

# 2018 in Review



# NUPGE Annual Report

Last year we produced the first issue of our annual report—*A Look Back at 2017*. We aimed for an easy to read, but we think an impressive, record of the busy year that we were about to leave behind. From the response we got, it seemed we accomplished our goal. So, welcome to *A Look Back at 2018*.

This report covers much of 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.

The National Union is in part our National Office and the team there; but the National Union is also the combination of our Components as one national family of organizations. Our abilities are what they are, our strength is what it is, because we are a small office, we have the combined strength of 390,000 members and the powerful, effective organizations making up our Components across the country.

We at the national level have 3 roles. One is to be of direct assistance to our Components in every way possible. The second is to represent our Components nationally, within the CLC and with other national allies, and internationally. The third is to deal with the kind of big-picture issues that affect every Component across the board.

Again this year, our team at the National Office has done a lot of work, and done it all at a level of quality and depth of content that makes us proud.

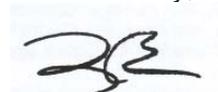
Our administrative staff, Deb Sonogo, Sandra Megeney, Lynda McGuigan, Sasha Saint-Aubin, Theresa Clemen, and Diane Fowles are a great and consistently reliable team. Their work gives us the foundation for work that will always be of the highest quality and that will meet the highest standards. Under Brenda Hildahl's leadership, they keep the National Union machinery humming, taking as their own the motto, "The difficult we do immediately, the impossible just takes a bit longer." We remain indebted to them.

Our technical staff, Brenda Hildahl, Deborah Duffy, Andrew McNeill, Keith Noseworthy, Michael Temelini, Anil Naidoo, and Jeryn Daly, are researchers and writers and committee advisors and more. A hard-working, committed, and talented group, up for any challenge. Collectively, they have produced a ton of valuable research, along with exciting web-based and hard copy publications. They've led meetings, participated for us in our broader coalitions, developed credible policy proposals, allowed us to intervene with confidence in public policy debates.

They are led so effectively by Carol Meyer, our excellent Managing Director, with the able assistance of Len Bush. Carol is beyond indispensable, she is simply critical to the success of the National Union. For his part, Len is a most valuable lieutenant, with wide experience and deep commitment to the cause. They specialize in running a professional, conscientious, and progressive organization.

Finally, Elisabeth Ballermann, our Secretary-Treasurer, adds immeasurably to the work of the union, bringing with her much experience and even more knowledge, bringing new skill sets and a judicious, thoughtful perspective.

In solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the initials 'JG' or similar, written in a cursive style.

# INTRODUCTION

It's been a busy year for the National Union and its Components. At the federal level, despite its promise to be progressive, green, and labour friendly, Prime Minister Trudeau's Liberal government looks a lot like the corporate friendly Harper Conservative government it replaced.

The Trudeau government has been very busy promoting and expanding what began as Harper's corporate rights agenda with trade and investment agreements like the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA) (which will replace the North American Free Trade Agreement) and with the misnamed Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP).

Most recently, the Liberals took a page right out of the anti-union handbook, by passing back-to-work legislation to interfere with free collective bargaining.

Other promises the federal government made have yet to be realized, have been abandoned, ignored, or altered, such as open and transparent government, electoral reform, restoring home mail delivery, meeting our *Paris Agreement* targets, and resolving longstanding indigenous issues.

However, the federal government is not the only government attacking public services and workers' rights. Unfortunately, we have seen right-wing populist governments elected in a number of provinces over the past couple of years.

The Components of the National Union have been struggling to both defend their members and to make their provinces better places to live for all citizens.

A small example of the activities of our Components would include:

- In January, NAPE members in 15 public sector bargaining units representing approximately 20,000 workers voted overwhelmingly to accept a new collective agreement, ending a long and difficult round of bargaining.
- In March, Health Sciences Association of Alberta ratified a 3-year collective agreement for its 19,000 members employed by the health authority, bringing improvements to working conditions, benefits, and work-life balance for which we've been advocating for many years.
- In June, over 300 developmental services workers at Community Living Cambridge voted strongly in favour of joining the Ontario Public Service Employees Union; and that same month some 100 front-line workers at the Kenora Catholic District School Board voted in favour of joining OPSEU.

- In August, a mediator-arbitrator established a collective agreement for more than 6,000 employees in the Health Care Bargaining Unit at the Nova Scotia Health Authority and IWK Health Centre. This came after 5 days of mediation-arbitration and concludes a process that began in October 2016.
- In September, members of the Manitoba Government and General Employees' Union at Main Street Project, who offer programming and services for Winnipeg's homeless and most vulnerable, ratified a new 3-year collective agreement. This ended a long and frustrating round of bargaining that was complicated by wage freeze legislation and restructuring and layoffs at the agency.
- In November, nearly 700 members of the B.C. Government and Service Employees' Union at Gateway Casinos in the Thompson-Okanagan ratified a new contract, ending a 19-week strike.

Despite our different struggles, we have been united in putting front and centre on the public agenda demands such as worker health and safety, an end to precarious work, the right to decent benefits and living wages, gender equality, justice and equality for racialized and transgender workers, reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, international solidarity, and democratic reform. Our members are united in exercising their constitutionally guaranteed labour rights to end income inequality and to fighting for tax fairness, good jobs, and quality public services.

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

## **NUPGE IN THE BROADER LABOUR MOVEMENT**

### Canadian Labour Congress

Through NUPGE, our Components are part of the 3.3 million-member Canadian Labour Congress (CLC), of which we are the second-largest affiliate. Our Components are also major funders of, and play a full role in, the day-to-day operations of federations of labour and labour councils across Canada. As NUPGE President, Larry Brown serves on the CLC Executive Committee and as a General Vice-President on the Canadian Council. BCGEU President Stephanie Smith represents NUPGE on the CLC Executive Committee and as a Vice-President on the Canadian Council. The Congress has a number of Standing Committees and Working Groups in which NUPGE plays an active role. Our representatives on these committees

are either staff from the national office, or leadership activists, and/or staff from Components. They are appointed by NUPGE's President to represent our union.

In 2018, members from several NUPGE Components participated in the Canadian Labour Congress's (CLC) Lobby on the Hill. Issues addressed on the lobby day included pharmacare, pay equity, pension and bankruptcy reform, and employment insurance. The National Union's role involved ensuring participants had the information they needed and that people were registered.

The National Union also continued to make sure that our members' voices were heard on the CLC's governing bodies and at committee meetings.

The next CLC Convention takes place May 4–8, 2020, in Vancouver, British Columbia.

### **Public Services International**

The National Union is affiliated with Public Services International (PSI), an international federation representing 20 million public sector workers who belong to over 700 unions in 163 countries. Through our membership in PSI, we work closely with other public sector unions in the international community to represent and defend public services and public employees. The National Union plays an important role within PSI. Canadian representation on PSI's Executive Board, on the Inter-American Regional Executive, and on the World Women's Committee is rotated every 2.5 years among the leaders of the 4 Canadian national affiliates. NUPGE President Larry Brown is the current titular member for Canada on the Executive Board and on the Inter-American Regional Executive.

### **Legal Challenges Coordination**

#### **NUPGE**

The National Union is concerned about the growing number of Components forced to launch legal challenges against provincial legislation that attacks workers' rights and freedom of association. We have engaged Andrew Raven, from Raven Law, to assist with monitoring and providing opinion when needed. Following the debate about the use of section 33 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (the notwithstanding clause) by Ontario's Ford government, NUPGE asked Raven Law to provide a legal opinion on options to challenge its use. This opinion was delivered in November and was followed by a conference call on November 29. The call saw the broadening of the committee to become the Legal Strategies and Component Coordinating Committee, which will meet to share information

and discuss strategies related to these legal cases. Some Components are actively pursuing cases individually or as part of a collective challenge, but all Components will be impacted by the results of these cases, so this committee provides an important opportunity to share information.

### CLC Legal Challenges Coordinating Committee

NUPGE President Larry Brown continues to lead the work of the CLC's Legal Challenges Coordinating Committee. The committee creates cooperation and coordination among labour allies when taking forward a legal challenge involving the rights of workers or trade unions. At the CLC's Canadian Council, President Brown presents a report by the committee on the important cases that impact workers and unions. These could be rulings or cases that are still being contested.

## **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

The National Union 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. The Components of the National Union play an active and important role in their provincial health coalitions.

Some significant issues are enforcement of the *Canada Health Act*, federal funding of health care, implementation of pharmacare, the ongoing Cambie constitutional challenge and stopping health care privatization, which includes the rise of paid plasma clinics. We also participate in the monthly calls between the CHC, provincial and territorial health coalitions, and labour allies. NUPGE Components joined the annual CHC lobby week on Parliament Hill. In February of 2018, Components were well represented as the issue of pharmacare was brought to the attention of MPs and Senators.

### Canadian Blood Services

NUPGE is a convener of the multi-union meeting of union representatives of Canadian Blood Services (CBS). The last meeting was held in Winnipeg, June 5–6, 2017, and we look forward to the 2019 meeting. We continue to work with allies such as the Canadian Health Coalition and BloodWatch

to resist the expansion of paid plasma in Canada. We joined in decrying the report by Health Canada's Expert Panel on Immune Globulin Product Supply and Related Impacts in Canada. The National Union made a submission to the panel. Despite the pressure of many progressive groups, the report left the door open to paid plasma and did not respect the Krever Commission's recommendations.

### BloodWatch

On October 29–30, 2018, NUPGE Components participated in a parliamentary lobby led by BloodWatch. Over 50 MPs and Senators were engaged in an effort to support Bill S-252, the *Voluntary Blood Donations Act*. Bill S-252 and the lobby have brought the issue of paid plasma directly to the federal government in an attempt to get federal action banning paid plasma. 4 provinces— Alberta, Ontario, British Columbia, and Quebec— have all banned paid plasma, but without federal action, our blood supply will continue to be placed at risk.

### Canadians for Tax Fairness

The National Union continues to work closely with Canadians for Tax Fairness (C4TF). Our support reflects the fact that without a fair tax system, governments in Canada will not be able to fund the comprehensive, high-quality network of public services and programs required to meet our social, economic, and environmental needs in the 21st century.

New C4TF campaigns are targeting *snow washing* and the fact that multinational corporations in the digital economy aren't required to pay the same taxes as their Canadian competitors. Snow washing refers to the fact that the high level of secrecy in Canada around who controls private companies has made it easy for tax dodgers, terrorist groups, and other criminals to launder money.

The anti-snow washing campaign has already met with some success, as federal and provincial finance ministers have agreed to the need for corporations to report who their beneficial owners are (the people who control the corporation). This is intended to make it harder for tax cheats and money launderers to use private corporations to hide their activities. What is still missing is a requirement that information on beneficial owners be made public. The increased scrutiny that a public registry of beneficial owners provides is seen as essential for disclosure of beneficial ownership to be an effective tool in dealing with tax avoidance, money laundering, and related problems.

## Trade Justice Network and Trade and Investment Research Project

Modern trade agreements typically promote and protect the rights of investors and corporations, while suppressing the democratic rights and freedoms of citizens. So there is great importance in common civic action. Therefore, the National Union continues to work closely in coalition with 2 organizations: the Trade and Investment Research Project, and the Trade Justice Network. Their aims are to raise greater awareness about Canada's trade and investment agreements, to examine the effects of these far-reaching treaties on public services, public interest regulation, and environmental protection, and to promote sustainable, equitable, and socially just alternatives to free trade.

## **NUPGE WORKING WITH OUR COMPONENTS**

### Working Sessions, Conferences, Committee Meetings, and Conference Calls

#### **Advisory Committee on Women's Issues**

- March 1–2, 2018, Ottawa
- September 20–21, 2018, Ottawa

**Canadian Health Coalition Lobby:** February 26–27, 2018, Ottawa

#### **Canadian Health Professionals Secretariat**

- May 7–8, 2018, Ottawa
- December 3–4, 2018, Ottawa

**Collective Bargaining Advisory Committee:** March 1–2, 2018, Ottawa

**Community Service Workers Lobby Training:** March 8–9, 2018, Ottawa

**Correctional Officers and Youth Facility Workers:** September 27–28, 2018, Ottawa

#### **Highway Maintenance Workers**

- June 25, 2018, Conference Call
- September 13–14, 2018, Ottawa

**Highway Safety Officers:** October 1, 2018, Ottawa

**Infrastructure Investment by Pension Plans:** February 16, 2018, Conference Call

**Leadership Development School:** August 18–24, 2018, Jackson's Point, Ontario

**Liquor Board Representatives**

- February 26, 2018, Conference Call
- November 1–2, 2018, Ottawa

**National Executive Board**

- #295, January 22–23, 2018, Ottawa
- #296, March 26–27, Richmond, BC
- #297, June 27, Conference Call
- #298, October 10, 2018, Conference Call
- #299, November 5–6, 2018, Ottawa

**Occupational Health and Safety Representatives:** June 21–22, 2018, Ottawa

**Ad Hoc Meeting on the Opioid Crisis:** March 9, 2018, Ottawa

**Pension Webinars**

- January 24, 2018 - Plan design considerations
- April 11, 2018 - Canadian pension funds' investment in infrastructure
- May 30, 2018 - Investing for impact: Generating financial returns with targeted social & environmental benefits

**United Nations Commission on the Status of Women:** March 12–23, 2018, New York

**Governance Workshops and Accountability Sessions**

A few years ago, the National Union initiated a process of regularly meeting with the Boards of our Components. This was a way of continuing our efforts to ensure that we are connected to, and appropriately representing, our Components. The sessions, usually lasting between 1 to 2 hours, focus on topics of union governance and include a report on the day-to-day work of the National Union. These sessions have proven highly successful, and during 2018, an Officer of the National Union met with the majority of Component Boards.

**Canadian Health Professionals Secretariat**

The Canadian Health Professionals Secretariat (CHPS) meets twice a year, and meetings this year took place on May 7–8 and December 3–4. CHPS

is an important forum for Components to share perspectives on critical health care issues. CHPS representatives benefit from presentations by subject experts as well as by sharing information on key topics with each other. This year we had presentations on pharmacare, the opioid crisis, and on a range of other topics.

### Ad Hoc Meeting on the Opioid Crisis

To improve understanding of the opioid crisis and to further the work of the National Union and its Components, an Ad Hoc Meeting on the Opioid Crisis was held on March 9, 2018, in Ottawa. The meeting centred around 4 presentations that generated considerable high-quality discussions:

1. The Opioid Crisis in Canada: Federal Approach to a National Public Health Crisis. Speaker: Brittany Sauvé, Senior Advisor, Opioid Response Team, Health Canada
2. The Opioid Crisis: Occupational Exposure, a Cross-Canada Update. Speaker: Michael Temelini, National Representative, National Union
3. North America's Fentanyl and Novel Opioid Crisis: What Is Illicit Fentanyl? Where Does It Come From? How Do We Stay Safe from Exposure? Speaker: Conor King, Justice Institute of BC
4. The Opioid Crisis: Beyond Physical Safety—Mental Health Considerations. Speaker: Elisabeth Ballermann, Secretary-Treasurer, National Union

### Leadership Development School

The annual Leadership Development School is one of NUPGE's longest-running and most successful programs. It is an intensive week-long school, held every year at the end of summer, aimed at senior leadership and staff. Curriculum for the school is developed in conjunction with Elaine Bernard, the former executive director of the Harvard University Labor and Worklife Program, and reflects many of the unique and challenging experiences faced by the Canadian and international trade union movement.

This past year marked the 20th annual school since its founding. It was held at the Briars Resort in Jackson's Point, Ontario, from August 18–24, 2018. The school brought together 22 members from NUPGE's Components, as well as 2 international guests: one from American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) in the US, and one from Unions New South Wales in Australia.

For over a week, participants received a core curriculum by Elaine Bernard, and lectures from 12 guest speakers on 18 topics, including "The Attack on

Unions,” “The Contradictions of Pension Fund Capitalism,” “Tax Fairness,” and “Domestic Violence in the Workplace,” and more. Central themes explored included leadership and organizational change, strategic choices for unions, building organizational capacity and external leveraging for unions, and innovation and change in unions.

Plans are already underway for the 21st session in 2019!

## **NUPGE CAMPAIGNS**

### **All Together Now! Phase 2**

Building on the work on income inequality in the *All Together Now!* campaign, the National Union began planning ATN Phase 2 in the summer of 2017. With the help of Grey Canada, the digital-first campaign was designed to be a little edgy, something that would communicate all the great ways that unions are still relevant to Canadians, and leave people thinking, “I can’t believe that message came from a union!” The tagline for the campaign was “Unions F@#k Yeah!”—designed to pique the interest of youth and instill pride in our members. The tagline “All Together Now!” was used to tie various aspects of the campaign together, as well to link to other research we published.

The first part of ATN 2 was a commercial that aired multiple times in 60-second and 30-second versions on CBC during the winter Olympics (February 2018). The commercial was also pushed digitally on YouTube and as ads on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

The YouTube videos were viewed 9,000 times in 2 months.

On Facebook, the 60-second ad reached 756,609 people with 486,000 views in 6 days.

Within a month, NUPGE videos were viewed 803,733 times. And posts were viewed 3,026,842 times, with a total of 37,211 engagements (likes, comments, shares, and reactions).

On Twitter, the ad reached 1,993,396 people. And in the next 28 days, NUPGE tweet impressions were up to 26,700 (a boost of 1,044.1%).

On Instagram, the ads received 190,219 views in 6 days.

With the commercial as a hook, the next part of the digital-first approach was a new website: unionsyeah.ca. The site was developed using thematic elements from the commercial to create cohesion between the 2 mediums and strengthen the message of the campaign.

When visitors landed on the main page, they were met with an invitation to take the Union Challenge: a quiz to demonstrate how people have benefited from the work of unions. As an incentive, the National Union offered a draw for 3 prizes of \$5,000; the draw was open to anyone who completed the full quiz and submitted their contact information. After each question, a pop-up appeared that framed the question in its historical context and showed what role unions played in shaping present policies.

The Union Challenge ran for 3 weeks, during which time 2,573 people took the quiz. 642 of those participants subscribed to our news update. And the quiz still remains active as a learning tool. Though the monetary incentive has ended, participants are still eligible to win a free Unions F@#k Yeah! T-shirt. The winners of the draw were randomly selected by Grey Canada and their stories are profiled on the website.

## Community Service Workers Lobby Training and Campaign

NUPGE has been continuing its national campaign in support of community service workers. News stories are regularly posted on our website, nupge.ca, sharing the struggles of front-line members working in the sector. We also document how underfunding and austerity cuts have impacted those who rely on services in their communities.

Community Services was added as a theme to the Why Unions Matter contest. Entries were then submitted by front-line members, sharing how unions matter to community services.

A train-the-trainer workshop was held in March 2018 for community service members to help prepare them to lobby federal MPs prior to the 2019 election. Guest speakers were invited to discuss the benefits of lobbying decision makers, and how important it is to build support for any campaign. The participants took part in a hands-on how-to lobby and strategy session as well. A lobby guide, posters, and Facebook frames were created in order to help support the federal lobby meetings.

## Pensions

The National Union has been working on issues related to federal legislation on pensions. This included getting involved in attempts to reduce some of the problems with the regulations on CPP enhancements and supporting amendments to bankruptcy legislation to protect pensions.

The amendments to the bankruptcy legislation are intended to give pension deficits priority when companies are insolvent. This is to prevent a repeat of what happened to workers and pensioners when Sears shut down.

## Privatization

The National Union has continued to expose more of the flaws with social impact bond projects in Canada. NUPGE revealed how the design of social impact bonds allowed investors to game the system. A social impact bond contract obtained by SGEU/NUPGE showed how social impact bonds can harm an organization's ability to provide services. The harm and restrictions included the service provider having to cover many of the administrative costs that come with social impact bonds and having to surrender control over how services are provided. We also helped with the promotion of a documentary on social impact bonds: *The Invisible Heart*. The approach to social impact bonds taken in the documentary was not one we would take in our materials. However, we recognized that a documentary presenting both sides of the debate on social impact bonds had a better chance of getting the truth through to people who desperately want to believe the claims of those promoting social impact bonds.

A recent development at the federal level is the announcement of a \$755 million Social Finance Fund. There are concerns that the Social Finance Fund will be used to fund social impact bonds and other new forms of privatization. Social finance started as a way to fund economic development and other projects when banks and other traditional financial institutions were unable or unwilling to help. We have called on the federal government to ensure the fund is used for economic development, instead of allowing it to become a subsidy for the privatization industry.

The National Union has also continued to produce materials on problems with privatization and emerging threats. The backgrounder on Medavie Blue Cross produced by NUPGE looks at that company's growing role as an operator of privatized services. While Medavie tries to hide behind its not-for-profit status, the lack of financial accountability and the secrecy around decision-making that characterize privatization are problems with the services Medavie operates.

## Trade and Investment Deals

An important part of the National Union's work continues to be our response to Canada's negotiations for, and participation in, international trade and investment agreements such as CETA (the Canada-European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement), and NAFTA

(the North American Free Trade Agreement). This year our staff devoted particular attention to the negotiations that resulted in 2 trade and investment agreements:

- The Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA), a trilateral trade and investment deal finalized on September 30 and signed on November 30, which will replace NAFTA upon ratification by the US Congress in 2019. Note that it was with the latest version of this agreement signed on Nov 30 that the abbreviation CUSMA was adopted by the Canadian government, replacing USMCA, the preferred abbreviation of the US government.
- The Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), a multilateral trade and investment agreement among 11 countries bordering the Pacific Ocean. In the fall of 2018, Canada became one of the first to ratify this agreement that replaces the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), which was not ratified and could not enter into force after the US withdrew its signature. The remaining states regrouped, continued negotiations without the US, and the result is the CPTPP.

The National Union also continued to monitor Canada's ongoing free trade negotiations to join 3 other economic trading blocs:

- MERCOSUR (comprising Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay)
- Pacific Alliance (comprising Chile, Colombia, Mexico, and Peru, and with separate bilateral talks with Australia, New Zealand, and Singapore)
- We also followed developments regarding the stalled negotiations over the Trade in Services Agreement (TISA)

Together with our allies in the labour movement and civil society, we will continue to monitor developments in these and other trade issues. Our work entails participation in: meetings, seminars, government-labour advisory groups, and government-sponsored technical briefings and stakeholder consultations. It also involves: writing letters to Ministers and government officials, and publishing various research documents.

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
- Council of Canadians
- Public Citizen’s Global Trade Watch
- The International Institute for Sustainable Development which organized a 2018 meeting on “Developing a Progressive Agenda for Reform of International Investment Law: Canadian Perspectives.”

## **NUPGE PUBLICATIONS AND WEBINARS**

### Publications

2018 was another busy year for publications. The National Union released research papers, fact sheets, backgrounders and pamphlets. Below is a chronological list of titles:

- Jan. 2018    *Guide to Communicating with Young Members*
- Feb. 2018    *Child Care: The best deal for all of us—Fact Sheet*
- Feb. 2018    *Fair Taxes: Benefit all of us—Fact Sheet*
- Feb. 2018    *Good Jobs: For a strong economy—Fact Sheet*
- Feb. 2018    *Pay Equity: One step toward gender wage equality—Fact Sheet*
- Feb. 2018    *Unions Still Matter: As much as ever— Fact Sheet*
- Feb. 2018    *Strong Democracy: Unions are a positive force in society—Fact Sheet*
- Mar. 2018    *Pharmacare: Prescription for Change*
- May 2018    *Medavie: A new face of privatization—Fact Sheet*
- May 2018    *Medavie Blue Cross—Backgrounder*
- June 2018    *Unions help strengthen democracy—Backgrounder*
- June 2018    *Growing Income Inequality and You—Backgrounder*
- June 2018    *Precarious Work and Youth—Fact Sheet*

- June 2018 *Fair Taxes: Tax Avoidance—Backgrounder*
- June 2018 *Fair Taxes: Making Income Tax Fairer—Backgrounder*
- June 2018 *The National Union and the Global Union Movement*
- Aug. 2018 *Good Jobs for a Strong Economy—Backgrounder*
- Sept. 2018 *Pay Equity—Backgrounder*
- Sept. 2018 *Digital Working: A guide to net neutrality— Fact Sheet*
- Nov. 2018 *New NAFTA: USMCA is the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement— Backgrounder*
- Nov. 2018 *Child Care: Good for Families, Good for the Economy—Backgrounder*

## Webinars

A second series of NUPGE's pension webinars was held between November 2017 and June 2018. This series is part of our ongoing efforts to increase the knowledge base and skill level of Component pension activists. The topics of the webinars were

- Defending good pension plans
- Labour rights in pension investment
- Pension plan design considerations
- Canadian pension funds' investment in infrastructure
- Investing for Impact: Generating financial returns with targeted social and environmental benefits

As in the first series, most of the webinars have been posted on YouTube so they can serve as an ongoing resource for pension activists. See the following link: <https://nupge.ca/content/nupge-pension-webinars-available-youtube>.

## **NUPGE WEB RESOURCES**

The importance of online communications for the modern labour movement cannot be overstated. The National Union was among the first Canadian unions to launch a website. Keeping our sites such as NUPGE.ca up to date with new items posted daily is an ongoing commitment of the National Union. But continuous technical improvement is also a goal for our websites. In 2015, we did considerable work improving the look, security, and functionality of our NUPGE.ca site. It now has a more accessible, simplified design that runs faster, and is more stable and secure than ever before.

Since our last Convention, we have updated the *All Together Now!* website with the look and feel of our ATN 2 campaign. It can be found at [unionsyeah.ca](http://unionsyeah.ca). This site goes beyond the traditional website stories to include interactive content, videos, maps, fact sheets, and backgrounder reports. It also has an online shop ([shop.unionsyeah.ca](http://shop.unionsyeah.ca)) where people can buy our campaign merchandise such as hats, T-shirts, and even tattoos. 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](http://communityserviceworkers.ca)).

## **NUPGE AND THE FUTURE**

### **Communicating with Young Members**

We are witnessing a growing shift in the composition of unions. For decades we struggled through policies of restraint and hiring freezes throughout Canada. As a large number of our members move into retirement, hopefully enjoying the benefits of a union pension, younger workers are being hired to replace them.

In 2017, the National Union embarked on some ground-breaking research looking at the attitudes of our young members and to explore the best way to reach out and engage these workers. The results of this research led to a number of presentations on the findings and to producing a publication called *Communicating with Young Members* to assist unions in reaching out to our members. Given the popularity of the presentations and the publication, we have created a web resource for unions that can be found on our [unionsyeah.ca](http://unionsyeah.ca) website.

While the first phase of the project has been completed, we still want to improve the manner in which we work with all our members. Past membership polls have indicated that there can be differences, based on age, in the priority placed on some issues.

We are undertaking a new study to help us develop more generational cohesion in our unions. We want to explore and measure the extent to which the values, perceptions, and expectations of our members align or deviate based on age. Then we plan to develop a communication strategy to help our Components frame issues in a way that builds member unity and defends against potential internal divisions both within the workplace and within the union.

## Environment

NUPGE has done a broad assessment of the groups working on the environment in Canada towards looking at a 2019 launch of new initiatives in this area. We continue to see climate change as a great challenge that will affect us all. It will require each of us to be 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 NUPGE's perspective, the future needs to be not only green but fair and just. Last year, Secretary-Treasurer Elisabeth Ballermann attended the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Bonn, Germany, and she continues to be engaged with the issue.

In 2018, NUPGE joined Trade Unions for Energy Democracy (TUED), an International group of trade unions and allied organizations working for energy democracy.

The National Union is also working on a project with York University called Work in a Warming World, which focuses on adapting Canadian work to respond to climate change.

## 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 2018 winners were

**Brian Fudge Memorial Scholarship:**

Jimmy Yan, child of Chester Jianjun Yan (OPSEU/NUPGE)

**Scholarship for Indigenous Students:**

Caleb Coulter, child of Greg Coulter (OPSEU/NUPGE)

**Scholarship for Students of Colour:**

Jereka Jiaying Hudyma Yu child of Bo Nancy Yu (MGEU/NUPGE)

**Terry Fox Memorial Scholarship:**

Adrianna Ochitwa, child of Paula Ochitwa (BCGEU/NUPGE)

**Tommy Douglas Scholarship:**

Jenae Roehl, child of Christi Roehl (HSAA/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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