2016-17 CUPE NATIONAL LEADERSHIP PROJECT

Building Strong Locals

**FINAL REPORT
SEPTEMBER 2017
CUPE RESEARCH**

CUPE

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INTRODUCTION

Delegates to the 2015 CUPE National Convention voted to undertake a second national membership survey as part of the Strategic Directions plan for 2015-2017.

> We will continue building strong locals by . . . conducting our second national membership survey to inform and guide our union on building a more inclusive union, meeting our members' needs, and engaging our members. We will consult our equity-seeking members in the development of this survey (Strategic Directions, 2015-17).

CUPE conducted its first ever national membership survey in 2014 which, for the first time, gave us a profile of the CUPE membership from coast to coast. The survey revealed key demographic characteristics of the CUPE membership in terms of gender, age, racial background, Aboriginal background, physical or mental health condition, and sexual identity. It also gave us information about the nature of CUPE members' employment: whether, and to what extent, members work full-time hours, have access to benefits and a pension plan, work for multiple employers, and have access to paid sick days, among other conditions of employment. We also learned about members' participation rates in union events or activities, the various ways in which members receive union communications, and the extent to which members are working in precarious forms of employment.

One of the compelling findings from the 2014 Membership Survey is that only about half the membership (53%) participate in a CUPE event or activity during the year. The 2014 survey results also tell us that members most active in the union are not entirely representative of all members. CUPE members who are most active in the union tend to be male, older, not racialized, have full-time secure jobs, and earn higher incomes. Many of our local unions face challenges engaging more members in local union activities, especially members who are equity-seekers, precariously employed, and younger.

We know anecdotally that some locals struggle with low membership participation rates. For example, some locals experience difficulties achieving quorum at membership meetings, which hinders the ability to conduct union business; others are challenged to fill vacancies on the local executive and/or committee structures; and still other locals experience low attendance at social and/or community events.

The 2016-17 CUPE National Leadership Survey project seeks to understand the challenges local unions experience when engaging members in union activities. But more importantly, we want to learn what local unions are doing to increase member participation in union activities. Our goal is to identify local unions' successful, best practices for engaging members in union activities – especially members of equity-seeking groups, precariously employed members, and young members in particular – and share that information throughout CUPE's 2,200-plus local unions. The survey team concluded that CUPE local leaders are the best source of information to achieve our research objectives.

The following report provides data that was collected from a survey of elected CUPE local leaders from across the country, focus groups with the members of CUPE National's Equality Committees (Women's Committee, Rainbow Committee, Aboriginal Council, Persons with Disabilities Committee, and the Pink Triangle Committee) and the National Young Workers' Committee, focus groups with CUPE members who are precariously employed, and a survey of CUPE servicing representatives. See the section on *Research Methodology* for more information.

Results from the national survey project were reported at CUPE National's 2017 Building Strong Locals Conference in Halifax. This report and related resources are available online at www.cupe.ca including a web series that features stories of CUPE members who have devised innovative strategies to engage members in local union activities.

WHO DID WE HEAR FROM?

What elected position(s) do you currently hold?

- President
- Vice-President
- Secretary-Treasurer
- Recording Secretary
- Chief Steward
- Other
- Unit Chair
- Provincial Division Executive Board Member
- National Executive Board (NEB) member

National Executive Board (NEB) member — 0%
President — 34%
Vice-President — 17%
Secretary-Treasurer — 14%
Recording Secretary — 11%
Chief Steward — 9%
Other — 7%
Unit Chair — 5%
Provincial Division Executive Board Member — 3%

A total of 851 members responded to this multiple-response question. A little over one third of the survey sample, about 34%, are local union presidents. Local vice-presidents comprise 17% of the sample, followed by local secretary-treasurers at approximately 14%.

The response rates for members of the National Executive Board (less than 1%) and Provincial Division Executive Boards (3%) appear low because members of these groups may have selected one of the other survey response options (e.g. president, vice-president). In fact, of the 851 members who responded to this question, 42 members indicated they held more than one union position, with 13 members indicating they held more than 2 union positions.

Seven per cent (7%) wrote that they held "other" elected positions including:

- Members and/or executive at large (N=13)
- Representatives (N=7)
- Health and safety (N=6)
- Trustees (N=6)
- Sergeant at arms (N=5)
- Committee members (N=4)
- Coordinators (N=4)
- Officers (N=2)
- Secretaries (N=2)
- Webmaster (N=1)

AGE

2016	2014

2016 chart:
- No Answer: 2%
- 21 to 30: 3%
- 31 to 40: 16%
- 41 to 50: 30%
- 51 to 60: 41%
- 61+: 8%

2014 chart:
- 24 and under: 4%
- 25 to 34: 17%
- 35 to 44: 22%
- 45 to 55: 32%
- 55 to 64: 22%
- 65+: 3%
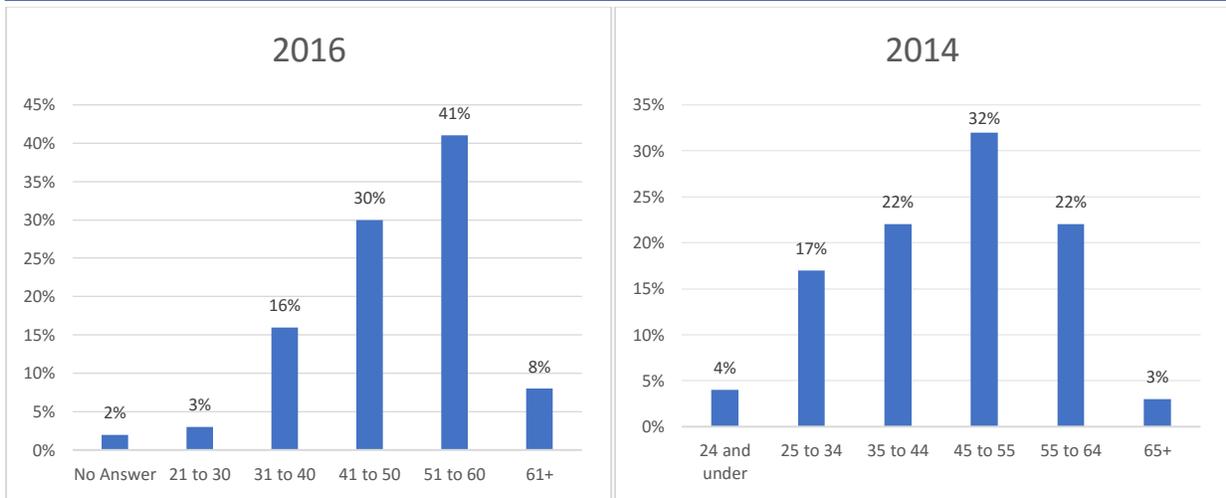
Age

Proportionally fewer young members (3%), defined as 30 or younger, participated in the survey. Respondents to the survey tend to be older. The largest cohort of members (71%) are between the ages of 41 to 50 (30% of respondents) and 51 to 60 (41% of respondents). In all, ninety-five per cent (95%) of the sample is comprised of members 31 years of age or older.

Although not exact, the age data shares similarities with data from the 2014 CUPE National Membership Survey in that respondents to both surveys are older. The 2014 data reveals that 21% of the CUPE membership is 34 years of age and younger, whereas 79% of members are 35 years of age and older.

What is your gender?

- Female
- Male
- Transgender
- Transsexual
- Intersex
- Two spirit
- Gender non-conforming / Genderqueer / Androgynous
- I identify my gender in other terms
- No answer

Female 60%
Male 38%
Transgender 0%
Transsexual 0%
Intersex 0%
Two spirit 0%
No answer 2%
Gender non-conforming / Genderqueer / Androgynous 0%
I identify my gender in other terms...
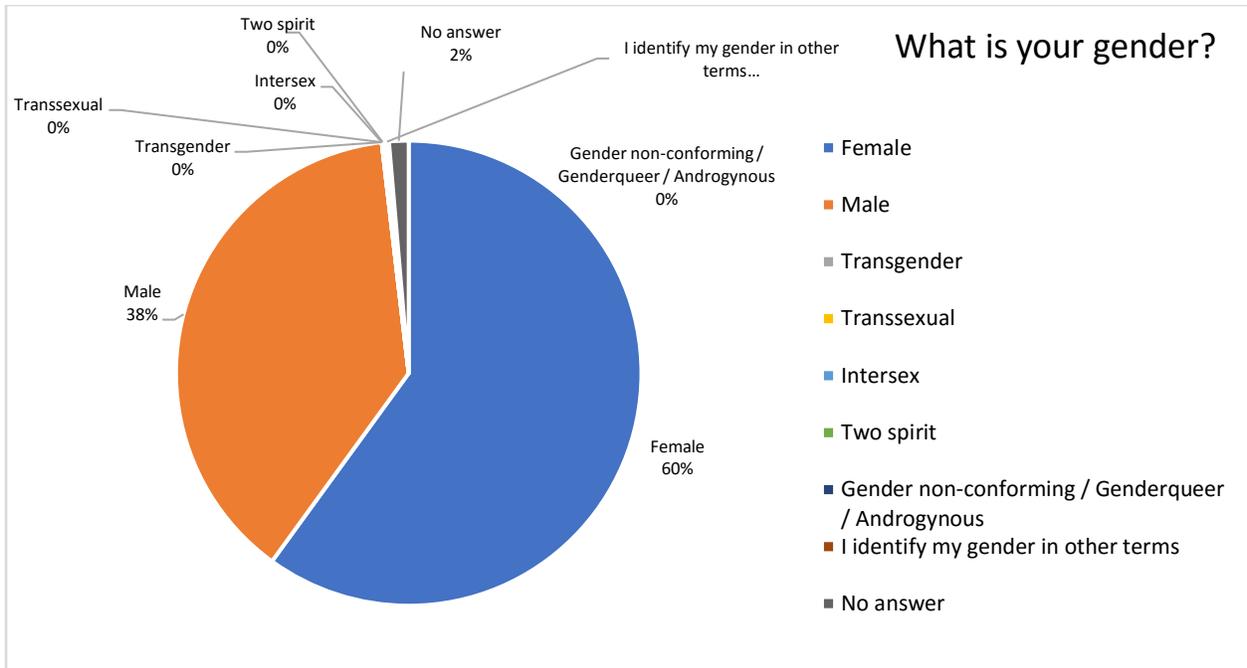
Gender

Sixty per cent (60%) of survey participants identify as female; whereas nearly 4 out of 10 respondents (38%) identify as male. One respondent identifies as two-spirit and another respondent identifies as gender non-conforming / genderqueer / androgynous accounting for 0.12% of the sample each.

Approximately 2% of the sample chose not to answer this question. No one who participated in the survey identified as transgender, transsexual or intersex.

Again, data from the current survey is similar to the data from the 2014 membership survey where 68% of the sample identified as female and 32% identified as male.

Gender and Local Union Presidents

President

Male 39%
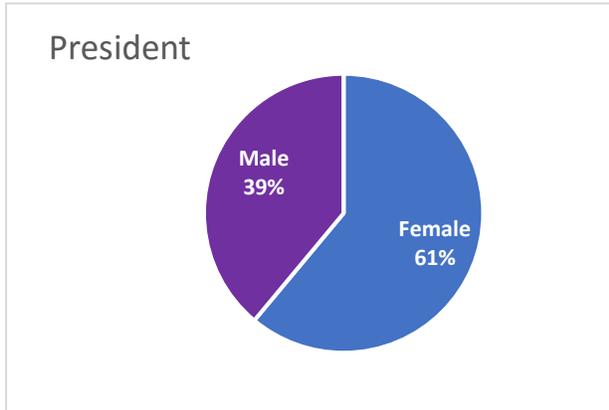
Female 61%

The data reveal that 6 out of 10 (61%) local union presidents are female and nearly 4 out of 10 (39%) are male. This is to be expected since more than 60% of the CUPE membership are female.

Gender and Local Union Vice-Presidents

Vice President

Male 40%

Female 59%

I identify my gender as other than Female or Male…
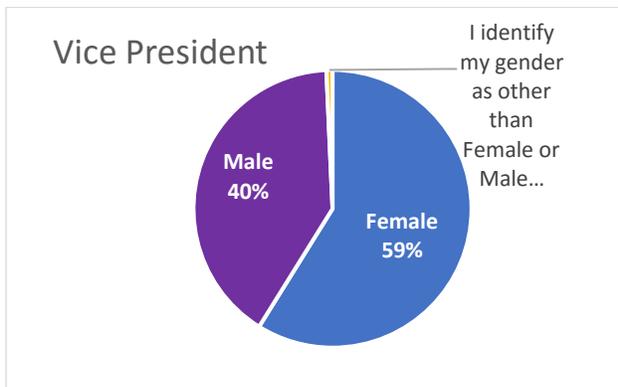
Similarly, nearly 6 out of 10 (59%) local union vice-presidents are also female and 4 out of 10 (40%) vice presidents identify as male. In fact, in all elected positions the proportion of females to males was higher.

Participating Locals by Province

Participating Locals by Province

Province	Percentage
BC	14.14%
AB	7.17%
SK	5.27%
MB	6.12%
ON	36.29%
QC	14.56%
NB	9.49%
NL	1.48%
NS	4.43%
PE	1.05%
Totals	100%
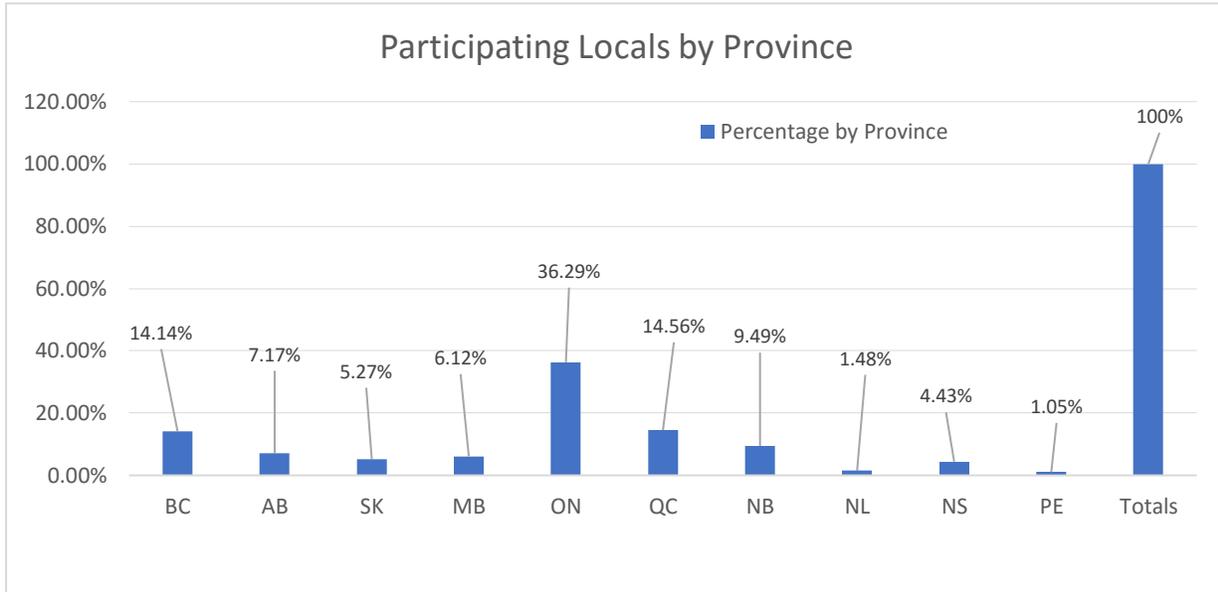
A total of 474 local unions participated in the survey representing approximately 22% of all CUPE locals. Ontario has the highest survey participation rate with 36% of locals, slightly lower than the province's participation rate in the 2014 membership survey (40%). Quebec has the second highest participation rate with approximately 15% of locals; the province's participation rate in the 2014 membership survey was slightly higher at 18% of locals. And the third highest participation rate belongs to British Columbia with 14% of locals, unchanged from the province's local participation rate in 2014.

Eighteen per cent (18%) of locals in the Prairie provinces took part in the survey, slightly more than 2014 when 17% of Prairie locals participated in the membership survey. Seven per cent (7%) of Alberta locals participated in the survey, the same proportion as participated in the 2014 survey. In Saskatchewan, 5% of locals participated, the same as in 2014. And in Manitoba, 6% of locals participated in the survey, compared to the 5% of locals that took part in 2014.

More locals from the Atlantic provinces participated in the current survey compared to 2014, 15% vs. 11% respectively. New Brunswick accounts for most of the increase with 9% of locals participating, compared to 6% of locals in 2014. In Nova Scotia, 4% of locals took part in the survey compared to 3% of locals in 2014. And the numbers for Newfoundland and Labrador, and Prince Edward Island remain virtually unchanged at 1% of locals participating in each province in the current and 2014 surveys.

Participating Locals by Sector
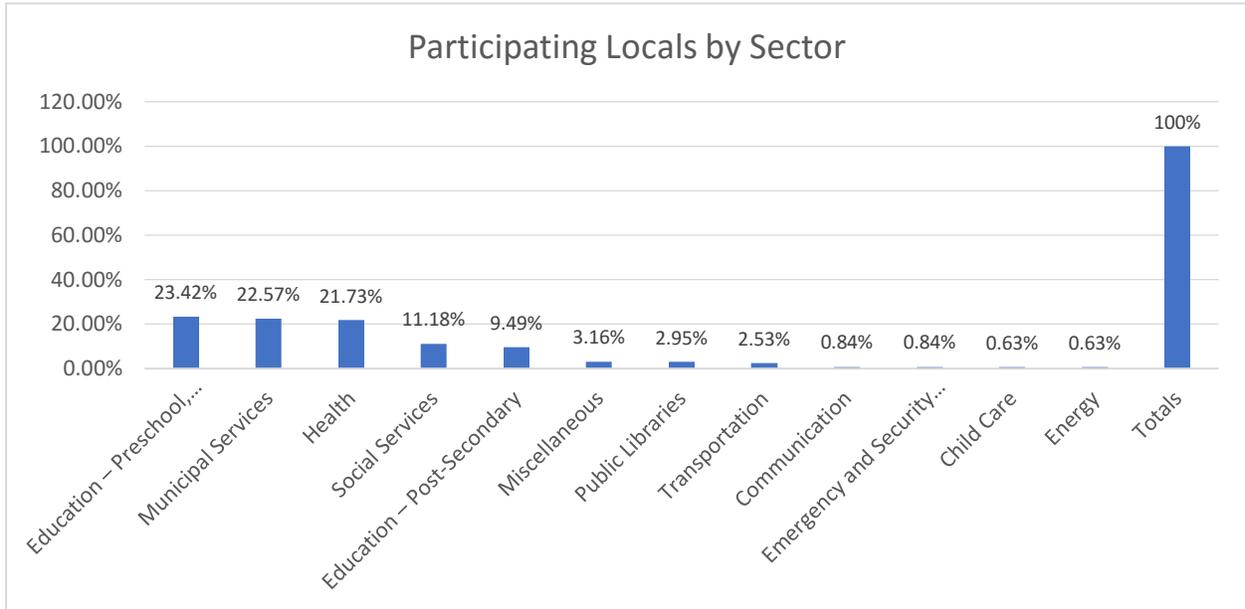
Most of the survey respondents indicate that their local belongs to one of three sectors: municipal, education (preschool, elementary and secondary school), and health. In fact, 67% of locals that participated in the survey belong to one of these three sectors.

Approximately, 23% of locals that participated in the survey are in the municipal sector. Locals in the education sector (preschool, elementary and secondary school) also represent an additional 23% of locals that participated in the survey. And 22% of participating locals are in the health sector.

Sectors with the lowest rates of participation in the survey include communication, emergency and security services, child care, and energy, with a participation rate of less than 1% of locals each.

Participating Locals by Size

Size of Locals
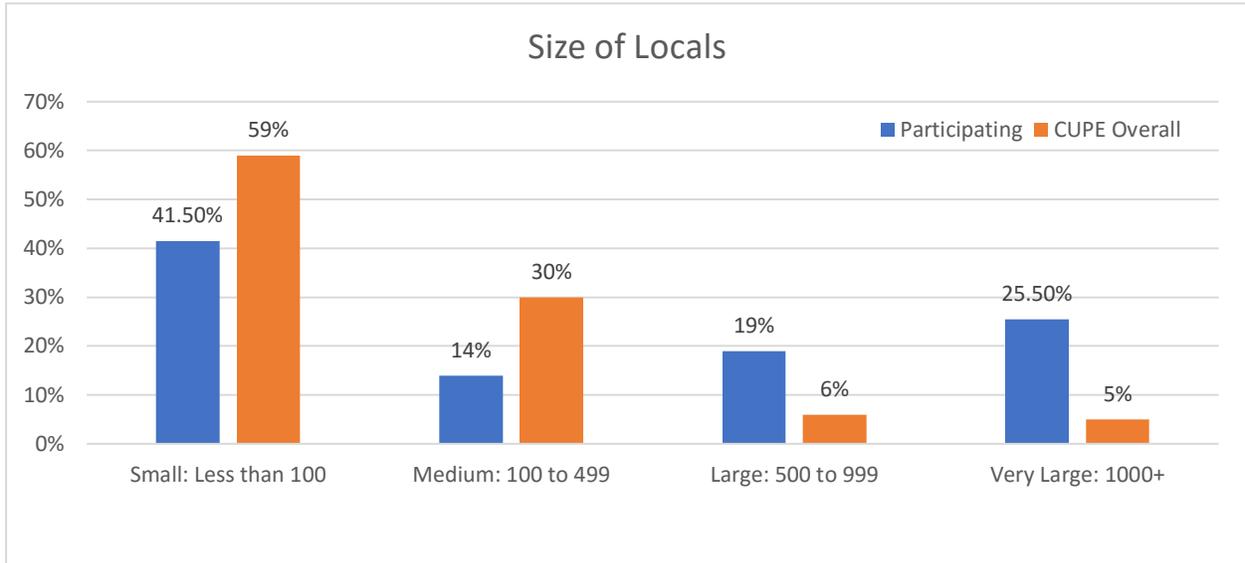
Elected leaders of 474 local unions, representing 354,659 members, responded to the survey. Of that number, small locals, defined as fewer than 100 members, comprise most of the sample at 41.5% of all local unions that responded to the survey. Very large locals (1000+ members) account for 25.5% of the sample, followed by large locals (500-999 members) at 19%, and medium size locals (100-499 members) at 14% of the sample. Compared to the total number of CUPE locals represented by 'CUPE Overall', the sample under-represents small and medium size locals and over-represents locals that are large and very large.

In your opinion, why aren't more members involved in your local union's activities?

| Category	Percentage
Accessibility issues for persons with disabilities	0.67%
Language barriers	3.23%
Discrimination or prejudice within the union	5.80%
Lack of mentoring opportunities	11.05%
Lack of paid union leave	13.48%
Other volunteer commitments	17.65%
The timing of union meetings	22.37%
Other	26.28%
Workload in union positions	32.88%
Fear of employer retaliation	35.98%
Shift work	36.39%
Child care responsibilities	44.20%
Household responsibilities	52.43%
Family responsibilities, including elder care	52.56%
Work commitments or demands	60.38%

Note: this is a multiple response question therefore totals do not add to 100%.

Most respondents (60%) cite work commitments or demands as the reason why more members aren't involved in local union activities. Family responsibilities, including elder care (52% of respondents), household responsibilities (52% of respondents), child care responsibilities (44% of respondents), and shift work (36% of respondents) round out the top 5 reasons as identified by survey respondents.

Proportionally fewer respondents cite accessibility issues for persons with disabilities (0.67%), language barriers (3%), discrimination or prejudice within the union (6%), lack of mentoring opportunities (11%), and lack of paid union leave (13%) as posing barriers to participation in local union activities.

Written responses in the category 'other' (26% of respondents) include a lack of interest, a lack of knowledge of unions, cynicism toward the union and/or executive, work-life balance, and too much responsibility as other potential barriers to participation in union activities. A handful of respondents claim some members believe there is no need for unions. Still, others report that some members are satisfied with the functioning of their local and see no need to become involved.

Please rate your satisfaction with the level of member engagement in your local union's activities:

Response	Percentage
No answer	1.48%
Strongly satisfied	7.04%
Strongly dissatisfied	10.49%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	13.21%
Somewhat satisfied	27.78%
Dissatisfied	40.00%
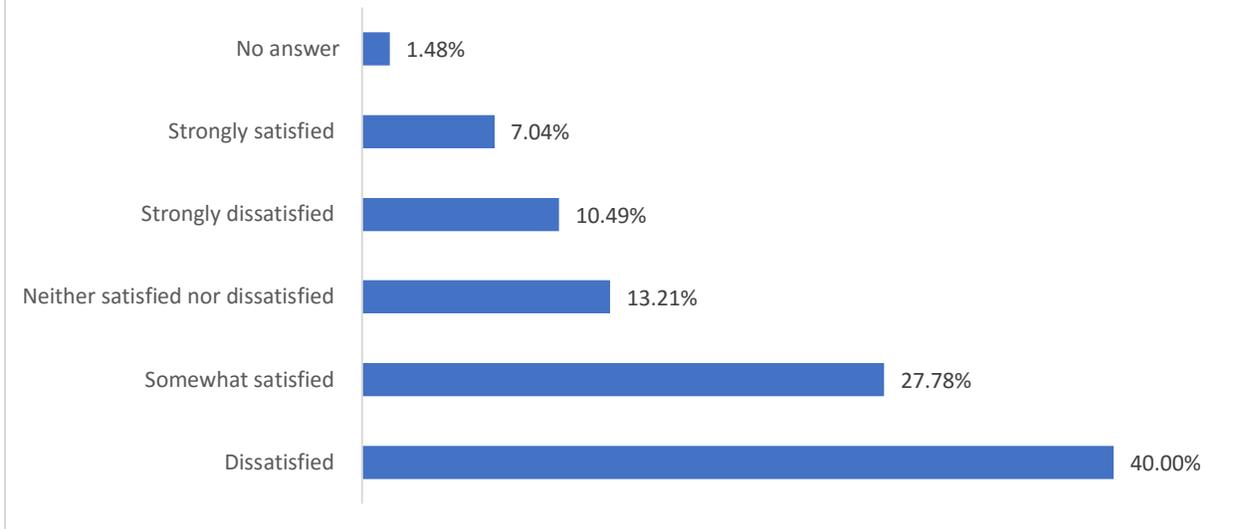
More respondents are dissatisfied with the level of member engagement in local union activities compared to those who are satisfied. Forty per cent (40%) of survey participants are dissatisfied with the level of member engagement and an additional 10.5% are strongly dissatisfied. In total, over half the sample (50.5%) are dissatisfied with the levels of member engagement in their local unions.

By comparison, 28% of respondents are somewhat satisfied with the level of member engagement and an additional 7% are strongly satisfied. In total, just over one-third of respondents (35%) are satisfied with the levels of member engagement in local union activities.

During the last 24 months, the level of union engagement in local union activities has:

Response	Percentage
No answer	3.83%
Decreased	8.27%
Increased	33.83%
Stayed the same	54.07%
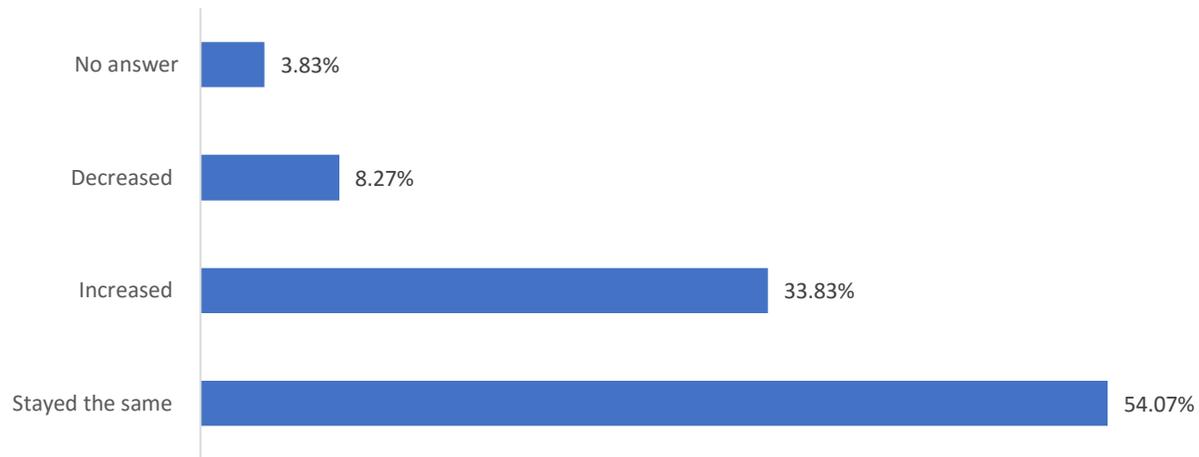
Most survey respondents indicate that during the last 24 months, the level of engagement in local union activities has either increased (34% of respondents) or stayed the same (54% of respondents). Only 67 survey participants, or 8% of the sample, report a decrease in the level of union engagement during the past 24 months.

Does your collective agreement have a provision for new member orientation?

4%
8%
30%
58%

- Yes
- No
- Don't know
- No answer
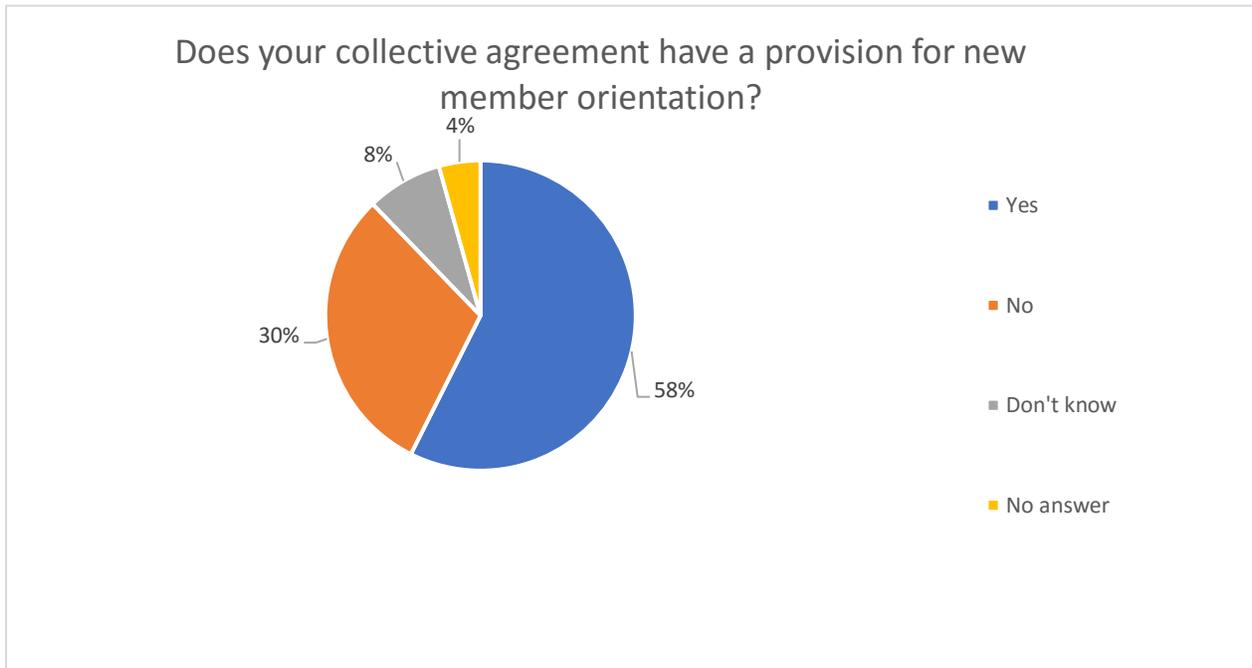
Well over half the sample (58% of respondents) report that their collective agreement contains a provision for new member orientation, whereas less than one-third (30%) report no such collective agreement provision. Eight per cent (8%) of respondents did not know the answer to this question.

Does your local participate in the employer's orientation sessions for new members?

5%
6%
38%
51%

- Yes
- No
- Don't know
- No answer
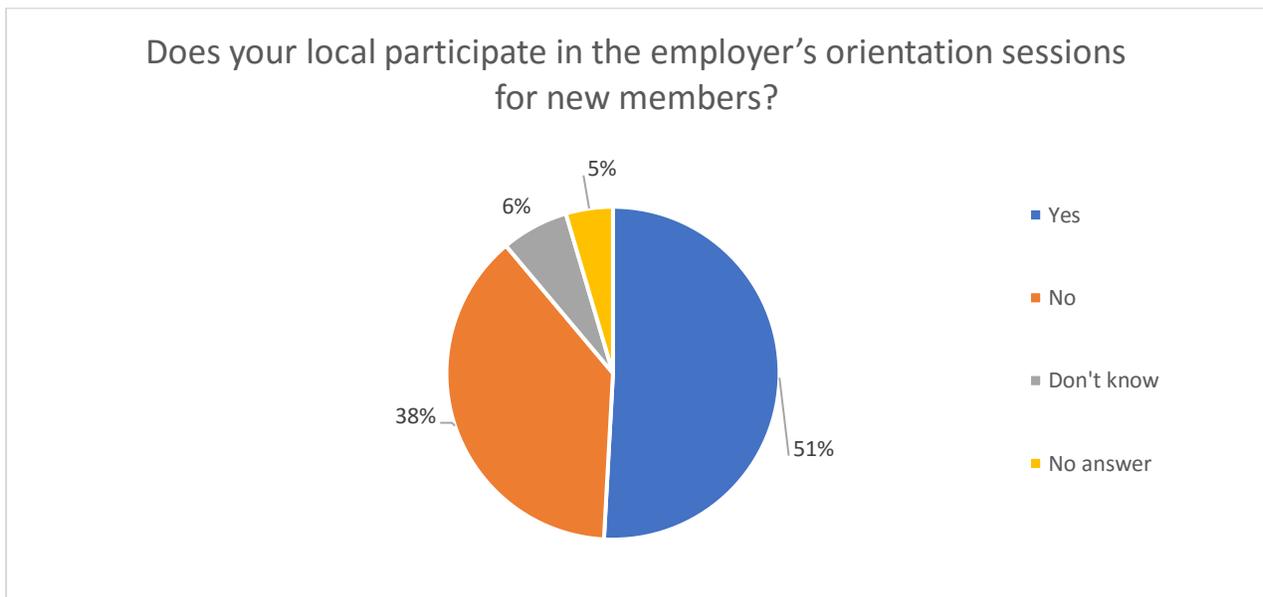
Slightly more than half of survey respondents (51%) report that their locals do participate in their employer's orientation sessions for new members, whereas 38% of respondents report that their locals do not participate in such sessions.

Does your local meet with new members and have them sign membership cards?

Legend:
- Yes (50%)
- No (40%)
- Don't know (5%)
- No answer (5%)
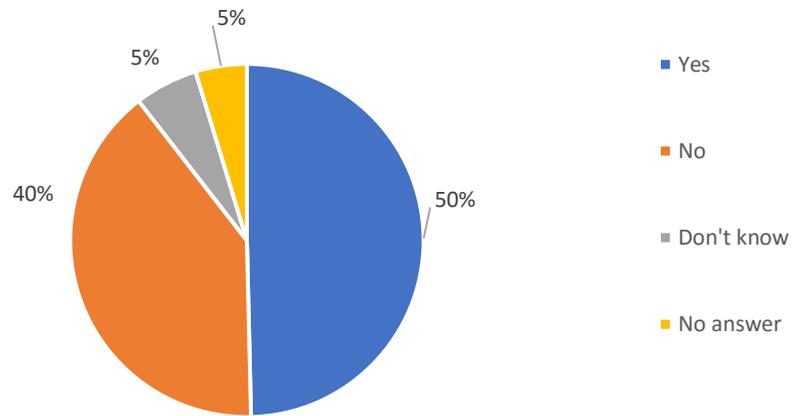
Half (50%) of survey respondents report that their locals meet with new members to sign membership cards, whereas 40% of respondents report that their locals do not undertake this practice.

ADDRESSING MEMBER ENGAGEMENT

Over the past 24 months, has your local undertaken any activities or made any bylaw / policy changes to increase member engagement?

- No — 61%
- Yes — 29%
- No answer — 10%
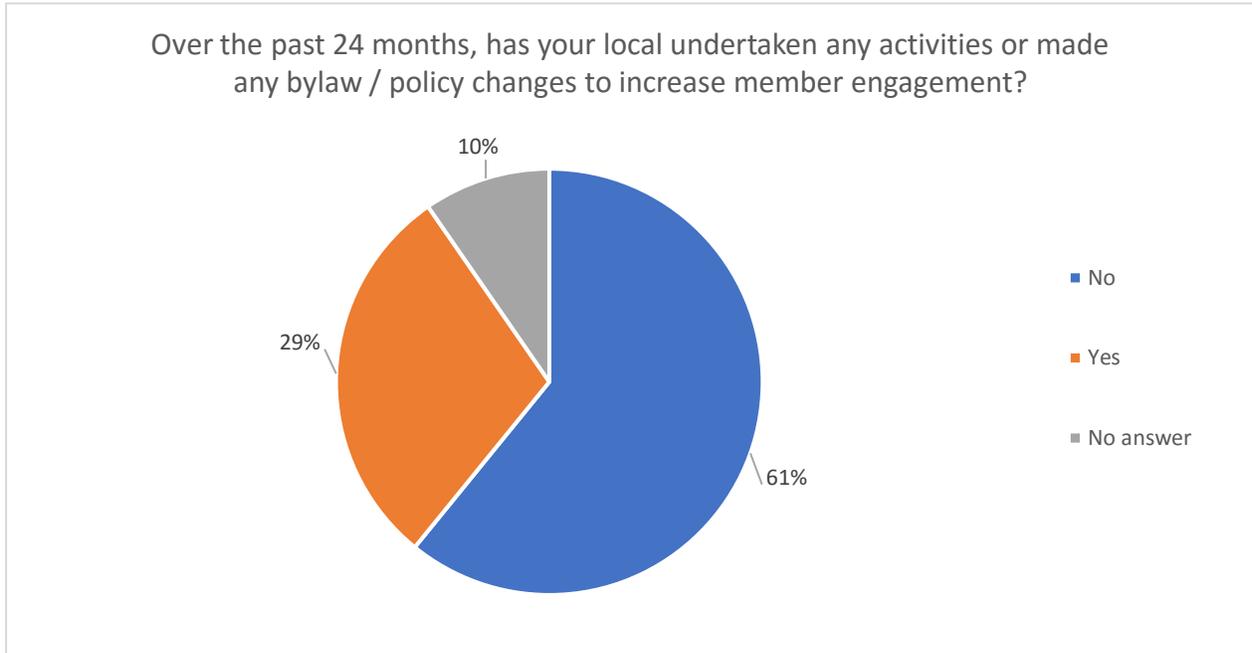
Most respondents (61%) reveal that their locals have undertaken no activities or made any bylaw/policy changes to increase member engagement over the past 24 months. However, 29% of respondents report otherwise, which suggests that a rather sizeable proportion of locals are attempting to find solutions to engage more of their members in local union activities.

During the past 2 years, has your local used any of the following measures to attract more members to regular and/or general membership meetings?

Measure	Percentage
Provided food at the meeting	60.62%
Provided door prizes at the meeting	51.98%
Changed the time of the meeting	33.33%
Changed the location of the meeting	32.47%
Had a guest speaker at the meeting	28.52%
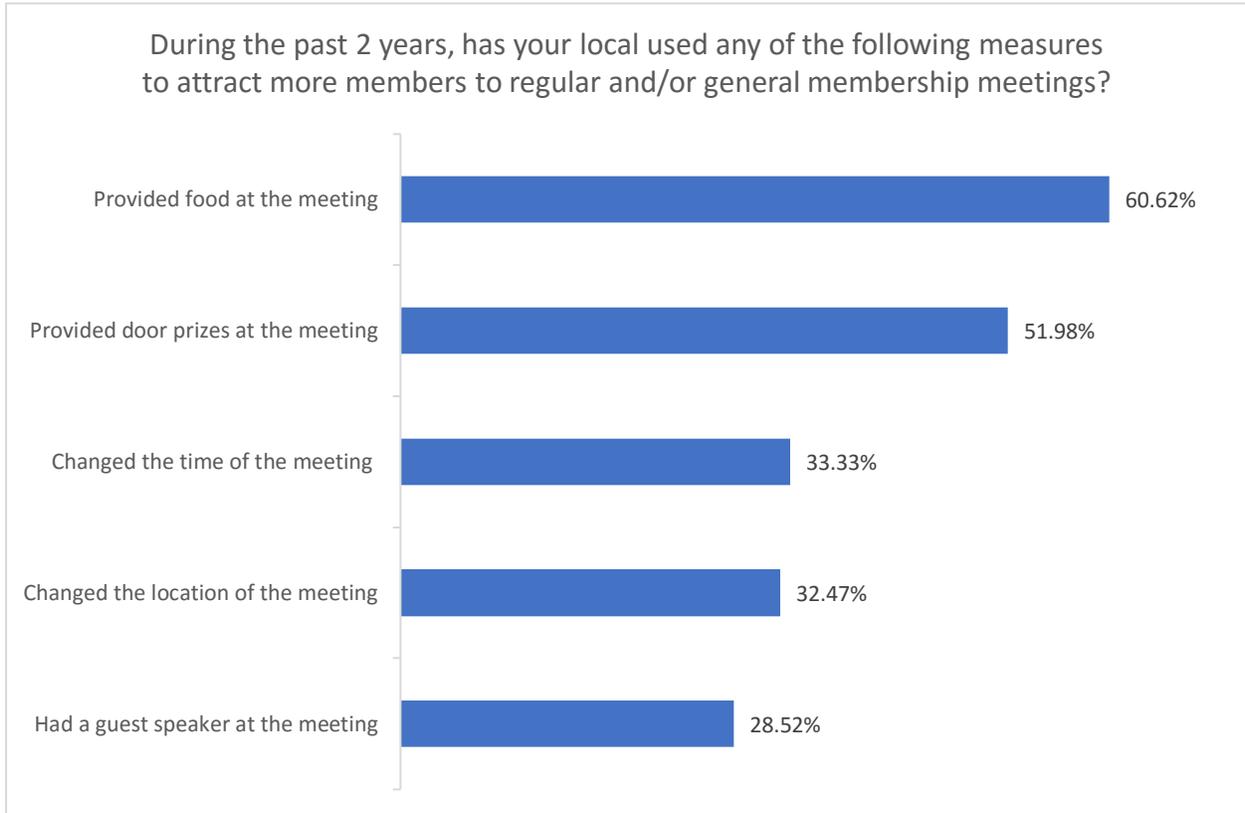
Note: this is a multiple response question therefore totals do not add to 100%.

Providing food is the most popular way to attract members to meetings for well over half (61%) of respondents. A little over half (52%) of respondents indicate that providing door prizes is an effective way to get members out. Other popular measures amongst survey respondents include changing the time of meetings (33%), changing the location of meetings (32.5%), and inviting a guest speaker (28.5%).

RETHINKING GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

Respondents across datasets recommend that local unions rethink their general membership meetings to engage more members. Some of the recommendations may require locals to revise their bylaws to dismantle barriers to participation.

> "If you need to amend your by-laws to allow members to hold positions without having to attend x number of meetings in a row then do it. This could be the only thing stopping someone who couldn't get the required number of meetings involved." (respondent to staff survey)

> "We just amended bylaws so that any union-dues paying member attending [a] meeting for the first time can be nominated for any position. It was very successful. In November, two new stewards and an executive position were filled." (respondent to the leadership survey)

> "Removal of required number of GMM meetings attended in order to be eligible to run for elected positions. Removal of geographical restrictions for steward positions. (i.e. instead of being workplace-specific it is more regionally-specific across our workplaces." (respondent to the leadership survey)

Respondents commented that general membership meetings are too formal, too long, uninteresting, and lack focus, all of which deters members from participating.

> "The best practice I have seen are those meetings that are run on time limits and those that stay on topic. Some groups pre-plan their agendas which does help keep members focussed on the issues. . . . As well as plan the meeting to be no greater than one (1) and a half (1/2) hour in length." (respondent to the staff survey)

> "Meetings that are interesting, inviting, and a good use of people's time – less formal, clear agendas, ample opportunity for member input . . ." (respondent to the staff survey)

Some respondents stated that strict adherence to parliamentary procedure and rules of order can be confusing and intimidating to members, especially members who have never attended a union meeting, and may deter members from attending and participating. As one respondent told us, "people are afraid and confused by rules of order."

Recommendations include shorter meetings, meetings that are held on more than one day and/or rotated throughout the day, meeting agendas that are distributed in advance, guest speakers, incentives for members who bring a member with them to meetings, and above all endeavour to make the meeting fun by providing raffles and giveaways.

> "Keep meetings interesting. A lot of members feel that the meetings are boring and they are not engaged. The parliamentary procedure ran meetings lose people. We need to do more to keep them interesting. We have business to complete but that doesn't mean it has to be a dull meeting – guest speakers – special topics each meeting – something different to maintain engagement of the members and keep it simple." (respondent to staff survey)

A respondent to the staff survey told us that adding an educational component to a general membership meeting had a positive impact on engaging members.

"I suggested to one of my Locals that when I attend GMs that I give a brief presentation on one aspect of their CA, for example, explaining the grievance procedure. So far we've only done this once but it was successful in engaging the members in attendance as it was relevant to them and a break from the typical GM agenda." (respondent to the staff survey)

Recommendations from the data include:

- Agendas that are distributed to all members in advance of meetings.
- Provide members with the minutes of general membership meetings (e.g. via email or confidentially through internal mail at work).
- Shorter meetings with time limits (e.g. one hour).
- Meetings that are held on more than one day, or rotated throughout the day.
- Locating general membership meetings at the workplace, or at a location close to the workplace.
- Inviting guest speakers.
- Incentives for members who bring a member to a meeting, particularly new members and members who have never attended a general membership meeting.
- Provide opportunities within, and outside of, formal meetings for members to ask questions and interact with elected leaders. Parliamentary procedure/rules of order may be perceived as confusing and intimidating to members and may pose a barrier to participation.
- Special topics of interest to members (e.g. the grievance procedure).
- Ensure family friendly meetings (e.g. provide on-site child care, welcome members' children).
- Ensure meetings are wheelchair accessible.
- Eliminate the requirement that members attend a certain number of meetings per year to run for elected office.
- Provide remote access to meetings (e.g. Skype, teleconferencing, video-conferencing, webinars, town hall format).
- Provide multiple formats to participate in elections (e.g. online, phone, proxy voting, multiple physical voting stations).

OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION FOR EQUITY SEEKING GROUPS, YOUNG WORKERS AND PRECARIOUSLY EMPLOYED WORKERS.

Does your local undertake any practices encouraging participation in local union activities by members from equity-seeking groups, precariously employed members and/or young workers?

- No
- Yes
- Don't know
- No answer

8%
17%
52%
23%
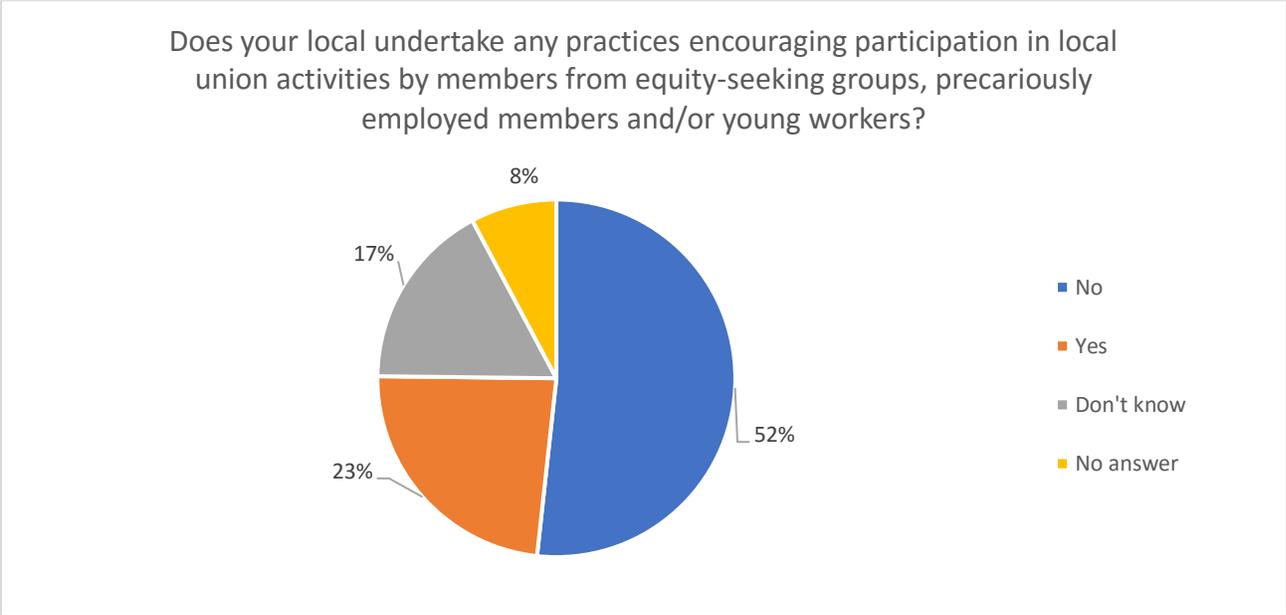
Slightly more than half (52%) of survey respondents indicate that their locals do not undertake practices to encourage the participation of equity-seeking groups, precariously employed members and/or young workers in local union activities. However, almost one-quarter of respondents (23%) report that their locals do undertake such practices. Interestingly, 17% of survey respondents did not know the answer to this question.

DIVERSITY IN THE UNION - MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL EQUALITY COMMITTEES AND THE NATIONAL YOUNG WORKERS' COMMITTEE

Focus group participants referred to a lack of diversity within their local unions as a major reason for members – especially members from equity-seeking groups and young workers – being unwilling to engage in local union activities. The National Women's Committee members stressed that their local executives were still male-dominated and, in some cases, showed resistance to including female officers:

> "Unfortunately, the structure remains male dominated and there's still this fear among women of going to a meeting and express themselves in front of the boys' club." (focus group respondent)

Members of the National Women's Committee and the National Rainbow Committee pointed to a lack of representation for workers of color or immigrant workers in their locals:

> "They don't see themselves reflected in the union, executive positions are held by white men and women. A lot of our members are immigrant members, so this is a barrier." (focus group respondent)

> "One of the largest barriers to the involvement of racialized people is this perception: 'at the top, the officers and administrators are all white, so if there is no one acting on our behalf why should we be involved?'" (focus group respondent)

Members with disabilities felt that their issues were treated as low priorities. Overall, participants pointed to a problem in representation to explain why members of certain groups of workers did not wish to participate or felt discouraged to do so.

Focus group participants also described situations in which officers' actions and attitudes were perceived as arbitrary or exclusionary, to the frustration of members:

> "For a long time, we had [an] executive like a 'good old boys' club that weren't interested in diversity, with some racist, xenophobic officials. Now, the new ones are changing the culture, and putting emphasis on inclusion and mentoring." (focus group respondent)

Some participants were worried that their local executives showed constant favoritism and no interest in renewing or opening its ranks to include new people:

> "I'm a young part-time worker. The biggest barrier for me in participating in the union is that it's an 'old boy's club' even if my local is ran by women mostly. They have been around for years; it's difficult to get people involved. The people running the union refuse to see things in a different light. I suspect I have been excluded as well because of my coming out." (focus group respondent)

> "I felt threatened when I ran against the president. I had to defend why I was running for the position and there was a risk of being ostracized for running." (focus group respondent)

"I think perception is reality. If members perceive it as an inaccessible old boys' club, then it is because it's a barrier to their participation. I think it does exist, because the perception of 'old boys' creates this poisonous attitude that dissension is viewed almost as treason, in a way." (focus group respondent)

Several participants also described as problematic the fact that in some cases, officers seemed to have preferential access to union-related opportunities such as training and conferences. This sense that union officials benefit from special treatment was described as having a negative impact on participation:

"There is still favoritism. If you want to go to a conference or a convention, it's always the same people voting for each other. The same people are going all the time. We need to break that cycle; we need to have [the] right balance." (focus group respondent)

The previous points relate more generally to the question of the union being perceived as either a welcoming, or intimidating environment. Although some participants described their locals as inclusive, progressive, and successful in representing equity-seeking groups, other participants explained that some members could feel uncomfortable or out of place when attending meetings.

Participants from the National Persons with Disabilities Committee stressed that members with a disability might not want to express themselves out of a fear of judgement or stigma (especially for people with an invisible disability or a mental illness) or to avoid being tokenized. Some participants also raised the issue of self-identification for Aboriginal and LGBTTI members.

Several participants also felt that, in some cases, the complexities of internal rules, bylaws or union language hindered people's participation and made the union proceedings somewhat daunting:

"The first time I went to a meeting, I tried to say something, but I got cut short because I didn't follow the protocol regarding how to address the meeting." (focus group respondent)

On the other hand, in several committees, participants mentioned the fact that union members did not want to interact with their local because they feared a form of retaliation from the employer.

Participants also touched on structural barriers to member engagement in local union activities. The challenge of balancing union work with paid employment was highlighted across all committees, particularly for women balancing multiple roles (e.g. child care and/or elder care responsibilities, household tasks), and for precariously employed workers holding more than one job, many of whom are young workers.

Distance and location were also important obstacles to members' participation, as well as the lack of childcare resources:

"We have a lot of people engaged in issues outside the union, that only have so much time, which is a dilemma. Transportation is also key. A lot of people can't afford it and its inconvenient and time-consuming." (focus group respondent)

"There are a lot of part-time workers, a lot of people have small children or a second job, and people feel it's a lot of work to get kids in the meeting, or to deal with conflicting schedules." (focus group respondent)

Accessibility was another important point raised in more than one focus group. One participant of the Persons with Disability Committee stressed that holding a meeting in an inaccessible building, for example, was not only impractical, but could be perceived as unwelcoming.

Focus Groups – Precariously Employed Workers

Through their responses to several questions about union activities and their participation, focus group participants touched on obstacles hindering engagement in their respective locals. Many participants said they were not aware of their local union activities (either social, educational, etc.) to engage members. Some expressed a lack of interest, but many felt that this was due to a lack of communication from the union. Most participants reported receiving no orientation session about their union and several believed that training and other opportunities were reserved for executive members. Many participants felt that engagement with their union could trigger a backlash from the employer.

Some participants felt that low participation was due to a lack of awareness or a sense of "apathy" among workers. However, participants also indicated that members felt their local failed to efficiently address issues of concern. Some participants felt that certain categories of workers were poorly represented by their union (e.g. part-time workers, seasonal workers) and that the focus lay mostly with regular full-time employees:

"Being a seasonal worker, I haven't felt part of, or as much a part of, CUPE. I don't feel as connected. . . . Seasonal workers feel like 'lesser' employees and are not really involved." (focus group respondent)

A significant proportion of focus groups participants also felt they did not have much impact or say in the bargaining process; several people pointed to a lack of consultation and limited means for them to provide their input into these processes. Certain participants felt they were not sufficiently informed and assumed decisions were being made by the executive. Most participants felt that union members were encouraged to express their views, but participants were not asked whether they thought these views would have an impact on union-related decisions and activities.

Participants also referred to the structural barriers related to scheduling conflicts, inconvenient locations, and lack of childcare:

"I would attend if they were scheduled at places closer to the workplace." (focus group respondent)

The timing of meetings seems to be more of a concern than the location. For example, one participant explained it was impossible for all workers to attend meetings during working hours simultaneously, because of the nature of their tasks. However, people may not feel like engaging with the union during their lunch breaks or after hours.

Recommendations from Focus Group Participants – National Committee Members

Committee members felt strongly that more inclusion and diversity are necessary to fix representation issues within the union, create a sense of ownership, and thus increase participation and engagement in local union activities. Members of the National Women's Committee stressed the importance of having equity among officers and of listening to the specific needs of female members. Many participants felt that reaching out to different populations within the union's membership – like younger workers, immigrant workers, or workers with disabilities – was likely to generate positive change within local unions.

Participants also spoke of technical ways to improve participation, namely by strategically scheduling and choosing locations for meetings. The issue of accessibility was also raised in more than one focus group: participants stressed the need for accessibility, safety and easy transportation in getting people to attend meetings and events. The issue of timely and effective communication about gatherings was also raised in this regard: there is a need to inform members efficiently to facilitate decision-making regarding participation. Reviewing bylaws and internal practices to ease participation was also mentioned.

More broadly, communication was another area where improvements could help boost participation. Overall, focus group participants stressed the need to raise awareness and educate members about the union. Specifically, participants recommended more frequent, consistent, and targeted communications from locals, for promotional and updating purposes, but also to inform members of the opportunities made available through the union (e.g. conferences, funding available, etc.):

> "We need more communication. There is a lack of it. You have the executive members that are aware and attend training, etc. I would like to know about issues in my zone and about negotiations in terms of bargaining." (focus group respondent)

Some participants suggested that showcasing success stories could also be a good way to get information across. Making use of social media and technology (e.g. apps, online voting) were also discussed, especially to reach out to younger workers. Some members suggested that showcasing success stories could also be a good way to get information across:

> "I want to hear success stories. A lot of time we don't hear the stories of the work of the local beyond we won or lost arbitration. I want to know what they are doing and why they are doing it." (focus group respondent)

Across the focus groups, several participants expressed that direct, face-to-face contact (e.g. through site visits, conversations, lunch sessions, etc.) with local union officials could play a role in improving engagement:

> "We need to start thinking outside the box and find strategies to allow us to communicate with members. We need to educate our members and the public, and we need physical contact, to go back to basics." (focus group respondent)

The theme of *taking the union to the members* emerged in the discussions; participants felt that building relationships was a good way to engage people. However, having limited resources or having to cover a

large area can make it impossible for a local to deploy these kinds of efforts, as some participants pointed out.

Recommendations from Focus Group Participants – Precariously Employed Workers

Participants emphasized the need for better communication. Recommendations ranged from more consistent and timely advertising, to engaging on social media, or using an application to keep members informed. Participants stressed the need to inform members about the union and its role, for instance through short orientation sessions. Participants recommended providing basic information early on about the union, particularly since some participants said they did not know they were unionized until sometime after having been hired. Participants insisted they would like clear, specific information that would allow them to keep track of the union's activities even when they could not be physically present at meetings:

> "Would be nice to be communicated with on what happened in each meeting, a place where members could go to get that info, maybe something electronic." (focus group respondent)

> "I think that the meeting minutes need to be more clearly communicated somehow to the union members. People are busy and don't always have time to attend." (focus group respondent)

Some participants felt that online communication was very efficient and should be further increased or explored; others however stressed the need to reach people offline as well, using regular mail, phone calls, and other alternatives. Overall, participants recommended using diverse channels of communication to "cover all bases", as one participant put it:

> "To reach everybody, you must diversify your ways to do it." (focus group respondent)

Another participant felt that consulting people on their preferred means of communication might be a good option (e.g. face-to-face conversations; surveys).

Another major communication point was the need for consultation; participants wished they could provide their input through polls and surveys, sometimes proposed as an alternative to attending meetings:

> "The local should send out incentivized surveys to assess what the diverse employees paying union fees want. It might be more efficient than the meetings, would get a wider scope." (focus group respondent)

> "Sometimes, we get surveys and it's always interesting to fill them out. When asked to answer those alone in front of the computer, I'm always glad to give my input. It's a good way to say what you what to say." (focus group respondent)

> "I would like to have a survey of our needs, to take into account different positions when setting priorities. Then they can bring those back to an accessible meeting." (focus group respondent)

Like some participants in the National Committees' focus groups, a few precariously employed workers were critical of what they perceive as a "confrontational style" in union communications (e.g. painting the employer in a negative light) and the use of confrontational or "militaristic" language (e.g. "on the

front-lines", "in the fight for", "in the struggle for"). They pointed to the use of "negative" language as a reason why some members do not engage in local union activities. These participants would rather the union develop information with a "positive spin", and focus on "relationship building".

Several participants felt it would be important to make the union more accessible, less intimidating and more representative, namely for seasonal workers, young workers, and for people working in non-traditional workplaces:

> "A lot of our employees come from non-traditional work environments, so they are not sure what the union does for them. There seems to be some hesitation and intimidation around union processes and expectations, so it weeds out a lot of people who might otherwise be on the fence. I imagine it's the same for younger and seasonal staff. We need to make [the] union more accessible and less intimidating." (focus group respondent)

> "I feel intimidated to go a meeting and talk about my concerns. I would rather talk to someone personally." (focus group respondent)

Participants also felt that some worker groups might feel better represented if one of their own held an executive position, or if the local had a separate "branch" (for part-time workers, for example):

> "In each department, there should be a part-timer who is a representative of the union. It would help keep people more broadly informed." (focus group respondent)

Some participants also suggested that meetings should target specific groups of workers or precise issues, so people could prioritize and get involved when the question at hand was of particular relevance to them.

Many participants agreed that in-person contact between local union officials and members would be beneficial in making the union seem more approachable. On-site visits, information sessions, and direct conversations with officials were listed as important tools not only to inform members, but also to build trust with the membership. For example, some participants wished union officers would introduce themselves in person, "hand out business cards", or even have their picture displayed in the workplace.

Conversations with officers or stewards were also deemed less intimidating than speaking out during a meeting. Generally, this type of "personal" contact was considered important to create a real relationship with the local, which could translate into increased participation. Here are a few examples of such statements:

> "I think face to face contact and someone from the local visiting the job site would be effective. . . . Having someone come would be helpful in providing a direct connection with the union." (focus group respondent)

> "It would be nice to have contact with the union representative. That way, if you get hurt and go off work, or if you are harassed, then the right person can get back to you." (focus group respondent)

> "Direct contact I think is really important. Myself, I go in person and it's 30 times better than using email. We need to keep that connection, that energy. Sometimes, you can misinterpret what's in an email. Face-to-face is better." (focus group respondent)

Across all focus groups, participants also touched on more **"practical"** recommendations to boost participation in union activities. These included paying extra attention to the timing and location of events to make them more accessible. Some participants thought the use of concrete incentives (food, draws, etc.) would be a winning strategy.

Recommendations from the data include:

- Adopt an equity lens to ensure that the composition of the membership is reflected in the composition of local union structures, activities and events (e.g. executives, committees, workshops, conferences, convention, etc.), so that members of under-represented groups (e.g. equity-seeking, precariously employed members, young workers) "see themselves" in their local union.
- Designated seats in union structures (e.g. executives, committees) for equity-seeking members, precariously employed members and young workers.
- Open union events (e.g. workshops, conferences and conventions) to rank and file members including equity-seekers, precariously employed workers and youth.
- Tackle discrimination and prejudice within and outside the union.
- Provide education opportunities on equity issues to all members.
- Actively outreach to equity-seekers, precariously employed workers and youth to encourage engagement.
- Amend bylaws where necessary to create committee structures for under-represented groups to come together, talk about their concerns, and develop strategy to address concerns (e.g. Precariously Employed Workers' Committee, LGBTTI Committee, etc.); alternatively, provide opportunities for under-represented groups to create ad hoc committees.
- Strategically schedule the timing of meetings, activities and events. For example, consider holding the general membership meeting on more than one day, or schedule a series of meetings throughout the day to accommodate shift workers.
- Provide opportunities within, and outside of, formal meetings for members to ask questions and interact with elected leaders. Parliamentary procedure/rules of order inherent in formal meetings may be perceived as confusing and intimidating to members and may pose a barrier to participation.
- Choose a location for meetings, activities and events that is centrally located and easily accessible by public transportation.
- Make meetings, activities and events more family friendly by inviting members' spouses and children and/or providing on-site child care.
- Provide minutes of meetings to all members via confidential internal mail, regular mail, or personal email.
- Ensure meeting space is wheelchair accessible.
- Provide new member orientation to raise awareness and educate members about CUPE, its role, what it does, and how members can get involved in local union activities.
- Provide frequent and timely communication about meetings, events and activities, and opportunities made available through the union (e.g. conferences, workshops, etc.).
- Review bylaws and internal practices and dismantle barriers to member engagement.
- Provide multiple platforms to participate in elections (e.g. online, phone, proxy voting, multiple physical voting stations)
- Take the union to the members by having face-to-face conversations with members in their workplaces (e.g. on-site visits, information sessions, lunch and learns).

- Small group meetings with specific classifications, occupational groups, shift workers and precariously employed workers to discuss the issues they care about.
- Meetings on topics that are of interest to members (e.g. the grievance procedure, health and safety, various other topics under the collective agreement).
- Provide diverse channels of communication (e.g. face-to-face conversations, email, social media, etc.).
- Surveys are a good way to consult with members on their preferred methods of communication and issues they care about (e.g. bargaining).
- Joint local union/employer equity events.
- Social and community events that embrace, reflect and celebrate diversity.
- Develop communication materials that are positive, reflect relationship building and that celebrate our successes and victories.

Are there designated positions on your local union executive for members from equity-seeking groups, precariously employed members, and/or young workers?
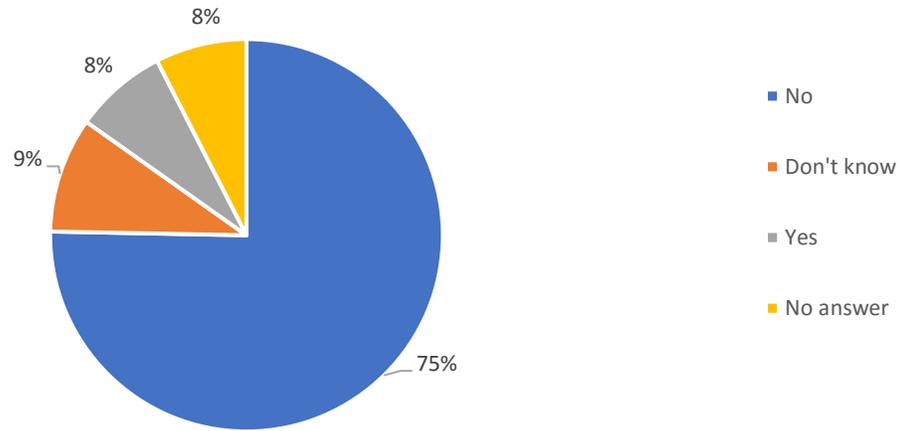
Most respondents, about three-quarters or 75%, report that there are no designated positions on their local union executives for members from equity-seeking groups, precariously employed members, and/or young workers. Only 8% of respondents reveal the existence of designated seats on their local union executives for the groups mentioned. Nine per cent (9%) of members surveyed did not know the answer to this question.

Please indicate which groups have designated positions on the local union executive

Group	Percentage
Persons with disabilities	14.52%
Aboriginal peoples	17.74%
LGBTTI people	20.97%
People of colour	25.81%
Precariously employed members	32.26%
Women	58.06%
Young workers (30 or younger)	59.68%
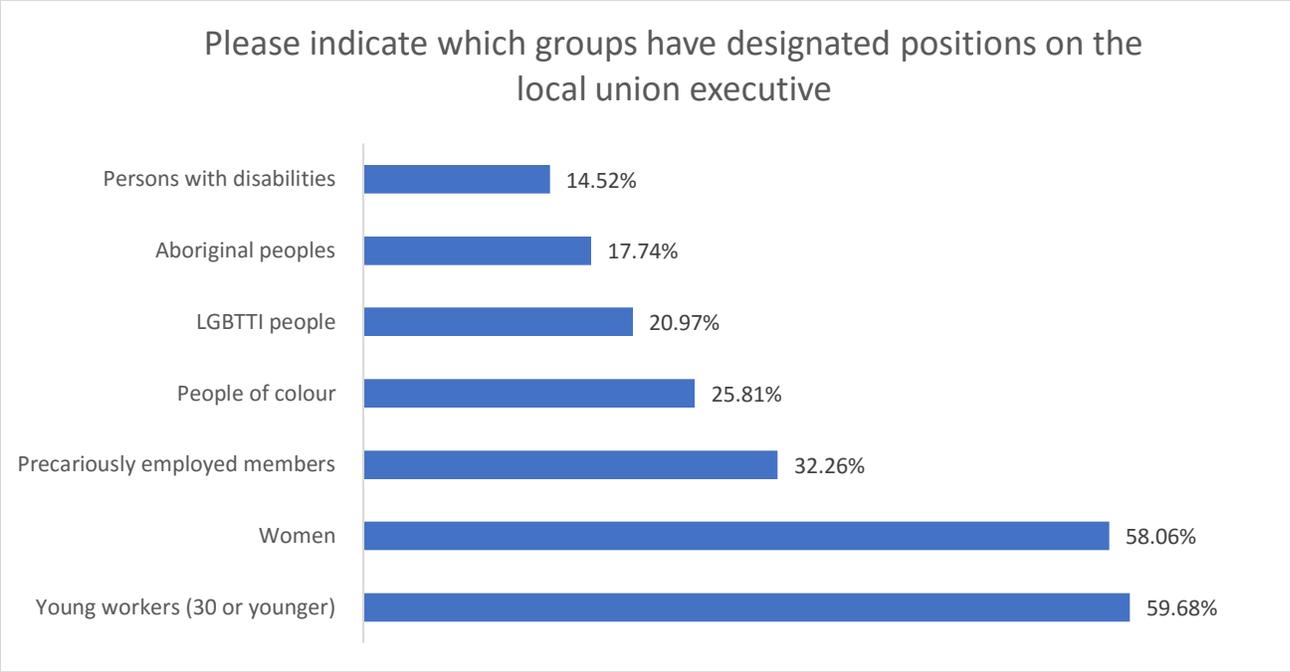
Note: this is a multiple-response question therefore totals do not add to 100%.

In the preceding question, only 8% of respondents revealed the existence of designated seats on their local union executives for members from equity-seeking groups, precariously employed members, and/or young workers. Here, we ask respondents to identify which groups have designated positions on their local union executives.

The top 3 responses include young workers (60% of respondents), women (58% of respondents), and precariously employed members (32% of respondents).

The groups least likely to have a designated position on their local union executive include persons with disabilities (14.5% of respondents), Aboriginal peoples (18% of respondents), and LGBTTI people (21% of respondents).

Roughly one-quarter of respondents (26%) report a designated position on their local union executive for racialized workers.

Does your local have any of the following active committees?

Committee	Percentage
Young Workers' Committee	4.94%
LGBTTI Committee	4.44%
Women's Committee	4.32%
Human Rights Committee	3.95%
Aboriginal Council	3.46%
Anti-Racism Committee	2.35%
Persons with Disabilities Committee	1.23%
International Solidarity Committee	0.86%
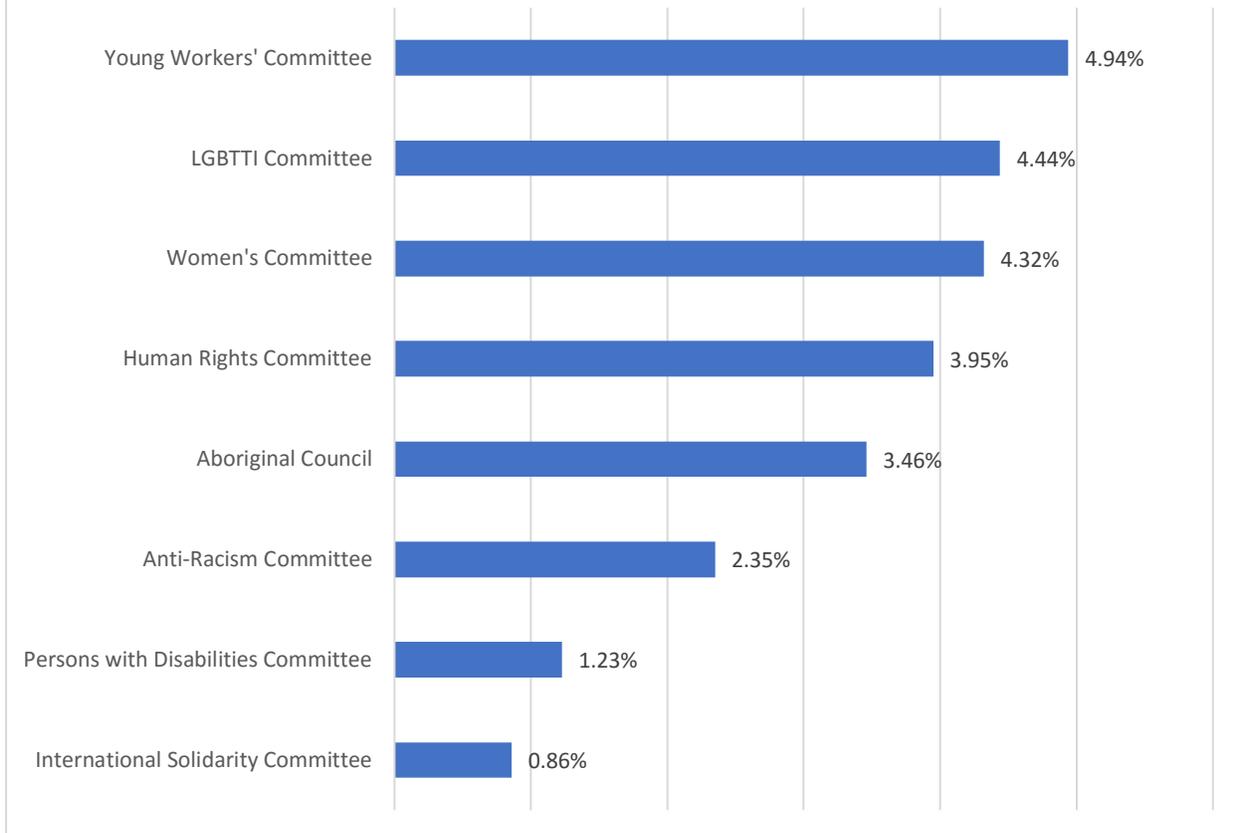
Most locals do not have active equality, young workers', or international solidarity committees. For each category of committee, fewer than 5% of respondents report the existence of these committees in their locals. The data range from a high of 5% for Young Workers' Committees to a low of less than 1% for International Solidarity Committees.

Are any members of equity-seeking groups, young workers, and/or precariously employed members delegated to attend union conferences, national convention and/or schools / workshops?

- Yes: 22%
- No: 57%
- Don't know: 14%
- No answer: 7%
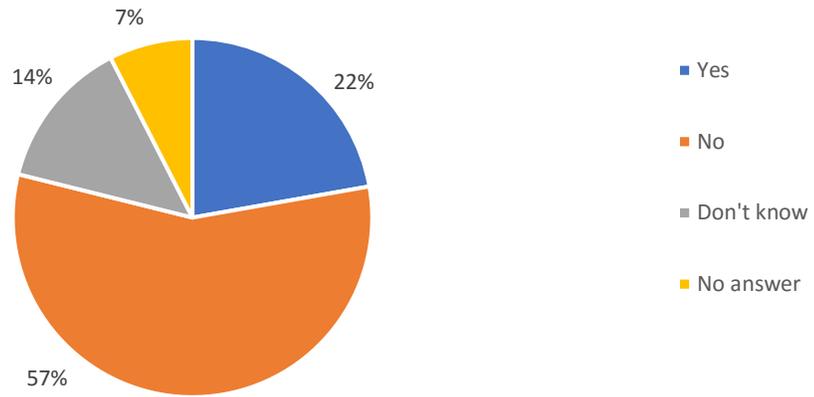
Most respondents (57%) report that members of equity-seeking groups, young workers, and/or precariously employed members are not delegated to attend union conferences, National Convention and/or schools/workshops. However, it is encouraging that more than 1 in 5 respondents (22%) report that members of these three groups are delegated to attend.

If yes, please indicate which groups are delegated to attend these events:

| Group	Percentage
Other	11.54%
Persons with disabilities	21.43%
Aboriginal peoples	23.08%
LGBTTI people	24.73%
Member who is precariously employed	27.47%
People of colour	32.42%
Member who has not previously attended a union…	39.56%
Women	57.69%
Young workers (30 or younger)	68.68%
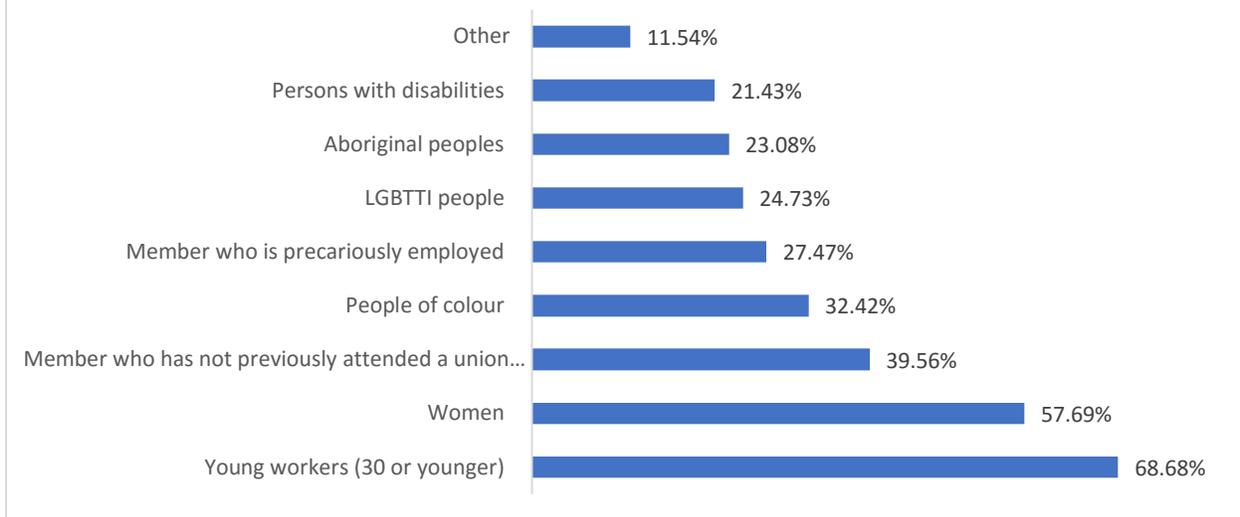
Note: this is a multiple response question therefore totals do not add to 100%.

Sixty-nine percent (69%) of respondents have identified young workers (30 or younger) as the group most likely to be delegated to attend union events including conferences, National Convention, and/or schools/workshops, followed by women (58% of respondents), members who have not previously attended a union event (40% of respondents), people of colour (32% of respondents), and members who are precariously employed (27% of respondents).

A smaller proportion of survey participants have identified LGBTTI people (25% of respondents), Aboriginal peoples (23% of respondents) and persons with disabilities (21% of respondents) as groups delegated to attend union events.

Approximately 11.5% of respondents chose to leave comments in the category 'other'. Comments include:

- Anyone who shows interest;
- The executive; and
- It depends/varies on the type of event.

Does your local bargaining committee have designated seats for any of the following groups?

| Group	Percentage
Person with a disability	0.57%
People of colour	0.72%
Aboriginal people	0.72%
LGBTTI people	0.86%
Precariously employed members	1.58%
Young workers (30 or younger)	2.01%
Women	3.44%
Other	8.46%
There are no designated seats	81.64%
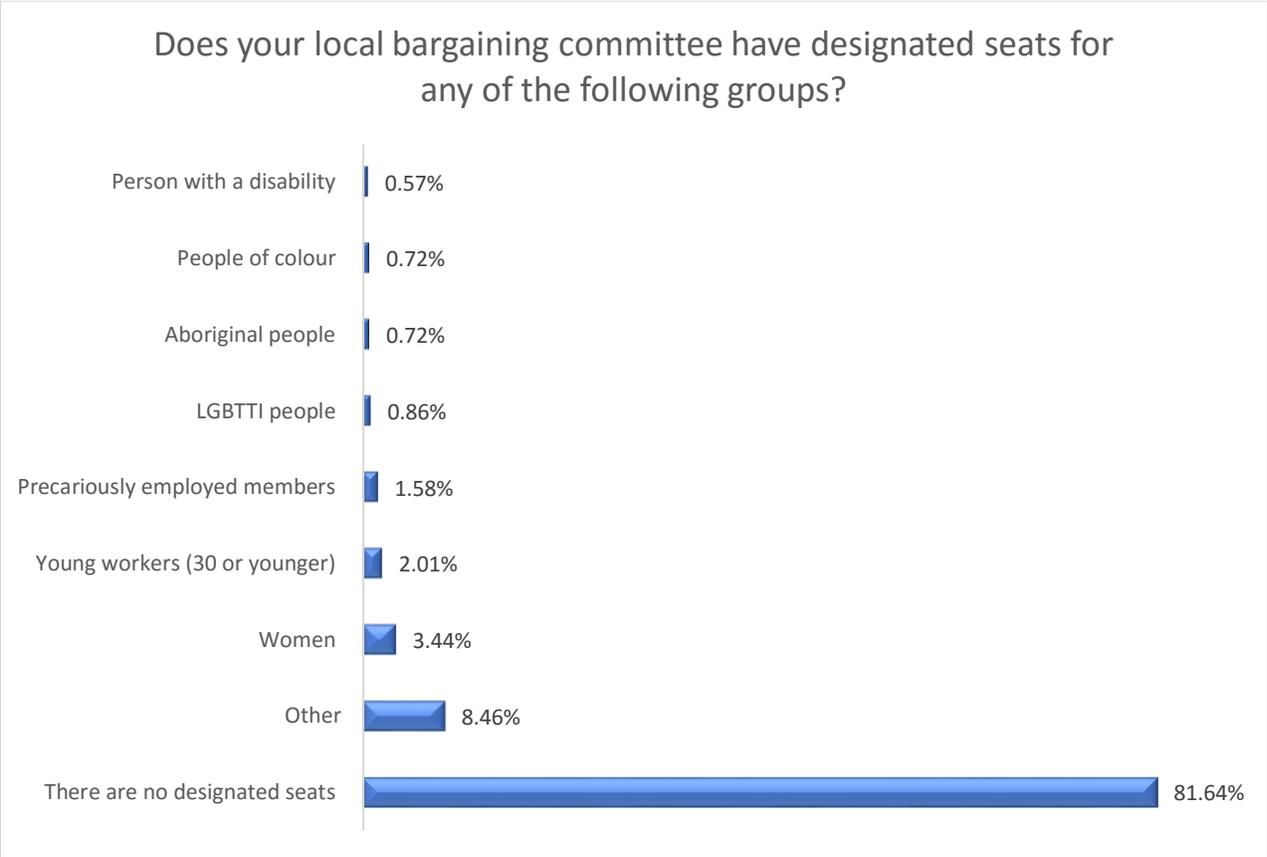
Relatively few locals have designated seats on their bargaining committees for equality seeking groups, precariously employed workers, and young workers. Seven out of ten respondents (70%) have indicated that there are no designated seats for these groups on their bargaining committees.

Only 3% of locals have designated seats for women; 2% have designated seats for young workers; and 1.4% have designated seats for precariously employed members.

Fewer than 1% of locals have designated seats for each of LGBTTI people, Aboriginal peoples, people of colour and persons with a disability.

Does your local have policies and/or practices to include equity-seeking groups, young workers (30 or younger), or precariously employed members in union education / training opportunities?

Category	Percentage
No answer	6.42%
Yes	15.56%
Don't know	16.05%
No	61.98%
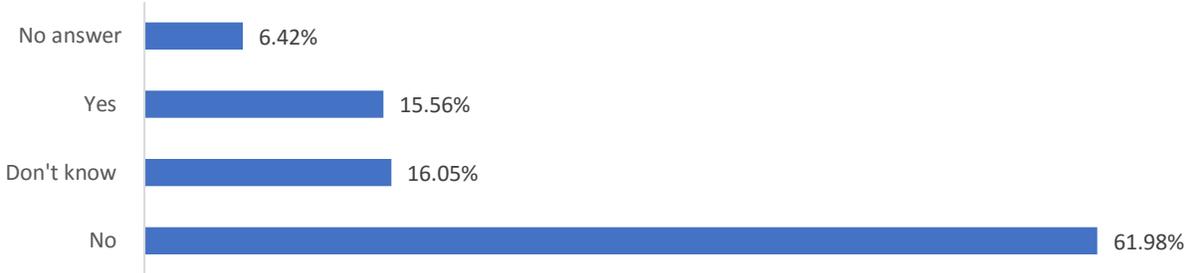
Most respondents (62%) reveal that their locals do not have polices and/or practices to include equity-seeking groups, young workers (30 or younger), or precariously employed members in union education / training opportunities.

By comparison, almost 16% of respondents say that their locals do have such policies and/or practices.

An additional 16% of respondents did not know the answer to this question.

EDUCATION IS KEY TO ENGAGEMENT

Respondents say that education is key to engaging all members in local union activities. But at the same time, respondents report that local unions need to do a better job to educate members about CUPE, CUPE policy, and their collective agreements.

> "A lot of members feel overwhelmed and do not understand their contract language or CUPE's policies. We need to take time to educate our members – c.a. discussion groups monthly – taking a few articles at a time." (respondent to the staff survey)

Providing education to members does not have to be overly complicated. For example, one local uses email to educate members about aspects of their collective agreement:

> "'Did you know' informational emails sent regularly to membership personal email about specific things they should know about their rights or their collective agreement." (respondent to the leadership survey)

Respondents told us that more members require education on parliamentary procedure and rules of order so that members are more comfortable to attend and speak up at general membership meetings. They recommend regular updates from the executive on the business of the local, including more information about education opportunities. Respondents also recommend that more education opportunities are made available to rank and file members to counter the perception that that the union *is* the executive.

> "Encourage members to sign up for union education even if they don't hold a position in the executive. It will increase their confidence if they decide to run for a position." (respondent to the staff survey)

> "The local needs to make education, conferences and conventions more readily . . . available to all members. More time than not it is only the Execs that take these opportunities and it creates the attitude that the Union is only that small select few members." (respondent to the staff survey)

Lastly, new member orientation is viewed as critically important to engage new members. But respondents say that some local unions are not using this opportunity to engage members in the work of the union.

> "Too many new members come into the Local without any introduction to the Union. In my view, this is the best time to engage members." (respondent to staff survey)

The new member orientation is the local union's first opportunity to make a good first impression on new members. It is the first step in the process of member engagement. Engaging members from the beginning, continually seeking their input and asking for their involvement and support, are best practices that no local should ignore.

Recommendations from the data include:

- Provide members with more education about CUPE, CUPE policy, and collective agreements.
- Provide more members with education about parliamentary procedure and rules of order.
- Provide members with regular updates about the business of the local.
- Provide members with regular and timely information on education opportunities.
- Open education opportunities to more rank and file members.
- Provide new member orientation at every opportunity.

Support for Union Work
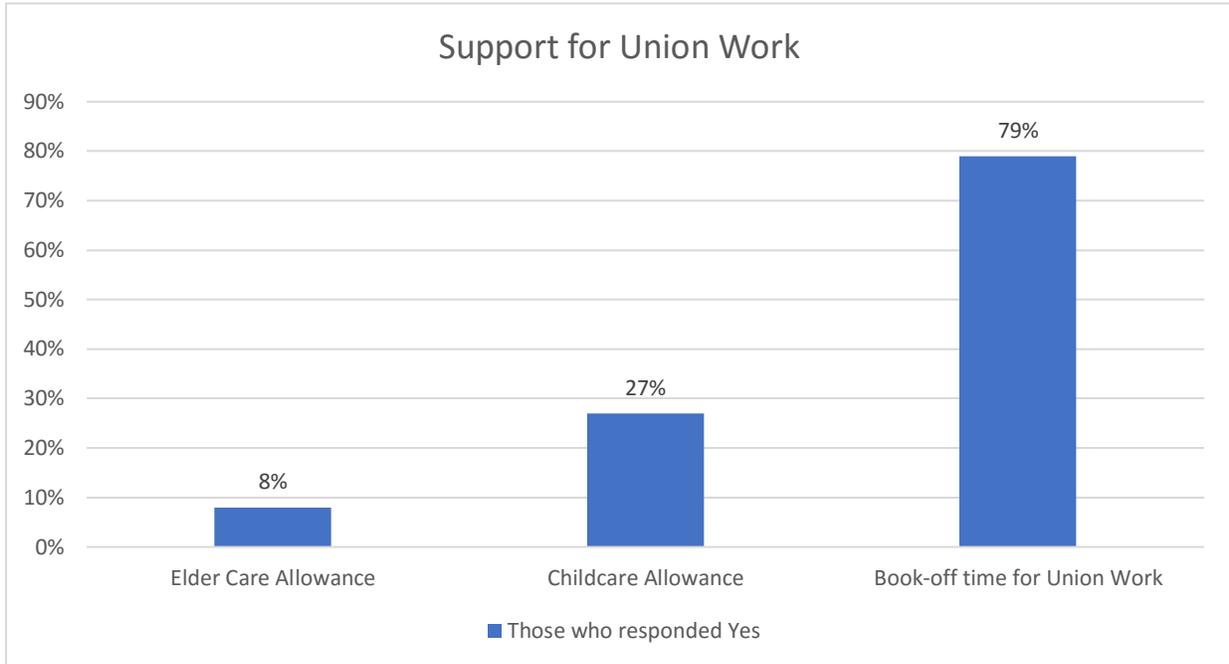
We asked elected leaders if their locals provide child care and elder care allowances to members doing union work and/or attending union events. We also asked whether locals provide book-off time (lost wages) to help elected officers carry out the administrative responsibilities of their positions.

Seventy-nine per cent (79%) of respondents told us that book-off time is by far the most common form of support for union work. Fewer than 1 in 3 respondents (27%) indicated that their locals provide child care allowances. And far fewer respondents (8%) reported that their locals provide elder care allowances to members working on behalf of their local unions.

IDEAS FOR MENTORING AND SUCCESSION PLANNING

CUPE locals use a host of innovative strategies to develop members' leadership skills. For example, one provincial local holds a full education day once a year for fifty-plus delegates including women, young workers, stewards and their alternates. The local has found the event to be a useful tool to encourage women and young workers to offer for elected positions. Another local encourages *all* its members to take CUPE's *Introduction to Stewarding* workshop to educate all members and unite the local.

Locals are providing mentoring opportunities to members and engaging in succession planning strategies to develop members' leadership skills. Mentoring can take many forms. For example, locals are mentoring future leaders for executive leadership positions.

> "We do training and orientation for our Executive Committee and recently opened up 4 seats on our EC for 'members at large' which we call Member Representatives. It's been a great way for folks interested in the union to get a sense of what goes on." (respondent to the leadership survey)

One local has established a program whereby each executive officer mentors one member during local union activities. Some locals provide shadowing opportunities to novice members so they can build their leadership skills by learning from more seasoned members. In other locals, seasoned stewards mentor novice stewards, and past executive members mentor current executive members.

> "We have been focusing on developing our capacity. It used to be that the President did everything. Now we've got the whole executive dividing up the work and our next step is expanding to the Stewards. We've been . . . encouraging people to pick topics they are interested in and shadowing the executive as they deal with those issues. We've been sending two elected reps on Return to Work meetings, if the member in question gives consent. That allows us to teach someone and develop their confidence. Same with all our issues, attendance management, workload, grievances etc. And the employer has been willing to allow us to do this. Our goal is to have engaged stewards who can take over some of the workload from the executive to allow the executive to focus on . . . strategy." (respondent to the leadership survey)

Respondents indicate that workload in union positions is one of the reasons why more members are not engaged in local union activities. However, some locals are actively tackling workload to engage more members in the work of the union:

> "We have decided to modify the bylaws to allow for a second Vice President." (respondent to the leadership survey)

> "We changed the structure of our Executive Committee and the roles of steward to distribute work more evenly, make positions less burdensome, and more clearly articulate the roles of each elected officer. Elections have been reorganized so that voting happens online and there is a campaign period so that members get to know candidates and have an opportunity to run for positions and to vote even if they are unable to attend the Annual Membership Meeting." (respondent to the leadership survey)

Recommendations from the data include:

- Provide mentoring opportunities to nurture and educate the next generation of local union leaders – especially under-represented groups including equity-seekers, precariously employed members, and young workers.
- Provide role-sharing opportunities to address workload in union positions; benefits include the transfer of knowledge and skills, and the sharing of workload responsibilities.
- Provide education opportunities to all members (e.g. Stewarding Workshop Series) to increase interest in the work of the union and develop leadership potential.

How does your local union currently communicate with members

Method	Percentage
Instagram	1.6%
YouTube	1.9%
Paid ads in news media - TV - newspaper	5.1%
Telephone town hall meetings	11.5%
The CUPE National website	11.7%
CUPE handbooks - guides	13.7%
Twitter	16.0%
Newsletters - Bargaining Bulletins	38.5%
Facebook	51.2%
The local union website	51.2%
Bulletin board at work	73.2%
Face to face conversations	74.6%
E-mail	81.5%
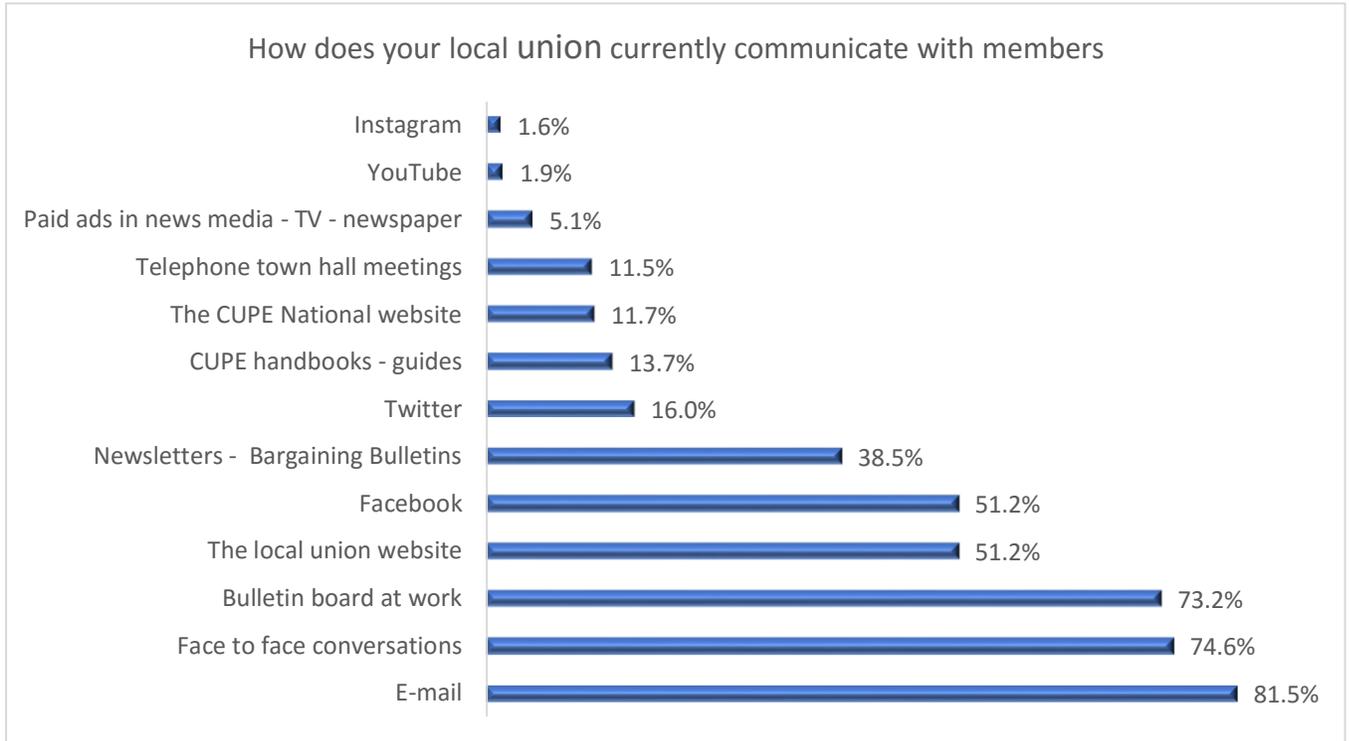
Note: this is a multiple response question therefore totals do not add to 100%.

Email is the most popular way that local unions communicate with members as reported by 81.5% of respondents. The second most popular method of communication is face-to-face conversations (75% of respondents), followed by the bulletin board at work (73% of respondents). The local union website and Facebook are popular with slightly more than half of respondents (51% each), followed by newsletters/bargaining bulletins (38.5% of respondents).

Instagram and YouTube are popular with less than 2% of respondents each, while paid ads in news media/TV/newspaper are popular with 5% of survey participants.

Increased awareness of the local and what it does could influence more members to become involved in local union activities. Respondents told us that they want to be better informed about the role of their local union and what it does. They also want regular, relevant and timely updates on the business of the local including more information about bargaining, workshop opportunities and social events. Many respondents want to know what is going on in their local union even if they cannot attend meetings and events and would like to receive consistent follow-up information (e.g. minutes of meetings).

Preferences with respect to communications were diverse, ranging from face-to-face conversations to email and social media (e.g. Facebook). This suggests that a one-size-fits-all communication strategy is to be avoided.

Respondents want to be consulted about issues that affect them. Surveys were proposed as a method to solicit member input on a variety of topics including bargaining and preferred methods of

communication (e.g. email, print, in-person, etc.). It was suggested that locals could survey members on the topic of general membership meetings to find out what's working, what's not, and to make changes in response to members' concerns and needs. It was also suggested that locals could survey members on the kinds of social events they would get involved in or the kinds of community events and causes they would support.

Respondents say that having easy access to local union officers' contact information could foster member engagement. Examples from the data include ensuring that officers' contact information (including a recent photo) is visible, current and easily accessible (e.g. business cards posted on the local union bulletin board, and/or on the local union website).

Recommendations from the data include:

- Increase awareness of the local union's role and what it does for members.
- Provide regular, relevant and timely information about bargaining, workshops, conferences, conventions, community and social events, etc.
- Provide information about local union activities and events (e.g. general membership meetings) even if members are unable to attend.
- Avoid a one-size-fits-all communication strategy. Respondents recommend a diverse range of communications methods from electronic (e.g. email, social media) to face-to-face conversations.
- Consult members about the issues that affect them and report on the findings; surveys are a recommended option.
- Ensure that local executives' contact information is visible and easily accessible.

Lastly, locals may want to consider working with the employer to have more access to members on the job. As one respondent told us, "it is a struggle to communicate with members when you can't touch base with them at work."

> *Communication is the biggest issue in our union. To get them motivated face to face, talking seems to be the only thing that really works.* (respondent to the leadership survey)

Taking the union to the members is a major theme to emerge from the 2016-17 CUPE National Leadership Survey Project. Elected leaders, focus group participants and servicing representatives told us that it is important for local union leaders to meet with members where they are, in their workplaces, and talk with members about what matters most to them.

> "Meet the members where they are at work and talk to them about the issues they care about; involve the members in a plan of action; i.e. not just listening and then telling members that the "union" will take care of it – this sends the message the members aren't really necessary after all." (respondent to the staff survey)

> "As a union, our elected leaders need to carve out time, away from administrative functions (i.e. meeting with the employer, filing and processing grievances etc.), to go around to work sites or break rooms and talk with the members to build rapport and relationships." (respondent to the staff survey)

> "I am currently going to continue to run a program called info on wheels. We get the . . . trailer, park it in front of work site locations, and chat over coffee and muffins and even BBQ hot dogs, weather permitting. I think that if we as a union, take the union to the membership on a regular basis, not just once for a special occasion, but regularly show our memberships that we care and want to come out and want to listen to them, they will come to the meetings and become more engaged. As a full-time president, I think our members deserve our time and effort." (respondent to the leadership survey)

Respondents noted the successes of informal meetings between elected leaders and rank and file members, and smaller meetings with occupational groups or classifications of workers, including shift workers and workers that are members of smaller units within locals.

> "Small group meetings (one to two members at a time) consulting specific classifications of members on issues of concern (e.g. possible changes to hours of work). Response was quite positive in that the union received valuable feedback and affected members felt a greater ownership over their union. Other issues were also identified as part of this outreach which the union was able to follow up on in subsequent rounds of bargaining" (respondent to the staff survey).

> "They hold 'you talk, we listen' sessions where executive members bring coffee to the workplace at different times of the day to increase member engagement." (respondent to the staff survey)

Taking the union to the members also means finding ways to include members in union activities, even when members can't attend events in person.

> "Get the information out to members who can't attend union meetings. Instead of ignoring members who can't make meetings, take the meeting to them if possible or at least get the information to them" (respondent to the staff survey)

One respondent told us about a success story where a local created an outreach committee to engage members and hear members' concerns:

> "Member Action Committees contacting every member in the Local to see if they have any workplace concerns, concerns with union, know who their shop steward is, etc. Mostly positive responses which has led to identify possible shop stewards and created more interest in the union and holding of facility meetings." (respondent to the staff survey)

Taking the union to the members underscores the need for *face-to-face conversations* between elected leaders and rank and file members to build community within the local. In fact, many respondents told us that face-to-face conversation is the most effective communication tool to engage members in local union activities. One respondent commented that members respond positively to face-to-face conversations because it humanizes interpersonal relationships:

> "Face to face conversations between current union activists and members is essential. The more we know each other at a human (non-transactional) level, the more likely it will be that we will come to the aid of each other and assist in union efforts when requested." (respondent to the staff survey)

Respondents told us that there is no substitute for face-to-face communication. Many participants said that having personal conversations with union officials contributes to building trust and conveys a sense that the local is accessible, active and approachable. The evidence shows that the personal touch works.

> "The union executive and stewards need to get out and personally talk to their members. My experience . . . with my locals who went out and talked with their members produced increased attendance at meetings and was the biggest influence on increasing member participation in their union. I observed one local go from struggling to fill positions to having more than enough members stepping up to fill all positions. Face to face to your members is a key area in engaging your members." (respondent to the staff survey)

A few respondents referenced the *Unite for Fairness* project as a successful model for engaging members in one-on-one conversations but indicated that the project requires additional resources to ensure success.

> "One-on-one conversations like the [Unite to] Fairness campaign are essential to tapping into member concerns and building awareness of, and pride in, the union." (respondent to the staff survey)

> Put financial resources into [the] Unite for Fairness campaign so locals can book off members to help with this or cost share with locals that can afford to do this." (respondent to the staff survey.

Here are some concrete examples to emerge from the data on the theme of *taking the union to the members:*

- Regular worksite visits by elected local leaders to discuss members' concerns.
- Small group meetings between elected local leaders and specific classifications, occupational groups, shift workers and precariously employed workers to discuss issues they care about.
- Locate general membership meetings at the workplace or close to the workplace if possible to make attending more convenient for rank and file members.
- Provide members with the minutes of general membership meetings via email or confidentially through internal mail at work.
- Provide remote access to meetings and events via Skype, teleconferencing, videoconferencing, webinars, and telephone town hall meetings.
- Provide multiple platforms to participate in elections through online voting, voting by phone, proxy voting and multiple, physical, voting stations.
- Create a committee with the specific task of outreaching to all members of the local (e.g. Member Engagement Committee).

These recommendations break down barriers to engagement and provide more opportunity for members to participate in local union activities. It also helps us to achieve our goals of inclusiveness and meeting members' needs especially for members with disabilities, shift workers, precariously employed members who work more than one job, members with child care, elder care and household responsibilities – many of whom are women - and members who lack access to transportation and/or cannot easily access modes of public transportation.

We are on the path to building strong local unions when we are inclusive of all members, including members of equity-seeking groups, precariously employed members, and young members and when we attempt to meet members' diverse needs.

Is your local involved in any of the following local union initiatives or community activities?

| Activity	Percentage
Don't know	3.83%
Support for client groups	3.83%
Other	4.69%
My local is not involved in any activities	10.62%
Cultural activities hosted or sponsored by the local union	10.86%
School events	13.46%
Sports / recreational events	14.07%
Social justice work	15.06%
Fundraising	16.30%
Work with unions other than CUPE	28.77%
Charity work / volunteerism	29.01%
Lobbying, elections, political campaigns	30.12%
Community picnics / BBQ's hosted by the local union	30.12%
CUPE Council	31.73%
Bursaries / fellowships provided by the local union	35.31%
Labour Day events	36.30%
Support for community groups (e.g. United Way)	38.27%
Labour Council	41.98%
Work with other CUPE locals	47.90%

Note: this is a multiple response question therefore totals do not add to 100%.

Nearly half of respondents (48%) have identified *work with other CUPE locals* as their local's most common community activity. Respondents report that their locals are also involved in the work of their Labour Council (42% of respondents), and provide support to community groups like the United Way (38% of respondents). Thirty-six per cent (36%) of survey participants report that their locals are involved in Labour Day events and provide bursaries/fellowships (35%).

Locals unions are least likely to provide support for client groups (4% of respondents), cultural activities such as festivals and concerts (11% of respondents), school events (13% of respondents), sports and recreational activities (14% of respondents), and social justice work (15% of respondents). Interestingly, 11% of respondents report that their locals are not involved in any local union initiatives or community activities.

Does your local union participate in community equity events?

- No — 47%
- Yes — 41%
- Don't know — 8%
- No answer — 4%
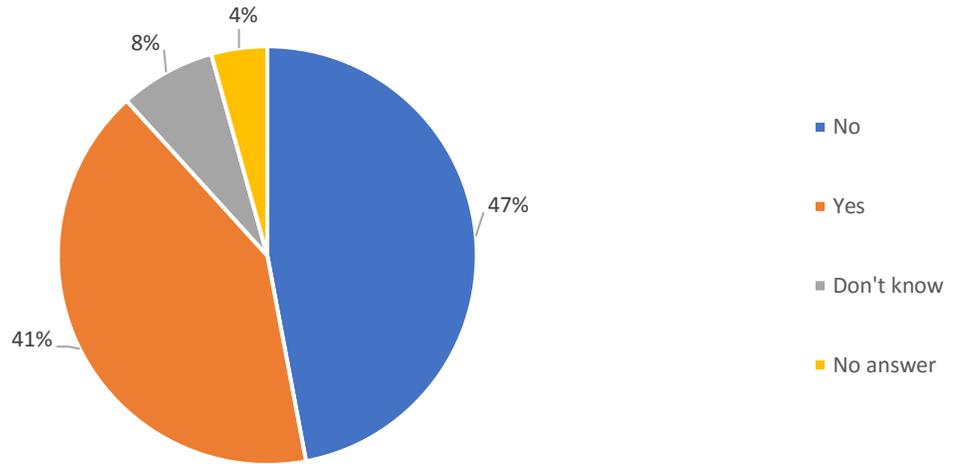
Close to half the sample (47% of respondents) report that their local *does not* participate in community equity events. However, 41% of respondents report that their locals do participate in community equity events. Eight per cent (8%) of respondents did not know the answer to this question.

Does your local participate in solidarity events with other CUPE locals and/or other unions?

- Yes — 69%
- No — 19%
- Don't know — 8%
- No answer — 4%
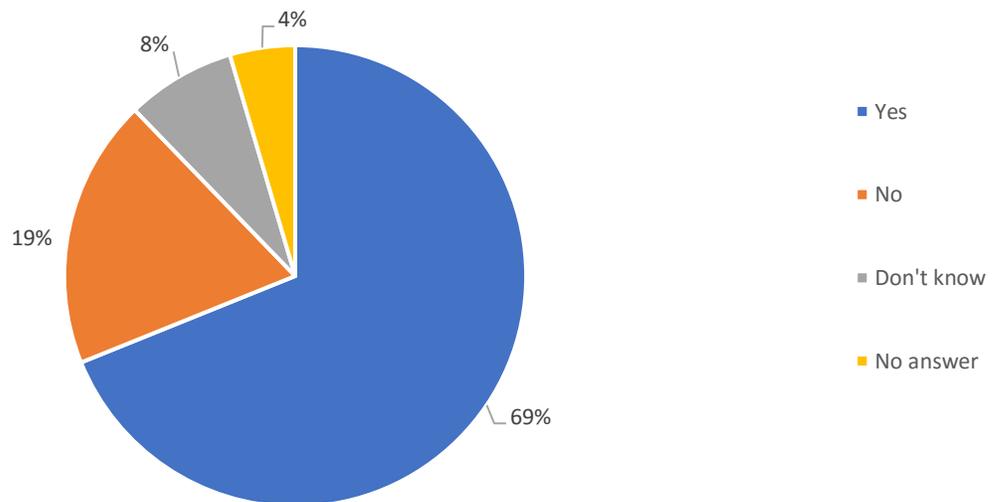
Most survey respondents (69%) report that their locals participate in solidarity events with other CUPE locals and/or other unions. Only 19% of respondents claim that their locals do not participate in such events. Eight per cent (8%) of respondents did not know the answer to this question.

Collective Bargaining
Submitted Proposals where there was a gain made - Top 7
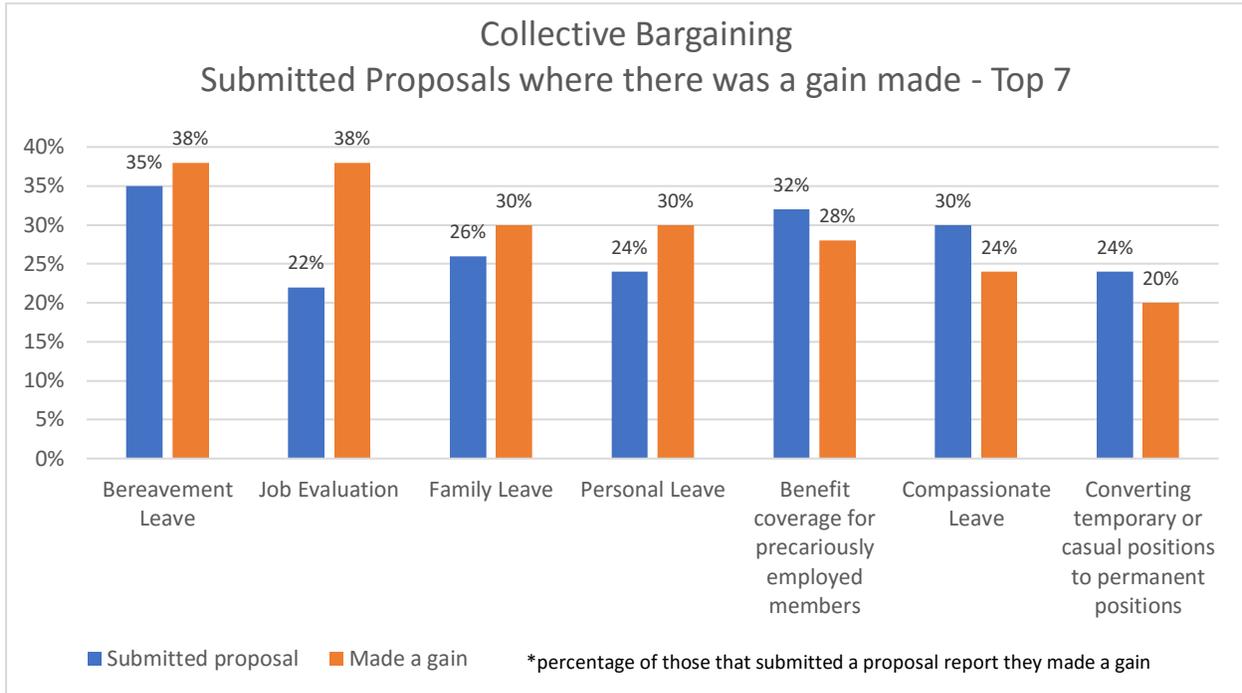
We asked elected leaders if their locals had put forward proposals on a range of issues during the last round of bargaining and whether gains had been made on those proposals. The bar graph provides data on the top 7 proposals that were submitted during the last round of bargaining and reported gains, as indicated by the respondents.

Interestingly, 4 of the top 7 proposals submitted during the last round of bargaining are related to leaves of absence: bereavement leave, family leave, personal leave, and compassionate leave. Also revealing is that 2 of the 7 submitted proposals address precarity in the workplace: benefit coverage for precariously employed members and converting temporary or casual positions to permanent positions.

According to the data, bereavement leave and job evaluation recorded the most gains in the last round of bargaining according to 38% of respondents each. Thirty per cent (30%) of respondents each report bargaining gains with respect to family and personal leaves.

Fewer gains were reported for benefit coverage for precariously employed members (28% of respondents), compassionate leave (24% of respondents) and converting temporary or casual positions to permanent positions (20% of respondents).

## BARGAINING AND ADMINSTRATION OF THE COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT

Respondents want local unions to tackle the issue of precarity by bargaining access to benefits and pension entitlements for precariously employed members, and by bargaining language that obligates the employer to convert part-time positions to full-time, permanent positions. They also recommend local executives welcome the contributions and unique perspectives of precariously employed members by creating a designated seat on the bargaining committee for a member representative who is precariously employed.

Respondents view bargaining surveys as an effective tool to engage members on the workplace issues they care about. Other suggestions include bargaining access to members' contact information, and shorter collective agreement terms since it allows more members to come together more often.

Respondents offered recommendations on the administration of collective agreements including timely follow-up and follow-through on the filing of grievances, and the enforcement of collective agreement rights. Collective agreements written in clear language was also suggested to engage more members.

Recommendations from the data include:

- Tackle precarity by bargaining access to benefits and pension entitlements.
- Tackle precarity by bargaining language that obligates the employer to convert part-time positions to full-time, permanent positions.
- Create designated seats on bargaining committees for equity-seekers, precariously employed members and youth.
- Bargain access to members' personal contact information.
- Provide more opportunities for member involvement in the bargaining process (e.g. bargaining surveys).
- Provide regular and timely updates on the bargaining process.
- Bargain shorter collective agreement terms.
- Provide timely follow-up and follow through on the filing of grievances and the enforcement of collective agreement rights.
- Provide clear language collective agreements.

In the last 5 years, has your local union extended its scope clause to include other workers in your workplace?
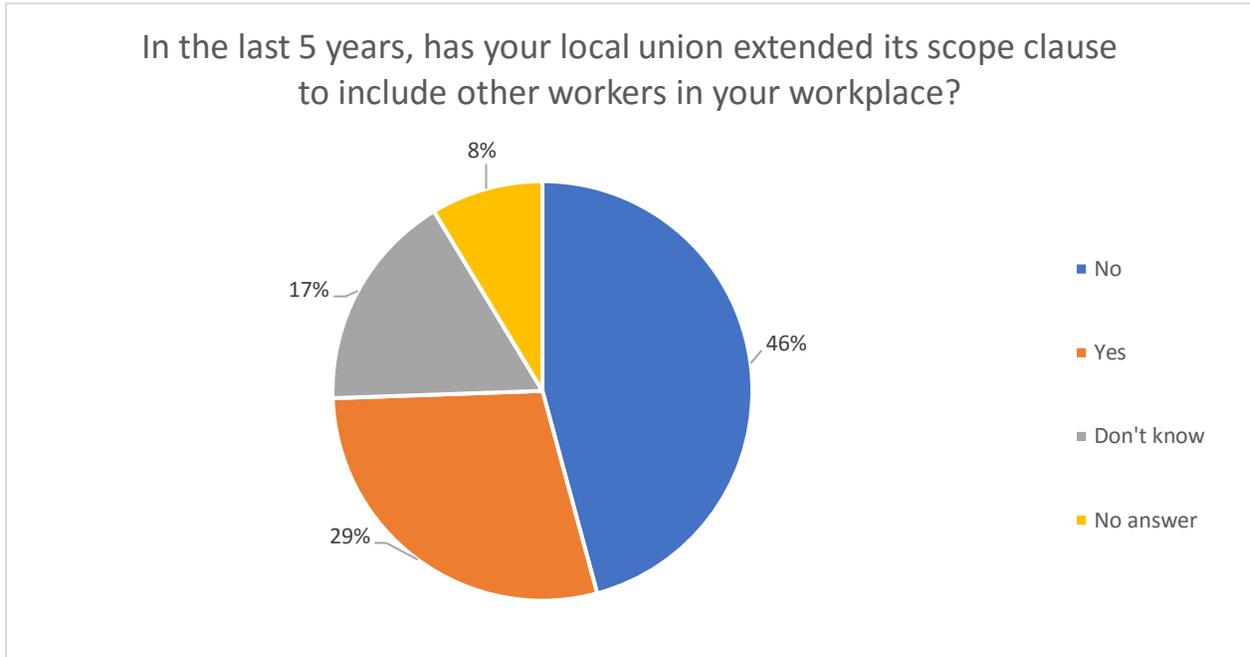
Just under one-third of respondents, or 29% of the sample, report that in the last 5 years their locals have extended their scope clauses to capture precariously employed workers in their collective agreements. However, proportionally more respondents (46%) report otherwise. Interestingly, 17% of survey respondents did now know the answer to this question.

Respondents view organizing as an engagement tool. For example, one respondent noted that organizing can be used strategically to engage more members in the work of the local.

> "I have also seen a lot of interest in Locals looking to organize the unorganized within their workplace which in my view creates member engagement as well since our existing members get involved in increasing their membership numbers by promoting CUPE." (respondent to the staff survey)

Another respondent told us that locals are reaching out to precariously employed workers in their own workplaces; sometimes these workers are not unionized.

> "Existing locals are looking to their precarious unorganized co-workers and realizing how important it is to ensuring that they become unionized as well with job protection, better wages and benefits, etc.". (respondent to the staff survey)

In the last 5 years, have new members been added to your local through an organizing campaign?

- No — 68%
- Yes — 14%
- Don't know — 12%
- No answer — 6%
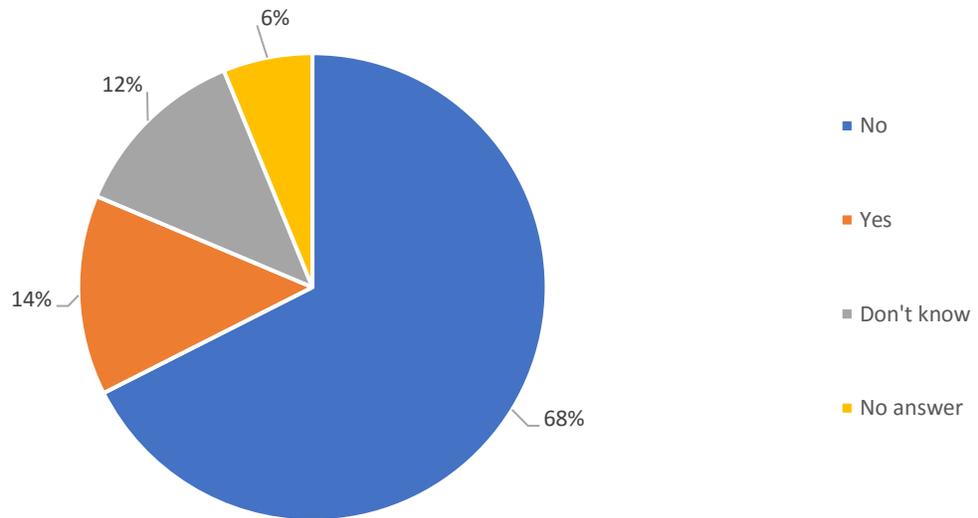
Most respondents (68%) report that in the last 5 years, no new members have been added to their locals through an organizing campaign, compared to the 14% of respondents who say that organizing has grown their local memberships. Twelve per cent (12%) of respondents did not know the answer to this question.

If yes, have members of your local been involved in the organizing campaign(s)?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know
- No answer
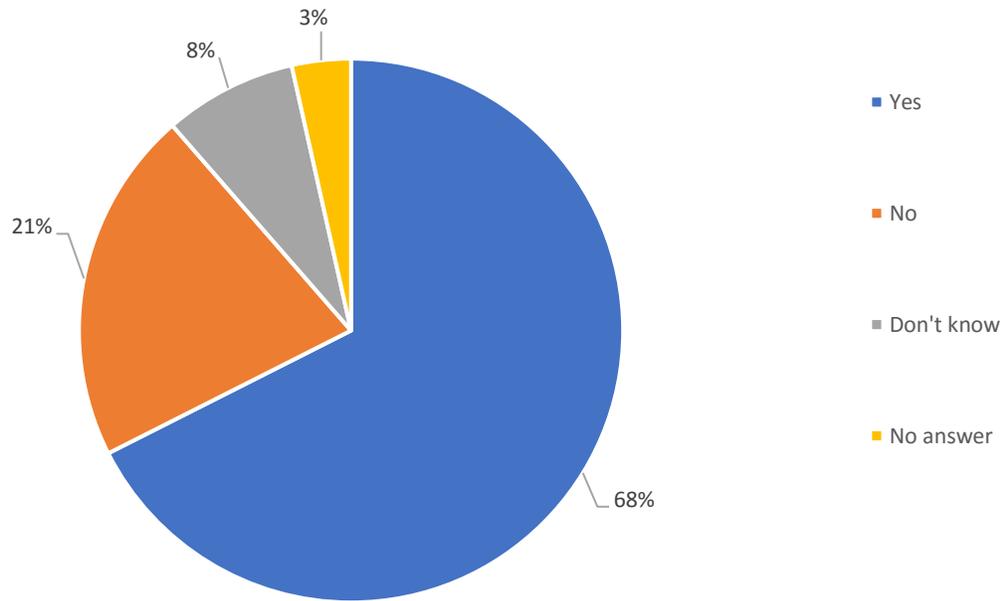
Fourteen per cent (14%) of respondents report that in the last 5 years, new members were added to their locals through an organizing campaign. Of that number, most respondents (68%) report that members of their locals were involved in the organizing campaign(s), compared to the 1 in 5 respondents (21%) who say that members of their locals were not involved.

Do you consider yourself:

|	
Korean	0.00%
Arab	0.12%
Japanese	0.12%
Southeast Asian (Cambodian, Laotian, Burmese...	0.12%
Latin American	0.49%
West Asian (Armenian, Azerbaijani, Bahraini, Cypriot,...	0.74%
Chinese	0.86%
South Asian / Indo-Canadian (Sri Lankan, Bangladeshi,...	0.99%
Filipino	1.11%
Other	2.10%
Black / African / Caribbean	2.35%
Aboriginal / Indigenous / First Nations / Métis	4.44%
French	7.65%
Canadian	35.93%
White / Caucasian / European	78.15%
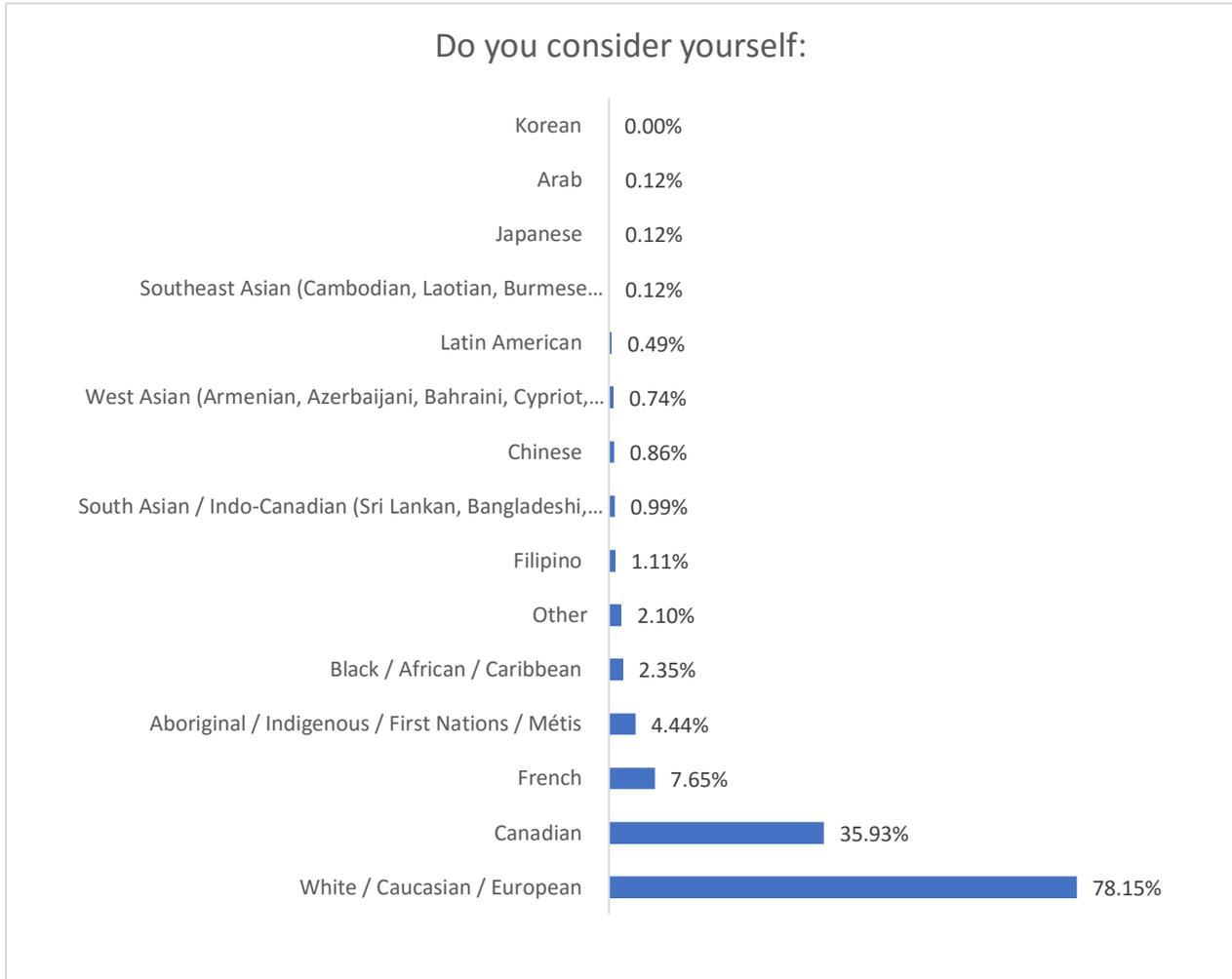
Note: this is a multiple response question therefore totals do not add to 100%.

Seventy-eight per cent (78%) of respondents identify as White / Caucasian / European compared to the 66% of respondents in the 2014 membership survey. An additional 36% of respondents identify as Canadian (2014: 23%). Nearly 8% of respondents identify as French (2014: 4%). Four percent (4%) identify as Aboriginal / Indigenous / First Nations / Métis (2014: 2%). Overall, 13% of respondents identify as racialized (2014: 15%).

Compared to the 2014 membership survey, the current survey is over-representative of CUPE leaders who identify as White / Caucasian / European (by 12%) and Canadian (by 13%). The current sample also slightly over-represents members who identity as French (by 2%) and Aboriginal (by 2%). However, the overall racialized composition of both samples is very close with a difference of only 1.6%.

Are you an Aboriginal person, that is, First Nations (North American Indian), Métis or Inuk (Inuit)?

- No, not an Aboriginal person
- Yes, First Nations (North American Indian)
- Yes, Métis
- Yes, Inuk (Inuit)
- No answer
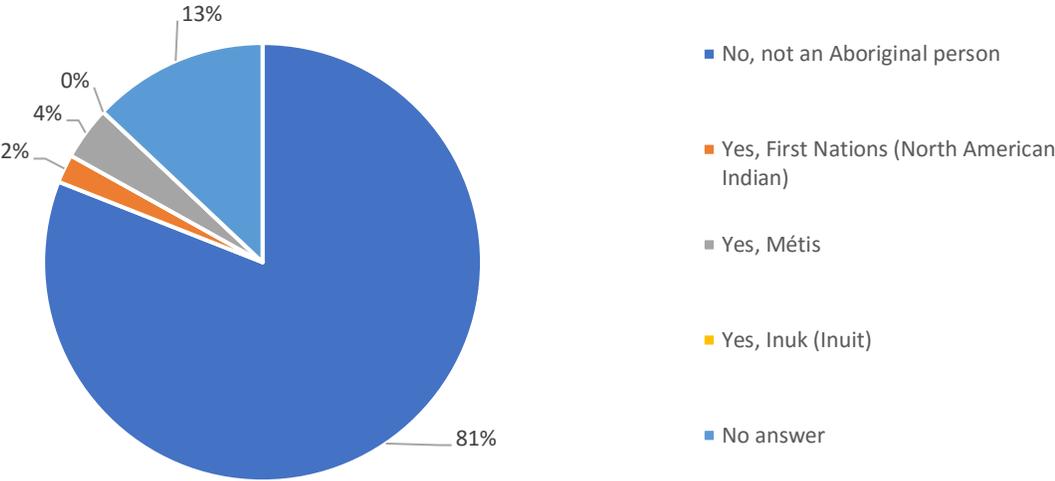
Most respondents (81%) do not identify as Aboriginal. Of those respondents who do identify as Aboriginal (a total of 6% of the sample), 4% identify as Metis, and 2% identify as First Nations. In the 2014 membership survey, the proportion of respondents who identified as Aboriginal was lower at 3.4%.

Do you consider yourself:

- Heterosexual
- No answer
- Bi-sexual
- I identify my sexuality in other terms
- Gay
- Lesbian
- Queer
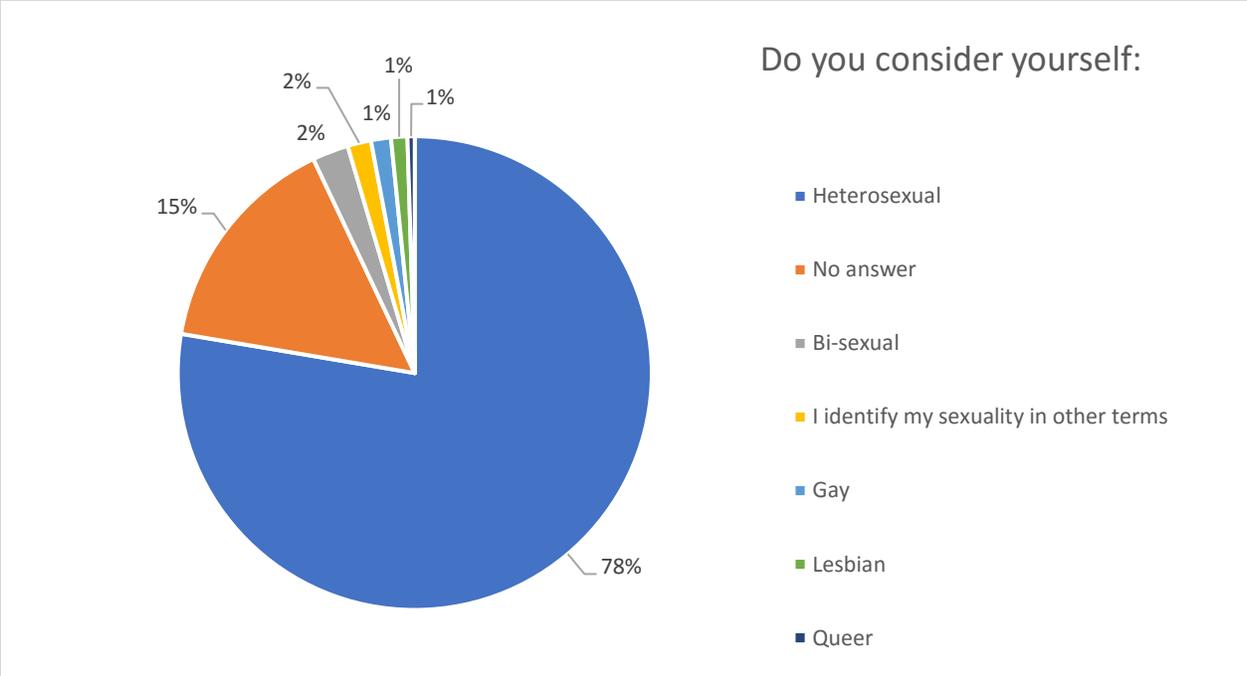
Most survey respondents (78%) identify as heterosexual. One per cent (1%) of respondents each identify as gay, lesbian, or queer. By comparison, 3% of respondents to the 2014 membership survey identified as gay, lesbian, bi-sexual or transgender.

Fifteen per cent (15%) of respondents chose not to respond to this question. We learned from the qualitative data that some respondents were not comfortable with this question while others viewed the question as irrelevant.

Approximately 2% of the sample identify their sexuality in other terms; responses include:

- Pansexual
- Asexual

Member of Equity-Seeking Group (excludes gender):
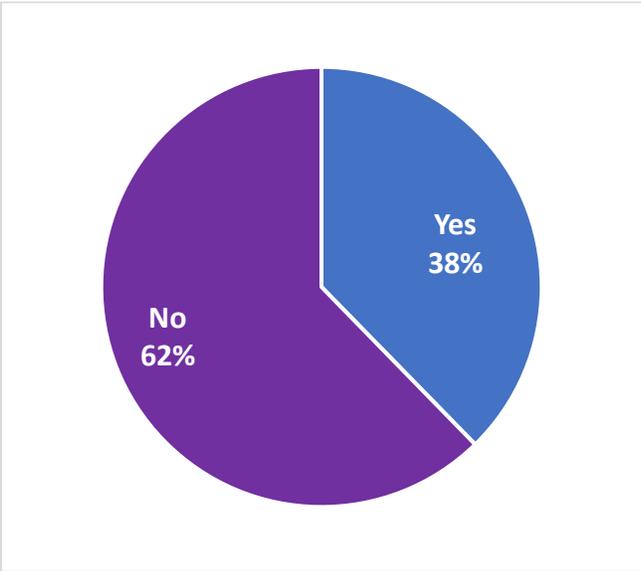
We constructed an "equity identifier", for the analysis, which is comprised of the following groups: Aboriginal peoples, persons with a disability, people of colour, and LGBTTI people. We chose to omit gender from the "equity identifier" because it represents a much larger category of individuals in terms of numbers and merits its own separate analysis.

The data reveal that nearly 4 out of 10 respondents (38%) identify as a member of an equity-seeking group whereas the majority, 62% of respondents, do not.

Do you consider yourself a:

- Person with a physical disability — 5%
- Person with a learning disability — 3%
- Person with a health-related disability — 9%
- Person with a mental health challenge — 5%
- Person with low vision / vision disability — 2%
- Person who is hard of hearing — 4%
- Person who is deaf or culturally deaf — 9%
- Person with a temporary / episodic disability — 0%
- Person with a disability not listed above — 1%
- Person without a disability — 60%
- No answer — 2%

Sixty per cent (60%) of the sample identify as a person without a disability. If we omit the 9% of respondents who chose not to answer this question, it is revealed that 31% of the sample report some type of disability. The most common type of disability reported by 9% of respondents is a health-related disability, followed by a physical disability (5% of respondents), and mental health challenge (5% of respondents).

How often do barriers related to disability limit your daily activities at work or require you to adapt to do your job?

Category	Percentage
Always	0.62%
Often	3.58%
Sometimes	11.48%
Rarely	15.31%
No answer	17.53%
Never	51.48%
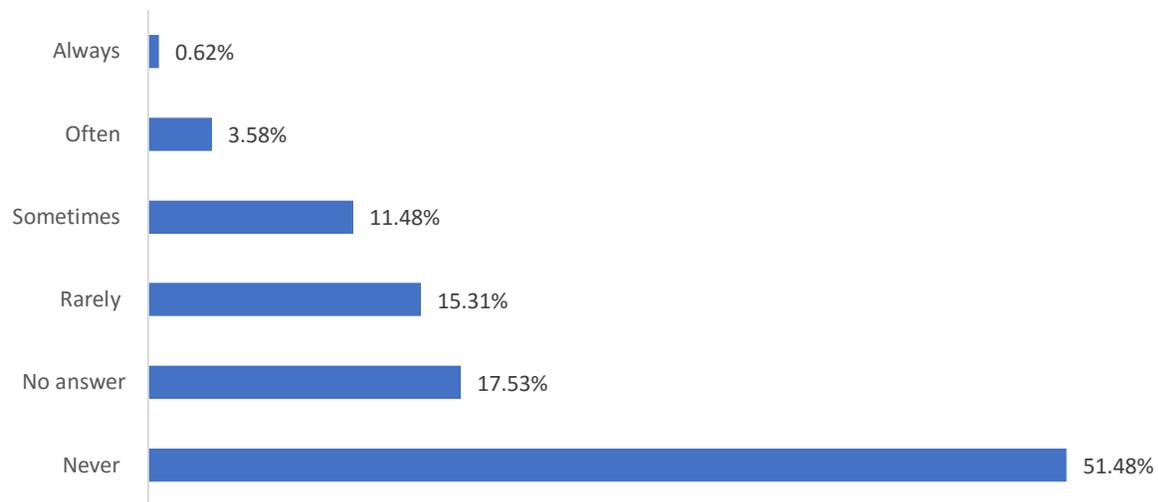
Sixteen point five per cent (16.5%) of the sample report that workplace barriers related to disability limit their daily activities at work or require adaptations always (1% of respondents), often (4% of respondents), or sometimes (11.5% of respondents). Most respondents (51.5%) report no barriers related to disability while 15% report that barriers related to disability rarely limit their daily work activities. Seventeen per cent (17.5%) of respondents chose not to answer this question.

What language do you speak at home most of the time?

1%

14%

85%

- English
- French
- Other
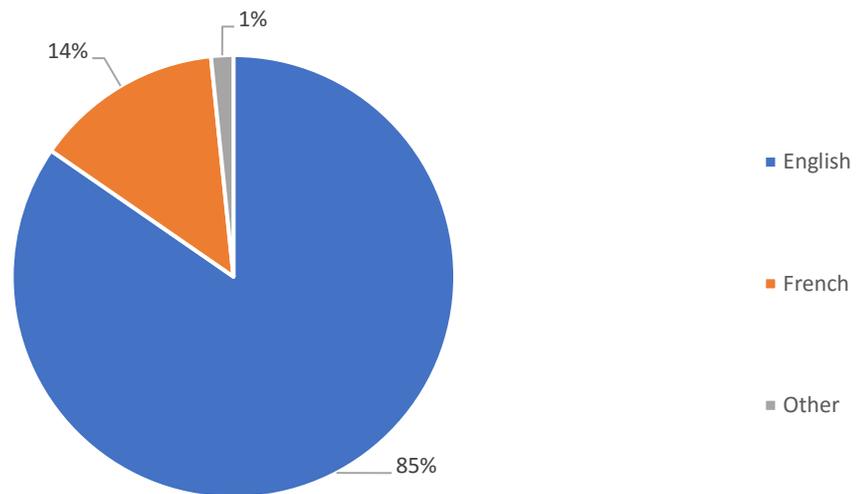
Most of the sample (84%) speak English at home most of the time; by comparison, 14% of the sample speak French at home most of the time. In comparison to the 2014 survey data, the current data reflects more English speakers and fewer French speakers. Seventy-five per cent (75%) of respondents to the 2014 survey spoke English at home most of the time, whereas 19% spoke French. At the time of the 2016 survey, numerous Quebec locals were facing representation votes which could account for the lower participation rates of French speakers in the 2016 survey as compared to the 2014 survey results.

i)   Online survey of elected CUPE local leaders

CUPE's elected local leaders across the country were invited to participate in the on-line leadership survey. For the purposes of the survey, CUPE's elected local leaders include the following:

- President
- Vice-President
- Secretary-Treasurer
- Recording Secretary
- Chief Steward
- Unit Chair
- Other elected position on the local union executive

Members of all Provincial Division Executive Boards and the National Executive Board (NEB) were also invited to participate in the online leadership survey.

The CUPE Research branch designed the survey instrument; it consists of 61 open- and closed-ended questions, although several questions have multiple sections. The online leadership survey was launched on September 13th, 2016 and expired on December 4th, 2016.

A total of 6,316 CUPE local leaders (4,895 English speakers and 1,421 French speakers) were contacted by email address and invited to participate in the online survey. The overall survey response rate is 13.0%; that is, 13.0% of CUPE local leaders contacted responded to the online survey. A total of 474 local unions participated in the survey for a response rate of 22%.

In total, 1,591 CUPE local leaders responded to the online survey. Of that number, 954 CUPE local leaders submitted their survey results to CUPE National, whereas 637 additional CUPE local leaders, for whatever reasons, chose not to submit their survey results.

Of the 954 submitted surveys, 810 contain useable data with complete datasets and a valid local union number. The analysis in the report is based on that number (N=810).

Of the 637 surveys that were *not* submitted, 295 were blank and contained no data. An additional 95 respondents were screened out of the survey because they did not identify as an elected, local union officer. And a further 247 respondents only filled out a portion of the survey.

Survey Promotion:

The survey was promoted throughout CUPE in several ways. The survey team hosted two conference calls in early summer 2016 with the co-chairs of the national equality committees and the National Young Workers' Committee to discuss and promote the survey project. Staff met with equality committee members during regularly scheduled committee meetings in the fall of 2016 to answer questions about the focus group portion of the research project. The survey was promoted at the CUPE National Sector Conference in Winnipeg, October 2016. In late November 2016, an information letter

including links to the survey was sent to all locals in the CUPE general mailing. Finally, the survey project was actively promoted by national office staff and servicing representatives throughout the regions.

Data Limitations:

Unlike the 2014 Membership Survey, the 2016-17 CUPE National Leadership Survey is not a random sample survey; therefore, **we caution against using the survey results to make general statements of fact about the entire CUPE membership.** However, we are encouraged by the fact that there are close similarities between the demographic datasets in the 2014 and the 2016 surveys, which gives us some measure of confidence in the reliability of the data.

For example, respondents to both surveys tend to be older, most are female, and annual earnings are similar. The overall racial composition of both samples is equivalent, most identify as Canadian citizens, most speak English at home most of the time, and few respondents identify as gay, lesbian, bi-sexual or transgender.

Compared to the 2014 membership survey, the current survey is over-representative of CUPE leaders who identify as White / Caucasian / European and Canadian. The 2016-17 data slightly over-represents members who identity as French and Aboriginal, and slightly under-represents respondents who identify as gay, lesbian, bi-sexual or transgender.

ii)   Focus Groups – CUPE National Committees

The second stage of the research project, and concurrent with the collection of online survey data, consisted of focus groups with CUPE's five national equality committees (Women's Committee, Rainbow Committee, Aboriginal Council, Persons with Disabilities Committee, and the Pink Triangle Committee) and the National Young Workers' Committee. The purpose of the focus group sessions was to learn how to best engage members of equity seeking groups and young workers (under the age of 30) in local union activities.

The Research Branch issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the focus group phase of the research project. Three consulting firms with focus group expertise were invited to submit written proposals based on the research objectives. The three proponents were asked to demonstrate experience working with equity seeking groups, among other criteria, in their written proposals. The successful applicant was Ottawa-based consulting firm, Goss Gilroy Inc.

The focus groups were held during the committees' regularly scheduled meetings in Ottawa during the fall of 2016. Each focus groups lasted up to two hours' duration. Goss Gilroy Inc., (the consultant) facilitated all five focus groups. CUPE Research worked with the consultant on the development of the focus group interview guide. Staff from the research branch attended all five committee focus group sessions. The consultant was responsible for delivering a final report that included an analysis of key findings with recommendations.

iii)   Focus Groups – Precariously Employed Members

The third stage of the research project consisted of focus groups with CUPE members who are precariously employed. The purpose of the focus group sessions was to learn how to best engage precariously employed members in local union activities. For the purposes of the focus groups, a *precariously employed member* was defined as:

A member who works fewer than full-time hours as defined in the collective agreement and includes members who work:

- Part-time
- Temporary
- Contract

- Casual
- Relief
- Seasonal hours

Precariously employed members are often not provided health benefits and pension coverage under the collective agreement.

The focus groups with precariously employed CUPE members commenced in early December 2016 and concluded in early February 2017. A total of eight focus groups were held across the country: two in each of Halifax, Vancouver and Toronto, and one focus group session in each of Winnipeg and Montreal. All the focus groups were held on a weekday evening; the first focus group was scheduled for 6pm; the second focus group, if scheduled, was held on the same weekday evening at 8pm. A total of 45 precariously employed CUPE members participated in the focus groups sessions.

Each focus groups lasted up to two hours' duration. Members were asked to fill out a short survey at the beginning of each focus group. Each member received a stipend as an expression of thanks for participating in the focus group study.

The consultant, Goss Gilroy Inc., facilitated all eight focus groups and administered the survey. CUPE Research worked with the consultant on the development of the survey and the focus group interview guide. Staff from the research branch attended all focus group sessions. The consultant was responsible for delivering a final report that included an analysis of key findings with recommendations.

There were challenges recruiting sufficient numbers of members to participate in many of the focus groups. Many moderators believe that between 8 and 12 people is the ideal number of focus group participants. However, in only 2 instances were we able to achieve between 8 and 12 participants; for example, 8 members participated in Toronto focus group #2, and 10 members participated in the Montreal focus group. In most instances, 6 or fewer members participated in the individual focus groups, and in one instance, Vancouver focus group #1, only 3 members participated.

There are several reasons for the low-turnout for the focus group sessions including stormy weather (e.g. Vancouver). Some members indicated they lived too far from the focus group facility. Some individuals that were contacted indicated they were not CUPE members and in some cases, the recruiter indicated that some individuals that were contacted were hostile and asked to be added to the recruiters "Do Not Call" list.

The challenge recruiting sufficient numbers of CUPE members to participate in the focus groups is the reason that one focus group session, instead of two, was held in each of Winnipeg and Montreal, the last two locations in the data collection phase.

Staff from the Research Branch and National Services Department worked with staff in the regions to acquire membership lists from locals with precariously employed members. Membership lists contained members' full name and contact information including home phone number and/or personal email address. Membership lists were provided to the consultant. The consultant contracted with Nielsen Opinion Quest to recruit members by telephone, and in some cases by email, to attend each of the eight focus groups. Only those members who identified as precariously employed were invited to participate in the focus groups.

At best, we had moderate success in our attempts to obtain membership lists from locals. Half the locals (50%) contacted for the Halifax focus groups provided membership lists, which represents our highest success rate. By comparison, of the 20 locals contacted to provide membership lists for the Winnipeg focus group only 3 provided lists for a success rate of 15%.

   iv)   Survey of CUPE Servicing Representatives

The final stage of the research project consisted of an online survey of CUPE Servicing Representatives. The survey was launched January 24th, 2017 and closed February 7th, 2017. The purpose of the survey was to learn from CUPE Servicing Representatives the best practices they observed that local unions are undertaking to increase the level of member engagement in local union activities, including members of equity seeking groups, young members, and precariously employed members.

Sixty-one percent (61%) of CUPE servicing representatives contacted completed the online survey. The online survey link was emailed to a total of 360 servicing representatives across the country. Of that number, a total of 220 staff (189 English and 31 French) completed the online survey.

Well over half the sample (61%) have ten or fewer years' experience as a servicing representative, with nearly one-third of respondents (32%) having worked for CUPE between 5 and 10 years. One-third of respondents (34%) have 11 years or more experience working as a CUPE servicing representative. Of that number, the majority (21%) have 11 to 15 years' experience. Only 2% of respondents have more than 20 years' experience working for CUPE. Five per cent (5%) of the sample chose not to answer the question.

More than two-thirds of the sample (67%) work in the provinces of Ontario (37% of respondents), British Columbia (17% of respondents) and Quebec (13% of respondents). Sixteen per cent (16%) of servicing representatives work in Alberta (7% of respondents), Saskatchewan (4% of respondents), and Manitoba (5% of respondents). And 11% of the sample work in New Brunswick (4% of respondents), Nova Scotia (5% of respondents), Prince Edward Island (1% of respondents) and Newfoundland and Labrador (1% of respondents).