

a look back at 2017



nupge annual report

I am very pleased to introduce the first issue of NUPGE's annual report—*A Look Back at 2017*. It is an easy to read but impressive record of the busy year that we are about to leave behind.

This is about the work of the National Union of Public and General Employees, which means it is about the work of the National office, and the work we have done for and with our Components. Our work has meaning because it is for our members in our Components; our work is effective only because we work in collaboration with our Components. Our abilities are what they are, our strength is what it is, because we are a small office with the combined strength of 370,000 members and the powerful, effective organizations making up our Components across the country.

When I look back at the year, I am amazed all over again by the breadth and the quality of the work done by our small team.

Our support staff, Deb Sonogo, Danny Wells, Lynda McGuigan, Sasha Saint-Aubin, Theresa Clemen, and Diane Fowles, have provided us the base on which we can safely stand knowing that our work will be of the highest quality and will meet the highest standards. Under Brenda Hildahl's leadership, they keep the National Union train running on time and make sure that our passengers and crew and cargo all get delivered safely, that the system works. We are indebted to them.

Our technical staff, Brenda Hildahl, Deborah Duffy, Andrew McNeill, Keith Noseworthy, Michael Temelini, Anil Naidoo, and Jeryn Daly, the researchers and writers and committee advisors and more, are multi-talented, multi-skilled, and excellent at the many jobs we throw their way. It's hard to stump them, hard to throw them a challenge they can't meet. Our research is always sound, our policy development always credible, our interventions in public debates always high quality, because of these people and the dedication they bring to their work.

They are led by the leadership team of Carol Meyer, our Managing Director extraordinaire, assisted by Len Bush. Without Carol, the good ship NUPGE would certainly founder or get blown off course. To say that she is invaluable is an understatement. Len is an experienced, level-headed, politically astute and very valuable lieutenant. They specialize in running a professional, conscientious, and progressive organization.

Finally, Elisabeth Ballermann has brought to her role as Secretary-Treasurer a wealth of experience and a ton of knowledge, giving us a new depth and a wonderful new set of perspectives.

When you read through our record of the year's work, I am confident that you will agree with me that the National Union holds up more than our share of the sky. We're proud to do so.

In solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the name 'Larry', written in a cursive style.

Larry

INTRODUCTION

It's been a busy year for the National Union and its Components.

At the federal level, while we are no longer confronted with Stephen Harper's Conservative government, the Liberal government is not exactly what it promised to be. Many of Prime Minister Trudeau's promises have been abandoned, ignored, or altered, such as electoral reform, restoring home mail delivery, open and transparent government, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

And in many other ways, the Liberal government is just an extension of the Conservative one it replaced. For example, in adopting Harper's greenhouse gas emissions targets, giving tax breaks to profitable corporations, and in refusing to tax the richest Canadians while placing a tax burden on the poorest, the Liberal government has not delivered the change it promised. And like the Conservatives before them, the Liberals have been promoting corporate-friendly trade agreements like the Canada-European Union Comprehensive and Economic Trade Agreement (CETA), the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), and the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP).

At the same time, our Components have been engaged in their own struggles. CUBGW went on strike in February against a greedy, profitable corporation demanding wage rollbacks and concessions from its workers. OPSEU college teachers went on strike in October and November against arrogant and unaccountable administrators and a provincial government that refuses to address the crisis of low-waged precarious work. And NAPE members in the town of Paradise endured a work dispute and lockout with the municipality that lasted months.

Despite our different struggles, NUPGE has been united in putting front and centre on the public agenda demands such as gender equality, reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples, international solidarity, democratic reform, worker health and safety, and fair work and wages. Our members are united in exercising their constitutionally guaranteed labour rights to end income inequality, and to fight for tax fairness, good jobs, and quality public services.

This is an opportunity to reflect and present some of this excellent work that the National Union has been engaged in.

NUPGE IN THE BROADER LABOUR MOVEMENT

Canadian Labour Congress

In 2017, the National Union dedicated a great deal of time in efforts to revitalize and reconnect the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) with its affiliates. We played a strong role in organizing meetings with our union allies and by drafting letters and reports detailing many of the problems we were experiencing with the national labour central. This work is starting to have an impact, and there has been notable progress made. However, a considerable amount of work remains to be done.

In May, the CLC held its Triennial Convention in Toronto, Ontario. This is an important event for the National Union and its Components and requires a considerable amount of effort by our office. NUPGE's role includes activities such as

- hotel bookings,
- organizing a caucus meeting,
- informing our delegates of the CLC's convention procedures,
- providing an overview of the issues being discussed, and
- mobilizing our members to participate in the debates.

Once again, the National Union and its Components showed that they play a significant leadership role within Canada's House of Labour.

Public Services International Congress

The NUPGE delegation attended the Public Services International (PSI) Congress in Geneva in October 2017, as part of the Canadian contingent. Representing NUPGE were Larry Brown, NUPGE President and PSI Canadian titular, Elisabeth Ballermann, NUPGE Secretary-Treasurer, Stephanie Smith, BCGEU/NUPGE President, and Mike Parker, HSAA/NUPGE President. NUPGE raised important issues such as precarious work, mental health, domestic violence as it affects workers and the workplace, and support for refugees and Kurdistan.

Legal Challenges Coordination

NUPGE

The National Union is concerned by the growing number of Components forced to launch legal challenges against provincial legislation that attacks workers' rights and freedom of association.

NUPGE engaged Paul Cavalluzzo, from Cavalluzzo Shilton McIntyre Cornish LLP, to produce an overview and legal brief on the state of jurisprudence surrounding these challenges and to provide a national perspective on them. Components impacted by such legislation, and their legal counsel, participated in a video conference, which was held on July 11.

Subsequently, the National Executive Board agreed this was a valuable resource for Components. NUPGE will continue to coordinate meetings where Components can discuss legal strategies.

CLC Legal Challenges Coordinating Committee

In recognition of the important work that NUPGE has done on the issue of court cases involving labour rights, the CLC has asked President Larry Brown to co-chair its Legal Challenges Coordinating Committee. The committee was created to foster cooperation and coordination among labour allies when taking forward a legal challenge involving the rights of workers or trade unions.

NUPGE WORKING WITH OUR ALLIES

The National Union proudly works with a variety of allies through the year. We do this when it allows us to better move forward on issues critical to our Components.

Canadian Health Coalition

NUPGE is represented on the board of the Canadian Health Coalition (CHC) and works closely with the CHC, as well as with provincial and territorial health coalitions and other allies. Some significant issues are federal funding of health care, pharmacare, privatization, paid plasma, and the ongoing Cambie constitutional challenge.

NUPGE Components are invited to join the annual CHC lobby work on Parliament Hill. In 2017, Components were well represented as the issue of pharmacare was brought to the attention of MPs.

Council of the Federation

The Council of the Federation (COF), made up of provincial and territorial governments in Canada, holds a yearly summer meeting. The National Union works with other allies during this meeting to push critical issues directly with Canada's premiers. 2017's COF meeting was held on July 17–19 in Edmonton, and NUPGE's Secretary-Treasurer led the National Union's delegation. Health care and pensions have been important issues where NUPGE and our allies have had some success in pressing governments to act, for example, the positive, recent expansion of CPP benefits.

Canadian Blood Services

NUPGE is a convener of the multi-union meeting of Canadian Blood Services (CBS) union representatives, with the latest meeting being held in Winnipeg on June 5–6, hosted at the MGEU offices.

The National Union continues to work with allies such as the Canadian Health Coalition and BloodWatch to resist the expansion of paid plasma in Canada. NUPGE was represented at the CBS's open board meeting in Ottawa on December 7.

NUPGE has also made a submission to the Expert Panel on Immune Globulin Product Supply and Related Impacts in Canada. It remains critical that this expert panel and our governments respect the Krever Commission recommendations against paid plasma.

NUPGE WORKING WITH OUR COMPONENTS

Governance Workshops and Accountability Sessions

As part of ongoing efforts to ensure that we are connected to, and appropriately representing, our Components, the National Union initiated a series of meetings with Component Boards. These sessions, usually 1 to 2 hours long, include discussions about governance and reports on the

day-to-day work of the National Union. This approach has proven highly successful, and during 2017 an Officer of the National Union met with the majority of Component Boards.

Working Sessions, Conferences, Committee Meetings, and Conference Calls

- National Executive Board Meeting #290 (January 9–10, 2017)
- Pensions Conference (February 2–3, 2017)
- Collective Bargaining Advisory Committee Conference Call (February 10, 2017)
- Advisory Committee on Women’s Issues Meeting (February 16–17, 2017)
- National Executive Board Meeting #291 (March 13–14, 2017)
- Canadian Health Professionals Secretariat Meeting (April 27–28, 2017)
- National Executive Board Meeting #292 (May 7, 2017)
- Education and Training Working Group Conference Call (May 18, 2017)
- National Executive Board Conference Call #293 (May 25, 2017)
- Canadian Blood Services Multi-union Meeting (June 5–6, 2017)
- Collective Bargaining Advisory Committee Conference Call (June 20, 2017)
- Legal Strategies Video Conference (July 11, 2017)
- 19th Annual Leadership School (August 19–25, 2017)
- Advisory Committee on Women’s Issues Meeting (September 7–8, 2017)
- Working Session for Correction Officers and Youth Facility Workers (September 21–22, 2017)
- Retailing of Cannabis Conference Call (September 22, 2017)
- Working Session for Probation Officers (September 25, 2017)
- Pension Experts Session (September 25, 2017)

- National Executive Board Meeting #294 (October 11, 2017)
- Occupational Health and Safety Representatives Conference Call (November 8, 2017)
- Component Finance Officers Meeting (November 16–17, 2017)
- Canadian Health Professionals Secretariat Meeting (November 20–21, 2017)

Retailing of Cannabis for Recreational Use

As provinces started to address the question of how cannabis for recreational use would be sold, NUPGE ensured Components had information on what was happening in other provinces. This included convening a conference call on the retailing of recreational cannabis in September.

Canadian Health Professionals Secretariat

The Canadian Health Professionals Secretariat (CHPS) meets twice a year, and meetings this year took place on April 27–28 and November 20–21. CHPS is an important forum for Components. In addition, non-NUPGE unions can share perspectives on critical health care issues. Both Components and non-NUPGE unions benefit from presentations by subject experts. This year we had presentations on federal funding, health human resources, pharmacare and the impact of provincial health deficits.

Leadership Development School

In 2017, the National Union held the 19th annual Leadership Development School in Keene, Ontario. This year's school had 23 members from across Canada participate, as well as guests from the United States and Australia. The core of the program is focused on the role of leaders in managing change in their unions and is led by Elaine Bernard, former executive director of the Harvard Trade Union Program. There were also sessions on climate change, LGBTQ2S issues, Indigenous women's leadership, the digital economy, and more. Plans are already underway for the 20th annual school in 2018!

NUPGE CAMPAIGNS

All Together Now! Phase 2

Building on the work on income inequality in the All Together Now! campaign, NUPGE began planning ATN Phase 2 in the summer of 2017. Wanting to find a way to make a splash and catch the attention of new and old followers of ATN, the National Union, working with Grey Canada, has developed an up-to-date digital campaign. The first piece will be a TV commercial that will air in February 2018. The commercial has been created to attract people to nupge.ca and the newly designed ATN microsite. The revamped site will contain an educational challenge designed as a tool to get NUPGE members and the public thinking about unions.

Electoral Reform

NUPGE was part of the campaign to try to get the federal government to keep its promise on electoral reform. This included producing materials for Components to use and helping Fair Vote Canada with its outreach. While the campaign did not succeed in getting the federal government to move ahead with electoral reform, it did succeed in making the public aware that the Liberals were breaking a promise they had made barely a year earlier. It also made the government realize that breaking promises will affect how it is seen by Canadians.

Trade Deals

An important part of the National Union's work continues to be our response to Canada's negotiations and participation in international trade and economic agreements such as CETA (the Canada-European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement), NAFTA (the North American Free Trade Agreement), and the TPP (the Trans-Pacific Partnership). Our ongoing work entailed submissions to parliamentary committees, letters to Ministers and government officials, and the publication of various research documents.

We have also participated in government consultations and briefings, and in parliamentary hearings. We have worked closely with our coalition partners across North America and around the world, in the labour movement and in civil society organizations, such as Public Services International, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, the Trade Justice Network, Public Citizen's Global Trade Watch (USA), and the Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung (New York Office) just to name a few.

Privatization

In the early part of the year, NUPGE was involved in the fight against plans for the Canada Infrastructure Bank, which is intended to make it easier to privatize many types of public infrastructure. Our work included a submission to both the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance and the Senate Committee on Banking, Trade and Commerce, as well as publicizing many of the proposal's flaws.

Our work opposing Social Impact Bonds included Larry Brown being interviewed for a documentary on Social Impact Bonds and providing assistance to the producers in identifying other strong voices against privatization for the documentary.

NUPGE continues to highlight the problems caused by different forms of privatization. These range from the use of tax havens by companies investing in P3 privatization schemes to the efforts of privatization proponents to deliberately underfund public services.

NUPGE PUBLICATIONS AND WEBINARS

Publications

2017 was a busy year for publications. NUPGE released research papers, submissions to government committees and departments, pamphlets, and even a colouring book. Below is a chronological list of titles:

- *The Election of Trump and the Renegotiation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)* (January 2017)
- *The Cold Hard Facts about Women's Economic Well-Being in Canada* (February 2017)
- "Submission to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance Regarding an Act to Establish the Canada Infrastructure Bank" (May 2017)
- "Briefing Note on Provincial Government Finances" (July 2017)
- *NAFTA Do We Hafta?* (July 2017)
- "Submission to Global Affairs Canada on the Renegotiation of NAFTA" (July 2017)

- *Universal Health Care on Trial* (September 2017)
- *Tainted Blood. Never Again!* (September 2017)
- *Unions Matter Colouring Book* (September 2017)
- “Canada Infrastructure Bank” (September 2017)
- “Problems with P3s” (September 2017)
- *Inventory of NUPGE Component Courses* (October 2017)
- “Infrastructure Investment” (December 2017)

Webinars

NUPGE has begun its second series of pension webinars. Below are the webinars held in 2017:

- Defending good pension plans (November 29, 2017)
- Labour rights in pension investment (December 13, 2017)

Several pension webinars are scheduled for 2018. Stay tuned!

NUPGE WEB RESOURCES

The importance of online communications for the modern labour movement cannot be overstated. NUPGE was among the first Canadian unions to launch a website. Keeping our site, nupge.ca, up to date with new items posted daily is an ongoing commitment of the National Union. Most recently, we did considerable work improving the look and functionality of our site. It now has a more accessible, simplified design and runs faster and is more stable.

As we prepare for the launch of phase 2 of the All Together Now! campaign, we are updating the campaign’s website. This will include a new look while introducing some great new advancements in web development, coding improvements, and web server technologies.

Another site we would like to encourage members and the public to regularly consult is the one for the Community Service Workers campaign (communityserviceworkers.ca).

Along with our websites, NUPGE is developing a growing presence in social media, including Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/NationalUnionofPublicandGeneralEmployees/>) and Twitter (@NUPGE).

NUPGE AND THE FUTURE

Millennial Research Project

In 2017, NUPGE explored the question of how our union, and the labour movement, are addressing the generational shift that is taking place. As we see baby boomers retiring, young workers are taking their place, yet as a movement, we have not fully embraced these changing demographics.

So NUPGE engaged Abacus Data to conduct several phases of research to understand more about the millennial generation. Through a national survey of union and non-union young workers (ages 18 to 35), NUPGE has gained concrete findings on the way millennials see the world, including their perceptions of unions. From there, 100 union members participated in an online research community in order to delve more deeply into questions of how to engage, communicate with, and motivate young workers. The data compiled will help inform our union as we move forward in a digital-first manner.

Environment

Climate change is one of the great challenges for this period in world history. It will affect us all and requires that each of us is engaged in the effort to reduce greenhouse gases and build a future that is both ecologically sustainable and respects the rights and livelihoods of all people. From the National Union's perspective, the future needs to not only be green but fair and just. As a step towards this goal in November of 2017, Secretary-Treasurer Elisabeth Ballermann attended the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Bonn, Germany. While she was encouraged that Canada is taking some small steps towards a green future with a just transition for workers, much, much more needs to be done. The National Union is in the process of revitalizing our work on climate change, and on the environment in general, and encourages members to watch for our contributions and get involved!

Scholarships

Every year the National Union awards 5 scholarships to the children and grandchildren and the foster children and foster grandchildren of current or retired NUPGE members. The scholarships are open to those who are starting a post-secondary education in a public educational institution. The 2017 winners were

Brian Fudge Memorial Scholarship — Arianna Sultani, child of Halina Sultani (OPSEU/NUPGE)

Scholarship for Indigenous Students — Ian Roberts, child of Paula Roberts (NAPE/NUPGE)

Scholarship for Visible Minority Students — Emily Chow, child of Helen Yeung (HSABC/NUPGE)

Terry Fox Memorial Scholarship — Navarra Houldin, child of Christine Sturgeon (HSAA/NUPGE)

Tommy Douglas Scholarship — Faris Kapra, child of Farhana Kanth (NSGEU/NUPGE)



NATIONAL UNION OF PUBLIC AND GENERAL EMPLOYEES

- B. C. Government and Service Employees' Union (BCGEU)
- Health Sciences Association of British Columbia (HSABC)
- Health Sciences Association of Alberta (HSAA)
- Saskatchewan Government and General Employees' Union (SGEU)
- Manitoba Government and General Employees' Union (MGEU)
- Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU)
- Canadian Union of Brewery and General Workers (CUBGW)
- New Brunswick Union of Public and Private Employees (NBU)
- Nova Scotia Government and General Employees Union (NSGEU)
- PEI Union of Public Sector Employees (PEI UPSE)
- Newfoundland & Labrador Association of Public and Private Employees (NAPE)

The National Union of Public and General Employees is an affiliate of the Canadian Labour Congress and a member of Public Services International.

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