

REPORTING BACK

Strategic Directions 2013-2015

Proud of our Past, Ready for the future

INTRODUCTION

A record number of delegates, guests and staff joined the Canadian Union of Public Employees to celebrate an historic 50th anniversary at our 2013 national convention in Quebec City, QC. We grew eightfold over the five decades since our inception, to the 633,000 members strong that we are today. Looking back 50 years, we proudly acknowledged our accomplishments, the challenges we confronted, and the lessons learned.

During our national convention we envisioned our future and planned for our next decades ahead. Over the past two years we reconnected to our members, and we continued to build a renewed labour movement. This was a critical time as unions, workers and allies faced unprecedented attacks on our democratic and human rights. The federal and some provincial governments, attempted to disempower unions, and to silence the protests of our members and allies who stood against policies and legislation such as Bill 377 and 525, that harm workers and communities. We forged new links and strengthened our networks to resist and overcome ever intensifying attacks on working people and civil society. And we gained ground as the attacks from the right were increasingly rejected by Canadians.

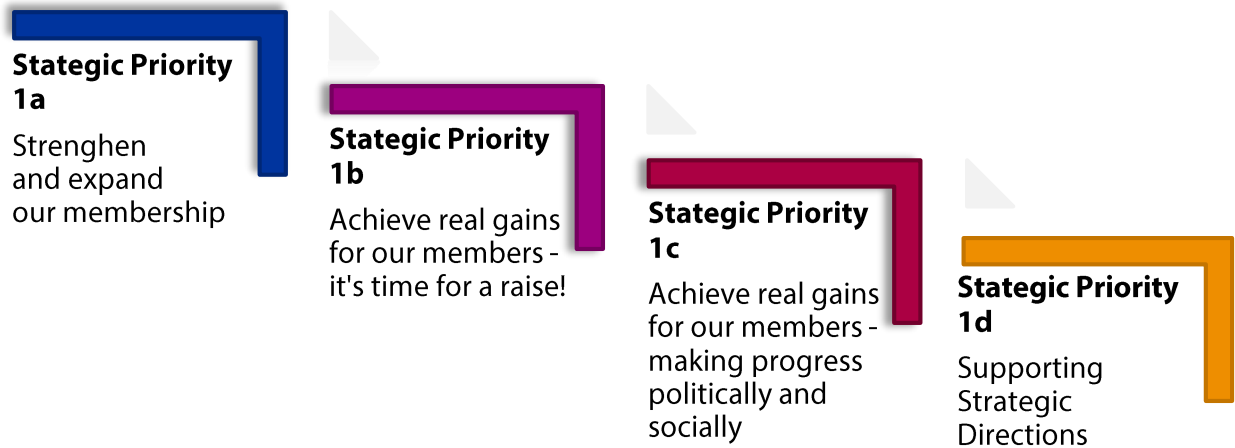
Our solidarity with allies at home and around the world helped us learn and grow as a movement. In many ways, both big and small, we made a difference by standing up for better workplaces and communities. Member by member, and community by community, we are expanding and strengthening our connections, fostered by shared values and a collective response.

CUPE is standing against the attacks on working people, the loss of real wages, the dearth of good jobs, and a stagnant economy, as we continue to build our resistance and our resilience. Over the past two years, our efforts to ensure an economy that works for everyone, and a society founded on peace, justice and equality have been challenged, yet we have achieved some success and made advances.

We continued to fight for good jobs and public services on the political front, at the bargaining table, and in our communities. We have increased our collective power by engaging members through the Fairness project. We advanced the struggle to protect and expand health care, for accessible child care, for good jobs, and a secure retirement for all Canadians. CUPE members defended public services, social programs and democratic principles. As our solidarity deepens and our resolve expands, we are creating a labour movement, a country and a world in which we can take pride, and build a legacy of equality and justice that will live on.

Proud of our past and ready for the future!

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Reporting Back: Strategic Directions 2013-2015 provides delegates to CUPE National Convention, and all members, a brief outline of strategic priority areas. It is also a snapshot of CUPE events and activities as examples of our work mandated by our last convention. The list is far from exhaustive or comprehensive; it is illustrative of the deep commitment and efforts of our union across the country. As Canada's largest public sector union and with more than 633,000 members, our work together in strength and solidarity is truly beyond these few words.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1A STRENGTHEN AND EXPAND OUR MEMBERSHIP

- › Renew our union through the Fairness project. Roll out the *Unite for Fairness/Stand Up for Fairness* project in each region across Canada.
- › Develop new resources for activists and staff, and communication tools for organizing new members.
- › Expand social media presence and new communication tools, and reach out to new and young members.
- › Grow CUPE's membership through "wall-to-wall" organizing.
- › Undertake a survey of our members in 2014 to build our relevance to our membership and increase our effectiveness in fighting for equality rights, and identify members working in temporary and precarious jobs, as well as temporary foreign workers.
- › Hold a National Human Rights conference, bringing an equity lens to our work on pensions, benefits, public services, health and safety, and the economy.

Actions and Initiatives

- Updated clear language workshops are available, and a new three-hour module, *Literacy Awareness for Stewards*, has been added to the Steward Learning Series.
- Since last convention, CUPE has organized over 12,000 new members into 157 separate bargaining units across the country. Some examples include:
 - Transit workers in Fort McMurray, AB
 - Long-term care workers in Cape Breton, NS
 - Child care workers at the Edmonton Garrison Military, AB
 - Family Resource Society – the first unionized military day care in Canada, AB
 - Airport workers in Kapuskasing, ON
 - Municipal workers in Drummondville, QC
 - Postdoctoral fellows at the University of Toronto, ON
 - Support staff in Saskatchewan's Prairie Spirit School Division
 - Library workers in New Westminster, BC
 - Ambulance services, NFLD
 - Substitute support staff in PEI's Western and Eastern school boards
 - Garbage and recycling collectors in Winnipeg, MB
 - Disability support workers and house managers in Winnipeg, MB
 - Early childhood educators, Halifax, NS
 - Patient transfer drivers, BC
 - Workers at Canadian Blood Services in Edmonton and Red Deer, AB
 - School support workers in Eastern and Central Alberta
 - New parking ambassadors in Victoria, BC
 - Municipal workers in public works and waste management in Steinbach, MB

- CUPE launched a major upgrade to our national website, cupe.ca. The new website helps members connect to their locals, access their collective agreement, register online for CUPE events and workshops, and read, download and order materials from the revamped Member Resources section. It offers support for bargaining committees, locals, financial officers, stewards and communicators, and helped activists and members find key campaigns and research. The website also adapts to mobile devices, with a format geared to sharing on social media.
- CUPE's Communications Branch helped build more than 140 new websites for CUPE locals, giving our members another way to connect at the local level.
- The Fairness approach is integrated into our education programs to help locals engage their members and to create a stronger internal structure in the course; for instance, the *Building Strong Local Unions* program is offered.
- CUPE was honoured with the Canadian Association of Labour Media's award for best use of social media by staff. We increased our use of social media to deliver information and empower our members to become agents of change. CUPE provides members with resources that help us to share our positions and organize on issues with their friends, family, community and politicians.
- In today's world, borders have become virtual for banks, companies and financial institutions – capital moves freely. The *International Solidarity* workshop helps us explore the root cause of inequality, austerity and privatization. We identify where we have the power to act, as workers unite around the world.
- CUPE has seen a renewed interest in labour history following our 50th anniversary in 2013. *Labour History and the Class Struggle Today* is a new course that remembers and honours those who came before us to help us learn from the best of our history, to inform today's challenges and ultimate successes.
- The new *Introduction to Human Rights* workshop identifies the links between oppression and class struggle, how discrimination impacts everyone, and challenges oppressive attitudes, behaviours, ideas and systems through individual and collective action.

Unite for Fairness

Unite for Fairness is an ongoing, strategic approach to build relationship and power within locals and sectors. Union solidarity is critical as we face escalating attacks on our right to bargain collectively, represent our members, and act politically. Over the past two years, the project provided an important opportunity for CUPE to listen to the needs, expectations and aspirations of 633,000 members, and to strengthen our union. Engaged and mobilized members are politically active members.

We are building our strength in every province, across sectors, and at the local level. Each region advanced the Fairness project at local meetings, public events and in publications, profiled at sector and bargaining conferences, and regional conventions.

Regional Fairness coordinators increased outreach and training opportunities for local leadership, communicators and staff. Some regions implemented sector-wide fairness strategies for bargaining, campaigns and elections. We have more trained leaders and communicators, a national database to track the project's reach, and map the next steps.

Fairness tools were developed to support sector and local strategies. Bargaining committees are accessing the Fairness project “Protecting our representation rights” bargaining kit that includes sample language and strategies to strengthen collective agreement language, to protect members’ representation and bargaining rights.

Unite for Fairness – federal election kits were developed with several tools to help CUPE locals get out the vote. Materials to help reach out to members and initiate election conversations, fact sheets, postcards and posters were included.

CUPE National's Human Rights Conference

Over 500 labour and social activists from across the country attended CUPE’s second National Human Rights conference in Winnipeg. From February 4 to 8, 2015, CUPE highlighted the role unions have in fighting racism and all forms of discrimination.

“Defending human rights is at the very core of what unions do every day. While we’ve made strides, we still have much work to do to end discrimination in our society, evident by the recent attention on the discrimination experienced by Aboriginal people here in Winnipeg,” Opening Statement, Paul Moist, CUPE National President.

Members were presented with the results of the membership survey while speakers helped expand the current context – the shift from full-time, continuous work, towards precarious and low-wage work. We focused on Canada’s human rights record, and the contributions of the labour movement, in collaboration with social movements, in advancing these rights.

CUPE members shared their successes at the bargaining table, and their strategies to raise the floor for all workers. Panelists discussed how members and locals can play a decisive role in the next federal election. We explored successful union and community campaigns led by marginalized workers to build collective power.

Workshops expanded on plenary topics through small group exchanges as members examined approaches and action strategies to take back to their locals and communities. Participants also had the opportunity to visit the Canadian Museum for Human Rights.

Four themes emerged from the conference as CUPE stepped up to create change, move forward on equality in our workplaces and in our communities, and build a powerful labour movement:

- › raise awareness
- › create common ground for all members
- › mobilize and organize in locals and communities
- › build our power to create change

“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”, Charles Fleury, CUPE National Secretary–Treasurer, closing statement.

Membership Survey

A major accomplishment, CUPE's first-ever comprehensive membership survey. Nearly 3,000 members representing all regions and sectors were polled. With the help of CUPE locals, leaders and staff, we have a better understanding of who our members are, including that 68 per cent of our members are women and, more than 20 per cent of our members are precarious workers.

The results helped CUPE to provide more effective and targeted support to locals in bargaining, as we gained valuable insights into the wages, working conditions, and union involvement.

The survey also increased our ability to advocate for all members, including equity-seeking members. The survey helped us tell our members' stories using real data, situating their struggles and successes in a broader context. It also set a baseline to measure our progress in future surveys.

Learning about the conditions for our members helps to understand how we must change. We can show solidarity for all our members by looking at improving wages and working conditions for precarious workers. We can look at new and creative ways to reach out to all members to involve them at all levels of our union. We can identify and move forward on a strong political agenda to improve conditions for all persons from equality-seeking groups, whether they are CUPE members, non-unionized workers, or temporary foreign workers.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1B ACHIEVE REAL GAINS FOR OUR MEMBERS – IT’S TIME FOR A RAISE!

- › Achieve real gains through bargaining, and improve wages and benefits for our lowest-paid members and members in precarious jobs.
- › Deepen policy on no-concession bargaining, reinforcing the national union’s “Plan to Fight Concessions and Defend Free Collective Bargaining”.
- › Organize an inaugural sector-based bargaining conference through the creation of the National Sector Council.
- › Increase in strike pay (see adopted Resolution No. 269).

Actions and Initiatives

- The 2nd edition of *Our Best Line of Defence* guide was published to provide an overview of the privatization, contracting-out and contracting-in issues. Sample collective agreement language is included for local bargaining committees, bargaining councils and staff representatives.
- The new *Building Bargaining Power* education program kicks off at this national convention. Ten new workshops are designed to provide bargaining tools for local executives, committees, activists and stewards as they plan, survey, mobilize, bargain, prepare, and build solidarity in their locals and sectors.
- Union Development Department and the Health and Safety Branch worked together to develop a new *Health and Safety Learning Series* that includes ten workshops available this year, and four more to be completed in 2016.
- CUPE-Quebec, stepped up its fight for retirement security with the launch of an online and television ad campaign aimed to build support for an expanded QPP.
- Our union defended workplace pensions under attack. In Quebec, CUPE challenged a provincial government report calling for sweeping pension plan changes, and pointed to examples of locals negotiating to ensure the financial health of their pension plans. Brother Charles Fleury joined the CUPE-Quebec, the Quebec labour coalition, and more than 25,000 protestors to speak out against Bill 3 that would impoverish seniors, and renege on existing contracts.
- CUPE filed a complaint with the New Brunswick Labour and Employment Board over changes to the province’s largest public sector pension plan that will convert the defined benefit pension into a plan that shifts risk to current and future retirees. CUPE locals that are part of the plan, representing up to 4,000 members, urged the provincial government to negotiate, not legislate, pension changes.
- In Alberta, the provincial government announced legislation to unilaterally change the Local Authorities Pension Plan, affecting up to 27,000 CUPE members. CUPE worked in coalition with other public sector unions and the Alberta Federation of Labour to challenge the proposed changes, pushing for joint governance of the LAPP.

- In Newfoundland and Labrador, seven municipal locals fought against dramatic cuts to their pension plan. Board members at the TRIO plan made a unilateral decision to change the way pension benefits are calculated. The CUPE locals lobbied municipal councils in the seven communities, and worked with plan administrators to find alternatives.
- A major victory in the Quebec Superior Court was achieved by a broad coalition of Quebec unions. The Court struck down a 2009 provincial law which had eliminated retroactive pay equity payments. CUPE equality representative, Sister Annick Desjardins, was the lead advocate on this file, on behalf of over 150,000 affected union members.
- CUPE members across the country made important gains in tough rounds of bargaining, despite a challenging economic and political climate. As CUPE members stood strong at the bargaining table, they were able to defend their collective agreements and make improvements to wages, benefits and working conditions. Here are illustrative examples of the many successes we achieved.
 - › Members of CUPE 1393, University of Windsor, Ontario, ratified a three-year agreement without concessions following a month-long strike.
 - › CUPE Local 1 members (clerical, technical and trades workers) of Toronto Hydro's ratified a four-year collective agreement with no major concessions.
 - › After months of negotiations, Clarence-Rockland municipal workers in Ontario, voted for a three-year contract.
 - › CUPE members of Queens Manor Home for Special Care in Liverpool, Nova Scotia, voted 100% in favour of the new deal, which not only beat back a major concession on sick leave, but contained a number of improvements. A contract was reached between Breton Ability Centre in Sydney, NS, and 50 Licensed Practical Nurses (LPN's) of CUPE 1478. The LPNs received the provincial wage template over the three-year term.
 - › After a four month struggle against an unprecedented lockout of unionized staff in Ontario by the Continuing Education Students Association of Ryerson (CESAR), CUPE 1281 successfully secured a collective agreement.
 - › CUPE 873, ambulance paramedics of BC, reached an agreement with the BC Health Employers Association, obtaining wage increases, a universal hourly wage scale to provide wage equity, limits to contracting out, and benefits protection.
 - › Part-time faculty and lab instructors, members of CUPE 3912 at Mount Saint Vincent University and Saint Mary's University, Nova Scotia, ratified a four-year agreements.
 - › CUPE 1764, Durham inside municipal workers, Ontario, ratified their collective agreement following a marathon round of bargaining, and successfully brought the three-week strike to an end.
 - › CUPE 108, outside workers at the Halifax Regional Municipality, Nova Scotia, came to an agreement with more than thirty changes to their contract including improvements to training and work assignment.
 - › The Syndicat des employés de l'Université de Montréal (SEUM-CUPE 1244) represents approximately 1,950 support staff at the Université de Montréal, about 80% of whom are women in a wide range of position. They successfully negotiated a three-year deal that established of a new pay structure – a final step in the pay equity process started in 1993.

- › After months of negotiations, a strike vote, and mediation, CUPE 338 and the City of Kelowna, British Columbia, ratified a five-year collective agreement that included wage improvements as well as new family leave provisions, a tool allowance, and vacation improvements.
- › Following a four-week lockout, 43 municipal members of CUPE 2019, Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Newfoundland, protected their defined-benefit pension plan, and won a fair wage increase and a signing bonus. The pension plan is sustainable well into the future, an important win in the struggle to defend strong workplace plans.
- › The 15 members of CUPE 1490, Township Council of Black River-Matheson in Ontario, locked out for more than 50 days, ratified their collective agreement.
- › The members of Units 1 and 3 of CUPE 3903, ratified a three-year collective agreement with York University in Ontario, ending the month-long strike. The agreement included improvements to wages and benefits, and indexation of tuition at 2012 levels. York University also agreed to move forward to add LGBTQ people to their employment equity policies.
- › The Town of Windsor, Ontario, and CUPE 1089 reached an agreement on a five-year contract. The wage settlement ensured base-wage adjustments, and percentage increases over the term. Longtime, seasonal employees are now recognized as full-time, and the local gained a commitment on training.

Stronger Together: Sector Council Conference

The first CUPE National Sector Council conference took place in Toronto from October 6-9, 2014. Over the four days, nearly 1,200 CUPE members and staff gathered, as the 11 CUPE sectors connected across all regions.

In plenary, we were reminded of the urgent times we are in as a labour movement, as we face legislative threats, attacks on pensions, cutbacks and underfunding, as well as the rise of precarious work, privatization, and challenges to worker health and safety.

CUPE members remained positive and optimistic as they shared examples of real gains and winning solutions all while knowing we stand together in our collective resolve to fight back. Common themes of mobilizing grassroots members and committing to CUPE's Fairness project, support members with approaches and tools that brings us closer to success.

Members were very clear about the importance of political action to elect progressive leaders and governments at every level. Each sector held meetings to further develop specific approaches and strategies.

The meeting was the first step in launching more regular, sector-specific conversations where members share vital information and winning strategies about bargaining and other key issues such as privatization.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1C ACHIEVE REAL GAINS FOR ALL – MAKING PROGRESS POLITICALLY AND SOCIALLY

- › Continue to campaign to expand the CPP/QPP, oppose cutbacks to employment insurance, defend medicare and call for national pharmacare and elder care programs, expand child care services, fight for equality and fair treatment at work for all workers, and champion environmental sustainability.
- › Advocate for expanded public services, social services, protections and better living standards for all workers, and a fairer tax system.
- › Support militant labour action including strikes and other direct actions.
- › Strengthen alliances with migrant worker advocacy groups and work with them to amend the TFWP. Advocate for fairer immigration, decent jobs and expanded pathways to permanent status for migrant workers.
- › Work to ensure CUPE members are actively involved at all levels of the NDP.
- › Encourage all members to be involved and run for election at every level – municipally, provincially and federally.

Actions and Initiatives

- CUPE's Enough is Enough campaign underscored the stark gap between First Nations and other communities in Canada in accessing safe drinking water. In partnership with the Assembly of First Nations and the Safe Drinking Water Foundation, the campaign supports the right of all Indigenous peoples to defend their water resources. The poster and petition were highlighted at division conventions.
- CUPE members joined the Métis Nation in Saskatchewan for Back to Batoche Days, an annual celebration of Métis culture and history. CUPE National was an event sponsor, and had a booth at the festival.
- The City of Nanaimo workers collaborated with their neighbours in the Snuneymuxw First Nation on water issues. Through an innovative mentoring program, workers from the First Nation are building their expertise in maintaining water systems, by job shadowing CUPE 401 water workers.
- CUPE stood with the Native Women's Association of Canada at Sisters in Spirit vigils to remember missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls, demanding justice and an end to violence. CUPE also supported Tears 4 Justice, a cross-country walk to raise awareness about violence against women and children.
- CUPE's Equality Branch tackled workplace harassment with three new resources: a kit for local activists, a pamphlet for members who have experienced or witnessed harassment, or who want to organize on the issue, and a research paper documenting the root causes of harassment.
- CUPE National joined with several organizations to support the Canadian Network of Women's Shelters and Transition Houses Network in launching their online resource (<http://www.sheltersafe.ca/>) for women and children escaping domestic violence.

- CUPE was part of a ground-breaking University of Western Ontario survey of over 8,000 Canadian workers on domestic violence and its workplace impacts. The findings highlight the extent of domestic violence and its consequences for workers – particularly women, Aboriginal people and LGBTTI people.
- CUPE participated in the #NOTokay social media campaign calling attention to the things we see and hear that promote violence against women. CUPE joined the Up For Debate campaign demanding a federal leadership debate on women's issues-violence against women, economic security and women in leadership.
- The World Pride Human Rights conference was a key moment for LGBTTI activists. CUPE sponsored and joined delegates from more than 50 countries to learn and strategize on many topics. CUPE's delegation showcased our LGBTTI advocacy, and moderated a panel on the labour movement's involvement in winning LGBTTI rights. The event ended in a massive parade with many proud CUPE participants.
- A CUPE delegation to Bangladesh built support for garment workers and their struggle for safety and labour rights.
- On November 20th, we mark the Transgender Day of Remembrance, to remember those killed because of the hatred or fear of transgender people. It is a time to consider the harassment and discrimination Trans people face, and what we must do to eliminate it.
- Our delegation to Nicaragua and Honduras marked International Women's Day as we meet with women working in sweatshops.
- In the Philippines, our delegation learned about the impact of mining on Indigenous communities.
- One-thousand litres of public water was greeted with cheers in Detroit, where over 120,000 citizens were locked in a water and human rights crisis. Brother Paul Moist joined Maude Barlow and Council of Canadians activists in an international convoy as a show of support and solidarity with people in Detroit who have had their water cut-off.
- In response to the Ebola crisis in West Africa, CUPE donated a total of \$20,000 to the PSI Aid Fund and Médecins sans frontières.
- CUPE National Secretary-Treasurer Charles Fleury led a delegation of CUPE activists and staff to the Inter-American regional congress (IAMRECON) of Public Services International (PSI), in Mexico. The delegation participated in talks about the threats of Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP), Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), Trade in Services Agreement (TISA) and the Canada Europe Trade Agreement (CETA). Brother Fleury warned against these agreements as attempts to sell-off and privatize public services.
- CUPE and the Council of Canadians called on left-leaning European Union (EU) political parties to help stop the dangerous trade bill, CETA, between Canada and the EU from being ratified. In an open letter, we asked Socialists, New European Left, and the Greens to work with like-minded Canadians concerned with the Comprehensive Trade and Economic Agreement.
- Regina residents registered their concerns with the provincial government's controversial plan to use public-private partnership (P3) privatization schemes to build new schools. Attending the annual meeting of the Regina Catholic School Board, community activists and CUPE members put forward motions demanding more transparency and accountability surrounding P3 schools.
- CUPE called on the federal government to abandon the P3 requirements, and consult with municipal governments, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, and other stakeholders on better and more effective solutions that protect and strengthen public infrastructure.

- CUPE's National Executive Board (NEB) adopted a resolution calling for improvements to Canada's immigration and refugee policy and to redirect public funds from military aggression to helping refugees. They noted the lack of leadership by the Canadian government in receiving refugees, having dropped from fifth to fifteenth place among industrialized countries, expressing concerns about increased xenophobia and right-wing propaganda among Canadians. The NEB approved actions to involve CUPE members in settlement and anti-racism initiatives. They further called on the federal government to redirect funds from foreign military intervention to humanitarian assistance. CUPE donated \$25,000 to the Canadian Labour Congress' Fund for the Canadian Council for Refugees.
- CUPE participated in a PSI trade summit in Washington on the new threats that trade and investment agreements such as the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) between Canada and the European Union, TTIP and TISA, pose for workers, public services, democracy and our communities. PSI Canadian and U.S. affiliates participated in meetings with the US Senate representatives.
- Our trade work this year supported the release of new research on the dangers of CETA. Through the Trade Justice Network, we helped launch a cross-Canada conversation toward a positive vision of trade that benefits everyone – not just a global corporate elite.
- CUPE demanded the federal Conservative government reverse its decision to cut funding for literacy organizations across Canada. We clarified how the cuts will hurt Canada's most vulnerable, and will undermine the economy overall. Without this funding, literacy organizations are being forced to lay off staff, review literacy and essential skills programs, and turn away Canadians in desperate need of skills training.
- *Learning in Solidarity* website on literacy in the workplace, was developed by the Canadian labour movement including CUPE. A series of short videos feature workers, teachers, union members and literacy professionals relating their struggles and accomplishments, and the importance of literacy training for workers, unions, and society.
- CUPE helped publish *Transformations: Literacy and the Labour Movement, Past, Present, and Future*, a book about the history of literacy work in the labour movement. Available in French and English, it shows how literacy has been and remains a powerful tool for social change.
- On May 15th, CUPE marked the 95th anniversary of the 1919 Winnipeg General Strike where over 25,000 workers walked off the job in support of fair wages, and better working conditions. On June 21, 1919, the Royal North-West Mounted Police and hired union busters rode on horseback and fired into a crowd of thousands of workers, killing two and injuring countless others.
- CUPE joined workers around the world in providing urgent humanitarian assistance to the people of Gaza including \$25,000 to the humanitarian relief initiative for Gaza, launched by the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) and supported by the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC). CUPE sent a letter on July 16th to the Canadian government voicing concern about the escalation of violence and rising death toll in Gaza.
- CUPE 2348 unveiled plans to transform the Merchants Hotel on Selkirk Avenue in Winnipeg's North End into a multi-use education, affordable housing, and social services hub. The renewed facility will be a centre for community engagement, including student and affordable housing, the University of Winnipeg Urban and Inner-City Studies program, and Community Education Development Association's (CEDA) Pathways to Education high school completion program.
- On Labour Day, the 120th as an official holiday, CUPE called on all Canadian governments to take immediate action to expand the Canada Pension Plan, to ensure strong workplace health and safety laws, and establish a national child care program. CUPE members and leaders joined our brothers and sisters in the labour movement across the country to march in parades and attend community picnics.

- CUPE members and staff were very active in municipal and school board elections in Prince Edward Island, Ontario, Manitoba, and British Columbia. Over three dozen CUPE members ran for election to municipal councils and school boards. CUPE locals and divisions actively supported and engaged in municipal election campaigns, mobilizing hundreds of members to work on the campaigns of labour-endorsed candidates.
- CUPE worked with the NDP at the federal level to achieve a strategic direction goal of electing an NDP government in 2015. National President, Paul Moist spoke to the NDP Caucus strategy retreat in October of the importance of health care and child care to an NDP election platform. In addition, he spoke at the Saskatchewan, Alberta and Ontario NDP conventions about the importance of a workers' platform, the essential partnership between labour and the NDP and the necessity for all labour to reject strategic voting and support the party of labour, the NDP.
- On November 6th, the Union des consommateurs launched a new report, *Les Impacts Économiques de l'instauration d'un Régime Public et Universel*, that favours a universal drug plan for Quebec, featuring a number of leading speakers. The study was funded by CUPE-Quebec. Canada's provinces including Quebec, are alone among all developed countries with a public health system without a public drug plan.
- 25,000 people marched through downtown Montreal to protest the Couillard government's Bill 3. Union and non-union, young people, seniors and families upheld the right to a decent pension for all. They denounced the consequences of the Bill, including the impoverishment of seniors and renegeing on existing contracts. Nearly 2,000 unionized employees in Quebec City – white and blue-collar workers, firefighters and police officers – joined the demonstration.
- CUPE Newfoundland actively supported a provincial NDP initiative to increase the minimum wage to reflect the loss of purchasing power since 2010, as well as an annual adjustment beginning in 2015 to reflect the CPI. The province has not seen a minimum wage increase since 2010.
- A special 40th anniversary celebration of municipal child care in Clarence-Rockland took place on National Child Day, highlighting the important role this vital public service plays in the lives of local families, and honouring the dedicated staff that cares for the community's children. CUPE 503 organized and hosted a reception and plaque unveiling, in appreciation of the high-quality public service operated by the City of Clarence-Rockland.
- On October 16th, CUPE representatives stepped up to help with flood relief efforts in the village of Gainsborough. The entire village of 280 people was affected by flooding, including the hospital. The hospital was evacuated, with patients being dispersed to other medical centres in the region. CUPE Saskatchewan, CUPE Health Care Council and CUPE National teamed up to donate \$8,000 to the South Saskatchewan Flood Relief. CUPE 5999 representing health care workers at Sun Country Health Authority raised over \$2,000 for flood relief, and volunteered their help to flood relief efforts.
- Public sector unions called on governments around the world to recognize and protect the right to strike of all workers. Public Service International made the call on the global day of action in defense of the right to strike called by the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC). The ITUC day of action – *Hands off our right to strike* – is in response to attacks from employer groups at the International Labour Organization, and the actions by some world governments to undermine the internationally recognized right of workers to strike.
- Premier Rachel Notley and the NDP team made an historic breakthrough in Alberta. Their victory is a tribute to Premier Notley and to the people of Alberta who took government from the PC's, breaking a 43-year stronghold in the province. The huge win was a tribute to thousands of NDP volunteers, including many CUPE activists and staff. Brother Ricardo Miranda, CUPE staff, was elected in Calgary-Cross, and Brother Don Monroe, CUPE 37 activist and regional vice-president on our National Executive Board, ran a great campaign with a close second in Calgary-Greenway. CUPE proudly supported, and continues to support, the Alberta NDP.

National Health Accord Campaign

The Health Accord campaign was launched with a National Day of Action on March 31, 2014. CUPE participated in actions across the country, organized by regional health coalitions and coordinated by the Canadian Health Coalition. Fifty protest events across the country marked the first anniversary of the expiry of the Canadian Health Accord. On Parliament Hill, Brother Paul Moist joined former Parliamentary Budget Officer Kevin Page and the Canadian Health Coalition's Coordinator for a press conference on the need for federal health transfers and a new Health Accord.

Working closely with the Council of Canadians, campaigns were well underway across the country. In target ridings, CUPE members organized workshops, lunch and learn sessions, door knocking and collected postcard to promote the campaign and town hall events with allies and the broader public. The town halls were well attended and featured Brother Paul Moist, Maude Barlow, and local health care and social justice advocates. We built a group of informed and experienced canvassers that were called upon for the federal election campaign in 2015.

CUPE Mental Health Strategy

CUPE developed a Mental Health Strategy to put into action the strategies identified by the Mental Health Commission of Canada.

We created and piloted workshops for stewards in CUPE workplaces to fight stigma associated with mental health, and to recognize and respond to situations in the workplace when mental health problems may be present. A new health and safety workshop to help activists identify psychological hazards in the workplace is also available.

An educational toolkit to support understanding mental health in the workplace is available, and an audit tool to identify hazards and promote psychological health and safety in the workplace, is developed for CUPE workplaces.

Resources and external supports for members and activists are available on the CUPE website, and include health and safety fact sheets, tools that help address mental health in the workplace, and links to emergency and other mental health resources.

Federal Election 2015

CUPE actively prepared for the 2015 federal election using a multipronged approach. Mobilization got underway with the National President's breakfast and lunch time presentations on the federal election issues and organizing strategies, at each Division Convention. Volunteers were recruited into target NDP campaigns.

Our outreach to CUPE members relied on our successful Fairness approach, and election specific tools and resources. We urged our members to get out to vote, and to consider the NDP – our party and our strongest labour ally. We highlighted four key issues of consequence to working people: child care, health care, retirement security and good jobs.

Our plan involved engaging CUPE members to get out and vote, and to encourage member activists to canvas across the country, particularly in key ridings. The initiatives included:

- Federal election kits were developed with several tools to help CUPE locals get-out-the-vote, and included fact sheets, postcards and posters.
- In most regions, members were booked off to reach out to CUPE locals – both leadership, and rank and file members.
- To support this outreach, two-hundred thousand (200,000) CUPE leaflets, “One Election Away”, were distributed within locals and to regional offices.
- CUPE members supported divisions to organize canvases and special event, focused on target ridings.
- Online communication was strong as we launched the CUPE Election Hub, a dynamic center to our social media work.

Child Care

CUPE sponsored and partnered in the ChildCare 2020 conference, the first national child care policy conference in a decade, and the fourth such conference in Canada’s history. More than sixty (60) CUPE child care workers and activists attended along with nearly six hundred (600) participants. They called for renewed action on early learning and child care in Canada, an inclusive vision of early childhood learning, and the engagement of the next generation of activists who will continue to advocate for affordable, quality child care. CUPE’s Research Branch presented on the positive impact of unionization on the quality of care.

CUPE revised the Rethink Child Care kitchen table conversation guide to include the vision for child care growing out of the ChildCare 2020 conference and to reflect the developments in the political party platforms. It includes a fact sheet contrasting income splitting, the Universal Child Care Benefit, and child care.

CUPE contributed to the rethink child care calculator to help people see how much they would save with a maximum \$15 a day child care program. It was launched during the *Spring into Action for Child Care* week. CUPE was involved across Canada organizing and participating in the events. A longer workshop has also been developed on canvassing and holding town halls on the issue of child care.

CUPE called for a federal child care plan that is affordable, to support families, and allow more women to join the workforce and boost our economy. The NDP platform supported substantial new child care spaces, and significant federal investment, as part of this national plan.

Employment Insurance Campaign

CUPE members were out in force challenging the Harper Conservatives' cuts to the employment insurance, with mounting protests in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Quebec, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland and Labrador.

CUPE is a major force behind the campaign against the employment insurance cuts in the Maritimes. On Valentine's Day 2014, representatives of the PEI Coalition for Fair employment insurance delivered a Valentine to Conservative government to scrap the EI changes.

In Quebec, thousands took part in demonstrations across the province in February. A broad coalition against the cuts to the employment insurance united unions, provincial municipal organizations, agricultural producers, rural groups, unemployed workers' groups, and other citizens against the federal Conservative cuts.

Labour Rights - Right to Strike

CUPE celebrated the Supreme Court decision recognizing the constitutional right of public sector workers to go on strike. A huge victory for all workers across the country, the top court determined the legislation failed the constitutional test.

The decision stems from Saskatchewan labour legislation passed in 2008 – the *Public Service Essential Services Act* which put unjust limits on which public sector workers could go on strike in the province. The Supreme Court struck down the law because it violated Saskatchewan workers' *Charter* right to freedom of association. The decision affirms that all workers, in all provinces, have the constitutional right to strike or to have another way to resolve labour disputes if their work is essential to health, safety or security.

When the offending legislation was put forward by the newly elected Wall government, several unions, including CUPE, launched legal challenges. The cases were eventually combined by the courts into one led by the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour.

"I applaud the Supreme Court for recognizing the role unions play in improving the lives of workers through free collective bargaining. This is a historic precedent for CUPE, public sector unions, and the entire labour movement." Paul Moist, CUPE National President.

International Solidarity Strategy Meeting

CUPE members and allies met to update CUPE's vision for global justice, leading to a new policy statement that renews our commitment to building strong unions and social movements around the world. To fight growing corporate power and inequality and protect workers' rights and public services in Canada, we must take a stand globally.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1D SUPPORTING STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

- › Focus resources to increase membership support, and public support for unions.
- › Continue core work as mandated by past conventions. Build and strengthen capacity to meet these challenges.
- › Fund the revitalization of our union through the Fairness project.
- › Prioritize resources for member mobilizing campaigns and priorities.
- › Protect our members and public services by fighting all forms of privatization.
- › Expand ways of reaching, communicating and informing CUPE members.

CUPE concentrates core work and resources on the policy direction established at our biannual conventions. This report demonstrates in a brief way, how we have achieved this mandate over the past two years, as we have:

- Increased support for CUPE and the labour movement amongst members and the community.
- Continued to renew our union using the proven approach of the Fairness project.
- Expanded our capacity to withstand the challenges we face socially, economically and politically.
- Defended our members and public services against privatization.
- Allocated resources to mobilize CUPE members in support of CUPE priorities.
- Continued to build our communication and education resources to keep CUPE members well informed and engaged.

Finally...

Delegates to the 2013 National Convention to which highlighted CUPE's 50th anniversary celebration, endorsed a strong plan for our union. As we celebrated with pride, our past achievements we began to build a plan for success for the next five decades. *Proud of our Past, Ready for the Future* will ensure our strength and capacity to take action and give voice to workers and citizens alike. Free collective bargaining may be under threat but we pushed back vigorously to defend our fundamental labour and human rights. We continued to declare and stand for the values of public services and workers; all human rights, dignity and equality of workers, Canadians and people around the globe; and, the fundamental right to healthy and safe environments- now, and into the future.

CUPE members, activists, leaders and staff rose to the challenges before us in a spirit of strength, solidarity and commitment. Together we continued to embrace our vision and values, everything we stand for as a union and as global citizens. At this national convention, Vancouver 2015, we recommit to our values, continue to build our vision, and establish our course for the next two years. Our strength is in our diversity and in our shared commitment and dedication.

In solidarity we will build our Power!

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