will allocate additional resources, as available, to meet these priorities. No real threat to CUPE members and our jobs will go unfunded.

Many resolutions on specific issues have been submitted by chartered organizations to the Resolutions Committee for this Convention. They will be dealt with in the due course of convention proceedings and debate, and implemented by the union.

In 2013, CUPE will celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its founding convention. Over the next two years, we will develop a program to celebrate the victories of those 50 years, but our practical focus will be to ensure that CUPE continues to be a leader with progressive strategies for change as we begin the next 50 years. Our strategic policies and programs will strengthen both our internal and external capacities to galvanize our membership – our greatest strength – and to develop a core of future leaders through succession planning and mentoring opportunities for young workers who will accept the responsibility to achieve and expand this vision.

CUPE will resource and implement this strategic directions program and all resolutions adopted by delegates to the 2011 National Convention.

# Appendix:

## History of Strategic Directions

---

The strategic directions provided in this document are not intended to be an exhaustive and inclusive list of every issue that CUPE faces in the workplace or that affect public services and our communities. Rather it is a program for developing new and expanded approaches for CUPE in order to be more effective in our campaigns and actions whether they are related to collective bargaining or public policy. These are high level priorities related to our ability to achieve success at the bargaining table, in the political arena, in our communities and in ensuring that our society has social and economic policies that are fair and just.

In 2003, CUPE moved away from debating individual policy papers on single issues to debating and adopting a unified program of action at convention. We are continuing this approach with this current policy paper.

Delegates to the 2003 CUPE National Convention adopted the first of this series of policy papers which are all entitled “Strategic Directions Program for CUPE” and specifically detailed the program priorities for two years. The priorities for 2003-2005 were:

- a. Strengthen our bargaining power to win better collective agreements;
- b. Increase our day-to-day effectiveness to better represent members in the workplace;
- c. Intensify our campaign to stop contracting out and privatization of public services.

Work plans and political actions were drafted and these priorities were implemented and the achievements are documented in *Strategic Directions: 2003-2005 Reporting Back*, presented to the 2005 National Convention. We continue to implement and carry on the recommendations that stem from the 2003 strategic directions as many of them remain relevant and pressing.

In 2005, CUPE delegates expanded on the strategic directions theme by adopting the second major policy paper called “Gaining Ground”. The paper set priorities for 2005-2007 in the following areas:

- a. Strengthening our sectors;
- b. Establishing measurable bargaining objectives;
- c. Organizing the unorganized;
- d. Increased participation of women;
- e. Communicating directly with our members;
- f. Strengthening alliance with other unions;
- g. Resisting privatization and contracting out.

The CUPE membership and staff put the necessary work plans and action plans in place to meet these priorities. Once again, our success was presented to convention in the *Strategic Directions 2005-2007 Reporting Back* document.

In 2007, the third strategic directions policy paper, “Securing the Future” was adopted by delegates to convention to set priorities for the 2007-2009 period. The policy outlined three major sets of strategic priorities:

- a. CUPE fight back campaign against all forms of privatization. The campaign was backed by a funding commitment of \$5 million from CUPE National and campaigns were conducted in each region coordinated through provincial divisions.
- b. Strengthening bargaining power and achieving equality. Delegates approved a commitment to ensure that all CUPE members have a pension plan and that benefits and a \$15 per hour wage is a priority in bargaining. Raising the bar on all equality matters was established as a priority and many of the 54 recommendations of the National Women’s Task Force were incorporated into the policy.
- c. Meeting global green targets and building international solidarity. CUPE direction on climate change and the environment was firmly entrenched into CUPE policy in this document. And for the first time, direction on international solidarity and support for the Global Justice Fund was identified and specified in policy.

The National Executive Board enabled the privatization campaign with appropriate funding and all the policies adopted in “Securing the Future” were incorporated into staff work plans and regional and local campaigns. Highlight results of our efforts were delivered to delegates to the 2009 Convention in a *Strategic Directions Reporting Back* document.

In 2009, delegates adopted the Strategic Directions Program for CUPE: 2009-2011 entitled “Taking Action.” It focused attention on two interrelated arenas: at the bargaining table and political action. The paper outlined ways to increase our capacity to engage in political action at all levels of government in order to achieve legal and legislative gains as well as political action targeted to strengthening our bargaining power.



Specifically, the paper addressed the following areas:

- a. Political action;
- b. Developing an alternative economic agenda;
- c. Defending free collective bargaining and resisting concessions;
- d. Charting a new course for pensions;
- e. Continuing the struggle in the following areas: anti-privatization; equality; Aboriginal issues; HIV/AIDS; child care and early learning; environment; health and safety and international solidarity.

The National Executive Board continued to resource the privatization campaign with a minimum of \$5 million over the two-year period and the policies adopted in "Taking Action" were incorporated into staff work plans and regional and local campaigns. Highlight results of our efforts are in the *Strategic Directions Reporting Back* document which can be found in your convention kits.

Policy adopted by delegates to the 2009 Convention forms the critical direction for our union in matters of collective bargaining, social policy and political action. We will continue to implement the direction provided from the 2009 Convention as we are not yet at the end of the two-year period and, while much in the world has changed, many of the problem areas that our priorities sought to address still persist.

cope491