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Chair

Ms. Hélène LeBlanc

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● (1100)

[*Translation*]

The Chair (Ms. Hélène LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard, NDP)): Good morning, and welcome to the 55th meeting of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women. Today, we are continuing our study on women in skilled trades and science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

We are also continuing our “paperless committees” pilot project. As you can see, the chair is not leading by example, since she is still using paper documents. But some members of the committee like Mr. Barlow are ready to be part of that new initiative right now. Good for you!

Today, we are pleased to welcome members of the

[*English*]

Society for Canadian Women in Science and Technology, Ms. Danniele Livengood and Ms. Sandra Eix. From the Centre for Education and Work, we have Ms. Suzanne Winterflood and Ms. Marjorie Marchinko.

[*Translation*]

We also welcome Kate McInturff, representing the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, and from the

[*English*]

and from Women in Science and Engineering from Carleton University, Ms. Natalie Linklater and Ms. Rim Khazall.

Welcome to you all.

Each group will have 10 minutes for their presentation, followed by questions from members.

We will start with the Society for Canadian Women in Science and Technology. You have 10 minutes.

Ms. Danniele Livengood (Secretary, Society for Canadian Women in Science and Technology): Thank you, Madam Chair.

My name is Danniele Livengood, and with me is Sandra Eix. We are here representing the Society for Canadian Women in Science and Technology, fondly known as SCWIST.

For more than 30 years SCWIST has been supporting and advocating for women in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Over this time we have seen many positive changes in the representation of women in these traditionally male-dominated fields. Women now account for 39% of students enrolled in STEM programs, and just this year the University of British Columbia achieved record numbers for enrolling women in their engineering programs. At the faculty level, women are 35% of life sciences researchers and 15% in physical sciences, computer sciences, engineering, and mathematics.

It would be tempting to congratulate ourselves and to say that even if women haven't completely achieved equitable representation in STEM fields, we have at least implemented a key part of the solution: encouraging and supporting young women entering STEM programs. However, a closer look indicates that there is still work to be done. For example, Statistics Canada reports that in comparison with men with STEM degrees, women with STEM degrees are more likely to be unemployed or employed in fields that do not require a degree. 2011 U.S. data shows that in the non-academic workforce, only 26% of STEM workers were women, yet we know that overall women make up 48% of the workforce.

More significantly, there is still an alarming absence of women at the leadership level, both in academic research and in industry. Statistics from 2013-14 show that women hold only 15% of full professorships in science overall and only 8% of full professorships in engineering, as compared with 31% in the humanities. Also, only 3.3% of the top 25 NSERC grantees, as measured by grant size, involve women.

The story is similar outside academia. Huge tech companies—Facebook, LinkedIn, and Google—show promising diversity statistics, such as 35% of their workforce being women, but women represent only 15% to 17% of their technical employees and only 20% to 25% of senior staff.

Until we understand and act to counter the historical and cultural forces that keep women from STEM leadership, we have solved only part of the problem.

In the 21st century, the challenges that face Canada and the world are not simple, and new kinds of thinking will be required to take them on. Recognizing this, education systems across Canada are evolving to focus on creativity, innovation, communication, collaboration, problem-solving, and critical thinking. Whether addressing climate change, new diseases, management of an information economy, or feeding a growing population, we need to think differently.

Leaders who think outside of the historically informed archetype can bring fresh perspectives to solve complex, interconnected problems. More than 20 years of research tells us that gender diversity is key to this kind of innovation. Studies by the Conference Board of Canada in corporate governance link gender diversity not just to employee satisfaction but also to improved governance, innovation, and economic benefits for corporations. Studies in the *Journal of Business Ethics* found that the presence of at least 30% women on a board decreases “group think”, while women directors improve a firm's ability to navigate complex strategic issues.

What we can learn from these studies is that a lack of women in STEM leadership isn't just a problem for ambitious women. It's a limiting factor in the ability of Canada's researchers and corporations to thrive and grow. In other words, STEM needs female leaders.

Women working in STEM identify many barriers to their success. Some of these are in the form of infrastructure and systems that hold them back, some are related to organizational or workplace culture, and some are related to attitudes about women's abilities in these fields. Over time, strong women and their supporters, bolstered by public policy and law, have chipped away significantly at the most obvious parts of these barriers.

Societal attitudes about who can and should participate in STEM have changed enormously. It's well established that there is no innate connection between gender and mathematical or scientific ability.

● (1105)

Human rights legislation makes discriminatory hiring practices illegal. Breaking down the final barriers requires us to change how we think and requires a level of self-reflection.

Most people are not aware of implicit biases that cause them to make small assumptions without realizing it. This is a critical barrier to women's advancing in STEM, since even the best-intentioned teachers, guidance counsellors, professors, and hiring managers have implicit biases. To illustrate the effects of implicit bias on women's advancement into leadership positions, a study presented a CV to several science professors and asked them to evaluate the candidate for a lab manager position. The male candidate was offered 12% higher salary and more mentorship and was rated more competent and hireable than the female candidate, even though the only difference in the CVs was the name at the top.

Regular and repeated use of instruments such as the Harvard implicit bias test can help educators, managers, and HR professionals become aware of and combat biases. Being aware is the first step.

The importance of role models in encouraging women as they enter non-traditional fields is widely recognized and is the raison d'être of many successful programs, such as SCWIST's Make Possible and ms infinity programs, as well as Let's Talk Science, and the scientists and innovators in the schools program.

However, when women in STEM are recognized and celebrated in the media, the stories often reflect inherent societal stereotypes. Media critical tests such as the Bechdel test for movies can help identify the gender biases that we are so used to seeing. An analogous test, the Finkbeiner test, serves to call out representations of women in STEM fields that define their successes in the context of their gender. To pass this test, articles about a woman in STEM must not mention, among other criteria, the fact that she's a woman, her husband's job, her child care arrangements, or how she's the first woman to.... These items may seem normal, even laudable to include in a story about a successful women in STEM, but we have to ask ourselves whether we would say these things about a man in the same field. While we need to see more women in STEM represented in the media, it's essential to be mindful of how they are portrayed.

As you can see, the representation of women in STEM is still lacking at the leadership level. This needs to change, because more diverse models of leadership are what Canada needs to meet 21st-century challenges. To move forward, we need to continue to support the best practices that have advanced women in STEM thus far, and we need to address the many more subtle barriers, such as implicit bias in media representation.

First, we cannot stop supporting the initiatives that we have worked so hard on this far. This includes support and advocacy networks such as SCWIST, DAWEG, WWEST, and the NSERC chairs for women in science and engineering program. lt includes mentorship programs for girls and young women such as SCWIST's ms infinity program, and our double-X networking evening. It also includes skill-building opportunities, such as SCWIST's immigrating women in science and ladies learning code programs, as well as its science and tech camps for girls.

Second, we must invest in systems to help HR professionals and educators understand and counteract their biases. This will help ensure that unconscious systematic biases against women in STEM will not continue as barriers. Workshops for professionals and academics, supported by the sharing of best practices for combatting biases, could change the landscape greatly.

Promising initiatives in this area include the WinSETT workshop series, Make Possible's HR inclusion workshop, and the HR toolkit on diversity being developed by Digital Nova Scotia.

Third, we must recognize and celebrate organizations that are models of diversity and tell the story of how they have benefited. For example, we know that the Fortune 500 companies with the most women on their boards far outperform those with the fewest. Motivating change in well-established institutions and corporations will be easier when the business case for diversity is widely understood.

Finally, we must work to build, connect, and integrate the existing networks of mentorship and peer support for women in STEM. We need to encourage initiatives that bring like-minded organizations together for common goals. For example, Creating Connections is a conference in metro Vancouver at which university and college STEM students meet with organizations that support women in STEM to bring together people of all genders to discuss issues of personal and professional development, networking, and inspiration.

Women in STEM and their allies have a lot of work still to do to provide Canada with the STEM leadership necessary for the 21st century and beyond. The advances we've made thus far justify optimism and further support as we take on the next set of challenges.

● (1110)

Thank you.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Thank you very much.

The floor now goes to Ms. Winterflood, representing the Centre for Education and Work.

You have 10 minutes.

[*English*]

Ms. Suzanne Winterflood (Executive Director, Centre for Education and Work): Good morning.

My name is Suzanne Winterflood. I am the executive director for the Centre for Education and Work. My colleague is Jeri Marchinko, senior adult learning specialist.

The Centre for Education and Work is a not-for-profit organization. We have partners in industry, education and government. We create relevant and real-life digital learning materials in affiliation with the University of Winnipeg, focusing primarily on industry workforce development.

The background of our project is that we were focusing on funding received from Status of Women Canada. We conducted research. We developed a website with online resources for employers and women in non-traditional occupations. The project focuses on the way to support recruitment and retention of women in non-traditional occupations, especially in manufacturing.

Why focus on manufacturing? There are no existing resources for Manitoba employers or women in manufacturing. For example, if a manufacturing company has female employees, they are more likely to be office staff, human resources personnel, or in finishing departments. They are rarely, if ever, heavy machine operators.

One focus group participant remembered that in 30 years only two women had worked in the press room, and they had not stayed for long. He said that it takes a special type of woman to incorporate herself into an environment where it is exclusively male.

“We just don't have a lot of women in the sector, and it puzzles me why they are not more”. That was a quote from the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters Association.

Participation rates show low participation. Although these numbers reflect only skilled trades, women also have low representation in unskilled trades. The need to encourage and support participation in non-traditional occupations has been well documented. As you can see from the figures, there were 128 women out of a total 5,053 in apprenticeship training in the trades in Manitoba, with a participation rate of 2.5%. That's extremely low.

We've undertaken years of research, conducted a needs assessment, completed a literature review, and identified a number of challenges and promising practices. There were insufficient responses from women in the manufacturing industries. We identified this in our project risk assessment at the beginning of the project. We therefore decided we had to broaden our scope to include occupations in other sectors, for example heavy equipment operators, truck transport mechanics, carpenters, painters, and electrical technicians. But as you'll see, there are very few from manufacturing, which speaks to it.

What did we learn? What we heard from our focus groups was that findings for female participants were similar to other studies. Although there has been work done in the areas of awareness and career planning, there is clearly a need to do more. There is also a need to extend awareness activities beyond high school. Several participants said that they had tried the traditional route first, went to university and entered jobs that were acceptable within their culture and their families. It wasn't until they were more mature, less influenced by peers and family, that they started to explore options they felt were more suited to their skills and interests. That's when they explored the non-traditional occupations.

There are recruitment challenges. All employers interviewed said that they got few applications from women and were, for the most part, unaware of gender biases in their job descriptions. Focus group participants said that they wanted to see real women in promotional material, not models with full makeup on. Focus group participants said that they were still being asked questions that were not asked of male counterparts in interviews, so gender bias exists in interviews, in questions, and in job descriptions.

As far as retention challenges, there are still problems with basic accommodations, changing rooms, washrooms, personal protective equipment designed for men rather than women, and inappropriate photos in the workplace. I dare not elaborate.

● (1115)

For example, one focus group participant told us the following story, “I used the upstairs restaurant washroom and the general foreman called my boss and told him that I thought I was special because I wouldn’t use the construction washroom—it had no door and no toilet seat.”

Sometimes women were asked or expected to clean up after team meetings, to make the tea. Participants said that they wanted to be treated in an equitable manner—no special treatment, just to be respected for the work they do. One comment that was given was, “They give you every opportunity to not succeed, but it's so nice when you do.”

Other women's experiences included the lack of information on knowledge of employment standards and the fear of taking maternity leave—fear of losing their jobs or of just not being called back when they were ready to return. We identified a lack of mentoring programs. Support and acceptance varies from workplace to workplace. You have to find the right fit and not be afraid to leave a job to go to new pastures. Lack of part-time and/or flexible working options was another identified issue.

Among the promising practices we identified—some employers are engaged in these activities already—were: employers working with school divisions to educate teachers, parents, and students on career options to transcend gender definitions; gender inclusivity in advertising and promotional materials; women in non-traditional occupations speaking at career fairs and schools, etc.; and pre-employment programs for women who had different voices.

Some women felt it was helpful and others felt it was demeaning to have special programs just for women. “There weren’t special programs for men to enter nursing—even when there was a nursing shortage.”

There were clear progression paths in companies. On-the-job training or access to further training is available. Putting respectful workplace policies into practice, identifying gender bias in interviews or in people with hiring decision-making authority, providing on-site child care and flexible working arrangements—these are some of the things we identified throughout the research.

As a result of the research, we're developing resources. There are two websites. The focus group website women's portal emphasized the importance of connecting with other women. This was key to having a successful website. They wanted awareness of occupations, positive and potential challenges, and information about rights, etc. —employment standards, maternity leave. They also wanted a support group online, interactive cases or studies for actual scenarios that women encountered in the workplace and how they have coped with them, and connections to mentors. These are just some of the things they want to see on their website.

There will be an employers' portal. Reaching employers has been challenging. All employers interviewed to date said they were interested in improving their recruitment and retention of women in non-traditional occupations. Some employers, especially those from smaller companies, stated that they would welcome supports in these areas. We're looking to develop tools to checklist or self-assess whether they are female-friendly workplaces; to provide tips on how to make the workplace more equitable, including online mentoring kits; and to show how to conduct a focus group with the women in their companies to be able to use them as a reference.

Thank you for your time. If you have any questions, we'd be pleased to take those.

One final note to take away, change is happening but it's slow. It takes a long time for attitudes to change.

● (1120)

The Chair: Thank you.

[*Translation*]

Thank you very much.

We now move to the representative of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. You have 10 minutes.

[*English*]

Dr. Kate McInturff (Senior Researcher, National Office, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you to the committee for the invitation to speak today.

My name is Kate Mclnturff. I'm a senior researcher at the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

The committee has already heard that women are highly underrepresented in most STEM fields and in the skilled trades. I'd like to spend my time today talking about why that is the case, and what kinds of public policies are needed to increase women's representation in these occupations and to address the challenges that are most pressing.

Men and women in Canada work in different fields, for different numbers of hours, at different rates of pay. Women are three times as likely as men to work part time, twice as likely to work for minimum wage, and nearly 100% likely to be paid less for the work they do.

The fact that men and women tend to work in different fields isn't unusual. Canada is fairly typical in terms of labour force segregation in OECD countries. The problem lies in the fact that there are women who want to work in non-traditional fields and they are being pushed out or meeting insurmountable barriers to achieving their goals. The problem lies in the fact that the women who make it into those male-dominated occupations are making less than their male peers, as we've just heard, and facing obstacles such as a hostile work environment. The problem lies in the fact that women's work in both male- and female-dominated sectors is undervalued.

Women want to work in skilled trades. Over the past 10 years, young women under 30 have gone from being 13% of new registrants in skilled trades training programs to 18% of new registrants. That's a 5% increase. However, the share of young women in the same age group completing those programs has increased by only 1%. This suggests that a significant portion of those new entrants are meeting barriers during their training before they even enter the job market.

I've met some of these women. When I taught at the University of Ottawa, I found them in my classes. They told very similar stories. They were inspired by a teacher in high school, a mentor, or a parent, and they entered trades training programs with high expectations. They were going to be the next Mike Holmes, but what they found was persistent discrimination, sexism, and exclusion.

Women who do manage to make it through their training and into jobs in skilled trades continue to face gender-specific barriers. Efforts to increase the presence of women in Canada's mining sector are a good example.

Women make up 20% of those employed in mining and oil and gas today in Canada. That percentage has remained unchanged since 2006 in spite of initiatives to support women's participation in the field and broader economic policies that have tried to support growth in that sector. Why? Reports by women in mining have identified some of the barriers that women face to working in this industry. Top of the list is a hostile work environment. Next on the list is the lack of mentors and women in senior management positions. Finally, there is the lack of child care and flexible work practices.

Women in mining, oil and gas, like women in other skilled trades, also face significant discrimination in their wages. The wage gap in oil and gas in Canada is one of the largest of any sector in our labour force, with women earning 65¢ on the male dollar, working full time, full year. Women working in construction trades fare little better. They earn 72¢ on the male dollar. Female electricians earn 79¢ and female plumbers earn 82¢ for every dollar earned by their male peers, working full time, full year.

ln the face of this level of discrimination, it should come as no surprise that most of the women who go on to work in skilled trades are concentrated in female-dominated fields such as food service and the beauty trades. The men who complete registered apprenticeships are concentrated in programs for plumbers, electricians, mechanics, and carpenters. So even within the skilled trades, we see gender segregation very clearly.

The wages in these different skilled trade fields are also very different, with male-dominated occupations paying double the rate of female-dominated occupations in the skilled trades. Let me give you an example. The average full-time wage for a chef or a cook is $29,000 a year. For a hairstylist, it's $22,000 a year. Contrast this to the average full-time wage for a plumber, which is $55,000 a year, or for an electrician, which is $60,000 annually.

● (1125)

Why? Because cooking and hairstyling are still viewed as women's work, and women's work is valued less than men's work.

The persistent and endemic undervaluing of women's work is a problem. It is, I would argue, the most urgent problem facing women in the workforce today.

Earning $22,000 a year is not enough to meet the basic needs of a family—not even close. An average market basket of goods, as determined by Statistics Canada, runs closer to $35,000 a year. A woman who is struggling to pay for food and rent cannot wait for attitudes to shift of their own accord. They cannot afford to leave it to karma. They need change now, and they can have it. There is ample evidence from across Canada and other OECD countries that the wage gap can be narrowed and that women's work can be valued.

Research on narrowing the wage gap is conclusive. The mechanisms that narrow the wage gap are as follows.

Family-friendly policies are the first mechanism. Women's hours of household and care work have not fallen over the past 20 years as their hours of paid work have increased. Today women put in 3.9 hours of unpaid care work a day, compared to 4.2 hours of unpaid care work 20 years ago. Only now, that four hours of work comes on top of a full day of paid work for the majority of women.

This is double the amount of time spent on household and care work as performed by men in Canada. Unless we add more hours to the day, this puts an absolute limit on women's capacity to increase their hours of paid work and to go after those more demanding jobs that require them to work after hours or overtime. Women are five times as likely to take time off from work to look after family members. Without family leave and sick leave policies that address this reality, women are further marginalized within the workforce and see their opportunities for advancement and better pay reduced.

Solution number two is child care. Where affordable child care is readily available, women's labour force participation increases, the wage gap narrows, and the rates of promotion increase as well.

In Quebec, for example, women's labour force participation outstrips that of other provinces. Quebec has one of the smallest wage gaps in the country, second only to P.E.I. Women's employment in Quebec also held steady during the recession, while it dipped in other provinces. I think this makes an important economic point. This demonstrates the stabilizing effect of accessible child care on women's employment, which is all the more important when we see male-dominated sectors dip, such as, for example, the oil industry and construction. If we have women in stable employment, this means that families are better able to weather the storm during times of economic downturn.

Policy number three is regulation and wage-setting institutions. In every age group, in every occupation, at every educational level, the wage gap for women is smaller in the public sector than in the private sector. This is the result of regulation and wage-setting mechanisms, which require employers to track levels of pay and promotion and address gaps where they find them, because you can't fix the problem if you don't know it's there.

Engineers and electricians do not live in a vacuum. They live and work in the same society as everybody else. If we want to support women entering those occupations, we need to put in place proactive measures that are going to level the playing field for all women in Canada, wherever they choose to work.

Thank you.

● (1130)

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We now move to our final presentation, which will be given by the chair of Women in Science and Engineering, Natalie Linklater.

Ms. Linklater, you have the floor for 10 minutes.

[*English*]

Ms. Natalie Linklater (Engineering Co-Chair, Carleton University Women in Science and Engineering): Hello. To start, off I'd like to thank the committee for having us here. We're very honoured to be here.

We are representing the Carleton University Women in Science and Engineering organization. It's an organization on the Carleton campus. My name is Natalie Linklater and I'm a Ph.D. candidate in engineering. With me is my co-chair, Rim Khazall, a Ph.D. candidate in neuroscience.

To begin, we'd like to tell you a little bit about our organization. It was founded in 2007 by a group of graduate and undergraduate students and is still completely run by the students. We're all studying STEM fields: science, technology, engineering, and math. Our mandate is to encourage and support women to pursue an education and a career in science and engineering.

Across Canada there clubs similar to ours; however, we're all independently run and operated. We operate very graciously. We are supported by the deans of science and engineering, and that's how we've maintained all our programs that we're going to present to you today.

Ms. Rim Khazall (Science Co-Chair, Carleton University Women in Science and Engineering): CU-WISE exists because of what we know currently—and the social environment was presented before—that females' interest in math and science takes a drastic drop as early as the age of seven. By the age of 15 they have completely lost their confidence and their ability, which is shocking considering the fact that there are no gender differences between males and females on the science scale. Their abilities are there; however, their confidence is severely lacking.

It's also interesting that female enrolment in Canadian universities is actually 40% higher than males'. However, females do tend to choose social sciences, arts, health, and education. Now, there's nothing wrong with any of those fields, obviously. However, where WISE steps in is to ensure that we encourage and support any of these girls who want to pursue a career in STEM and really highlight their potential and the availability of really cool fields.

Our approach is a multi-modal approach. We have outreach programs in which we look at high school and elementary levels, and we'll be talking about that in more depth. We also have social programs on campus to support current students in science and engineering. These social programs range from networking events at our local bar all the way down to destressing yoga and lectures provided by different committee or community members at Carleton. Our outreach programs centre on real-world problems...[*Technical Difficulty—Editor*].

Oh! I touched no buttons—

● (1135)

The Chair: That's quite all right. Sorry about that.

That made quite a point there.

Ms. Rim Khazall: There you go: real-world problems and real-world solutions.

I'd like to highlight both of these programs. The social on-campus supports and the outreach programs, which are really based on two very central effects that we use: hands-on activities, along with peer mentors and role models.

Natalie will speak to a few of these.

Ms. Natalie Linklater: We have a number of outreach programs, as we mentioned. One is called Go ENG Girl and is a program for girls in grades 7 to 9. It introduces them to concepts of engineering. After we introduce them to these concepts, they do a hands-on activity. Some of these concepts that we've introduced are roller coaster design, computer science and programming skills, bridge-building and earthquake stability, just to name a few. These programs are presented at universities across Ontario. They're supported by the deans of engineering and Actua. They allow the girls an opportunity to be introduced to these concepts.

I'm an engineer, and I wasn't introduced to the word “engineer” before grade 11, so it's really important to get the word out there as to what they do and educate them on the role of engineers. Also, we bring in their parents, so this is also a key aspect. It's to educate the parents on what these careers might entail. For a portion of the day, the parents are with their girls and they're hearing talks about the roles of engineering and how their university career might go. Then the girls are separated from their parents, and the parents get a little bit more of a boring lecture and we do hands-on activities with the girls.

Another similar program we do is Girl Guide badge day. This is catching on across universities as well. Not every university does it, but we have implemented it for the past four years at Carleton. It's for girls in grades 4 to 8. Girl Guides is a national program, and the girls come to school with their troop leaders this time. We're also trying to expose different adults as well as different age groups of girls. Girl Guides has an engineering badge, so we go through what an engineer is, the different types of tools they might use, as well as hands-on activities that are taught by our volunteers in the STEM fields. We use that peer mentoring approach again, which gives a different view of what an engineer is and shows the girls a closer view, so they might think, “Oh, I can be doing this in a couple of years, and it's not that scary.”

Ms. Rim Khazall: Some of our high school initiatives.... We do look at high school students, as well. Again, we find there is a decline and, really, a lack of information provided with regard to what an engineer is and what a scientist does. We have high school initiatives called Discover WISE and Women in Research, which have been designed and implemented by CU-WISE, so far exclusively. These focus on highlighting female graduate students and/or professors within the Ottawa field, not necessarily just at Carleton. Whoever will come, we'll take.

It allows a glimpse into the life of a researcher and an engineer—what do they do on a day-to-day basis?—again, really focusing on how this research is implementing real-world changes. Girls and women tend to be driven towards real problems and real solutions that they can actually help with.

Following these TED Talks kinds of lectures, they go to a mentoring social event where they get to interact with graduate and undergraduate students who are part of the WISE family. Again, those are really the peer mentoring and the social support and role models that are being highlighted for them. We answer everything from basic questions such as, “How hard is first-year calculus”, to “I want to be an aerospace engineer; how do I get there?” We try to make sure everything is available for these girls.

Again, for these programs we bring in the teachers and the guidance counsellors. They are extremely important not only in decision-making, in terms of where these girls are going to go, but also in implementing their abilities—“You can totally do first-year calculus; it's not a big deal; don't worry about it”. They're very influential. Again, we're targeting people of power in these girls' lives and hoping they'll influence them in a certain way. This is not just a woman's issue; it's a social issue.

Turning to our campus support for the women in STEM, again, I mentioned that we have social events such as the meet-and-greet and networking events at Carleton. We also have a mentoring program, attracting both undergraduate and graduate students. The mentors range from graduate students to professionals in the field. We try to attract, as much as possible, people from across Ottawa.

Finally, we have a fund for a conference that has been very popular in the last couple of years, which we're very excited about. Not only does it offer money to help pay for conferences, but we also encourage them and send out a weekly newsletter that highlights different tech conferences and sciences conferences that are happening across Canada or internationally, building the confidence in these girls' abilities to not only showcase their skills but also engage with their colleagues, increasing their visibility within the science and technology fields.

● (1140)

Ms. Natalie Linklater: A couple of other really simple initiatives that we've implemented.... We try to break barriers and stereotypes of what younger girls or even current girls think engineering and science is. We have a strong history of female leaders in science and engineering, so a really easy thing to do using social media, which really grabs the younger girls as well as the university-age girls, is to take a picture from the Internet, which I Google, of past female scientists or engineers. We use an inspiring quote and we send that out on Twitter and Facebook as well as within a newsletter.

Examples of people we've used are Marie Curie, Rosalind Franklin, and Jane Goodall. These are just a few examples. It's really easy to put a different face onto what science and engineering could be.

We also maintain a blog. All our authors are current students. Another way of changing the face and increasing the visibility of females who are currently studying STEM is putting a picture of them at the bottom of the blog. It seems really simple, but it makes a difference. You get to see a person. You get to know what their interests are, what they're studying, and the wide array of people in our membership. It really makes me happy to see the variety of girls studying in the STEM fields.

Ms. Rim Khazall: Our recommendations are obviously based at a community level in grassroots production. They're basically outreach activities. These outreach activities have been working. We have had girls from our first-year programs in the last five years come in and enrol in engineering and science fields here at Carleton. It's working at our level, so hopefully it can work at a global level. As was mentioned before, it is a mentoring program, with scholarships awarded, and conferences, and also highlighting science and engineering fields in different school levels, starting from elementary and going up—what is an engineer, what is a scientist?

With that, we thank you for your time.

Ms. Natalie Linklater: Thank you so much for having us. We're very grateful for this opportunity to give you a glimpse of what's happening on campuses across Canada. This is just an example of some of the initiatives we've implemented.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Thank you for all those very interesting presentations.

We now move to the question and answer period, starting with Mrs. Truppe.

Mrs. Truppe, you have seven minutes.

[*English*]

Mrs. Susan Truppe (London North Centre, CPC): Thank you, Madame Chair. I'd like to welcome and thank everyone for attending. It's a nice big group today, so we're getting a lot of feedback from you.

Suzanne, from the Centre for Education and Work, I think you mentioned you received some funding from Status of Women. Do you recall how much?

Ms. Suzanne Winterflood: It was $250,000 over three years.

Mrs. Susan Truppe: What was the project called?

Ms. Suzanne Winterflood: It's “One Foot in the Door”. You can see on the slide a logo that brands it.

Mrs. Susan Truppe: Great. That's a good name.

Do you have programs for immigrant women who either have or don't have experience in skilled trades?

Ms. Suzanne Winterflood: We don't have a specific program for immigrant women. We've looked at this as being a program for women across the board, from all groups, but it's certainly something we would be happy to consider extending specific roots for.

Mrs. Susan Truppe: I can't remember if you mentioned hosting events, but do you host events or some types of initiatives that target women, to get them into the skilled trades?

● (1145)

Ms. Suzanne Winterflood: No, this particular project was purely to develop online resources to support recruitment and retention, and in looking at the barriers, as a response to those barriers that exist, to identify them within the needs assessment stage.

There are a lot of calls for events. One thing we have thought about but isn't really covered within this particular funding is to be able to hold a conference to launch this initiative in the summer—we're just at the beginning of developing resources—and to bring employers together as well as women, because there is a major shortage of manufacturing companies willing to employ women. They're certainly open to it, but I think they don't know what they don't know.

Mrs. Susan Truppe: Thank you.

Natalie and Rim from Carleton, maybe I missed it, but how long has Carleton University's Women in Science and Engineering been around? It's such a great initiative.

Ms. Natalie Linklater: It was around for many years, but in 2007 it was re-formed, and since then it's been going really strong.

Mrs. Susan Truppe: How are you funded for all the stuff you do?

Ms. Natalie Linklater: We're supported by the deans of science and the dean of engineering at Carleton.

Ms. Rim Khazall: We're very generously funded.

Mrs. Susan Truppe: It's nice you added that.

You were talking about your conference fund. Does that conference fund pay for girls attending Carleton to attend these conferences? Is that what it's for?

Ms. Natalie Linklater: Yes. There are some women-specific conferences. There's women in Ontario, ONWiE; the Ontario women in computing conference; as well as a WISE national conference. There's a Grace Hopper conference for women in computing.

That money can be used for those conferences, or for someone like me, who is an environmental engineer, I can apply to the conference fund and get awarded a certain amount of money to help recover the cost to present at a conference.

Mrs. Susan Truppe: That's great. It sounds like you guys are doing a really good job.

Ms. Rim Khazall: We do make them write a blog, though. We make them work.

Mrs. Susan Truppe: You're doing a good job.

You had talked a few times about the young girls. I don't know if you said grade 4 or four years old...

A voice: Grade 4.

Mrs. Susan Truppe: It was grade 4. How do they know about you? How do you get those girls involved?

Ms. Natalie Linklater: For grades 4 to 8 there's a Girl Guides badge day. We send out information through Girl Guides Canada. From grades 7 to 9 we have our Go ENG Girl program, and that is sent out through the schools. They'll get information about that all across Ontario.

We created a list of all the schools and guidance counsellors in the area and we email them our high school programs.

Mrs. Susan Truppe: That's a lot cheaper. High school is more community oriented, but for grades 7 to 9 you send them out all across Ontario.

Ms. Natalie Linklater: Yes, Go ENG Girl is a program that's hosted at different universities across Ontario, so we combine forces for that one. We're really pulling in girls from the Ottawa area, but other universities will pull from different areas.

Mrs. Susan Truppe: Okay, that's great.

You also mentioned a few, and you do a lot of different promotions to get girls interested in STEM. Do you have a favourite or one that's worked better than another?

Ms. Rim Khazall: I am partial, because it's my program. Our program is Discover WISE women in research. The TED Talks give a glimpse of the research, and as a researcher I can really appreciate that, but it also gives a glimpse that you are multidimensional. You can't be defined by one characteristic. For example, Natalie gave a talk about...I think it's poop water that she works with, but apparently it's engineering. She gave a talk about that, but she also gave a talk about gardening and the mix between gardening and....

I think that kind of diversity is so important, so the girls don't feel they're in a niche and that they have to look a certain way, or be a certain way to be accepted. That's one of my favourite programs because it highlights that diversity and it also gives the girls a platform to speak about their struggles.

It's also the youth worker in me. I need to be on the floor. We chat them up and we talk with the teachers and try to provide resources for the teachers and the guidance counsellors to help them. We get a lot of emails that say, "Okay, we're talking about water sustainability, do you have any good resources for me?" We will give that to them.

● (1150)

Mrs. Susan Truppe: Are these girls at Carleton, or are these some of the ones you are trying to attract from outside?

Ms. Rim Khazall: We invite these girls to Carleton. We send an email to all the high schools in the Ottawa and greater Ottawa catchment area and we invite them to Carleton, along with their teachers and guidance counsellors.

Mrs. Susan Truppe: Okay, do you have one—

Sorry, am I finished?

Thank you.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Ms. Freeman, you now have the floor for seven minutes.

[*English*]

Ms. Mylène Freeman (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, NDP): Thank you, Chair.

Kate McInturff, from the CCPA, you talked about how women earn 65¢ on the dollar in STEM employment. That's a really scary number, given that this is even below the rather large pay gap that we have generally.

What is the state of our understanding of this wage gap? What kind of data do we have, and where are the gaps for understanding where this inequality is coming from?

Dr. Kate McInturff: Thank you for the question.

The 65¢ is specifically for the oil and gas industry. As I mentioned with, say, construction or engineering, it's different but it is there and it is in the order of 20% to 30% less for those working full time, full year.

In terms of the data that we have, we have very good data on what people earn and we can break that down by occupation, and by using our National Household Survey data by age group and educational level. The data shows it is highly persistent and we see it in female-dominated and male-dominated industries. We see it between men and women in both those industries. We see it across the board. We see it in industries where men and women are relatively equally represented as in trade, where we have relatively equal numbers of men and women. We still see the wage gap.

A host of things are causal factors. One of the most well-documented reasons has to do with the perception by both men and women, both employers and employees, that the reality of women's unpaid work is going to make women less able to do the job that would come with a promotion, so what you see from day one as women are hired, as I think some of the other presenters pointed out, is that the employers are already putting them in less responsible positions, consequently lower-paid positions. I appreciate the lean-in argument, but the data shows that the wage gap is there the second you set foot in the workplace. Then it gets exacerbated. In particular it gets exacerbated by things like maternity leave, and again, this isn't just a matter of women leaning out. This is employers, often out of very good intentions, discounting a woman who has young children from opportunities and writing her off—not putting her into the competition, as it were.

The data is there. It's pretty clear. The good news is that we also have good data on solutions, and those are some of the things I mentioned earlier.

Ms. Mylène Freeman: Great. Tuesday was budget day, 2015. There's a lot about manufacturing and a lot about science and technology.

How do you feel this year's budget will impact women in STEM specifically? Do you see it enhancing access to good STEM jobs for women?

Dr. Kate McInturff: There were investments in higher education and research, which obviously, as a researcher, I'm going to think are a good idea. I think that I would just flag, for example, increased investment in the Canada excellence research chairs. This is a good thing. It's good to celebrate our researchers, but what we've seen with that program is that women not only do not receive those chairs but do not even get into the nomination process. It's not one or the other. It's not that we can invest in research and STEM, or we can have gender equality. I think we need both things. The issue is to both increase funding for higher education and for people in skilled trades, as this budget did, but I think we also need those proactive programs that are going to go in right now, today, and address the discrimination that's happening.

Attitude shift is crucial but it is generational. The reason I've harped so hard on the issue of the wage gap and discrimination in terms of hiring and pay is that those are behaviours we can fix right now. The attitudes are going to take longer. We've heard some excellent examples of the kinds of work that they're doing at Carleton to change attitudes. I love that they're going with parents and the guidance counsellors, the people who are influencing young people. But that is generational, so I think the other thing we need to do—and I would love to see more money in the budget for this—is really track where the gaps are, and then make sure we have carrots and sticks in place to ensure that, if you're identifying a gap in women's participation or graduation rates or completion rates, you are going in and doing something to change people's behaviour today.

● (1155)

Ms. Mylène Freeman: I'm going to throw out another wide question.

What would a gender-responsive budgeting process look like to you in order to create more pay equity? What would be the specific targeted things you would see that would empower women to go into these types of jobs?

Dr. Kate McInturff: I think any successful economic policy needs to recognize that women work in different sectors. We might wish that not to be the case, but that is the case right now, here today in 2015. They have different constraints on their economic lives because of the double burden of unpaid work. They are far more likely to take parental leave, so that's a reality. If you want to build a successful economic policy for job growth and one that is responsive to the needs of men and women in your society, then your economic policies need to address that fact.

For example, with job creation, you need to look at what kinds of job creation stimulus polices are going to create jobs for men and for women. This is crucial. Just to go back to the oil prices, which are on everyone's mind right now, if you put family policies in place that make women's economic lives more secure and increase women's employment.... There's tons of evidence from Canada and from the OECD that, for example, accessible and affordable child care increases women's labour force participation and makes it more likely that they can go into whatever job they want, at whatever point they want. We're not talking about women going back to work the day after they have a baby. Women go back to work at various stages in their children's lives. If you put that in place then, because women tend to work in different sectors, what that means is that in families where you have a man and a woman, when a male-dominant industry, like the oil industry, is hit by an economic shock like a drop in oil prices, that family is more secure.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

[*Translation*]

Thank you very much. I know that there is probably a lot more to say on that topic, but there is no more time.

Mrs. O'Neill Gordon, go ahead for seven minutes.

[*English*]

Mrs. Tilly O'Neill Gordon (Miramichi, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Welcome to all of you. I want to thank you for offering us such a great presentation here today. We all know that change is happening. It's not happening at the pace we'd like to see. It's rather a slow pace but it is a change. That in itself is a positive message we can have out there.

I want to start off with Women in Science and Engineering. Natalie Linklater, I know Rim has told us what her favourite practice was. I'm wondering if you'd like to share what yours was.

Ms. Natalie Linklater: Sure. I really am partial to the yoga, but it's not really a program. It's just something we do to help the girls relax. We have a really great fitness instructor now who's doing a master's in biomedical engineering so she does our little yoga program.

I'm partial to the Go ENG Girl program. I'm an engineer and we have a lower representation out there so we specifically like the engineering program, but it's the hands-on aspect I really like. We introduce the concept of aerodynamics for example, and then they do a simple activity to practise that concept right away. A lot of people are familiar with the science process, the hypothesis. You build an experiment and you retest your hypothesis, but there's also, we call it, the engineering process. They have a problem. They have to do some research. They have to do a design, and then they have to test their design. Then they have to do iterations until their design works the way they want it to work.

They had to build a rocket that would travel up. They have a straw and a string, and they have to make the straw travel up the string carrying an object. This was like a space race. They had to carry a pen, which we realized halfway through was very heavy. But we talked about propulsion and we talked about drag. I said let's add some balloons or something. Let's get that pen to space.

It really is the concepts. You take two slides. We introduce this concept, and then we get to practise it right away, and then it's the iterations, the engineering process, we want to show them.

Those are my favourites.

● (1200)

Mrs. Tilly O'Neill Gordon: I like the hands-on, the early initiative you are offering the young girls. I like the idea of bringing in the parents because I know as many as 90 years ago—no, not really—if I had come home and said I was going into engineering or something like that.... I ended up being a teacher; that was the kind of thing you did. I like the idea that you're bringing in the moms, and I'm wondering if you bring the moms and dads or just the moms.

Ms. Natalie Linklater: Yes. Whoever wants to come.

Mrs. Tilly O'Neill Gordon: Could you elaborate a little on how that works? What age did you say that was?

Ms. Natalie Linklater: This one is grades 7 to 9 where they come with their parents, so it's before they enter high school, before they have to make any of those decisions like math and science, and the academic stream versus the applied stream. We're really trying to say, and we tell them, girls are just as good in math and science as guys are. There's no gender difference in that. You lack the confidence.

A girl would be devastated if she gets a B. A guy gets a C, and he thinks he's awesome at math. This attitude persists even in engineering.

We're trying to tell them that's a fact and say it's okay. There's a panel discussion as well so they get to ask questions of current students. A lot of the messages are that they came into engineering and failed a couple of classes, and that's no big deal. You just pick up and go again. A lot of the girls respond positively to it and the parents as well. They really like the fact that we're telling them how it is. We're not sugar-coating it at all. Also a lot of the parents thank us for it. They are happy we're telling them the story.

Mrs. Tilly O'Neill Gordon: Do you see a change as a result of that?

Ms. Natalie Linklater: Yes. That is a very good question.

We do see a change. Our program Go ENG Girl has been going on maybe for seven years now, maybe even more, and we have seen girls who have gone through the Go ENG Girl program and are now in engineering. They told us they're here because we introduced them to this early on. It's amazing. They are volunteers now with CUIs, and they help us run the Go ENG Girl. It's really great; it really touches my heart.

Mrs. Tilly O'Neill Gordon: Mine too I guess. Being a former teacher it really does. I love to see that the children are doing something and something they like to do as well.

Mrs. Tilly O'Neill Gordon: Suzanne, I know you mentioned that participation of women is not on a par with where you would like to see it. Has the rate changed in recent years, and how do you feel that has come about?

Ms. Suzanne Winterflood: Perhaps Marjorie would like to answer that.

Ms. Marjorie Marchinko (Senior Adult Learning Specialist, Centre for Education and Work): I'm not sure if I would "like" to answer it, because the answer isn't encouraging. Since 2006, there has been no improvement in the trades in Manitoba. Remember, when we talk about trades, we're not talking about cooking or hairdressing. When you remove those traditional female roles, no, there hasn't been any improvement. A lot of the folks who we work with around the trades are struggling in terms of increasing numbers and acceptance. For whatever reason, which we can't really speak to at this point, Manitoba has a lower participation rate in the trades than does even Saskatchewan next door; you know, kind of a Prairie environment as well. It's a troubling situation.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Duncan, you now have the floor for seven minutes.

[*English*]

Yes.

● (1205)

Mrs. Pat Perkins (Whitby—Oshawa, CPC): Did Madam O'Neill Gordon have seven minutes?

The Chair: Yes, indeed.

Mrs. Pat Perkins: Well, I have a problem with whoever is timing this. You told Madam O'Neill Gordon that she had—

The Chair: Yes, it was difficult. Yes, thank you.

Mrs. Pat Perkins: —one minute left and at that point she had two minutes left, so I'm having some difficulty. I have put it on here because there have been several of those, so I'm very concerned that people are being short-timed.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much for your concern.

We have a timer here and I always make sure that all members have all their time.

Thank you very much.

I think it is good that we have one timer, which is mandated by the —

Ms. Joan Crockatt (Calgary Centre, CPC): I have to object here, Madam.

When a member of the committee is bringing a problem to your attention, I wonder if you could just take that into account. We may have a problem with our timer, the actual equipment we have here, so that's just what my fellow member is raising here.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mrs. O'Neill Gordon had about a minute and a half, which was difficult for me to interrupt while she was...and I gave her a question, and I wanted to leave time for the witnesses to be able to answer, so I knew she had plenty of time, and I never wanted to short-change her.

Thank you for pointing that out.

We will continue with Ms. Duncan. You have seven minutes.

Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair.

I really do appreciate the fairness in this committee. I want to recognize that.

I want to say thank you to all of you. These were excellent presentations.

I will begin with Ms. Linklater and Ms. Khazall—soon to be Dr. Linklater and Dr. Khazall, we hope.

At the university we have many young women at the bachelor's level—in fact, more than young men now—but we lose them going to the master's and the Ph.D. levels. I'm wondering if you have thoughts on why.

Ms. Rim Khazall: There's been a lot of research looking into that. The dean of science actually had a summer worker a couple of years ago look into it, and there are multiple factors that play into that. The fact is that research, especially in fields such as physics, computer science, and what have you, are not very tangible for women in their undergraduate years. Again, when we present these lectures to our undergrads, we aim to showcase that research can be an opportunity if they should deem it necessary or appropriate for their lifestyle.

It's kind of like, “I'm going to go and get a job”, and maybe that's why. A lot of times they're also factoring in the question, “Can I have a family?” They're not aware of things like NSERC, which has a couple of really great programs that are now being initiated with the science chairs. Also, if you have NSERC funding—and it's very hard, as well, to get funding—and if you do go into maternity leave, you can postpone it by a semester. So there are a few things that people are not very familiar with.

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: That's really helpful. What recommendation would you like to make to the committee?

Ms. Rim Khazall: For that? Again, really, from our point of view—and this is extremely biased, as I am a graduate student—I would recommend funding opportunities, 100%. This is something that, when Natalie and I went to the gender summit in Washington back in 2013, I believe, was one of our main recommendations; and also directly to the NSERC committee. We said, “We need funding; let's work on that.”

Thank you.

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: Thank you.

Ms. Livengood, you talked about the hiring challenges and what happens when we're changing. I used that example last week. Are there other things that happen in hiring, for example, largely male panels, hiring within but advertising outside?

I'm really curious whether you have looked at pay equity.

Ms. Danniele Livengood: I'm going to let Sandra take this one.

Ms. Sandra Eix (Member, Outreach & Make Possible Volunteer, Society for Canadian Women in Science and Technology): Thanks for your question.

In terms of hiring, I think there is also evidence—and I can't put my finger on it here—that the language in which job descriptions are couched is really significant in making them appealing across gender. Something that describes a role as “very competitive” or “demolishing the competition” or “making our company exceed its goals”, those very competitive words versus words like “leadership” and “collaboration”. Even though they could mean very similar things, those words can bias who is interested and willing to apply.

But certainly one of the things we would recommend is that hiring managers need to be supported in learning to understand those biases and those subtle things that can affect who applies and who is successful. There is lots of evidence as well that when hiring panels talk about candidates they'll qualify their approval of female candidates. They'll say they want to be sure she did all that research on her own. They'll do that when they wouldn't necessarily do that for male candidates.

We talk about generational change versus behavioural change. The generational change is very slow. I think you can also speed up some of that change by making people aware of what they're already doing. Even the awareness that you have an implicit bias is huge in helping people to understand how they're making decisions about hiring and promotion and tenure or admission into a graduate program.

● (1210)

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: Thank you.

Similar to what I asked the women from Carleton, women are roughly 52% of the university population. They get to the assistant professor level and it's 28%, and you said it's 15% at the full professor level.

What are we doing? Why are we losing our women and what are your recommendations to change that?

Ms. Sandra Eix: I think part of it is the story of implicit bias. As everybody here has pointed out, family-friendly policies are a huge part of it. The legalities are certainly there. There are laws that are meant to prevent people from discriminatory hiring and promotion practices, but the implicit, the sneaky, subtle things, are still there and I think that becoming aware of those sneaky, subtle things is really vital.

I think that making it possible for women in particular, but for everybody to make decisions about how their career path is going to move forward, without having to panic about child care, family support, or where you're going to move to next, all that kind of support is enormous in helping women to take on leadership roles.

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much. That's almost all your time.

We have Mr. Barlow for five minutes, please.

Mr. John Barlow (Macleod, CPC): Thank you very much.

Thanks very much to all of you for being here.

Natalie and Rim, you guys are the next mentors so it's really exciting to see how much work you're putting into this, and I really appreciate that.

Being one of the Alberta members of Parliament, our issue is skilled labour and we have very significant vacancies, even with the economic downturn. There are some wonderful opportunities there for women to take advantage of. How do we get them there?

Suzanne, you mentioned that of the 5,000-some women involved in apprenticeship programs, only about 128 of them are in the trades. Is that a ballpark figure?

Ms. Suzanne Winterflood: Yes.

Mr. John Barlow: You said there are obviously some barriers there, and I know that Dr. McInturff also mentioned that.

We've heard a lot about this over the fall, especially in Alberta, and that's why we expanded the Canada apprentice loan to $4,000 per learning term, interest free. We put $100 million into that program. I know that's not going to address every barrier, but do you think that with something like that they're going to have money to cover some fees?

Ms. Suzanne Winterflood: I don't know that this is an incentive for the women. I think when we refer to the ability to make the decision to go into the trades, that comes when they're a little more mature and they're able to stand out against family values and cultural values. There is definitely an awareness being raised for women to be able to earn more money, and to want to do apprenticeships.

I think the hard thing is finding companies to take the women. Certainly in Manitoba there are incredible traditional values, perhaps is the way to put it. Companies don't even know that they don't know that women aren't there. When you ask companies they'll say they'll employ women if they apply. They won't apply if the selection process and the interview process aren't equitable, and the retention issues in the workplace environment aren't necessarily where they need to be. So I'm not sure that the apprenticeship grants, as much as they are very good, will be enough.

I think role models of women who are already in it— With due respect there is a lot of talk around the STEM projects, etc., and those subject areas are integral to tradesmen and journeypersons, but in the same vein there are women who want to go into those professions, those trades, who don't fall into professional engineering, etc. There's an awful lot of work to be done with industry to be able to have a level playing field and to be supported in those roles. They have to be willing at the company level.

● (1215)

Mr. John Barlow: So finances may not necessarily be one of the main barriers.

Ms. Suzanne Winterflood: Not for the actual applicants, no, and not for the apprenticeships. I think it's more that the companies have to be aware that women are there and can be a valued member of their workforce, and what they have to do to accommodate that employment. We have companies, there's one in particular, that did employ a woman. She turned up for work, but on the day she started she couldn't access the plant because the only access was through the male changing rooms, so they couldn't start her. Those types of things. We need support for and encouragement of industry in much the same ways as we've done with immigrant groups, with first nations communities, to say that women are out here.

Mr. John Barlow: Kate, you talked about this a little too. Would you mind commenting on that as well? You talked about how we've gone from 13% to 18% in new registrations in the skilled trades, but only about a 1% increase in the ones that are finishing. The reason I talked about that and the Canada apprentice loan is that I think about 26,000 Canadians enter an apprenticeship program and less than half actually finish. So men are not finishing because of those financial barriers. Is this a step in the right direction to at least maybe address one of those barriers?

Dr. Kate McInturff: I have to agree with the previous witness. This is creating a bigger opening for women at the front end, but the pipeline is still blocked. So you're not going to get any change at the other end of the pipe if you don't clear the blockage, and that blockage really does have to do with the way women are excluded even within the training programs, the inappropriate pictures on the walls, the lack of female bathrooms, all of those—

Mr. John Barlow: You don't like the Snap-on Tools calendar?

Voices: Oh, oh!

Dr. Kate McInturff: You gotta like a good Makita girl, but at a certain point it gets tiresome. I think women mentors as well as the witnesses from the Carleton program have demonstrated so clearly through their work, putting in place those women role models, and frankly, speaking to men in those programs. I think of course we need to speak to women and change their attitudes, but we also need to speak to men within the skilled trades, and men going into those programs to change their attitudes. To reiterate what Suzanne said, the report on women in mining also found that the majority of industry and mining had no recruitment policies specifically aimed at women, yet they were making exactly the complaint that you reiterated, which is we don't have enough skilled workers. The women in mining—and they're already there—are saying they're there, but these are the barriers.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

[*Translation*]

Thank you very much.

Mrs. Sellah, the floor is now yours and you have five minutes.

Mrs. Djaouida Sellah (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Thank you, Madam Chair.

First, I would like to thank all the witnesses who have come here today to enlighten us about women working in STEM fields. The abbreviation lets me save a little time.

From current data, we can see that the wage gap between men and women exists everywhere in both traditional and non-traditional fields.

Ms. McInturff, you stated that the salary gap in Quebec is smaller than in the other provinces. So how can we import that model across Canada? We know that the daycare program in Quebec is outstanding. Can you tell us how that kind of program could encourage women all across Canada to become involved in science, technology and mathematics?

● (1220)

[*English*]

Dr. Kate McInturff: Thank you for the question.

If you look at women's employment and the gaps in levels of employment and levels of pay across the country, Quebec really does very well. I think that a couple of reasons why the gap is narrower—and indeed the employment gap is narrower as well in Quebec—have to do with the host of family policies it has in place. There's evidence not only from the Quebec model but also from a number of studies that looked at countries in Europe that have similar kinds of programs in place.

I've spoken a bit about child care. The evidence is very clear that where child care is both affordable and available, women's labour force increases and the wage gap narrows, so you see greater economic security and greater employment security for women and their families.

With the $7-a-day child care model in Quebec, it is not as available—there are still shortfalls in terms of spaces—but it is certainly the most affordable child care in Canada by far.

The other thing Quebec has in place, which could be expanded across Canada, is not only a more generous maternity leave policy, one that has a lower threshold of hours worked for women to qualify, but also a targeted paternity leave policy. This is particularly important. What we see in Quebec is that, because there is a specific leave allocated only for new fathers, now in Quebec 75% of fathers take leave and they take 5.6 weeks on average. In the rest of Canada it's 25% of fathers, and they take two weeks on average. The paternity leave is exactly five weeks, so there's a clear causal effect.

The knock-on effect of this is particularly important when we're talking about women's access to work and the kinds of informal biases that push them out of promotion and entry into these fields. The paternity leave program is relatively new, but what I can say is that I've looked at the share of sick leave taken by men for family reasons, and it's actually increased since the introduction of paternity leave. What that suggests is that you're seeing a shift in the balance of unpaid work between men and women because those family policies are in place, and that is hugely important.

We were talking about women's promotion in academia. There are studies in Canada and the U.S. that show that when women in academia have children—I was one of those women, so I feel this in my heart—their rates of pay and promotion go down. When men in academia have children, they go up. There are clearly attitudes at work that say that when women have children they're less reliable, less serious, and not committed; and when men have children, we say they're very responsible and committed, and we should pay them more and promote them more.

Having these family policies in place not only addresses the really pragmatic issues of just how women balance their days, but they actually are helping us shift the relationship between parents. They're shifting the burden of unpaid work, and that is going to create a huge shift within the workplace.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Mrs. Sellah, that was a great question that elicited a great answer.

Mrs. Djaouida Sellah: Madam Chair, could we have the text of Ms. McInturff's presentation?

The Chair: That should be possible. It will be included in the evidence in French. We had her speaking notes in English only.

Mrs. Djaouida Sellah: Yes, but perhaps we can have them translated into French so that we have them available before we start drafting the report.

● (1225)

The Chair: Yes, we can do that.

Mrs. Djaouida Sellah: Madam Chair, I would like to have a minute before the end of the meeting to raise a point of order.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you.

We now move to Mrs. Perkins. You have five minutes.

[*English*]

Mrs. Pat Perkins: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I appreciate all of your presentations. They've been very enlightening. I almost wonder where we should begin here.

Maybe I should start with Ms. McInturff.

You've had several opportunities where you've spoken about accessible and affordable child care being an inherent part of what could make this a game-changer sort of thing. I'm having a bit of difficulty following that bouncing ball. We're talking about getting women in particular into non-traditional jobs, but quite often non-traditional jobs come with non-traditional working hours. Daycare systems, as they exist throughout the country, tend to follow traditional working hours, and having daycare available in non-traditional working hours could then create another whole dynamic of issues of availability, of who is going to be providing those, of how it is going to work, and of how you can provide for every instance. I'm not sure that this is as big a piece as perhaps we're hearing in the dialogue today, if you were to extrapolate it out and put it throughout the entire spectrum of the workforce, as it could be.

Have you looked at it from a total 24-7 comprehensive viewpoint, or are you looking at it in the traditional work hours?

Dr. Kate McInturff: I'm not aware of any country that offers child care 24 hours a day, so there's no model to say, “Here's what would happen if we had that.” What I would say is that when women who worked in mining, for example, were asked what the barriers were, child care was one of their top three responses. They are saying, “This is a problem for us.” You're absolutely right that, in some non-traditional trades, one of the other things they said was more flexible work hours. Child care isn't the only piece; it also has to be an employer—

Mrs. Pat Perkins: But the child care piece isn't as easy a fix as what we continue to hear again and again about the fact that, if we had this national child care policy that.... There's a whole lot of dialogue of what that would look like, how it would have to look, what the inherent costs would be, and who bears the cost.

Dr. Kate McInturff: In every country that has provided affordable and accessible child care, women's employment levels have gone up, so that evidence is clear.

Mrs. Pat Perkins: Okay, but I'm not going into women's employment levels so much as the non-traditional roles, and I don't think that they necessarily marry. That is what I'm saying. They may, but I don't think that necessarily they would automatically marry. I just wanted to put that out there, because it's one of the things that I don't think is conclusive.

Now to the young women who have come to us from Carleton, you are both tremendously inspirational people, I have to tell you. Your enthusiasm for what you do is very clearly articulated. I have to tell you that what you're doing with young people, with the kids, is commendable. I very much know that it's your kind of enthusiasm that's going to bring out the best in those young girls, and perhaps allow them to want to be just like you. I appreciate all you're doing in that regard.

The Girl Guides things is awesome. I didn't know that existed. Congratulations for that.

I believe it was Danniele who brought forward the statistics about the *Fortune* 500 companies that have women on their boards. They far outperform those that don't, I believe is what you said. Thank you for that. I really appreciate hearing that.

● (1230)

The Chair: I'm sorry, Mrs. Perkins, would you ask your question?

Mrs. Pat Perkins: Yes.

Do you know that our Minister of Status of Women, Kellie Leitch, has brought forward a program where the boards now are accountable to increase the number of women they have on these boards of directors of corporations? Do you find that this has been beneficial to this process?

Ms. Sandra Eix: We don't at this point have data on that but the evidence is really strong. There are about 20 years of research, mostly from the States, but the evidence in Canada is similar. It's staggering, the difference between zero women on the board and more than three women on a board. There's a critical mass factor as well. It can be an increase of 84% on return on sales.

The evidence is there that it works in general. Obviously an initiative that promotes that in Canada is a laudable initiative that's bound to see results. I don't have the data about what the results have been for that initiative, but that would be an interesting thing to investigate.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

[*Translation*]

We now move to Ms. Crockatt for five minutes.

[*English*]

Ms. Joan Crockatt: Lovely.

Thank you all very much. Every one of you has added something really special to this.

You see people around the table nodding because we've all had many of these experiences. I actually found the study very uplifting. A lot of us have been through many of these challenges, but we're also getting further ahead. With every discussion we have each year, and with every study we do, this seems to be a little bit more in the forefront. The news is a bit better.

When you were talking, Suzanne, I was thinking about how in Alberta we don't have so many of the problems of getting women into these skilled trades and higher jobs, because there's such a desperate shortage of work for us. Although the male culture may dominate, if they don't have a woman driving those big, huge trucks in Fort McMurray....

Incidentally, they now drive by far the majority. I think it's over 80%, and their driving records are also way better than the men's.

Voices: Oh, oh!

Ms. Joan Crockatt: They're highly sought after; otherwise, they might get somebody coming in who doesn't even have the same language or cultural background, which can be more difficult to integrate. They're actually being welcomed in the workplace.

One thing we are looking at is that in my own industry, for example, the newspaper industry, we had a real problem trying to get women editors until circulation started to decline and they started getting good tracking. They found out that women were big consumers, and that's who advertisers wanted to put the advertising in the paper for, to get those eyeballs. Suddenly we had a big push to integrate women.

You guys are all in scientific fields. What you do is based on evidence. We've heard some of this evidence about women increasing the returns on boards and maybe increasing sales. I'm wondering if anybody has any new research.

You know, I think we're far better to make a moral case that women will actually improve outcomes if you can get them in the workplace rather than trying to push people in—you should because you should.

I'll throw that out there, but Suzanne, do you want to start?

Ms. Suzanne Winterflood: From us it's much more anecdotal. The employers we've spoken to, however, who are accepting of having women are often quoting to us, "If you have a female welder, she's so much more meticulous. She has more attention to detail." It's more anecdotal, in our case. Because we do our research through focus groups, it's more qualitative. It's spoken and it's noted.

There definitely is a lot of support. Those guys, or those companies and employers, who are already employing women can see the value.

Ms. Joan Crockatt: We should capture that, maybe. I should ask everybody if—

Ms. Suzanne Winterflood: Yes, absolutely. That's in our needs analysis. I know it's in there in our report, which we would share with you, if you'd like.

Ms. Joan Crockatt: If anybody else has examples, perhaps you can send them in later.

Do you want to give them now, Sandra or Danniele?

Ms. Sandra Eix: The statistic I brought up earlier was from the return on sales.

There's a study quoted in one of our papers from 2009. The study's name is actually "Profit, Thy Name Is…Woman?" It's a longitudinal study. They put in the caveat that correlation and causation are definitely two different things. The 20-year longitudinal study suggests that in places where they promote women to leadership positions, where there's a lot of women in the workforce, where in general it's a very diverse workforce, there's a correlation to high profitability.

● (1235)

Ms. Joan Crockatt: We see that on boards, but this is in the workplace, not on boards.

Ms. Sandra Eix: Yes.

Ms. Joan Crockatt: Good. I'm sure you're aware of the women on boards initiative.

This morning it just so happened that I was up at the crack of dawn, doing an announcement with Kellie Leitch, the Minister of Status of Women, announcing $300,000 for women in the electrical industry. These are professional engineers and linemen and everything, the whole gamut. One thing I realized, because it was in the notes I gave this morning, is that this January we announced opening the applications for over $100 million in interest-free loans every year through the Canada apprentice loan initiative. I'm wondering if women know that these kinds of funds are available to them now. Whatever you could do to help us get that message out, I think it's really important that women know.

The other piece of information I'll pass on, which we heard at this committee and that I thought was critical, was we're always talking about wanting women to earn the same for the same. Not enough women were going into sciences, so we're trying to get the message out to go into sciences. We're seeing that more women are choosing life sciences as opposed to math-based sciences, and it's in the math-based sciences—engineering, computer science, mathematics—that you make the most money.

The Chair: Mrs. Crockatt—

Ms. Joan Crockatt: Are there any quick comments from any of you on those? Thank you for reminding me.

Ms. Sandra Eix: As a person with a Ph.D. in physics, I can assure you that progress has been slow. I think the role of mentorship is enormous, so the ability to see people a couple of steps ahead who are doing what you want to do, the ability to talk about those stories in a way that doesn't say this is the first woman professor at SFU, the way to do that is huge.

There are so many of these mentorship organizations. SCWIST has a program called ms infinity, which does programs for kids just the way WISE does. There are WISE-similar organizations all across the country.

It frustrates the living daylights out of me that they're not connected. When there's one woman in physics here and one woman in physics there—

The Chair: Thank you, so connecting. Thank you very much.

Ms. Duncan, you have five minutes.

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: Thanks, Madam Chair.

Dr. McInturff, if you could make specific recommendations to this committee regarding pay equity, what would they be? It's been 100 years.

Ms. Joan Crockatt: Choose engineering, not biology.

Ms. Natalie Linklater: The gap is still there.

Dr. Kate McInturff: Yes, the gap is almost everywhere.

We had a commission on pay equity that made quite substantial recommendations. I would say implementing those very substantial recommendations would be a good start.

I would also say that voluntary and awareness-raising activities are fantastic, making people aware of their biases is very important, but that the evidence shows that unless there's some kind of regulation, some kind of proactive tracking of pay gaps where they exist, then we don't close them. We need regulatory levers.

I appreciate that's not always popular, but the evidence shows that without them we don't see pay gaps close. To me, if you aren't measuring and you aren't requiring people to address the gap, to show that they're doing something to close it, then it's not going to close on its own.

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: The recommendation is for regulation, we need to measure.

Do we have challenges with measuring, and how would you overcome them?

Dr. Kate McInturff: In non-unionized sectors, and in the non-unionized private sector in particular, there isn't the same level of transparency. There are all kinds of reasons that private sector employers don't want to be transparent about who's getting paid what, but I think we have to weigh those interests against the interests of fairness, and indeed non-discrimination, as guaranteed in our charter, which require a certain amount of transparency.

Transparency is one other thing that makes a huge difference. You can imagine, just behaviourally, if you're in a workplace and you know what people are getting paid, and you know that the person down the hall from you is getting paid more, and you went to school with them, you're probably going to say something about it. That level of transparency within the workplace can create movement in the workplace, where employees can bring pressure. It doesn't have to be antagonistic. That push from within will also help level that playing field more.

● (1240)

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: You also said implement the recommendations of the pay equity study.

Dr. Kate McInturff: Yes. They spent a lot of time and they heard from a lot of witnesses, and the report is like a phone book. I think there's a lot of work there that we could profit from.

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: Since you are at the university, it's come up that it's biological versus physical sciences. Has anyone here looked at pay equity within departments?

Ms. Rim Khazall: There are actually a couple of reports online. I'm not going to start spouting figures because those would be science fallacies, but there are actually quite a few resources online. We have them labelled on our WISE website. We'd be more than happy to send them your way. But pay equity is real, and the lack of it is real. It's kind of shocking for both of us, too, because if I do want to go into academia, I'm going to be earning less than my lab mate is, and he's weirder than I am, so I don't know if that's a win.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: I've heard stories in which the man is presented a range of salaries and the woman is given a number.

Ms. Rim Khazall: Yes, and then you have to negotiate it. A couple of my colleagues are just on their way to defend. One of them got a job at the same place my lab mate got a job, and I'm not going to say where. He was given a range, and he was given the higher end of the range. She was given a number. I told her to go tell them to up that number. Both of them have Ph.D.s, and the positions were different, so granted the pay was a little different, but it was $60,000 for a Ph.D. in neuroscience versus the $89,000 he was making, so that's two steps down.

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: Thank you.

I'm going to ask Ms. McInturff one last question, which has just gone out of my head.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: It's gone. I was just going to pick up on the number versus the range. Oh, I know. What's the recommendation to the committee? How do you start getting at these universities? Is it possible to get at these?

Dr. Kate McInturff: I had a really interesting experience with my uncle, who is a senior academic at a medical school. They were saying that they're trying to deal with the fact that they have far more women now. There are lots of women in medicine and maternity leave is a real thing, so they were asking if they should create two tracks of different lengths, a 10-year one to go up for tenure and another one that is five years to go up for tenure. He worked out that if you did that, women would be taken less seriously. He realized that they actually needed to think about their rates of tenure and promotion for men and women and to treat men and women as if they have equal levels of responsibility in terms of how they balance work and family life. Then they would not just be reinforcing the idea that women need to take that extra time, which then reinforces the fact that women do take that extra time, which then reinforces the idea that they're not serious and we can't promote them, and so on.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Barlow, you now have the floor for seven minutes.

[*English*]

Mr. John Barlow: I don't know whether Sandra or Danniele wants to answer this, but I saw that you were given some funding from Status of Women for a mentorship project called “Make Possible: Together we create opportunity”. You haven't had a chance to speak about that, but I'm wondering if, since we've heard from everybody about how important mentoring is in this process, you can tell us a little bit about that program. Have you had some success? Where is it right now?

Ms. Sandra Eix: Sure. We have Status of Women funding for—and it's ridiculous that I don't have the exact numbers at my fingertips—a three-year program, I believe. It's a substantial piece of funding. What we are doing is creating a mentorship network. There are two broad components to it. One is creating a site that I'd describe as having sort of a little bit LinkedIn, a little bit Facebook, and an awful lot of what I've described as "SCWIST love" in it. It's an online place where men and women can sign up to have conversations around skills.

The notion we started out with was to have mentors connected to mentees. We realized that is actually not what people wanted. People wanted to be both mentors and mentees. Having that unidirectional passing of wisdom was not what people wanted. What they wanted to do was to share skills. The website, which is up now at makepossible.ca, is an opportunity for people to sign on, choose their skills—skills they have, skills they want—and connect with others around skills they want to share with each other. I'm biased, but I think it's beautiful. It has a pretty darn good population on it already, considering that it just went into beta within the last few months. It's a brand new website. There was an awful lot of work done on the front end, trying to figure out what people wanted that would be different from what already exists and challenging some of our own assumptions, like the mentor-mentee relationship, challenging our own assumptions about what was required.

I think this is another thing that was a little bit of a surprise. The other part of that funding has supported a number of face-to-face workshops and workshop series. We have an HR inclusion workshop coming up to talk about HR professionals, about ways to combat bias, really high-quality stuff that's brought to us by the WinSETT Centre. We're working with it. Because we are able to do these sort of face-to-face mini-conference or workshop opportunities, it's a way to actually build capacity in terms of mentorship, having conversations about women in diverse fields, or gender diversity in various fields, I guess, in general. So the other piece of it is the face-to-face component.

Given how many mentorship programs there are, and how many girls in science and girls in tech programs there are—so many of them—the long span of the program and the substance of it, has allowed us to partner with other groups and to really figure out who those partnerships are. WWEST, west coast women in engineering, science, and technology, the local NSERC chair in women in science and engineering.... We've been able to pull all those groups together and collaborate on projects. The data sheets that I keep flipping to are a co-production with WWEST. The workshops are a co-production with the people at WinSETT. The SCWIST outreach programs are plugged into Make Possible. We have a networking evening, a huge one, for undergraduate women, and it's plugged into the Make Possible network as well. That's what the funding has allowed us to do: integrate locally. It would be awesome if we could integrate in a larger way. I think we'd be able to share best practices a lot better.

● (1245)

Mr. John Barlow: The website's kind of the hub, and then the rest is sort of the social network.

Ms. Sandra Eix: Yes. The website will be the legacy.

Mr. John Barlow: Right, and you touched on it as well. Status of Women just launched its It Starts with One—Be Her Champion program, asking Canadians across the country to champion a women and be a mentor. I love the fact that a few of you have brought up.... Mr. Keddy's here, thankfully, today to give me some support, but it is important that we get men involved in this as well.

Sandra, do you have men as part of this program as well? Can you talk to us a bit about that?

Ms. Sandra Eix: Yes, that's been a key part of it right from the beginning. That was, again, something we recognized by talking to focus groups about what was wanted. It doesn't make any sense to have just women talking to just women about skills sharing and mentorship. We need to have the support of men and the mentorship of men in assorted fields. As I say, when there's only one woman in physics—and I can speak from personal experience—you need to have the mentorship of anybody, everybody, who is successful and wonderful, and that certainly includes men. All of SCWIST's events are open to men, and we do our best to recognize their support.

Mr. John Barlow: And it's—sorry, go ahead, Danniele.

Ms. Danniele Livengood: That's part of why we are the Society for Canadian Women in Science and Technology, not "of" Canadian women. We are all inclusive, and we want male members as well. We want them there supporting women.

Mr. John Barlow: Great. Unfortunately we are at the point that in many industries the man has to be the one to open the door. If we get the man we're going to start to change the cycle, so I'm glad you have that part.

Suzanne and Marjorie, you talked about some of the programs you're doing. You touched a little bit on working with the school divisions. A lot of the testimony we've had through this has said we have to start at a young age.

Can you talk a little bit about working with the school divisions, guidance counsellors, and teachers to get them engaged?

● (1250)

Ms. Suzanne Winterflood: In Manitoba there is a lot of work going on to take trades into school. Equally there's STEM, but the trades side doesn't quite come with the cachet of the academics and professions. In Manitoba, of course, we have a large manufacturing sector—like Alberta—so we have to get our women in there, and they want to be in there. With the school divisions, we're linking in with them.

We are very much at the beginning of developing our resources, so we are looking at bringing people into that role to look at what's needed. Certainly for the younger students to be able to have access to understand the trades, there's the apprenticeship offering. Our offices are based within the Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology, which puts us in quite a nice position because we can actually see what's happening on the ground. It's important.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Freeman, you now have the floor. You have seven minutes.

[*English*]

Ms. Mylène Freeman: Thank you.

I do have one more question for Kate McInturff before I move on to more subjects. Specifically I wanted to talk about how you felt about previous program spending on infrastructure and skilled trades. Did it show any progress on women's equality, specifically with regard to training, with regard to being able to access promotions and to work-life balance?

How do you see previous investments that have been made, and how would you recommend we make them work better for women?

Dr. Kate McInturff: I'm in favour of infrastructure spending and always happy to see more investments in infrastructure and in public transit, which women depend on very heavily in our major cities.

I think in terms of job creation, we need to recognize that infrastructure spending is going to stimulate jobs in male-dominated professions. So if we're looking at job creation this year, if the job creation is happening in construction, as it is—and women make up 20% of that field—then the job creation is mostly going to go to men, which is fine; but what we need to see is a kind of parallel investment in job creation particularly in industries where women work, where the wage gap is smaller, and where the pay is better.

For example, if you invest heavily in infrastructure and in resources in manufacturing, as we've seen in Alberta, for example, you see also that there isn't a kind of a parallel investment, at least not on the same scale, in health and education where women tend to work and to experience less of a wage gap. It's not that women aren't working there. It's just that they are working in service and hospitality industries where they are making much lower wages, and they are much more likely to have temporary work, so they are in a less economically stable position.

I wanted to come back a little bit to the opening up of student loans, which is fantastic, of course, but I think one note of caution is that because of the wage gap, there is clear evidence that women take longer to pay off their student loans. That means the cumulative interest they pay is greater. Essentially the wage gap means that, when women take out loans, they are paying an additional tax on their education because it takes them longer because of the wage gap.

The loans are excellent. I would never say anything bad about them. It's fantastic. But I would say it would also be useful to think about grants and bursaries targeting women, because those grants and bursaries aren't going to come with the same tax that women bear because of the wage gap at the other end, when they are having to pay that back with a lower salary, with a lower offer of $60,000 instead of $89,000.

Ms. Mylène Freeman: That's really interesting, thank you.

I'm going to open up my next question, or area I'd like to hear more about, to all our witnesses because I think we've all spoken about this. Specifically I want to talk about the safe and secure workplace. You've all raised the fact that there is a hostile work environment sometimes, and that is a major hurdle we need to address in male-dominated workplaces, and a lot of workplaces where women have been traditionally under-represented. Even on Tuesday one of our witnesses from TechGirls brought up the issue of micro-aggressions. We don't even realize it but sometimes it's little things like “Well, you should have smiled then”, which seem harmless on their own, but realistically it comes from a place of seeing women in certain roles.

I'd like to hear from all of you on your recommendations on how to change not just the workplace culture in terms of encouraging mentoring and encouraging women to seek these jobs, but also in creating safe, secure workplaces that are free of harassment for women.

● (1255)

Ms. Suzanne Winterflood: Within the trades I think simply because it's on the shop floor and you're out in the field. If you work for a hydro company you're in the middle of nowhere, so there are a lot of considerations around what that looks like as far as hostile goes.

We've had women who have said things that range from they're treated like their daughter, their sister, their niece, or whichever, and the men are very comforting, saying, “There, there, dear, it's all going to be good and fine.” That isn't necessarily seen as hostile, but it's a barrier that's a problem. We're talking about strong women who want to be in manufacturing, in the non-traditional trades. They're humping around wherever, and it's, “Oh please, dear, let me help”, that sort of thing. In those situations it's very much around trying to work with.... It's dangerous. To “educate” men is always scary because that's exactly what they're scared of—“Oh, we have to behave differently because you're a woman, and women want to come in, and that's all too much hard work.”

We run a focus group with men so it's about trying to change that integrally, and I think my colleagues here alluded to the same things. It's about educating men and educating women on how to interact with men. Let's admit that there's a two-way thing here. From a hostility point of view I think it's really about education. It's about supports and it's very much about reporting safely. Women ask, “If something is done what are the repercussions if I report that? Do I lose my job? Do I get scared? Do I get more hostility because it's a guy I'm reporting to?”

In Manitoba Hydro they have a woman HR representative dedicated to their women in the field, out wherever. They have a website for their women so that women have somebody designated at head office to be able to report issues to and she deals with that on their behalf. So that's a really good, promising practice there.

The Chair: Thank you; that's all the time.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Sellah, I believe you wanted to raise a point of order.

Mrs. Djaouida Sellah: I did, Madam Chair. Thank you.

I would like to raise a point of order about some remarks by our colleagues.

I think that they are relatively new compared to other colleagues of ours. Because of the respect that is owed to our guests and to ourselves, I find that comments of that kind are tantamount to a gratuitous attack on our chair, who is neutral in the extreme, and respectful.

In my opinion, this kind of partisanship should have no place in a parliamentary committee. I feel that we should trust and respect our chair and those who are assisting her.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mrs. Sellah.

I have taken note of that and I thank you.

In fact, under the motions that we have adopted for the work of this committee, it is always important to adhere to the time allotted to each member. However, there is always a little latitude. It is sometimes difficult to stick to the time allotted to each member. Luckily, I am not in the NHL and this is not an overtime period between the Montreal Canadiens and the Ottawa Senators. Here we have some manoeuvring room. Mrs. Perkins' remark was valid, but we are still always trying to do things properly.

My thanks to the guests who joined us today. Your presentations were wonderful. The discussions were very stimulating and the perspectives were very varied. It will enhance our study remarkably well.

Let me remind committee members that we meet again next Tuesday to continue our work.

Have a good day and a good weekend.

The meeting is adjourned.