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# Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage

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**EVIDENCE**

## Thursday, May 3, 2018

## Chair

**Ms. Julie Dabrusin**

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● (0855)

[*English*]

**The Chair (Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Toronto—Danforth, Lib.)):** We're starting up again.

We have a busy morning with a number of witnesses. Before we get started I wanted to take a moment to acknowledge that one person who was chair of the heritage committee before me was Gord Brown, who was a tremendous advocate for the arts.

Pierre and I were able to work with him on music committee or music caucus, and I wanted to take a moment before we begin today to acknowledge all his hard work for this committee and for the arts, and to bring that spirit forward as we continue with this study and with our other studies here.

Today we have witnesses for our study on gender parity on boards and senior leadership levels of Canadian artistic and cultural organizations. We have with us by video conference from ACTRA, Heather Allin and Ferne Downey. Thank you.

Then here we have Susannah Rosenstock from Art Toronto.

[*Translation*]

We also have Sophie Brière from the Université Laval.

We will begin with those appearing by videoconference. Since there are technical difficulties sometimes, it is better to proceed in this way.

We will begin with the presentation of the ACTRA representatives.

[*English*]

**Ms. Ferne Downey (President, International Federation of Actors, Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Artists (ACTRA)):** Thank you very much, Ms. Chairwoman, and members of the committee, for allowing us to appear before you today as part of your study, and thank you for the eloquent remembrance of Mr. Brown.

My name is Ferne Downey. I'm a Canadian actor and past president of ACTRA, the Alliance of Canadian Cinema and Television and Radio Artists as well as current president of FIA, the International Federation of Actors. Joining me today is Heather Allin, a fellow Canadian actor, and Chair of the ACTRA national women's committee.

**Ms. Heather Allin (Chair, National Women's Committee, Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Artists (ACTRA)):** Ferne and I are here today as the voice of ACTRA's members, 25,000 professional English-language performers. This year marks a milestone for our union as we celebrate our 75th year as a national federation. That's 75 years of representing performers living and working in every part of Canada. Performers who are pivotal to bringing Canadian stories to life in film, television, radio, and digital media. Like many sectors in Canada, our English-language film and TV sectors are not immune to gender inequalities. We at ACTRA have fought long and hard to address this within our industry, and it's why we're here today: to identify the problems and provide recommendations for change.

**Ms. Ferne Downey:** In addition to my role as past president of ACTRA, I'm also proud to serve as the chair of CUES, the Canadian Unions for Equality on Screen. CUES is a group of union and guild representatives whose aim is to collect and analyze data to better understand the opportunities and challenges facing all women in the production industry, and to develop recommendations and tools to increase the number of women at all levels of production. Since we began about 2012, CUES has released two reports by Canadian academic Dr. Amanda Coles to address these issues.

● (0900)

**Ms. Heather Allin:** After undertaking an extensive review of industry statistics from unions and representing workers in front and behind the camera, the first CUES report found that women are highly under-represented at nearly all levels of production in Canada's film and television industry.

Three years later, with the numbers remaining stagnant, a follow-up report dealt with the statistic to determine why this inequity might happen. This second study found that the key to understanding the issue of gender inequality is the analysis, not just of discrimination against women, but of systemic advantage for men. Within the Canadian film and television industry this means that women have to work harder and perform at a consistently higher standard.

For example, a project's financial risk assessment is not gender neutral even though there was no evidence to support gender discrimination as a useful risk management tool in film and TV production. Stereotypes prevail. Male directors are seen as visionary and creative and female directors as demanding and difficult. A rigid hierarchical work model still drives the operations of independent film and television production in Canada.

**Ms. Ferne Downey:** –If we're ever going to stop the systemic exclusion of women, women must not only be part of the conversation, but also must be equally represented in key leadership and decision-making positions.

Studies support this. A 2016 study by the Rockefeller Foundation found that having women in leadership positions would significantly help attract a more diverse workforce, and a case study by Status of Women Canada found that companies with women on their boards were better able to attract and retain excellent employees. That study also found that, "Women are drawn to companies that already have women on their boards, because they see opportunities to advance". However, while it's important for women to be equally represented on boards, we must stress that it is not an adequate way to address the issue of gender inequality in and of itself.

**Ms. Heather Allin:** Last October, CUES member unions and guilds were the first to report that the modest practical recommendations they had implemented from the first CUES report had already made a remarkable difference within their organizations.

The second CUES report went one step further. One recommendation was for an industry-wide effort for organizations to adopt gender equality as a core principle in policy development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. Since the report's release in 2016, CUES has expanded beyond its own member organizations and has successfully worked with Canadian funding bodies to develop and execute these practices.

After launching its first gender parity policy in 2016, Telefilm received push-back from CUES and other industry players for its lack of quantifiable goals. With industry input, Telefilm revised its policy and announced specific gender parity measures for feature film production financing in order to achieve a balanced production portfolio for the number of films being directed, written, and produced by women for the year 2020. Just one year later we were pleased when Telefilm reported that of the 60-plus films the agency had committed to funding so far that year, 44% are directed by women, 46% have a female screenwriter, and 41% have a female producer.

While this is exciting news, Telefilm has acknowledged that films with over a $1-million budget continue to pose the greatest challenge in attracting female directors. However, Telefilm has committed to continuing to work with industry partners to address this, and is confident it will ultimately meet its goal.

Other Canadian funding bodies have also made their own commitments to achieve gender parity through the creation of special funds or changes to existing funds, including the CBC, the National Film Board, and the Canada Media Fund. We look forward to seeing further progress.

**Ms. Ferne Downey:** While the work we have started within our industry has been instrumental in our quest to create gender parity, we feel we have only just begun. We'd like to end our presentation by asking the federal government to play its role by implementing the following three recommendations.

First, ensure that there is gender parity on boards, like CBC/Radio-Canada, NFB, and Telefilm, and in government appointees to the Canada Media Fund.

Second, the government must urge all organizations that receive funding to set a goal of achieving gender parity in key creative roles in the productions they finance.

Third, the government must also urge those organizations to track and publicly report on their progress.

We thank you for your time and look forward to your questions.

[*Translation*]

Thank you very much.

● (0905)

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

We will now to go to Ms. Rosenstock, from Art Toronto.

**Ms. Susannah Rosenstock (Director, Art Toronto):** Good morning, members of the committee, and thank you for the invitation to speak today on this important subject. It is an honour to be here and to share my thoughts.

I thought it might be useful to provide some biographical information. I am from the United States, and I completed a bachelor's degree in art history at Columbia University in New York and a master's degree in art history from the Institute of Fine Arts at NYU. I have been working in the visual arts in New York and Toronto for more than 20 years. I joined Art Toronto in 2010 and was promoted to director in 2014.

Art Toronto was founded in 2000 and it is Canada's only international art fair for modern and contemporary art. While there are more than 300 commercial art fairs worldwide, and dozens in the U.S., Canada has only one. Art Toronto is a five-day annual consumer event that takes place at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre, and it is the largest and most important annual visual arts event in Canada. It has grown to become an essential meeting and networking event for arts professionals from across the country.

The fair is composed of approximately 100 Canadian and international commercial art galleries selling modern and contemporary art as well as hosting booths for art museums and other not-for-profit art spaces, art magazines, and curated projects. A multi-day program of talks and tours featuring prominent art-world figures takes place throughout the duration of the fair.

In 2017 Art Toronto was attended by more than 23,000 art collectors, art professionals, and art lovers, and it contributed over $10 million to the arts economy through artwork sales, in addition to tourism dollars spent in the city during those five days. Art Toronto's opening night event is a fundraiser for the Art Gallery of Ontario, raising close to $400,000 annually for the gallery's exhibitions and programs.

Art Toronto is owned by Informa, a multinational company headquartered in the U.K. Informa has 7,500 employees worldwide and is a leading business intelligence, academic publishing, knowledge, and events business.

In thinking about your request to speak about gender parity on the boards of Canadian cultural institutions and among artistic leaders across Canada, I did some research into Informa's hiring policies and the programs it has put into place to reach the company's goals in terms of employee diversity. While I was pleased to learn that 56% of Informa's employees are female, in the leadership groups at the higher levels this number drops to 27%, and in the directorships at the highest level the number drops even further to 22%. The number of female directors, however, is a higher percentage in Informa's Canada offices.

A similar trend can be found in U.S. and Canadian art museums. In 2018, though, I do not believe that it's sufficient to look at gender parity in these institutions and across the arts in Canada without also considering ethnic diversity.

In the U.S. and Canada there are clear disparities in gender representation in museum directorships, depending on operating budget size. The majority of museums with budgets less than $15 million are run by a female rather than a male director. The reverse is true for museums with budgets of over $15 million, where female representation decreases as budget size increases.

A study published by *Canadian Art* magazine in April 2017, entitled “Hard Numbers: A Study on Diversity in Canada's Galleries”, looks not only at gender discrepancies but also at the demographics of museum staff by job title. While the top directorships skew towards men in these roles, the study finds that visible minorities and indigenous people are severely under-represented at all levels of gallery administration, including curators and directors.

While these numbers have a variety of effects across an organization, it is perhaps most visible when looking at the gender and ethnicity breakdown of solo exhibitions presented at these institutions. A 2015 report by *Canadian Art* magazine looked at these exhibitions from 2013 until 2015 at one major institution in each province, plus the National Gallery of Canada, focusing on living artists by gender breakdown and racial distribution. The national average of this study showed that 56% of these solo exhibitions were given to white male artists, 33% to white female artists, 8% to non-white male artists, and 3% to non-white female artists. That is to say, what happens at the top affects what visitors see and experience at these institutions.

Informa has put into place new company-wide programs in the past few years to improve the gender balance at the senior management level and to create more diversity overall throughout the company. I think that some of these initiatives could be applied to the issue of gender parity and diversity in Canadian cultural institutions and on their boards.

● (0910)

Several years ago, an Informa graduate fellowship scheme and an Informa apprenticeship scheme were introduced, as well as a leadership development program to increase professional leadership skills, provide networking and collaboration opportunities, and to support succession planning, which is essential in any institution.

I believe that this last point about leadership, mentorship, and succession planning is key in developing future leaders in the arts in Canada who reflect the diversity and plurality of the Canadian population of the 21st century, and of the communities that these institutions exist to serve. This lack of leadership training resources to date in Canada has been cited as the reason that many of Canada's, and specifically Toronto's, more recent hires for CEOs, including the AGO, the ROM, and the McMichael, have all hired from outside Canada.

Like Informa's programs, I am aware of two excellent leadership development programs to be considered as examples, but also as opportunities for Canadians. The Clore Leadership Programme, in the U.K., aids in the professional growth of museum professionals; and in the U.S., the Getty Leadership Institute assists top-level museum and cultural executives from around the world to become better leaders, with the aim of strengthening their own institutions' capabilities, as well as advancing the international museum field.

Some good news is that new leadership programs in Canada are now available, including those at the Banff Centre, the Cultural Human Resources Council, and through Business for the Arts. These programs are a start, but more needs to be done to provide leadership training resources to a greater number of people in the culture sector, and to provide specific outreach to women, indigenous people, and visible minorities.

The resources of the federal government could help to make these existing programs more robust, and the government could work with other partners to provide additional opportunities. For example, the government could work with partner institutions from across Canada such as the Remai Modern, Ryerson University, the National Gallery, and The Rooms, to develop a cross-country leadership program with candidates in each location who meet annually for a leadership summit, with the opportunity to present and share ideas and meet with national and international arts sector leaders. These programs could be developed to specifically target female and diverse candidates that reflect Canada's population, and could create a new generation of Canadian leaders in the arts and culture sector.

I've also been asked to share my thoughts on gender parity on visual arts boards. The good news there is that these boards do have majority representation for women, though visible minorities and indigenous people are again greatly under-represented. I believe this needs to change.

In addition to my work at Art Toronto, I'm also a founding member of the board of the Toronto Biennial of Art, a new multi-venue art event that is set to launch in 2019. We are in the process of board-building and have set ourselves the task of building a diverse board of talented and passionate arts supporters who reflect our core values as an organization.

In considering how the federal government could work with partners to diversify these boards, I think this could be most effective in the grant application process. The Canada Council for the Arts has recently updated its funding policies with an emphasis on diversity as funding criteria that have a new weight. In this vein, there could be a preferred status given to charities or not-for-profit organizations that are working to address the issue of diversity in their representation, and these organizations could be eligible for more support for their projects. This could, in turn, lead organizations to create a greater range of board roles that encourage participation from a broader range of potential members.

Thank you again for the invitation to speak today.

[*Translation*]

**The Chair:** We will now hear from Sophie Brière from the Université Laval.

**Mrs. Sophie Brière (Professor, Université Laval):** Good morning, everyone.

Thank you for inviting me this morning.

Like any good teacher, I prepared a PowerPoint presentation.

I am not an arts expert at all. That's what I said to the people who invited me. However, I have done a lot of work on the presence of women on boards of directors and their impact on them, mainly in Quebec, in various sectors of activity, both public and private. Today, I want to talk to you about lessons learned from those research projects. Like any good teacher, I likely have material for two or three hours, but I will try to limit myself to 10 minutes. As you can see, at the end of my presentation, I added the list of publications. We have published four or five reports on the issue. So there is probably a lot to say.

I tried to answer the four questions I was asked.

First, is gender parity an issue in organizations, on boards of directors and among senior management? The answer is yes. I do not want to give you any figures this morning, because I think everyone has them already. We know that the percentage of women on boards is about 20%. The number is pretty much the same for the boards of large, publicly traded companies.

In the Government of Quebec, this percentage has gone up because it passed a piece of legislation and set a quota a few years ago.

In short, it is a persistent issue, despite women being the majority in universities and colleges.

What I want to say to you this morning is that this is not a talent pool problem. I am convinced that all the skills are there, mainly in the field of the arts. There is a talent pool problem in the science and engineering sector, because fewer women are studying in those areas, and that is an issue. In all the other areas, however, for example medicine, law and administration, women are there and they are competent, even though we hear that it's not always easy to find women to fill certain positions.

There is also a perception that equality is achieved in feminized sectors. People ask me why I'm working on that, since there are lots of women in the arts, law firms and hospitals. That's true, but they are not sufficiently represented in decision-making positions. You know as well as I do that there are still significant pay inequities for all sorts of reasons that we can talk about again later. There is still a lot to do on this front. Yes, we have the impression that there's parity, but that is not actually the case yet.

When I meet with the presidents or members of boards, they all say that they are in favour of equality and diversity. The discourse is very interesting. I have never heard anyone say that they were against that. However, when you ask shareholders meetings, board members or related associations to take concrete action, that's a whole different story. There are things we could do; I can come back to this later.

It has been suggested that the appointment of women to boards would have a significant impact on organizations' senior management, but that is not the case. My colleague Jean Bédard and I are currently conducting gender parity studies on boards of directors and we are following the statistics. The situation is stagnant except in the government and crown corporations.

People tell us that it's easy to appoint people to boards of directors, but the real challenge is at the senior level of organizations, because that's where the decisions are mostly made. I'm not saying that boards are not important, far from it, but the bulk of the work is done at the senior level of organizations. The two do not always go hand in hand.

Furthermore, women are not automatically pro-women. I am often told that, since we have appointed women, the problem is solved. I often say that, if we do not change the system and the organizational practices, even if women have been appointed, there will not necessarily be a change. It's sort of the same with diversity. If the pattern stays the same, it will not change. This does not automatically mean that women will promote new topics and have more clout. People have told me that they had appointed women and that, fortunately, nothing changed.

Boards are fairly traditional organizations. If we want real change, the people appointed to boards must make real changes and work in a real context of diversity and equality.

In addition, there is clearly a lack of data tracking. When we request data from organizations, including large corporations, we have difficulty obtaining the percentage of women in senior management and the percentage of women on boards. That's important, and that's what we're doing right now: we're tracking the data to disrupt the perception of equality that we are constantly seeing when people think the matter is settled.

● (0915)

I now turn to the second question: why are women not asked to join boards?

There are still many stereotypes. It's incredible how many stereotypes there are about women being like this and men being like that.

There are many stereotypes related to work-life balance. Some people are a little tired of hearing about it, but you have to talk about it because it's not settled.

It is a major issue for women, but also for men, especially young men, as we are hearing more and more. People don't have enough time. Sitting on a board is extra, on top of other activities, quite often. Management positions require time. Sometimes, people will not accept a decision-making position because they say that they already have a job and a family, so they have no time to do more.

So there is this perception: we are not going to try to recruit some women, because we think that they are already busy enough and that we cannot ask them to do this as well. There are also women who exclude themselves by saying that they are quite busy, that they do not want to do more, out of respect for their spouse, and that it will be difficult to balance it all.

Furthermore, there are stereotypes related to the skills gap. I still hear remarks that women lack leadership, have difficulty communicating and do not have enough knowledge in the field. As I said earlier, I do not buy this discourse anymore. Frankly, I don't think we're there anymore. There are skills galore.

We must also stop reinforcing the stereotypes that women are more human and more open to dialogue, or that men are more this or that. This kind of rhetoric reinforces stereotypes, and we can't go very far with that. Instead, we need to work together and stop confining people to predetermined roles, such as women on human resources committees.

People also have the reflex of asking people from their own network. It’s common for the boards to ask people they know, because that’s what the appointment process is. Real skills profiles must therefore be built using real appointment mechanisms. That helps a great deal with getting out of the pool. Board chairs have told me that they could easily find someone in two or three days, but it might take them two or three weeks if they had to find women or people specifically in certain communities. It sometimes takes longer, but they have to make the effort to step outside their own networks.

I forgot to mention the discourse on competence. We often hear people say that they do not choose candidates based on whether they are women, youth or people from other backgrounds, but rather based on their skills. However, this discourse on competence denies one problem. Skills have nothing to do with choosing a man or a woman. Basically, it is important to recognize that people are competent, but that now the boards must overcome inequities and that, at some point, they have to make specific choices. This does not mean that people are not competent.

There is also a limited turnover in these positions. It is important to keep that in mind. People have asked me how many years it would take to achieve a quota that we might decide to set. We have to look at turnover in positions every four or five years. If we want to appoint women, we have to take that into account.

In addition, the same people are often asked to sit on boards, and that's true for women too. It is therefore important to diversify the pool of candidates.

As for the organizational measures, I will talk about them quickly. I think we need to discuss this issue openly. We must adjust the selection criteria to what we truly want to achieve. It is not necessarily a question of lowering the requirements, but of sometimes changing them according to the traditional experiences of women and men as well. We must enable everyone to participate in board governance. We must stop thinking that we are going to train only women because they lack skills. We need to work on organizational measures rather than single strategies.

Finally, what can be done to promote parity? There are a few methods.

Collect data, as I said.

Avoid working only on single strategies. Let's stop saying that this is the problem of women. This is the problem of organizations. That's what I wanted to say this morning.

Legislative measures can produce slightly more concrete results than simply explaining why the organization does not have women. That does not improve parity much.

Avoid magic bullets.

Do not focus solely on boards. I mentioned that.

Encourage organizations and senior executives to review their practices, not just ask women to adapt.

Take into account the impact of maternity. It's part of reality. In the culture sector, people have atypical hours and have a hard time finding childcare.

Implement communications strategies to highlight the progress made on adding women to organizations' boards.

Spread the word about innovative experiences. Right now, I'm doing a lot of work on good practices, if you're interested. I am working on case studies. Many people are doing interesting things, and those need to be documented in organizations.

● (0920)

Do not believe that things will get better by themselves. I do not look that old, but I've been working on this for 25 years and things are not fixed.

Finally, it is important to work in partnership with stakeholders. I hear all the time that the new generations, in two or three years, will fix the situation. That is not true, because they will use the same mould. If the work is not done at the level of the organizations, the changes will be smaller.

Thank you.

● (0925)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

We will now start with the questions and answers. The speakers will have seven minutes.

We will start with you, Mr. Breton. I understand that you will be sharing your time with Mr. Virani.

**Mr. Pierre Breton (Shefford, Lib.):** Exactly.

My sincere thanks to each of the witnesses. My thanks to Ms. Downey and Ms. Allin for their recommendations, as well as to Ms. Rosenstock. However, since I only have three and a half minutes, I will turn to Mrs. Brière.

I would have liked to listen to you for three hours, like your lectures. That said, we still have a few minutes together.

I am particularly interested in the performance of businesses. Of course, we are here to talk about parity on the boards of artistic and cultural organizations. I'm not sure whether you have heard about this, but some studies show that the number of women on the boards of directors is directly proportional to the quality or performance of the companies.

I would like to hear your comments on that. You have three minutes to talk about it.

**Mrs. Sophie Brière:** I will answer in three seconds: it's true.

Honestly, I do not understand why we have to justify that. Why would women not perform well and help improve business performance? Rephrasing the question is answering it.

Basically, those sorts of studies assess the percentage of women and the bottom line. Top researchers will say that the causal link is questionable. Other studies try to show that, ultimately, the link is not as strong as it is believed, because the results are sometimes different when compared to other boards with women.

Personally, I am convinced that diversity, equality and the presence of women improve the situation. Many people have told me that they would not go back to boards of directors made up of 50-year-old white men only. I have nothing against men of that profile, I like them a lot, but we want people with diverse experiences. This is true for women and for other groups. That goes without saying. In their speeches, managers will say that this is where the future, profitability, performance, and sustainability lie. It's what makes a company socially responsible.

I completely agree with that. It takes energy to get there, rather than trying to still convince people that women can do the job. I think that goes without saying.

**Mr. Pierre Breton:** Since I have links with some boards of directors, I can say that establishing clear policies within these boards of directors has improved things and led to results.

You talked about legislative measures that the government could take, such as passing certain laws. These are good things. But I think the organizations need to take charge, put policies in place within their boards of directors and respect them.

I'd like to hear your thoughts on that.

**Mrs. Sophie Brière:** You're absolutely right.

Setting a quota is a perfectly justified, correct and effective measure, but it isn't the only one. If we only set quotas, there will indeed be appointments but, after a few years, if the organizations haven't put something sustainable in place, we'll have to start again.

Of course, if we set a quota, there will be women on boards of directors. That's a good starting point. However, if we want to see real change within an organization, the managers need to want to change the practices and foster a working environment that will keep women in the organization and hold decision-making positions.

I'll give you an example. I currently do a lot of work with lawyers' offices—

**The Chair:** I'll remind you that the member is sharing his time with Mr. Virani, so you will have to be brief.

**Mrs. Sophie Brière:** Right. I'll just finish my thought.

There is a very large pool of women lawyers. Law schools are full of women. Yet, there are almost no women in the big law firms.

Even if there is a pool of women, they need to be appointed and retained. It's a challenge.

**Mr. Pierre Breton:** Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** Mr. Virani, you have the floor.

**Mr. Arif Virani (Parkdale—High Park, Lib.):** Thank you very much to all the witnesses for their presentations.

[*English*]

I'll be directing my questions to ACTRA, and specifically to Ferne. That's partly subjective, because Ferne is a constituent.

Ferne, welcome to the committee. It's a great pleasure to have you here. Obviously there are a lot of creators and artists in Parkdale—High Park, among whom you are one of the most prolific in terms of your contributions. Thank you for your contributions to ACTRA and now to FIA, but also in terms of your work with CUES. I want to ask you a couple of questions, if I have enough time.

The first relates to your recommendation number two, which calls for stricter requirements on entities that receive government funding. As you know, that's a priority of Minister Joly. She announced in January a review of all of the grants and contributions given by Heritage to various actors' entities to ensure that they have harassment-free workplaces. That was also followed last week by an announcement by the Canada Council for the Arts where $500,000 was made available to different organizations around the country to promote harassment-free workplaces.

I want to ask, are those steps in the right direction? Secondly, about that $500,000 fund, is there a specific method or targeting that you think should be used for that funding, in particular to address some of the needs you mentioned in your presentation?

● (0930)

**Ms. Ferne Downey:** Thank you for the question. I'm proud to be in Parkdale—High Park.

In terms of your first question, yes, we observe that the government is working in the right direction. We have approached the problem of sexual harassment in the industry very industry-wide. We appreciate everything that the federal government is doing in taking steps toward that goal now.

It's a bit tricky to figure out exactly how to request that Canada council do its work. I think they're very proficient in terms of making their own analysis. We're just glad to see direct, actionable steps. We're activists. We need to have change. The change has to be systemic and long term.

We don't pretend that we're going to turn this ship around overnight. However, the baby steps we're all taking, societally and industry-wide, are the right baby steps, until 100 years from now we won't even believe we had to have this conversation, because women are respected, they're respected in the workplace, they're running boards, they're in many leadership positions, and society has found a balance that it has lacked for a very long time.

**The Chair:** Perfect. Thank you very much.

We will now be going to Mr. Eglinski, please.

**Mr. Jim Eglinski (Yellowhead, CPC):** Thank you to our witnesses today.

I'd like to start with Sophie Brière.

I was quite interested when you were talking about the perception of equality. I know a number of years ago, when I was a mayor of a city in British Columbia, we needed to find a new chief executive officer or manager for the city. I had a number of women in senior management roles within the municipality, and I wanted to look at the possibility of hiring a woman versus a man for the chief executive officer role. I hired a headhunting firm, and we had extreme difficulty in finding people to come forward from the feminine gender to take it on.

One of the biggest problems was trying to find people who would move from the location they were in and who had gained enough experience to handle the job that we were asking. Actually, we couldn't do it. I finally found a lady to come out from retirement to take on the role, and I'm pleased to say she worked out very well. She's still there, some 10 or 11 years later.

Do you find that because of the uniqueness of the feminine...she might be a wife, a mother, versus the guy who's going to move on for a job role, they are maybe somewhat hesitant to take that big move?

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Sophie Brière:** I think women are more reluctant to take action because of the work-life balance. It isn't a question of competence. Women are wondering how they can fulfill these mandates while caring for their children. All the studies show that, despite the sharing of household chores, women still bear the brunt of this responsibility. It's a reflex in women. This is very much in terms of women's mobility, whether it's regional, national or even international, as you've said. Women exclude themselves when it comes to going abroad, moving or accepting new challenges, because they fear that they can't reconcile these challenges and family.

If we don't find ways to reconcile work and family, this situation will continue to be a barrier for women. I think that's the situation that's in question, more than the skill or the interest. Indeed, I don't think there is a lack of interest.

● (0935)

[*English*]

**Mr. Jim Eglinski:** Thank you.

Ms. Rosenstock, you're from the United States.

**Ms. Susannah Rosenstock:** I am. I've been in Canada for 11 years now.

**Mr. Jim Eglinski:** You've been here 11 years, and I believe you mentioned something about three or four other major art institutions in Canada that have people in the CEO ranges from outside Canada. One of the other witnesses mentioned earlier that we have very few who go over the $1-million production in the management role versus those who do the lower end.

Can you explain to me why that is? Why are we hiring outside Canada still? Is there a lack of skill or qualities here, or are there unique skills that you guys are acquiring in other countries because you've been at it a little longer?

**Ms. Susannah Rosenstock:** I don't know that it's the skills. I think it's really the lack of training, the lack of succession training here in order to put people in those positions. From what I know, there are women who are leading smaller museums, mid-sized museums, and other artistic institutions across the country, but not at the very highest levels. I think that, because there simply aren't people being trained in any sort of succession training to take those jobs, the headhunters generally look outside the country. They look to the U.S., and they look to the U.K.

I know you spoke to Heidi Reitmaier of MOCA recently. She is Canadian. She has come back to Canada to take the job as director of MOCA, but she trained elsewhere for that position. She was in the U.S., and she was in the U.K.

I think in order to get that experience, from what I know, people do have to leave Canada, get that experience, and then hopefully they can come back for a job, but perhaps there is a way to have that leadership training here.

I don't think it's wrong to hire people from outside of Canada. I don't think it's wrong to hire Canadians who have trained in other places. I think it can definitely be an advantage to have people who have travelled, lived abroad, and trained in other places. They can bring that knowledge and those connections back here to Canada, but I do think that there is a lack of leadership in order to put people in those positions here, from what I know.

**Mr. Jim Eglinski:** Maybe I'll go back to the witness who mentioned the $1 million, and more men in the upper levels than women.

Could you maybe explain a little bit more why you see that happening?

**Ms. Heather Allin:** That's information gleaned through the Telefilm study. What we have found and what has been reported is that the gender diversity and inclusion in films that have budgets of a million dollars or less is higher. There is a far greater penetration of women in that sector, but once it gets to be more than that, the circumstances change dramatically.

There's a study that came out of the U.K. that said that 4% of directors in a budget of that level are women, so that's a 96% success rate for men, and a 4% success rate for women. I believe that a lot of that is addressed by what Sophie was talking about in terms of the level of leadership, the succession planning, and the opportunity. It's not that women are not trained to do these things; in fact, they're very well trained, and there are a lot of them with that skill set.

**Mr. Jim Eglinski:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

[*Translation*]

**The Chair:** Go ahead, Mr. Nantel.

**Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, NDP):** Thank you very much to all the witnesses.

I am very happy to see Ms. Allin and Ms. Downey. It's been a long time since we've seen each other.

[*English*]

Thank you very much for being here.

Actually, I would like to thank my colleague, Ms. Dzerowicz, for bringing this topic to the heritage committee. I think that we're quite in time.

[*Translation*]

There's an article by Mario Girard in this morning's edition of *La Presse*, that mentions, as Ms. Rosenstock did, that the Canada Council for the Arts is obviously in favour of parity. He quotes Simon Brault of the Canada Council for the Arts, “The question of women's place in the arts is currently being asked”. The article indicates that Simon Brault insists that “major work must be done in the field of classical music, where composers are overwhelmingly male”. It goes on and states, and this is very interesting, “These measures would be added to the practice of blind auditions, adopted by most of the major classical orchestras in the country”. I didn't even know that existed. It seems that it “gives visible results”. Mr. Brault says the Canada Council for the Arts “must come up with a plan very soon” on parity.

Mrs. Brière, thank you very much for your enthusiasm. Obviously, everyone was very excited about your findings and analyses, and we can't wait to read your documents. However, you raise the fact that appointing women to boards of directors is not a panacea for achieving parity. Moreover, I tip my hat to my colleague Ms. Dzerowicz on this subject. Rather, you suggest going to senior management, that is, managers and boards of directors.

You also mentioned the work-life balance, and I sincerely believe that a broader range of child care services in Canada would certainly be a step in the right direction. In itself, it can be said that this would certainly help women to be more visible in senior positions. It's also an incentive, not a brake. I went to Denmark and Sweden this fall to see to what extent early childhood services were used by men. I saw many dads go out with their children. It was striking; I didn't spend my time counting them with a digital counter, but it was obvious.

I would like to take this opportunity of having ACTRA with us today to ask them a question. In all your observations, one thing struck me. You gave the example of the law firms. The succession is there, but there is indeed a kind of societal model that could discourage this aspiration to a management position. I think the people at ACTRA are directly tied to film sets, and they can see that.

Do you believe that we could do better in the models that youth see on television and in movies? Should we impose criteria?

I'm sure Ms. Downey has a position on that, and she doesn't cease calling for better roles for all members of her union.

Perhaps we can start with the witnesses who are joining us remotely; it would be simpler.

● (0940)

[*English*]

**Ms. Ferne Downey:** I'll just dive in very quickly. We certainly believe in the Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media's ethos “If she can see it, she can be it”, so Heather and I and our home union have worked to create opportunity at all levels, be it in union leadership—where Heather and I have both been leaders—leading actors and advocating for policy change at the highest level. It's a top-down inspiration for society, for our members, and for the movies.

We're hoping, in our home union, that we've made opportunities for the young emerging artists, to say, “It's your world. You're going to be running our whole world. If you want to be the next president of this union or be running your own theatre company or be in your own movie, start now. You are it. You are the change. You are the everything.”

We mentor. We give opportunity. However, it's experience that makes you happy to take the next step, isn't it? It's having the opportunity first, when there is so much systemic advantage for the men in our industry. At 36, the women in our industry as actors are not as sought after. We see the trajectory. Men have opportunity right into their seventies.

**Mr. Pierre Nantel:** So, when we talk about education to be a change or a factor, education in entertainment is much more insidious. It brings in a perspective for women that is not officially in the books, but what you see is what you perceive and it is what orients the girls.

**Ms. Ferne Downey:** Yes, so you become role models, and that changes the stories that you tell. That ends up really...because we're looking for long-term, systemic change. We want society to behave differently with each other, and the disadvantage has been too systemic for too long. All of those things have to simultaneously happen—the leadership opportunities and what we see.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pierre Nantel:** Mrs. Brière, do you think the entertainment industry has a role to play?

**Mrs. Sophie Brière:** Yes. I really have a lot to say, the systemic changes are so complex. I would like to be able to tell you what to do and offer you a short 10-step guide, but the fact is that for some people to occupy decision-making positions, you have to prepare the entire sector and the entire organization. But it takes 20 years. I've studied cases where the proportion of women started at 20% and increased to 40% or 50%. But, it took about twenty years.

First, how do you recruit people and how to train them on arrival? Often, once people are recruited, they are left to their own devices. They are asked to organize themselves, on the pretext that they are the ones who wanted to do this job. But it's not necessarily about people who have been doing this job forever.

Then you have to see what working conditions are offered to them. In all the sectors I studied, people who had a first child lost credibility, and their progress was slowed down. I apologize for saying it, but that's the reality.

I'm currently studying police officers in Quebec. This is a very big step backwards. When policewomen have their first child, they are said to be careerless and not real policewomen. If they have a second one, it's worse. If they have a third, it's a question of their credibility. You have to know that they continue to accumulate seniority even if they have been gone for three years out of a total of six years, for example. All other police officers are very frustrated that these women are being offered a decision-making position when they have been home for three years. According to them, they only had to not have any children. That's what people tell us.

It remains that it is a choice of society. This is the reality: women have children.

The problem comes up in law firms as well. Women with children lose their cases. This environment is so competitive that wanting children is associated with not being a careerist. It is considered that it will be up to these women to get by when they return to work. In this system, it's performance at all costs.

To really change things, you have to focus on those values. If people have children or haven't worked in the film industry for 25 years, they have to be given a chance. They need to be supported and offered good working conditions. When they come back to work, they have to be followed, integrated, helped and accompanied to decision-making positions. You see, it will work for women as well as members of cultural communities.

● (0945)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

**Mrs. Sophie Brière:** That's what needs to be worked on. It takes time.

**The Chair:** That is well put.

[*English*]

We now have Ms. Dzerowicz for three minutes.

**Ms. Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.):** I want to thank everybody for their excellent presentations.

Hello to those who are presenting by video conference.

Hello, Ferne. Hi, Heather. Good to see you again.

Because I only have three minutes, I'll just ask a couple of questions quickly. Ferne and Heather, you've made some wonderful recommendations. The second one was that groups getting funding should get funding to ensure gender equity right across all roles. Is there a particular time frame that you would suggest for that? Should we say we should target within a period of time, or should we say we just want to be tracking progress?

My second question is around tracking and publicly reporting on the progress and that recommendation. Do you believe it's enough to just publicly report it, or do you think someone needs to be in a leadership role, monitoring and encouraging people to really move forward on achieving...? Do you publicly state it or do you...? I'm not suggesting quotas, but someone who is in a leadership position to actually push for results....

**Ms. Ferne Downey:** In terms of the public reporting, we work closely with academics. The transparency of reporting is integral to having truth be shared with the whole society you're trying to change.

You're absolutely right. In addition to that, it can't just be compartmentalized and be a little piece of paper in someone's report. There has to be continual systemic activity. Policies have to change. Priorities have to change. If inclusivity and diversity is a top priority, then everything...every day, strategic planning has to happen.

**Ms. Heather Allin:** We haven't talked about a time frame, but I'm going to refer to a project called the 2xMore campaign, which was started by Rina Fraticelli in Women in View and worked with the Directors Guild of Canada.

I will note that when women were directing live action, 55% of the top four roles went to women, as compared to 41% when men were directing. When women were writing, 58% of the top four roles went to women, as opposed to 40% when men were writing.

This 2xMore campaign was designed to double the number of women in series and film directing positions in a three-year period. After two years, they had actually made significant achievements in those systems. This was—

● (0950)

**Ms. Julie Dzerowicz:** Can I just stop you for a second, because unfortunately I've run out of time. I just wanted to make two comments and then I'll end in 15 seconds.

This comment is for Professor Brière. As a woman who's worked mostly in business, and now in politics at senior levels, and someone who's been promoting women in senior roles for a really long period of time, I found three things in addition to what it is that you've presented. If you have any comments, if you could write them in, I'd be grateful.

For me, it's not just mentorship. It's actually sponsorship that was really needed. If women aren't actually sponsored and brought into the conversation, we don't get anywhere. There's coaching. It's more than just training. We have to be coached. There are a lot of weaknesses. Men automatically do that in the business world. It's not automatic for women.

The last part is women supporting women. You mentioned that slightly in your report, but also it's not an automatic thing that women will go and actually support and bring women along as well.

I don't know if you have some additional comments. You won't be able to do it now, but if you're able to address that, it would be interesting to me.

I just wanted to say thanks very much to Ms. Rosenstock. Your comments around diversity are very well placed and very necessary, and something that we'll definitely be considering as part of our recommendations.

Thank you so much, Madam Chair.

**The Chair:** We're going to suspend very briefly. Could everyone can stay close to the table while we change witness panels so that we can move on.

Thank you very much.

● _____ (Pause) _____ ●

● (0955)

**The Chair:** We're going to start up again because we have four witnesses in this round, and we're already a little bit tight for time.

We will begin with the people we have by video conference.

We have Ms. Schirle.

We have Ms. Young.

[*Translation*]

We also have with us Angèle Bouffard from the YMCA, and Catherine Benoit from Spira.

[*English*]

Ms. Young, why don't we start with you for your presentation, please.

**Professor Margot Young (Professor of Law, University of British Columbia, As an Individual):** I wasn't given explicit directions about precisely what you wanted me to talk about, other than gender parity and gender representation on cultural and arts boards, so I'm going to talk very briefly about the sorts of things that I'm happy to take questions on.

First, I think it's clearly important to be concerned with diverse representation on these boards, particularly as recipients of federal government funding. The nature of accountability that the government needs to provide to the representativeness and the fairness of both the process, but also the outcome, of board membership, is critical really. A number of countries around the world are moving towards gender quotas, to gender targets, specifically. Indeed, one of the commentators has called it a kind of quota fever around the world. We see quotas being used in terms of electoral systems, and also increasingly in terms of corporate boards. So we have a measure in Canada, introduced in Canada, but Norway is really the leader in this having introduced the requirement of 40% women across all kinds of public and private boards in addition to electoral representation.

There are, of course, a number of studies about the process of these placements and increases of women and what they're able to say about changes in perceptions of women in leadership roles, and also with respect to the kinds of decision-making that happen at a particular institution. We could talk a bit more about that.

My primary expertise is in constitutional law, in equality law and theory. Of course, there's always great concern about whether the idea of some kind of external structuring of the number of women on boards raises equality problems, as opposed to being a response to equality issues. I think it's clear from our equality law that there is much support constitutionally for a notion of equality that is substantive and understands different kinds of treatments in the name of equality, and supports affirmative action measures as features of equality.

Maybe I'll just end there and take questions. I would argue that it's very clear that it's sustainable to have some kind of government regulation of board membership under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and some people would go further and argue that there may be an affirmative obligation on the government to take positive measures, in light of its international human rights obligations for full participation of women in public life, to ensure that we see higher representation of women, and other under-represented groups, other equity groups, in these kinds of institutions, on these sorts of boards.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

[*Translation*]

We'll continue with Mrs. Benoit.

**Mrs. Catherine Benoit (General Director, Spira):** Good morning, committee members. I am pleased to contribute to your study.

First, I would like to introduce myself to put my presentation in context.

I have been the General Director of Spira for nine years now. I have an MBA in international management and international development from Université Laval. I am the Chair of the Board of Directors of the Méduse Co-op, the Secretary of the Board of Directors of the Pôle des entreprises d'économie sociale de la région de la Capitale-Nationale and Co-Vice-Chair of the Board of Directors of the Table de concertation de l'industrie du cinéma et de la télévision de la Capitale-Nationale.

The day before yesterday and today, you have heard from a number of leading organizations and specialists about the impressive situation and about their reality. Spira is a medium-sized organization with a budget of $600,000. I'm pleased to present the reality of an organization like ours. These organizations aren't to be ignored. They are the majority and essential in the portrait of Canadian cultural organizations.

For its part, Spira is a cooperative devoted to independent cinema resulting from the 2015 merger of Vidéo Femmes and Spirafilm, two organizations that have existed for nearly 40 years. Its main mandate is to support the production and distribution of films, be they short films or feature films. The cooperative has about 150 members. Each year, it's involved in more than 60 films and reaches an audience of 400,000 people. Funded by arts councils, the cooperative is not-for-profit. Its revenues are about 75% of grants.

As a result of the merger, in order to maintain the mission of Vidéo Femmes, Spira was keen to put gender equity at the centre of its values. How does this translate concretely?

At Spira, 50% of the projects supported are carried out by women, and a concern for parity is present when our committees and collective projects are put together.

Spira's board of directors includes six artist members and three external members. Of these nine positions, at least four must be held by women, and this is mandatory.

Ten employees—five men and five women—make up the cooperative's team. Women have held the artistic director and general manager positions since 2009 and 2008, respectively.

Spira's board of directors has been gender-equal since 2012-13, and the quota has been in place since 2015-16.

It goes without saying that gender parity is a constant concern within the cooperative.

Spirafilm, of which I was the manager, was already concerned about gender parity. Our merger with Vidéo Femmes forced us to more formally implement procedures that would allow us to maintain gender equity.

Three years after the implementation of these measures, I realize that this reflection was necessary, because it is clear that it is unfortunately not yet natural to think about parity. Otherwise, we would not be here today. It is a reflex that is learned and develops.

The first measure adopted was the quota of women on Spira's board of directors. In fact, at least four of the nine positions must be held by a woman. However, conversely, the board of directors could not be made up only of women: at least three men must sit on it.

It goes without saying that we initially found it difficult to respect the minimum of four women. We had fears: what if we didn't find competent women? The former president of Vidéo Women had warned us that it would take effort.

Three years after the introduction of this quota, the mechanism has become natural and well-anchored in the actions of the board of directors. I will speak about it a little later, but education remains a major point for maintaining the importance of parity.

Efforts to reach parity are well marked, and we have tools and mechanisms in place.

The first method is the active search for candidates. We participate in recruitment activities such as “Tea time with the board”, an activity organized by the Chambre de commerce et d'industrie de Québec. We also called on the people in our network and told them about the profiles of the candidates we were looking for, the idea being not to wait until the AGM of members to have people interested in serving on the board.

We decided to put in place a skills matrix in an Excel table, which is the one proposed by the YWCA and includes not only objectives to be achieved in terms of parity, but also other criteria such as youth, skills and cultural diversity. In the coming weeks, a call for applications will be launched, and we will ensure that we have a large pool of candidates at the AGM.

One of the benefits of this skills matrix is to publicize needs and make a tool to attract women and show them that they have an opportunity to join a board of directors. This opens a door for them and tells them that they can join our board and that we need them.

● (1000)

Something else we have put in place is mentorship. Spira participates in the YWCA's mentorship program for young female administrators. Through the program, a young woman can train for a year by sitting on the board of directors. The idea could easily be adopted by a number of other boards, in organizations large or small.

We communicate the value of parity to members of the board and to staff. We do so in order for it to be easier to achieve and so that everyone can become its champion. At board meetings, and at the annual general meeting, we inform our members of all the efforts Spira makes to achieve parity. We also mention it occasionally on social media. Making our members and our public aware is a way for us to contribute to society, so that it can become more egalitarian.

We also know that achieving parity depends largely on the people in place. So it is critical for us that organizations include parity in their procedures, so that it will last.

I would like to draw your attention to another major issue linked to parity on boards, the issue of the presidency.

Having women on boards of directors is one thing, but it is another to have them take decision-making leadership positions.

At Spira, we recently realized that we had never had a female president. So, next June, we are going to establish parity with a co-presidency. This will allow us to put into practice a joint execution of powers and development of skills. Another method would be to establish alternating presidential mandates, so that the position would be occupied by a woman on a regular basis.

We believe that parity will be easier to achieve if we establish measures such as flexible schedules, the ability to bring children to meetings, and participating in meetings remotely, both for the board of directors and for the staff.

Still with a view to promoting parity, Spira has adopted gender-inclusive writing and lexical feminization.

I will now say a few words on the artistic leadership positions within cultural organizations.

We cannot ignore the difficult question of the low salaries in small organizations and the shortage of labour. It is a problem that limits our choice of candidates. We prefer the most competent candidates. However, where one of the two key management positions is already occupied by a man, we would consider applications from women with particular attention. I have been working in the arts for nine years now and I have noticed that, in small organizations, it is often women who occupy positions of artistic leadership, even of overall leadership, whereas in large organizations, the opposite is true. The workload is the same, but the salaries are lower.

In conclusion, I have the following recommendations for you.

Work with national organizations like the Independent Media Arts Alliance, so that they become champions and intermediaries.

Establish a program to train managers and provide mentorship for women, even in small and medium-sized organizations.

Increase funding to organizations so that they can provide suitable working conditions that may attract competent women to artistic leadership positions.

Encourage quotas. As an earlier speaker mentioned, in Norway and France, quotas have been imposed in public organizations, with positive results. In this country, SODEC, the NFB and Telefilm Canada have implemented measures of that kind, and the results seem very positive up to now.

Finally, we recommend that studies be conducted to determine the status of the situation and that the results be published.

Thank you very much. I hope that my comments will provide you with food for thought.

● (1005)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

[*English*]

Now we actually have Ms. Schirle by video conference. Why don't we go to you to make sure we can keep you in there in case we have technical difficulties?

**Dr. Tammy Schirle (Professor, Department of Economics, Wilfrid Laurier University, As an Individual):** I'm sorry for the technical difficulties, and thank you for having me here here today.

As a general statement, usually when I do this, committees limit me to five minutes, so I may be a little brief today just out of habit, but I'm happy to expand the conversation later.

**The Chair:** That's fine, and I bid you welcome.

**Dr. Tammy Schirle:** I would like to begin by clearly stating that I know absolutely nothing in regard to running an artistic or cultural organization. In preparing for this meeting I realized I am considered the equivalent of a director on a board for such an organization, but that does not imply knowledge. Rather, I am a professor of economics.

My research focuses on labour markets and policy, including gender wage gaps and women's participation in the labour market. I also teach economics and gender at Laurier. With that background in mind I wanted to speak more generally about women's representation in leadership positions.

I'm not aware of any formal Canadian statistics regarding the representation of women on boards of artistic and cultural organizations. We know women's representation on TSX-listed boards is low. According to recent reports, women hold roughly 15% of board seats in these companies. The impression I have is that artistic and cultural organizations have better representation of women on boards, but may not have a fair representation of women in top leadership positions.

Gaining better information about artistic and cultural organizations will require standardized reporting. For example, the Canada Revenue Agency could require organizations with charitable status to report the gender of members of the board of directors as public information, adding to the information already reported. With this information, if we see women under-represented, what should we do about it?

Gender quotas are often the first thing that comes to mind, and economists have now had a chance to study a few examples. An excellent example is a paper published in the *American Economic Review* titled “Gender Quotas and the Crisis of the Mediocre Man”. I have to say I love the title of this paper.

The author studied elections in Swedish municipalities where the council is appointed by proportional representation implemented through party lists. Starting in 1993 the Social Democratic Party lists were subject to zipper quotas whereby party lists had to alternate male and female names throughout their list of nominees. The party seats are then filled according to this list, ensuring representation of women among the seats that are won.

This zipper quota clearly resulted in a higher share of women elected. More importantly, it resulted in an increase in the level of competence among the elected officials, which mainly reflects an improvement in the selection of male candidates. Put simply, mediocre men appeared to be removed from the party lists, especially in leadership positions, and replaced by highly competent women.

One reason I like this paper is it speaks to the main point of opposition to gender quotas. That is the concern that it threatens the selection for leadership positions based on merit. This paper reminds us that many other factors drive appointments, which may not be optimal.

Norway's gender quotas for corporate board membership introduced in 2006 have received more attention. We see evidence that changing the composition of boards will affect corporate strategy. For example, Norway's affected corporations appear to avoid short-term workforce reductions, which affects short-term profits; that may be important as part of a long-term strategy. The same study, however, found that other aspects of corporate decisions affecting revenues and non-labour costs were unaffected.

We also see evidence from Norway, however, that gender quotas for boards may not have much effect beyond board composition. The quotas do not appear to lift the position of women not appointed to boards or alter the decisions of young women who are planning their careers in business.

When we look at the broader literature, the evidence suggests that gender quotas that change the composition of boards can affect the strategy of an organization. Those effects may be small, but I have not seen convincing evidence to clearly suggest it is negative. Gender quotas may raise competence levels in an organization. However, we must remember that policies such as gender quotas are only one small piece of that policy puzzle.

I thank you for your attention, and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

● (1010)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much for that.

[*Translation*]

We now move to Mrs. Bouffard, from YWCA Québec, who also has a presentation for us.

You may begin, Mrs. Bouffard.

**Mrs. Angèle Bouffard (Coordinator of leadership programs, YWCA Québec):** Good morning, everyone.

My name is Angèle Bouffard. I have just come directly from Quebec City. I am from the YWCA there.

Let me take a few moments to introduce our organization, the YWCA. In Quebec City, we have been working to train women for boards of directors for years. This role was designed in, and is unique to, Quebec City, because it does not exist in any of the other YWCA facilities in Canada. Our mission is to empower women as they search for the best in themselves. This means that we provide accommodation services to women in difficulty at the same time as we work with female leaders in major positions.

We have built an entire strategy, which, in English, might be described as “training women as leaders and decision-makers.” At the very start, we were able to count on funding from the Government of Quebec, then Status of Women Canada supported us with two particular components of the program. To date, we have trained more than 1,000 women to sit on boards of directors. For Quebec City, that is huge.

It means that women are ready to train themselves. They come and spend 15 hours with us in order to equip themselves with tools that will make them more skilled in their roles on boards of directors.

We have adapted the training for 17-to-25-year-olds. We are working with women from CEGEPs and from the Université Laval. To date, we have trained more than a hundred, a number of whom are foreign students who want to become involved in boards of directors of all kinds. They see it as a way to become involved in a Canadian organization, to gain experience in the community, and to give back to that community.

We have also established a mentorship program. We have thirty or so pairs at the moment. Mrs. Benoit is one of the mentors. The unique feature of our program is that each mentor agrees to an observer being present at her board for a year, and to help her acquire tools so that she can play her role better. At the end of the time, there has been real development and the women feel even more prepared.

A year and a half ago, we conducted a study with about 800 of our former participants to find out their situations, what they were doing, what boards they were sitting on, and what obstacles they were still faced with, if such was the case. We found that they were very happy that they had taken the training, but there were still some who were hesitant to take the plunge into an adventure on a board of directors, even though they had received those 15 hours of training. However, these were women who already were accountants, lawyers, professionals or public officials. They were women with at least a bachelor's degree, sometimes even a master's degree. The students from the Université Laval are often graduate students in finance, management or law. But they want more tools. They lack confidence. They also suffer from imposter syndrome. We did not ask a lot of questions about it, but that last observation emerged from the responses the women gave us. After the training, they wanted a real experience, which is why we established the mentorship program so that we can guide them.

We also have co-development groups, meaning mutual, professional support among female administrators; they give each other great tips.

Those are our strategies to help women to train themselves and to become even more skilled. Believe me, that is what they are constantly asking for, because they are suffering from imposter syndrome and they always think that they are lacking a little something.

The day before yesterday, we offered an advanced course on financial statements for the management of not-for-profit organizations, following on from three courses in management and in reading financial statements. The women keep asking for them, because their goal is to be super-competent before they take a seat on a board of directors.

We have realized that the problem lies right inside the organizations. Why were 1,000 women not all successful in finding a place? They were ready, they had extraordinary skills, but they were not being noticed. That is when we established a mentorship program for the organizations. The crux of the issue is that we have what we call systemic obstacles. You will see that in cultural organizations.

We decided to provide you with some statistics.

● (1015)

We have parity ratio when 40 to 60% of board members are women. For others, there is only parity if there is an equal number of men and women on the board. We are talking about boards, but the same goes for all decision-making spaces.

In Quebec, 18% of board members are women. These statistics are slightly outdated, but still valid. For three quarters of companies, only 11 to 25% of their board members are women.

One might think it's different in the cultural industry, but here are more statistics on the matter. You will see that we have done our research.

Half of companies have less than 20% women board members. Moreover, did you know that 28% of companies have no female board members? According to a study by Mrs. Brière and Jean Bédard, at this pace, if we were to take concrete measures like the ones used to support organizations, we would have to wait until around 2034 to reach parity.

In reality, according to calculations, if nothing is done, if we take no action, because of fluctuations, departures and arrivals, progress and setbacks, we won't reach parity 2200. That's a few generations away. I am training students for nothing at Université Laval—obviously, I'm kidding.

As you will see in your documents, there are many benefits to having women on boards. The idea is really to diversify expertise, to take certain questions into account and to cover all basis. I can assure you that the women we send on boards are more competent than any other board members I've seen and I would hire any one of the women that I train to sit on the boards that I sit on.

I'd like to go back to statistics for a moment. We are currently gathering statistics on the make up of all boards in the arts and culture sector across all categories in Quebec City. For today's meeting, we took the time to analyse the data collected up until now, and related to 113 organizations.

Today, in Quebec City, only 30% of these 113 organizations in the arts and culture sector have more than 30% of women board members. This sector is made up mainly of women. Yet, these numbers confirm that they do not sit on boards. They hold junior positions and are unable to climb the corporate ladder.

In addition, 70% of these organizations have less than 50% women board members. We have divided those numbers into categories: 0 to 20%, 20 to 30%, and so on. We gave you those numbers, by date and year. We will track those numbers over many years, since we will be asking for them in our support process. Nine percent of organizations in the cultural sector have no women board members.

Concerning the parity ratio, which starts at 40% of women, only 52% of organizations meet this threshold. However, when it comes to a true parity, only 30% of organizations have 50% women board members.

This data concerns the art and culture sector in Quebec City. It is not necessarily the same thing across the country, but at least, we have these numbers.

We make sure to support organizations, because we want parity to be an integral part of their DNA at every level. We have many steps that we would like to propose to increase the number of women board members. There are many models; we have created them. I gave you documentation on the subject. These documents are also available on line. We have created the *Guide pour une gouvernance paritaire — Pour des C.A. égalitaires*, which offers an eight step game plan. You will find a more detailed version of this plan in your slides and in the document that we gave you.

A lot of support is needed, in two phases, but I would suggest that you follow closely the steps that we have established.

First, senior executives must be there.

Organizations also have to develop official policies. That is the basis for everything. Without a policy that specifies in writing the objectives and criteria, there will be too much fluctuation and too many set backs, and only individuals will support the process, instead of the entire organization.

● (1020)

Then, you have to create governance committees whose role is to recruit.

Moreover, you have to give companies the tools and competency matrixes that they need to diversify the make up of their board, like the kind of matrix use by Mrs. Benoit and many organizations.

You also have to help organizations in using different recruiting methods. We have set up an activity called “A board at tea time”. In March of last year, 40 organizations were recruiting about a hundred candidates. So, it is really a question of shadowing.

Furthermore, you have to diversify the way you do things.

Then, you have to support the new people.

Finally, what we want is for organizations to have the tools to peak women's interest and attract them. That said, it is up to organizations to change the way they do things, not to women to acquire more skills.

● (1025)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

We will begin our questions and answers period. Members will have five minutes each.

Mr. Hébert, you can go ahead.

**Mr. Richard Hébert (Lac-Saint-Jean, Lib.):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I would like to congratulate all our participants for the quality of their presentation.

Mrs. Bouffard, I'd like to start with you.

In your *Guide pour une gouvernance paritaire*, you say that 19.8% of board members in Quebec are women, compared to Nova Scotia and Saskatchewan where that percentage reaches 25.7% and 23.2% respectively.

You can see where I am going with this. Why is there such a gap? Why is it lower in Quebec?

**Mrs. Angèle Bouffard:** I would say it's a widespread phenomenon. The numbers are inconsistent. I think the law passed in 2006 helped increase that percentage in Quebec, and that public and parapublic organizations allowed us to reach parity. Until it becomes a legal requirement, nothing will change. Quotas are not mandatory. However, we ask organizations to voluntarily set targets.

I just came back from Halifax yesterday where I was working with organizations from around the country. We decided to ask that a clearer law be passed on the subject, because nothing is getting done. It takes a long time to see any progress.

**Mr. Richard Hébert:** In your study, you say that parity has many benefits for an organization, whether it be an arts organisation or an economic organization. I would like to hear about the benefits of parity within a board.

Afterwards, Mrs. Benoit, who sits on a board where there's equal representation, could tell us about the benefits of parity for Spira.

**Mrs. Angèle Bouffard:** Many women sit on different boards. However, they are in a minority position. You need about a third of board members to be women for the board to evolve. Until a board reaches that proportion of women, it will not make any major advances in its governance process.

Then, there is also the competency matrixes. I sit on many boards and support others. The competency matrixes allows us to recruit women, very strong women, that really meet the set criteria. There will be a sort of floating period where men who already sit on boards might fall behind because they will not have been recruited using a competency matrix with many required qualifications. Eventually, they will catch up and everyone will be recruited based on the same criteria.

Nowadays, women who get nominated on boards are very strong. They help the organizations move forward; I see it on many boards.

**Mr. Richard Hébert:** That's what I noticed. In a past life, I was mayor of Dolbeau-Mistassini and saw many boards. Actually, at a certain time, in the RCM Maria-Chapdelaine, 33% of mayors were women. Unfortunately, that number dropped down to less than 10% and I noticed a difference in the dynamics of our meetings.

Mrs. Benoit, with the time that we have left, I'd like you tell me how parity benefited your organization.

**Mrs. Catherine Benoit:** There is no doubt that parity reinforces the collective intellect. Actually, it allows for various points of view, because what preoccupies men doesn't necessarily preoccupy women. Using a competency matrix allows us to have a diverse set of skills on the board.

In our case, it is more about having a vision that is representative of our members, and 50% of our members are women. It is important that they all be represented.

**Mr. Richard Hébert:** Thank you.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** We're going to Mr. Shields now, for five minutes.

**Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC):** I appreciate the information we're receiving today. It's excellent. I think we've had two who have talked about grassroots and about some really fundamental things that you've changed and built.

I'd like to go to Professor Schirle. What is your opinion on using search firms when looking for a board of directors?

**Dr. Tammy Schirle:** I don't have any particular experience with search firms, but there could be some advantages to going outside of your own networks in making those kinds of searches.

One reason we often see a lack of diversity in something such as a board—or any group—is that often these things are selected from within your social networks. You see a position open and ask, who do we know who would be good to fill that position?

When you go to a search firm, the search firm is going to look beyond your social networks. If they're given appropriate directives to look for a diversity of views, they may do better than your own networks in finding some very good, competent candidates for those positions.

● (1030)

**Mr. Martin Shields:** That goes to my follow-up question. Whose responsibility is it, then, to develop those directives for the search firm so that the search firm doesn't just find who they want?

**Dr. Tammy Schirle:** That is the difficulty. This is where you need to rely on your own board to have the broader interest in mind, if there are no regulations in place. This is where perhaps some guidance along the lines of gender quotas is often suggested. Do you want to rely on the board itself to make these decisions in trying to push forward more optimal choices, or are you going to try to push through some sort of regulations or perhaps some guidelines for these organizations?

**Mr. Martin Shields:** This doesn't exist in the private sector, but would you suggest this for the public sector, which we're talking about today?

**Dr. Tammy Schirle:** This is thinking of the public sector and the para-public sector. In this case what I have in mind is charitable organizations. That's why I mentioned the idea that we could use information from the CRA in developing a better sense of what our numbers look like. So, yes.

**Mr. Martin Shields:** Professor Young, I know you're a little more on the constitutional side, but do you have any opinions on on this particular topic?

**Prof. Margot Young:** Let me add to this conversation concerning the relationship between search firms and boards of directors that it should be a close relationship. I've been involved in a number of searches that have had search firms involved. It really is the board's responsibility to articulate clearly to the search firm what the requirements for the candidates are.

I would add to this discussion as well the notion that affirmative action runs along a continuum. We've talked about a range of different measures. If we start from the position that under-representation of women on these important sites of decision-making and cultural formations is a real concern, then we have a series of responses that we could take. They range from things such as the training of women to become competent and skilled to take up these positions to, as we've already seen, outreach programs to look outside your networks and engage with women you don't otherwise run across who would be excellent candidates. You can have a more proactive approach of getting women to apply for the jobs, or you can have some kind of preferential treatment during the hiring, or you can have quotas.

My sense of the literature is that it shows that many of these measures at the low end of the continuum—having reporting requirements is another requirement that we currently have.... For some corporate boards you have a requirement to report what your efforts are to get a more diverse board or what your board looks like. Reporting requirements and outreach are not as effective as quotas. The process often stagnates as we work through different kinds of more moderate measures to try to diversify boards, until we reach the point of imposing some kind of quota.

Norway, for example, has seen the presence of women on the kinds of boards it regulates go from about 23% to 40%. To have a quota system can be very significant for affecting a problem that seems resistant to other sorts of milder measures. I think this is because we face real barriers to diversification in these key leadership decision-making spots, notions of unconscious bias. The stereotypes of structure, the characteristics of leadership that we don't associate with women and do associate with men are clearly important. There's lots of literature about the play that unconscious bias gives and how difficult it is to actually undo it.

Having a quota or some sort of set target for increasing the presence of currently under-represented groups on these important sites of decision-making is one way you can change what our stereotypical assumptions are with respect to women in leadership and decision-making roles.

● (1035)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Nantel, you have the floor.

**Mr. Pierre Nantel:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

I would like to thank all the witnesses for their presentations.

In the recent testimonies that we have heard, Quebec City has been well represented. I don't know if that is a sign that its economic vitality is finally spurting up in culture, the arts and parity, but it's great. I don't know if the YWCA is as formative elsewhere in Quebec and Canada, but it's really great. It's even better to see that it's related to cultural organizations like Mrs. Benoit's organization.

Concerning Quebec City, I would like to reiterate that we need to consider my motion regarding the painting entitled *Saint Jérôme entendant la trompette du Jugement dernier*. We learned yesterday that we might never know how much we'll have to pay through our taxes for this boondoggle. Once again, I would like a vote on the matter.

I know the cultural organizations in Montreal very well. I think I can say that the professionals in the cultural sector usually form a boys' club. I probably won't make any friends by saying that.

Mrs. Benoit, is it the same in Quebec City?

**Mrs. Catherine Benoit:** Like I was saying, I think I mostly noticed a difference between small and big organizations. Looking quickly at big cultural organizations in Quebec City, there are still a lot of women. Actually, it might be slightly different between Quebec City and Montreal, but I don't have any statistics on the matter.

Before coming to this meeting, I took a look at the website of different organizations. We also have national meetings with small and medium-sized organizations, those whose budget doesn't exceed $1 million, and I noticed that there are many women within those organizations. I think the problem is more with big organizations, like museums, operas, ballets and large theatres.

**Mr. Pierre Nantel:** It is true that highly professionalized organizations are male-dominated. I see Mrs. Bouffard nodding.

Ms. Young, Ms. Schirle, I would like to ask you a question.

[*English*]

Madam Young, do you get the interpretation out there?

**Prof. Margot Young:** I do get the interpretation, so speak in the language of your choice.

**Mr. Pierre Nantel:** Perfect. Thank you very much.

[*Translation*]

The Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage studies cultural issues. That is why we have decided to study the issue of parity in boards in the cultural sector.

Do you think that's the kind of issue that should be studied in every committee on the Hill?

[*English*]

**Prof. Margot Young:** Absolutely, and I understand the current government to really have a commitment to gender mainstreaming as well. One of the important features of taking gender equality seriously is that it becomes a metric in every measure that you undertake in your regulatory and lawmaking capacity. It is clearly appropriate for gender to be on the agenda for any of these sorts of regulatory regimes being contemplated across the range of committees.

You knew I was going to give you that answer, so there it is.

**Mr. Pierre Nantel:** Thank you, Madam Young.

I'm sure Madam Bouffard will want to add something because you talked about metrics.

Madam Schirle.

**Dr. Tammy Schirle:** I can probably state much the same thing. I think each committee does have a responsibility to do gender budgeting and gender-balanced representation of individuals' views and priorities. It is the responsibility of our government to represent everyone.

We've seen that as an important priority for government in gender-based analysis plus, and I think that is an important component that should continue.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pierre Nantel:** Mrs. Bouffard, do you have anything to add?

**Mrs. Angèle Bouffard:** Yes.

When I said that I was in Halifax two days ago, that was with the Gender Equality Network Canada. These are key issues and we are looking at the issues related to systemic obstacles in organizations. We have to go beyond the mindset of making women fit a certain mould to succeed. Women are ready, but they still have to break through that glass ceiling.

I don't think it would be a bad thing to raise the issue in every committee. It should be studied everywhere, because, transversely, it happens in a similar matter.

**Mr. Pierre Nantel:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Ms. Dhillon, you have the floor for five minutes.

[*English*]

**Ms. Anju Dhillon (Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle, Lib.):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Good morning to all our witnesses. Thank you for coming before the committee.

My question is for Ms. Young. You were the chair of the status of women committee at the University of British Columbia. What can you tell us about the challenges you faced and women faced regarding access to physicians on administrative boards?

● (1040)

**Prof. Margot Young:** I can tell you a lot about that.

I have also been chair of the status of women committee at the University of Victoria. I just came back, actually, from a meeting of the Canadian Association of University Teachers, which at a national level is very much concerned with the diversification and the inclusivity—or lack of inclusivity—of our university environments, with respect to staff but also with respect to faculty particularly.

The issues are challenging. There's much formulation and discussion of equity and what equity requires, but in terms of changing the numbers, there's been slow progress. To the extent that we have seen some progress on the equity front—I'm talking primarily about faculty and faculty moving into positions of leadership within the university—it's primarily been progress that has helped more white women to get positions.

Women are still under-represented, but women who are racialized are very much under-represented. The progress has been progress that has been enjoyed by non-racialized women to some extent. The issue therefore is a complex one, across the different dimensions by which exclusion happens in the university environment. Gender is important. Racialization is important. We certainly need a key focus on retention of our indigenous scholars and movement of indigenous faculty into leadership positions.

I don't want to say that gender doesn't matter. It's hugely important and I've invested many years into working towards the advancement of gender equality in the university environment. However, gender includes women who are indigenous, women who are racialized, women with disabilities....

We have universities mirroring the power structures, not surprisingly, in broader Canadian society. We have yet to reach a position where we're taking advantage of the full wealth of expertise, of experience, and of talent across the range of wonderful diversity that we have in Canadian society. Certainly we see, as we move higher up in the ranks of the university, from assistant professor to associate professor to full professor to dean, and from associate vice-president to vice-president and so on, that a disproportionate number of women and other under-represented groups increasingly drop out of the picture.

**Ms. Anju Dhillon:** What are the biggest roadblocks? Did you try to push for more women to be in superior positions? Was there resistance? What were the causes? What was the justification for this resistance to women in general and to female minorities?

**Prof. Margot Young:** You know, it's one of these truly wicked problems where we can talk about a number of features that play out to over-determine this under-representation. I'll begin, again, by referencing this notion of unconscious bias. This idea has shown to be incredibly important at every stage of entry, to every stage in an institution like the university, the association of characteristics that are not typically leadership characteristics with women regardless of what women themselves might actually possess.

There is the need to understand that leadership comes in many different forms. There are different styles of leadership. Some styles of leadership can be much more effective for their very lack of the sort of traditional features that we associate with male leaders. It's also the case that the character of these leadership jobs is not always attractive to women.

We're constantly coming up against the gender division of labour in our society: the lack of adequate child care, the way in which the workplace is not structured so that you can be the primary caregiving parent and a full member, a full paid worker in it. That's true not just of universities, but it's certainly true of universities.

The atmosphere at universities is increasingly sharp, pointed, and competitive. On the push for productivity, I've seen a dramatic change in its character and its quantity in the 20 years or so that I've been a university professor. It is hard to have the kind of life as parent and worker that we want everyone to have, and to be fully committed to a leadership position at the university.

It's often the case that women don't think they want to enter into that sort of environment. We have a community of incredibly talented and competent women with tremendous leadership capacities and real promise to reform our institutions in positive ways. We have yet to create the environment that allows them to flourish. There are a variety of reasons for that. Pretty much all of them are discriminatory. Some are forthrightly intentional, but a lot of this unconscious bias—again to refer to the various studies that are tracking that right now—is a really powerful force in limiting opportunities for a number of groups, but particularly women.

I'll just mention one thing that I did do. I started a mentorship program. Mentorship has been shown to be incredibly important, to have women in leadership positions who not only set examples for women so they can imagine themselves moving into those positions and having that kind of career. It also provides the kind of support and appreciation of what it is to be female in an institution and to pass along advice. Mentorship is one good example. Role models are a feature of that.

● (1045)

**The Chair:** Perfect.

I will have to cut you off there, but it's a good note to end on.

[*Translation*]

I would like to thank all our witnesses.

[*English*]

That will bring this meeting to an end.

The meeting is adjourned.