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Chair

Mr. Bryan May

Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities

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• (1530)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Bryan May (Cambridge, Lib.)): Good afternoon, everybody, and welcome.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2) and the motion adopted by the committee on Thursday, November 9, 2017, the committee is resuming its study of experiential learning and pathways to employment for Canadian youth. Today the committee will be hearing from witnesses on the subject of underemployment.

Coming to us via video conference from Winnipeg, Manitoba, we have Mr. Dan Tadic, executive director of the Canadian Welding Association.

Via video conference from Kwantlen Polytechnic University in Burnaby, B.C., we have Mr. David Burns, a faculty member in the Department of Educational Studies.

Did you and I meet on Wednesday?

Dr. David Burns (Faculty Member, Department of Educational Studies, Faculty of Arts, Kwantlen Polytechnic University): Yes, we did.

The Chair: So it's the same David Burns: good to know. I knew you looked awfully familiar. It was either you or your doppelgänger on Wednesday.

In person we have, from the East Prince Youth Development Centre Inc., Barb Broome, executive director. From the Fédération de la jeunesse canadienne-française we have Justin Johnson, chair. From Réseau des carrefours jeunesse-emploi du Québec we have Rudy Humbert, adviser, entrepreneurship, volunteer work, and volunteer action; and Elise Violletti, adviser, special projects and personal and professional autonomy.

Welcome to all of you. Thank you for being here or joining us via video conference. Each group has seven minutes for opening statements.

First up, we'll go to Mr. Dan Tadic from the Canadian Welding Association.

The next seven minutes are yours, sir.

Mr. Dan Tadic (Executive Director, Canadian Welding Association): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you all for the opportunity to speak with you today.

I serve as the executive director of the Canadian Welding Association, which is a part of the Canadian Welding Bureau, better known as the CWB Group.

Since 1947, the CWB has been an independent, non-profit organization funded solely by the industry it serves. With offices in Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, and Nova Scotia, the CWB's team of 160 staff provides services right across the country. The majority of our services are provided on the shop floor, where we provide guidance and oversight to multiple industry sectors involved in welding. The CWB is accredited by the Standards Council of Canada as a certification body, and it is the only national organization with a primary focus on welding.

Today, the CWB has over 6,000 welding fabrication companies certified across Canada and around the world. Our primary mission is to help protect the safety of Canadians. To support this mission, CWB provides services not only to Canadian organizations but also to organizations around the world that supply welded structures and products to Canada. One of the biggest issues facing Canadian welding is that this sector is in the midst of a skills shortage. With an aging demographic and a strong demand for welding professionals in several industries, including mining and natural resources, an active effort must be made to attract young people to the industry and to ensure that we have the trained labour force required to meet the needs of industry now and in the future.

Skilled tradespeople earn their living in a variety of work environments. Some work in clean and pristine plants, while others may work in conventional plants or outdoors on pipelines or various construction projects. Regardless of the work environment or the field of trade, safety is of the utmost importance. Both employers and employees must meet and observe proper safe practices.

To ensure that Canada can continue to produce highly trained skilled tradespeople, our industry recognized that a national training curriculum for welders would provide colleges and other training institutions with a current and comprehensive approach to create a first class generation of skilled trades.

In response, the CWB has invested \$3 million in a new and comprehensive national training curriculum resource for the welding trade. Known as Acorn, the program was developed with input from both industry and educational sectors, and it was launched in 2015. The Acorn training curriculum includes components that can be used at both the secondary school level and the post-secondary level right across the country.

At the secondary school level, the CWB has committed to provide this training curriculum resource to provincial boards of education at no charge. This is to help ensure that the next generation of potential welders receive a world-class learning experience that assists them in making educated choices about the long-term career opportunities in the welding profession.

This unique approach to learning includes extensive use of virtual reality and immersive learning approaches to both fully engage the students and ensure that concepts are understood and retained.

Another area in which CWB is providing leadership is in our industry, in the area of apprenticeship. According to the Canadian Apprenticeship Forum, only one in five, or 19%, of employers take on apprentices. The CWB is undertaking a new initiative to engage more employers in training and to improve the welding apprenticeship programs across Canada as part of a five-year study. Apprenticeship programs are provincially regulated and have some variances. The Canadian Council of Directors of Apprenticeship is working to harmonize trades training across Canada, and welding is one of the trades that are being harmonized currently.

Canada is undergoing a critical skilled trades turnaround as the baby boomer generation is retiring in great numbers, and employers are experiencing difficulties in finding skilled welders and metal fabricators in particular. Poaching is an issue for many, as those who can afford to pay more will find skilled welders at a premium rate. This approach will only drive the cost of labour up, and it is not a long-term skills shortage solution.

• (1535)

The CWB recognizes this challenge faced by our members and the welding industry to remain competitive and profitable in today's challenging economic environment and global marketplace.

Through our enhanced welding apprenticeship training initiative, we would like to help employers attract and retain employees with the right skills, encourage continuous skill upgrades to take advantage of new processes and technologies, develop a culture of innovation and creativity, and recognize the connections linking quality, productivity, and profitability.

The CWB feels that more can be done to ensure the long-term success and sustainability of the welding industry in Canada through better leveraging Canada's welding apprenticeship programs. The CWB wants to enlist industry's involvement in this new initiative to address the shared industry challenges by working co-operatively.

This fall we're rolling out the enhanced welder apprenticeship training initiative, and the ambitious goals of this initiative are to increase apprenticeship enrolment, increase completion numbers of welding apprenticeships by 30% over a five-year period, improve the welding skills of apprentices by providing a broad range of training

opportunities in a variety of workplaces, and increase the level of employer engagement and participation in apprenticeship training.

We plan to set up industry consortiums, one in each province to start with, consisting of about a dozen employers in each. We plan to add more consortiums as the demand grows. Initially, the industry consortium will be set up in Vancouver, Edmonton, Saskatoon, Winnipeg, Hamilton, Montreal, Moncton, Halifax, Charlottetown, and St. John's. Our program includes a five-year study of a new method of apprenticeship training, and includes the rotation of apprentices every 12 months or as agreed by the employers. We believe that this new model will better engage apprentices in learning welding skills, expose them to a variety of welding processes and products, and allow them to learn from a large number of skilled tradesmen.

As part of our research project, we will provide labour market analysis, with forecasts for welder demand by 2025, and conduct employer and apprentice surveys to gauge their satisfaction and solicit their feedback on how the program could be improved. We plan to provide regular reports of our progress and share this information with industry and government.

Our industry is embracing this initiative. We feel it's crucial to the long-term viability of our industry. We're looking for partners to commit to a co-operative training program as part of our five-year study on how a new collaborative model of apprenticeship innovation and training will ensure a strong and well-trained pool of skilled welders for our future success.

Thank you very much.

• (1540)

The Chair: Thank you very much, sir.

Now we go over to Mr. David Burns, faculty member with the department of educational studies at Kwantlen Polytechnic University, coming to us from Surrey, B.C.

You have seven minutes, sir.

Dr. David Burns: Thank you very much.

I'd like to use my seven-minute statement to touch on three things. First, to describe the initiatives under way at KPU and in the Lower Mainland that might be of interest to the committee; second, to identify a couple of other contacts who might have interesting information and who you might like to speak to; and third, to identify some possible future directions for federal policy in this area.

First, KPU is a polytechnic institution, which means that work-integrated learning and pathways to the workforce aren't just priorities for us; they're key purposes. Enabling students to move through their education into appropriate, meaningful work based on what they've learned in their university curriculum is absolutely essential to our mission. That applies to everything from our welding programs and millwright programs to our liberal arts programs and our science programs.

In pursuit of those goals and values, we have co-operative education experiences, field schools, work-integrated learning experiences, service learning, and partnerships with over 300 local non-profit organizations.

My interest in this area is, however, much more specific. One of the things we are finding—and this is true across the country—is that while we do have something like a skills shortage, it would be more valid, I think, to conclude that we do not know what skills we have, and that there might be a shortage but we do not know enough about what our graduates know and can do to truly know what the Canadian labour force looks like.

When you go from grade 12, for example, into first-year university—say, into an undergraduate program—essentially everything the education system knows about you is forgotten. All of the hundreds of assessments that have been taken of your learning and your progress from kindergarten through grade 12 are distilled into a very small number of letter or number grades, depending on the province you go to.

From the perspective of understanding the skills that members of our labour force actually have, this is a significant national loss. We take all of this information we have about the passions and capacities of students and turn it into something like “B-plus”, and then when they enter university or college experiences, we start building that information from square one: What can they do? What do they know how to do? How have they grown over time? When you graduate from those programs, whether it's in a skilled trade or in an undergraduate program, we again essentially forget what it is that the education system has learned about you, so when you move out into the labour force, you have a certificate or a seal or a degree, which is meant to summarize all of this achievement. In 2017 when we know that a person's competencies are much more important than the ticket or seal or degree attached to their name, we have to start thinking of that as not good enough.

One of the things that KPU was doing—and this is the research that I'm currently engaged in—is partnering with our local school district, which is Surrey Schools, to see if we can devise ways in which we can admit students to university, not based upon their grades but based upon their actual skills and competencies.

This year we received permission to admit a small number of students to my university based on their skills and competencies. That test student group will be working with my student research team to propose future university-level policies to allow people to come to our institution with all of that rich detail and competency and ability, and not merely that letter grade, which might still persist. It's something we look at in administration or admission decisions, but really should be peripheral. What Canadian students know how to do is much more complicated than their grades, and if we're going to understand the skills the workforce truly has and needs, we need to start taking a look at that at the high school level and at the undergraduate level.

All of the information about that study can be found at our lab website, which is www.kepi.community, on which we describe the partnership and we'll be posting information about what we find as we proceed in the coming years.

There are a few persons who I think would be useful in your research. One of them is Dr. McKean, of course, who organized the post-secondary education summit for the Conference Board last week, which is where I met the honourable chair. They recently published some documents on this subject, so they would certainly be worth speaking to.

Also, as a polytechnic institute, we're a proud member of Polytechnics Canada. One of the things that Polytechnics Canada might provide the committee is some really rigorous analysis of work-integrated learning. Because it's an important area, you get lots and lots of institutions saying that work-integrated learning and these kinds of experiences are a part of what they do, but there's much less concrete policy action, which is what I'm trying to do, and much less evidence-based practice, which is what Polytechnics Canada can provide.

● (1545)

They collect data from my institution and 12 other polytechnic institutes that might be of significant value in tackling these issues, and they do some terrific work. I think they would certainly be worth speaking to.

I'll talk about my recommendations for possible future policy action by the federal government. This notion of amnesia is quite significant to me in terms of the system. We lose far too much information that was far too costly to collect through teachers giving assessments and observing students, through professors doing the same, and so forth. It's almost as if—and this is what I noted at the Conference Board—you move from one doctor to the other, and your new doctor does not want to read your medical file. They simply want to know if you are healthy or not, yes or no. All of these different details in a medical file surely are pertinent to your health in much the same way that all of the different competencies you've developed in your bachelor of arts, for example, are relevant to what you could contribute to the workplace.

I think the federal government has a couple of possible avenues for intervention here. One of them is that we need a shared language, which we currently lack, among K-to-12 systems, university or post-secondary systems, and companies. I'm hearing the representative of the Welding Association speak in terms very similar to those used by the representative of the analogous body for mining, who I spoke to last week. I'm struck by how little we actually speak with these industry bodies, and how, when we do, we tend to use completely different language to describe the same things. In K-to-12 schools, the learning outcomes established by the provincial governments are not well understood by professors, who do very little communicating back to the K-to-12 systems about what's learned within university; and neither of those two systems speaks very well to companies and to the economy. We need a shared language across all three sectors: K to 12; post-secondary; and the private sector or the public sector, our employers.

I think a useful example of this is the classification of instructional programs used by Statistics Canada, which provides shared language about the kinds of jobs that Canadians have. That framework allows us to collect data through the census, for example, about employment rates and about our labour force. What we need is something similar in the area of skills development that could be used both in education and in industry.

The second point is that the federal government could support a system through which we could more adequately carry all of this information forward. It should be seen, if you step back from the system, as simply unacceptable that we do not know what our labour force knows. We're looking at a number of different platforms to catalogue and better understand what graduates actually know as they enter the workforce. When we're talking about the formulation of federal trade and industrial policy, I think that kind of data would be absolutely crucial in making good decisions. The federal government could certainly support a shared language and a shared dataset in terms of what graduates and people in a workforce know and can do. I think educational systems can contribute meaningfully to that.

I think those are the two best areas I could suggest to interact with. We also have some excellent experiential learning folks at KPU, including Dr. Larissa Petrillo, who manages the 300 partnerships I mentioned before and who might be very good for you to speak to.

Thank you for your time.

• (1550)

The Chair: Excellent.

Thank you very much, sir.

Now we're going to go over to Barb Broome, executive director of the East Prince Youth Development Centre.

The next seven minutes are yours. Go ahead.

Ms. Barb Broome (Executive Director, East Prince Youth Development Centre Inc.): Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you regarding East Prince Youth Development Centre and some of the issues the youth of Prince Edward Island are facing.

The East Prince Youth Development Centre is a non-profit organization located in Summerside, P.E.I. It's funded through our provincial government's Department of Workforce and Advanced Learning, and has been operating for over 23 years.

As an employment-assistance service centre, East Prince Youth Development Centre is unique in that it is the only youth employment centre on Prince Edward Island. It provides much-needed career support, job coaching, and life and employability skills training to youth aged 15 to 30.

However, they must be out of school. So, if there is a 15-year old who's out of school, we know there are some issues there.

While this may sound like any other employment-assistance service centre, what makes it so different is that it provides an umbrella of services. Many times there's a long road between today and employment.

Our recent stats indicate that 71% of our clients are youth at risk. This includes poverty, homelessness, addiction issues, mental health issues, criminal records, single parents, lack of education, and lack of family support. Because of this, we work very closely with probation services, social assistance departments, and addictions and mental health services.

Last year, our provincial government decided that all employment-assistance service centres would be combined, and that East Prince Youth Development Centre would be closing.

While 29% of our clients could make this transition, we were very concerned about the other 71%. We know that these clients need more than the typical employment services.

A consultant at that time told me that his research indicated that youth want consistent services across the province, and that the first thing they ask for is help with career planning. My response to this was, "You did not speak to the youth in Summerside." The first question they typically ask us when they come into our centre is, "Can you drive me to the food bank because I haven't eaten in several days?" For many, a lot of supports are required before we get to the career planning stage.

We're very pleased that the government of P.E.I. didn't follow through with this plan. However, the future of our centre and the youth we serve is still very uncertain. We never know from one year to the next if we're going to continue to receive funding. We operate on a budget that is so limited that my air trip here cost more than our whole annual budget for marketing, travel, and professional development—and that's for all of our staff.

Finding employment for these youth is more complex than just needing to work on employment skills. They need so much more than a resumé and a cover letter. Many young people are dealing with complex barriers, like homelessness, experience with the criminal justice system, food insecurities, young children, the effects of childhood trauma, and mental health challenges.

For youth with disabilities, additional challenges include a lack of previous work experience and obtaining appropriate accommodations at work. These youth are not reaching their full potential, and they're falling through the cracks.

I listened to Minister Hajdu speak to this standing committee on November 28, and I was very pleased to hear her say that employers are looking for staff with good soft skills, and essential skills such as time management and teamwork. This is something we were teaching for many years, until 2015, when we were told by Service Canada that we could no longer deliver life or parenting skills through our Skills Link program, Parent Power.

This is a program we had been delivering for over 15 years to single parents who were on social assistance and had no work experience and absolutely no self esteem. Many didn't know where to turn for help to deal with everyday issues, such as nutritious food for their family or how to interact with others. Even with numerous cuts to our program over the years, our success rate in getting them employed was 88%.

I'm sad to say that we did not receive any Skills Link funding this year, and our program has been cancelled. That was a three-year call for proposals last year, so it looks as though we will not be receiving any funding, at least until past 2020.

I feel that experiential learning and pathways to employment for Canadian youth are a good start. However, government departments, such as workforce and advanced learning, education, and social assistance, need to work more closely together.

That needs to include youth at risk while they are still in school. We need to be talking to these youth in their comfort zones: on the streets, at the soup kitchen, or outside the local convenience store.

For the past two summers, we've been delivering a program for high school students from low-income families. That seems to be helping to keep them in school. The process we're aiming for is to put them on the path of going for post-secondary education. However, they come to us with little or no hope. They're not involved with school sports or any other extracurricular activities, because they don't have the money and they don't have the confidence.

• (1555)

One of the simplest things we take for granted, or most of us do, is having a social insurance number. Youth cannot get a job without a social insurance number. They can't get a social insurance number without a birth certificate. They can't get a birth certificate without having \$35 in their pocket.

For many, this means a decision between food for their kids or a birth certificate. Also, if they do get some support from social assistance, they are not allowed to attend upgrading during the day. They are supposed to be looking for work. Well, where are they going to get a job without even a grade 12 education?

There are some great government programs in place, such as career focus, Canada Summer Jobs, and career connect, but I feel that more needs to be done for our youth at risk.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Now we go over to Justin Johnson, chair of the Fédération de la jeunesse canadienne-française.

You have seven minutes, sir.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Justin Johnson (Chair, Fédération de la jeunesse canadienne-française): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Ladies and gentlemen of the committee, I am pleased to be here as a young francophone Canadian and on behalf of the Fédération de la jeunesse canadienne-française. This organization represents the

interests of francophone youth right across the country. I am pleased to be here to talk to you about investing in youth to revitalize the job market in francophone minority communities.

As regards youth employment, the Fédération de la jeunesse canadienne-française has served as a delivery organization for programs stemming from the Youth Employment Strategy for over 20 years.

In the brief we are presenting today, we make three main recommendations.

First, we recommend that the Government of Canada increase access to jobs and training opportunities in French for youth throughout the country.

Second, we recommend that the Government of Canada invest further and foremost in funding the Young Canada Works in Both Official Languages program, and in offering quality paid internships for francophone students in francophone minority communities throughout the country, through the Young Canada Works at Building Careers in English and French program.

Finally, we recommend that the Government of Canada consult French-speaking youth living in a minority context and take their needs and realities into account when updating the Youth Employment Strategy.

Employment is an important issue for French-speaking youth, right across the country. Moreover, that is what we often hear in the field and at youth gatherings hosted by the Fédération de la jeunesse canadienne-française. Young people are saying there are big gaps in access to jobs in French and in their communities, right across the country.

They are also pointing to many problems that are important realities for youth, including with respect to their transition to the labour market. Here are a few examples: difficulty finding work in their field of study; access to French-language or even bilingual jobs; academic over-qualification, often combined with a lack of job experience; high student debt; and so forth.

Young people aspire to find work in their language and in their field of study, jobs that offer competitive wages, for a respectable period of time, and once again in their home communities. They are also looking for work experience that promotes bilingualism or linguistic duality in the workplace.

Fortunately, there are some programs that facilitate the labour market integration of francophone youth and promote the economic development of francophone minority communities, such as Young Canada Works. The sub-component, Young Canada Works in Both Official Languages, is the only Youth Employment Strategy program that focuses specifically on the official languages.

Since 1996, this program has helped young Canadians develop their job skills and get summer job experience in their second official language. This program is important for young people as it facilitates their labour market integration and promotes the economic development of francophone minority communities in particular. This is a good start, but we can do better.

Offering internships for young graduates would also be an excellent way of facilitating their labour market integration, as well as an excellent way of contributing to the economy, in particular by developing bilingual workers right across the country. The Young Canada Works at Building Careers in English and French component is currently limited to creating international internships. Although creating internships in Canada is one of the program objectives, there is currently no budget for that objective, which we consider very unfortunate.

• (1600)

We hope therefore that the Government of Canada will invest further and foremost in funding these two existing programs. Investing in these programs would make it possible, among other things, to create internships in key sectors and, in particular, would help francophone minority communities keep more young people in their home communities, while also contributing to our country's economic vitality.

The government is also preparing to revise and update the Youth Employment Strategy. In doing this, the government must, in our opinion, take an exhaustive approach. For all the proposed changes to the strategy, the government must consider the specific needs of francophone youth and of francophone minority community organizations. This strategy is very important for young people.

In our opinion, all the programs and initiatives in the Youth Employment Strategy must respect and promote Canada's two official languages. We have the collective responsibility to consider the problems young workers face and to find solutions to the obstacles they have to overcome. We have to give them the tools to develop self-confidence and be able to find their place in the labour market, while also becoming active in society and serving as agents of change in our respective communities.

Thank you for listening. We invite you to look at our brief that was distributed earlier and that provides further details.

We will be pleased to answer your questions.

[English]

The Chair: Now we'll hear from the Réseau des carrefours jeunesse-emploi du Québec. We have with us today Rudy Humbert, as well as Elise Violletti.

You have seven minutes.

• (1605)

[Translation]

Ms. Elise Violletti (Advisor, Special Projects, Personal and Professional Autonomy, Réseau des carrefours jeunesse-emploi du Québec): Mr. Chair, ladies and gentlemen of the committee, Jo-Annie comes from a troubled family background. She became homeless. In her own words, she had nothing to lose. In fact, she had nothing at all. She participated in project Eldorado, at the Shawinigan youth employment centre. I would like to share what she said with you:

I started [project Eldorado] without any specific objectives in mind. [...] I soon realized that it was one of the best gifts I had given myself in a long time! [...] I now see that the youth employment centre allowed me to go through a practical social transformation process which [...] has certainly become a success in my life. It was the key that helped me become the person I am today.

Eight years later, Jo-Annie has graduated and is the assistant general manager of a centre for homeless or socially marginalized people. Project Eldorado gets people actively involved in process of returning to school, including a practical initiation to international cooperation. That is one of the experiential learning processes developed at youth employment centres and that changes young people's lives.

We are the Réseau des carrefours jeunesse-emploi du Québec, or Quebec's network of youth employment centres. The network is made up of more than 80 youth employment centres, in all regions of Quebec, which help close to 60,000 young people every year, in particular through experiential learning projects. Each experience is unique and brings about significant changes in the lives of those young people.

My name is Elise Violletti and I am a special projects and social and professional autonomy advisor with the Réseau des carrefours jeunesse-emploi du Québec. With me is Mr. Rudy Humbert, an entrepreneurship and voluntary work advisor.

Mr. Rudy Humbert (Advisor, Entrepreneurship, voluntary work and voluntary action, Réseau des carrefours jeunesse-emploi du Québec): The Réseau des carrefours jeunesse-emploi du Québec and the youth employment centres are vectors for social innovation in the development of experiential learning projects in the areas of career development, entrepreneurship, voluntary action, and social and professional integration.

With 20 years of experience working with Quebec youth, the youth employment centres are community organizations that work with their many partners and their community. The expertise and intervention work of the youth employment centres have been recognized Quebec Premier Philippe Couillard, in particular by establishing the youth employment centre component as part of Quebec's most recent youth action strategy.

Youth employment centres help create a safety net for young people so that each young person can achieve their full potential, whether in terms of employment, pursuing their studies, developing autonomy, entrepreneurship, or civic engagement. The OECD recognizes the importance and credibility of the services that youth employment centres offer young people in Quebec. The centres' actions and projects focus on diversity, gender diversity, and integration. No young person is left out and each project is tailored to the reality of each person and their environment. Quebec has a network of 110 essential local organizations. They are deeply rooted in their communities and 100% dedicated to youth.

Experiential learning is a model that promotes participation in activities in a context that is as close as possible to the knowledge to be gained, the skills to be developed, and the attitudes to be shaped or changed. We see how it benefits young people in terms of developing self-confidence, building their identity, taking charge of themselves, sociability, and the willingness to be involved. These 21st century skills are developed through various projects carried out at youth employment centres. They include internships, professional simulation, work platforms, the youth employment centre school, volunteer work, entrepreneurship, voluntary action or social involvement.

Ms. Elise Violletti: As the Expert Panel on Youth Employment stated, we believe that in order for young people to contribute to Canada's social safety net, they need opportunities and support to adapt to a changing world of work.

The OECD pointed to the current polarization of the labour market and its risks. As a result, we need to focus on the quality of jobs and on greater inclusiveness in order to weather the crises and adapt to changes in technology.

Although the economy seems favourable, young people are hard hit by unemployment and precarious employment. That is why we must consolidate, develop, and adapt our services to each young person's needs and their environment. Scholastic inequality and, more broadly speaking, social inequality, shape young people's relationship with work and employment. Because the young people who use the youth employment centres come from family, scholastic or career backgrounds that may have been marked by multiple problems, the overall approach is more than ever tailored to the situations of young people who are seeking long-term social and professional integration.

Through the experiential approach, the young people carry out a collective project. Youth employment centres therefore help these young people learn from their experiences in order to develop and ultimately move toward training or long-term employment.

By offering all young people the opportunity to take training, have a job that suits them, or implement a citizenship or entrepreneurial project, the youth employment centres give them an experience that is often limited to those who are more fortunate, thereby helping each young person develop their full potential.

• (1610)

Mr. Rudy Humbert: Social integration is a prerequisite to professional integration because without a degree, unqualified youth present a number of social marginalization factors that keep them out of the professional sphere. Lacking social skills is even more problematic today than lacking academic qualifications, in terms of both hiring and job retention.

Involvement in community life promotes the social inclusion of youth and allows them to develop skills and abilities that could be transferable to other areas in their lives.

Participating in volunteer projects that benefit the community can also improve public perception of youth, since that involvement directly benefits the community. It is therefore essential to recognize, promote, and encourage the civic engagement of youth as they seek social and professional integration.

The experiential youth entrepreneurship projects run by youth employment centres help youth develop entrepreneurial skills and meet the challenges of takeovers, and of the labour market integration of youth and newcomers.

Social participation and mobility are decisive factors for the development of autonomy, the professional integration of youth, and regional development. That is why major support is needed for the interprovincial and international mobility of youth.

Ms. Elise Violletti: In 2023, Quebec will have more people aged 65 and over than those under 20. In this context, the younger generation must be equipped to step up and contribute to the growth of society today and tomorrow, together with other generations and while respecting diversity and the environment. To that end, they must have the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills they will need to understand and take on the challenges in their community, and learn how society works.

We thank the members of the committee for their attention and for giving us this opportunity. We will now be pleased to answer your questions.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you very much.

I believe we have Mr. Steven Blaney up first, for six minutes.

[Translation]

Hon. Steven Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to thank the witnesses for being here today. They are the first witnesses we have heard as part of this study.

To begin, it seems that there are two groups.

There are those who do not have the abilities and profiles needed to access the labour market and who have problems in life. I am thinking of what Ms. Broome and the people from the youth employment centres said.

Then there are those from the professional sector or the mainstream.

I will start with the professional sector and then go back to those who have difficulty accessing the labour market. I would like to go back to the example of welders.

[English]

Mr. Tadic, thank you for being with us today. It's Steven Blaney speaking. I had the chance to meet with you a few weeks ago in Ottawa.

You mentioned that the biggest issue is skills shortage. Can you give me an overview of what the skills shortage in the welding industry is and tell me a little bit about your Acorn program, which you have launched to fill it up?

Mr. Dan Tadic: In terms of a skills shortage, companies can find welders. Welders can be trained to a multitude of skills, depending on the industry requirement. Where industry is having difficulty finding skilled labour is in the area of metal fabricators. Those are the guys who know how to use a measuring tape, cut materials to various angles, assemble components or different structures together, and then fabricate them in an assembly unit and allow the welders to then proceed with the welding. We have been organizing an annual welding educators conference for the past six years. Actually our seventh year will be next year in Calgary, at SAIT. One of the first comments we received from educators was that we need to standardize welding education. So our board approved an investment of \$3 million to develop this online training material, and we're providing it at no cost to all high schools in Canada, and we are charging a nominal fee, to recover our investment, to colleges and trade unions to use it. There are a whole bunch of high schools and colleges that are using this program right now. We keep adding to it. We're investing more to make sure that it changes as technology changes. We're not done with the investment in Acorn. It's an ongoing process. We want to make sure the latest and greatest technologies are included in this training material so that our students have the best possible resources for learning.

•(1615)

Hon. Steven Blaney: Thank you.

Madam Broome, you mentioned that it's important that kids have the basics. You mentioned homeless kids, and you talked about programs you used to deliver. What would be your recommendations in terms of those programs? You mentioned you had some challenges with funding. How do you see this committee helping to make recommendations to the government in that regard?

Ms. Barb Broome: I feel that the government is really putting more emphasis on post-secondary education and the high school students who have the supports to get there. I deal with a lot of youth who drop out of high school, so I feel there needs to be something, some supports in place, before they even get to that point, before they get to our door as youth at risk. As I said, 29% of our clients are not youth at risk. They're university kids; they're high school kids who have graduated and are moving on, and they are looking for a career path, but it's that other 71%. When you take a small organization, such as we have in Summerside, and 71% of our clients are youth at risk, how many are out there who are not getting the supports they need to make it through high school or to move on to post-secondary?

Hon. Steven Blaney: Are you refusing kids because you don't have programs?

Ms. Barb Broome: We're not refusing to work with them with the resources we have, but we certainly can't deliver the programs they're looking for.

[Translation]

Hon. Steven Blaney: Okay.

I will now move on to the youth employment centres.

Ms. Violletti, are you familiar with the HPI, or Homelessness Partnership Initiative, a federal program that creates learning platforms for troubled youth?

Have you heard of it?

Ms. Elise Violletti: A number of Service Canada programs are offered at youth employment centres, but I am not familiar with the HPI.

Hon. Steven Blaney: Okay.

You talked earlier about a homeless woman who now has a management position.

How should the government set its priorities? Should we focus on young graduates and direct them to technical programs such as welding, for instance?

Should we also reach out to drop-outs? What are your thoughts on that?

Ms. Elise Violletti: The services that young people need must definitely be accessible. Regardless of their needs, services must be accessible. Access is really the key to everything.

A graduate can be directed to a program. If that is what they need and what suits them, that is ideal. Young people do not all have the same interests though. We must address the needs of all young people, bearing in mind their different profiles, difficulties, and above all strengths.

Hon. Steven Blaney: You mentioned that CJEs were helping 60,000 young people.

Are those young people following the regular path, or are they dropouts and youth with social issues?

Ms. Elise Violletti: In the youth employment centres....

[English]

The Chair: Could we get just a very quick answer, please?

[Translation]

Ms. Elise Violletti: All kinds of young people frequent Quebec's youth employment centres. Some are young dropouts, but some are also young university students.

What makes youth employment centres special is that they help all young people based on their needs. People who work there focus on young people's needs and on what they are in order to provide them with the services they need.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Now we'll go over to MP Morrissey.

Go ahead, please.

Mr. Robert Morrissey (Egmont, Lib.): Thank you, Chair.

To the witnesses, thank you for coming.

Today the committee is studying a motion put forward by my colleague Madame Fortier, dealing with pathways to employment for Canadian youth.

I want to follow up with Ms. Broome on a line of questioning that Mr. Blaney raised. The one segment of young people for whom the government has to get it right—and as Minister Hajdu said when she appeared before the committee, we cannot afford to lose this segment of young people—is the segment you referred to, Ms. Broome, aged from 17 to 29.

I have a specific question. What is the cost of taking a youth at risk through the program you are operating?

• (1620)

Ms. Barb Broome: Are you referring to the Skills Link program that we would have had?

Mr. Robert Morrissey: Yes, per individual.

Ms. Barb Broome: The cost is minimal. You would be looking at less than \$10,000 for each individual who would start in a program, spend about 10 weeks in a classroom, and get the experience they need there as well as the soft skills and self-confidence to go out and apply for a job. Most of them don't have that ability. We've had so many who have come to the program, and we can't pay them until we lend them the money to go out and get a birth certificate so they can get a social insurance number. It's just not fair when they're being dropped down like that.

Mr. Robert Morrissey: You made a reference to it having been longer, and I recognize that this program was longer. It was reduced in 2015. What was the length of training given prior to that?

Ms. Barb Broome: It was 17 weeks.

Mr. Robert Morrissey: At the end of those 17 weeks or the training program we have today, could you outline for the benefit of the committee, the skills that disadvantaged youth have as they exit the program? How are they equipped to make a decision to move forward?

Ms. Barb Broome: They leave the program with numerous skills, especially the soft skills that employers are looking for. They learn time management. They learn teamwork. They learn leadership. They learn budgeting. They learn how to express themselves in an appropriate way with an employer. They learn confidence in how to speak with an employer. They learn to research what's out there for employment, and they also learn that there are stepping stones—that you're going to start here today and you're not going to be here tomorrow. They've come to accept the fact of how they are going to get there and what type of job they might need: is it a job to get them started until they get enough EI to qualify for skills funding, so they can go back to school for post-secondary education to take a trade they couldn't take in the past?

When we started these programs, I heard many times, “Well, you can't expect me to do shift work. I'm a single parent.” Well, guess what, they're not the only single parent in the world who has to work shift work, but it takes time for them to realize that, because they're not out in the community. They don't really see that. They get a social assistance cheque once a month and a family allowance once a month; they go out and do their shopping, and that's it.

Mr. Robert Morrissey: Has there been any analysis done on the cost of not reaching out to the youth that you identify? They are in similar ranges. Are you aware of any study that's been done that looks at the cost of not reaching out to youth in this category and putting them on a different pathway?

Ms. Barb Broome: I'm not aware of a study for that, but it is common sense that if you're taking someone off income support, you are actually saving money for the government.

Mr. Robert Morrissey: Let alone incarceration, because of the cost of corrections.

Ms. Barb Broome: That's right. We deal with that too. You talk about incarceration. We have some who come to us who might have a criminal record, and they think they're never going to get a job, that nobody is going to support them. At our centre, we're non-judgmental. If they have to go to court and they're terrified because they may have done something that they're ashamed of, and they don't have family supports, we're there for them. It might mean going to the court and speaking to the judge who might say, “How are they doing? Are they doing well in this program? Do you see any improvement?” Yes, we're there for them.

There's definitely more benefit to helping these youth now before they get so involved in the justice system or on income support. It's very hard to get off income support once they get there. It is really difficult to get them back, because now they've hit the bottom. They have no other resources.

As I said, they're not allowed to go back to school, to upgrade during the day. They're supposed to get babysitters and go at night.

• (1625)

Mr. Robert Morrissey: Thank you very much for your presentation, as well as the other one, because it's the young people we have to make sure our programs are reaching.

If you were speaking to the minister today, what is the one policy direction or policy that you would like to see this government adopt to better deal with the youth at risk who you're dealing with?

Ms. Barb Broome: I would like to see them come to the source. I'd like to see them out on the streets, talking to these youth and asking them what they want. There have been times when a youth forum was taking place in Charlottetown and we'd get an email to send our youth to Charlottetown. How are they going to get there? We don't have transportation, and they don't have the confidence to go there and say how they feel. You have to get these youth while they're young and at the source, where they are. You need to be with them on their level.

You can't be scared to go to the nearest convenience store where there are 15 young fellows standing around and you're terrified to go and talk to them. You're not going to get anywhere if your attitude is to walk in with two police officers, one on each side, for protection. You need to hit these kids at their level and you need to be prepared to go out and talk with the small organizations that work with these kids on a regular basis.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Now for six minutes we have MP Sansoucy.

[Translation]

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to thank all the witnesses for their presentations.

In Quebec, over a million jobs will be filled within seven years.

I represent a riding experiencing a labour shortage, and I sincerely hope that our study will help us find ways to build a better bridge between available jobs and job seekers.

Having been the director of a housing resource for troubled youth, I am well aware that youth employment centres don't only help troubled youth. There are two such centres in my riding—Espace carrière, in Saint-Hyacinthe, and Carrefour jeunesse-emploi Comté de Johnson, in Acton Vale.

I know that you help dropouts, as well as university graduates who are underemployed. Given our area of jurisdiction, we are more specifically interested in what is being done for young newcomers, but also for young aboriginals.

My first question is twofold.

To your knowledge, are any youth employment centres working with young newcomers or young aboriginals?

If you don't have that information on hand, you could send it to us later.

Our study could also lead us to recommend that more money be transferred to the Government of Quebec and to other provincial governments to support the most promising approaches used with those clientele.

Mr. Rudy Humbert: Thank you for your question.

Youth employment centres do work with newcomers. Each centre's identity is rooted in the community. If the centre is located in an area with many newcomers, it will develop that expertise. Montreal can welcome newcomers, but there also many programs that help welcome newcomers in the regions. Youth employment centres are there to help newcomers throughout the process and to show them what resources are available in the community.

Assistance with job searches is available both in the city and in the regions. There are also citizen engagement projects for newcomers. That is one of the best tools we have found to take advantage of all their skills—so they can transfer them—and to inform them of the various resources available in the community.

As for first nations, there are also ongoing projects. Once again, it depends on the youth employment centre in question, but those located in a region that is home to aboriginal communities develop projects with them and with schools. Some examples are student retention and entrepreneurship projects, which have pretty amazing results.

We are particularly concerned about those communities. That is why transformative projects have been created.

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy: Could you help us with our study—without creating a lot of work for yourself—by sending us a description of centres that work with those clientele?

I make a lot of visits to companies in my riding. People from various work environments are telling me that it would be worthwhile to go back to buddy systems, which help people learn by working with someone. Learning both professionally and socially is beneficial and necessary to job integration.

Do you know whether there are any such programs? Do you think that approach should be developed further?

• (1630)

Ms. Elise Violletti: Actually, a number of youth employment centres provide those kinds of programs. In Laval, among other places, the youth employment centre is working with businesses from the region to integrate young people. Companies take care of training as far as work to be performed goes, but they leave the development of transferable skills to the youth employment centre. They want to make sure that the youth employment centre will provide support in situations that are more difficult to manage.

Other centres also provide support, even once the individual is employed. So we are talking about enhanced support, involving meetings. That service supports employers, but it also helps young people develop. It is really done in that context. There are needs to be filled, but employers don't necessarily always have the required resources or knowledge to support development that is more social in nature.

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy: In the same vein, I think the Minister of Labour would be interested in the fact that we have more information on this issue. I accompanied her to Turin, Italy, for the G7 Summit, attended by labour ministers. We visited a business that was using that kind of a program. We thought it was very interesting.

In addition, you said you were working on developing entrepreneurship skills in young people. What obstacles are you facing? That is another way to help young people find work.

Mr. Rudy Humbert: Absolutely. Since 2004, youth employment centres have worked on meeting the challenges of youth entrepreneurship. In each youth employment centre, an outreach officer would be dedicated to youth entrepreneurship, with a mandate to develop entrepreneurial culture in Quebec—in communities and schools. After 14 years, we have noted that the desire to become an entrepreneur has increased tremendously. Interest has more than doubled in Quebec. In fact, roughly one in two young Quebecers is interested in entrepreneurship.

There is a will, but desire does not necessarily translate into action. The entrepreneurship rate is lower. Today, we are focusing on providing young people with support. That is done a lot through the Créneau carrefour jeunesse program. Experiential entrepreneurship projects are carried out in secondary schools to make young people aware of those opportunities. I assume those projects are very brief.

All the studies we have show that about 20,000 businesses will not find a buyer in the next few years and will have to close. That is the challenge of business purchases. The solutions lie in young people, women and newcomers.

[English]

The Chair: That's interesting.

Thank you very much. I'm afraid that's your time.

Now we go over to MP Fortier.

Go ahead, please.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Mona Fortier (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you very much for your presentations. We appreciate the fact that you took the time to come share your experience with us.

As we know, Prime Minister Trudeau has put the emphasis on youth. This study helps us figure out how to increase their opportunities. In the latest budget, \$572 million was invested in the youth employment strategy. That means investments are possible. They will continue to generate jobs and experience opportunities for young people, especially those who are vulnerable.

Mr. Johnson, you said that you have 20 years of experience in providing youth employment programs.

What is your relationship with employers from across the country?

Could measures or initiatives be introduced to encourage them to increase their participation and help young people learn experientially?

Mr. Justin Johnson: Thank you for your question.

Employers are working on enhancing the vitality of francophone minority communities across the country. That interaction between young people who are engaged in our communities and organizations that are working on improving the vitality of francophone minority communities ensures the transition to the workforce. In a way, it counters our young people's overqualification and lack of experience, which are due to the fact that they stay longer in university and other French language post-secondary institutions. As a result, those young people lack concrete experience on the ground in our communities.

•(1635)

Mrs. Mona Fortier: If you could make two recommendations for the government to help young people reach their full potential—especially those living in French minority communities—what would those recommendations be?

Mr. Justin Johnson: Linguistic duality and bilingualism must be recognized. If we want to live in a truly bilingual environment, we absolutely have to provide and make available jobs and training opportunities to young francophones in minority situations.

We don't need to reinvent the wheel, since programs like young Canada works already exist. There are measures in place to help access careers in French and English, such as bilingual internships. It is just a matter of reinvesting in existing programs and adding a touch to fulfil those specific objectives.

Young people talk about content, radio and communication. We want to be heard on social media and contribute to the francophone space across the country. That is why we want to develop digital content in French. Investments must be made in existing programs that are working very well. The government must also respect and recognize linguistic duality in its measures and plans.

Mrs. Mona Fortier: Thank you very much.

[*English*]

I will be sharing the remainder of my time with my colleague Mr. Sangha.

The Chair: You have two minutes, sir.

Mr. Ramesh Sangha (Brampton Centre, Lib.): My question is to Mr. David Burns. We have people who are marginalized and those who are disadvantaged, those who are immigrants or who have fallen into criminal problems and other things. You talked about your program with regard to skilled trades versus undergraduate programs, those based not on grades and skills but on competency and ability. Would you explain how your program is beneficial for disadvantaged groups and youth?

Dr. David Burns: There are two basic orientations to education policy in this regard. We can take the student body, in all of its diversity, and focus on getting them to fit within the constraints of the system that we have or we can attempt to change the system that we have, to permit a greater range of diversity. It is the latter that we're trying to do at KPU, and I think we need to do that more broadly across the country.

For example, when we have new immigrants, they come with an extraordinary range of skills and abilities, but essentially the only mechanism we have to understand what they can do is a pretty cumbersome process to transfer their credentials, which is where you get all of these clichés about highly educated people performing low-skill jobs because their degree from their home country is not recognized here. An education system that respects the knowledge and capacities of these disadvantaged groups needs to be based on competencies. It needs to be based not on the credentials that you have but on what it is you're actually able to do, whether that is with credentials from here or from somewhere else. Having a broader sense of what their capacity is would empower and enable all of those marginalized persons.

The Chair: Thank you. Sorry. Maybe somebody else will share some more time.

Monsieur Robillard, you have six minutes.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Robillard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, Lib.): Mr. Chair, should we run out of time, can we give the clerk our written questions so she can send them to the witnesses?

[*English*]

The Chair: Yes.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Robillard: I now turn to you, Ms. Violetti.

According to my notes, you are the advisor in charge of special projects at the Réseau des carrefours jeunesse-emploi du Québec. Can you tell us more about those projects? How do they help young Canadians you work with prepare for the labour market? Do you use government programs to carry out those projects?

•(1640)

Ms. Elise Violetti: Thank you for your question.

There are different projects, and they vary from one region to another, since they meet the needs of young people and their communities.

I will give you a few examples of projects that have been carried out and that help young people develop their skills, among other things.

For example, l'École autrement is a CJE Les Etchemins project that helps young people who dropped out of school undergo training that will then help them pursue the job they want. That project is for young dropouts. The program is linked to school, and it enables them to earn school credits. That is really how it is done. The difference from the school environment is that support is provided through the youth employment centre. School board professionals come to the youth employment centre to encourage learning and the acquisition of knowledge. That is one of the programs.

The youth employment centre for the counties of Richmond and Drummond-Bois-Francs has developed a workshop called "touch wood", where wood is used to help young people develop skills such as project management. Young people have to carry out an entrepreneurship project. So they have to find a product to build, manage its inventory and figure out how to sell it. That way, they develop skills that will help them find a job. The program will not necessarily lead them to a job in that field, but it will help them develop skills.

Ms. Broome talked about developing self-esteem, which is essential for troubled youth with difficult backgrounds. Those young people need to develop their self-esteem and participate in projects that will help them regain their self-confidence, but also get themselves going again and develop transferable skills.

Mr. Yves Robillard: Finally, let's talk about linguistic challenges.

Can you tell us whether a young person who is using the services of the Réseau des carrefours jeunesse-emploi du Québec to find an internship may face linguistic challenges? Are they ever asked whether they are bilingual and can speak English? If so, does that happen only in Montreal? Conversely, do you ever provide services to young people for whom doing an internship in French would be a challenge? How do you adapt your services in either case?

Ms. Elise Violletti: Once again, thank you for your question.

Youth employment centres adapt to their environment and to young people's needs. So Montreal is not the only place where young people speak only English. There are unilingual anglophone young people in a number of regions. In those cases, services are provided by the youth employment centre, where connections are made with anglophone organizations that can help translate the tools used, among other things.

There are young people for whom it may be difficult to do an internship in French, and conversely, there are others for whom it may be difficult to do one in English. So a support service is provided.

Generally speaking, services are adapted to young people. Translation is provided when necessary.

Mr. Yves Robillard: Can you tell us more about how Quebec's labour market for young workers compares to the labour markets of other provinces in terms of internships?

How is Quebec doing when it comes to the tools available to young people and the way our institutions prepare them for the labour market?

Ms. Elise Violletti: Thank you for asking the question. That is something I will have to look into. For the time being, I suggest that we talk about internship-related elements that need to be emphasized.

Various organizations are also focusing on this issue. The Comité consultatif Jeunes, an organization funded by Quebec's labour market partners commission is currently doing research on internships. The first stage of the research focused more on student internships, and the second stage, currently underway, is about internships done in employability patterns. That research may shed some light on the issue.

I suggest that I send you more detailed information after the meeting.

Mr. Yves Robillard: Thank you very much.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you.

Now we will go over to MP Warawa.

Go ahead, please.

Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC): Thank you, Chair.

Thank you to the witnesses. It's very interesting testimony.

I have a question for Mr. Burns at Kwantlen.

You have shared the importance of work integration, moving from education into employment. You have a campus in Langley, British Columbia. You have one in Cloverdale and one in Surrey. I believe you're in the Surrey campus now. Is that right?

• (1645)

Dr. David Burns: No, sir. We also have a campus, it should be said, in Richmond. I am at an office block in Burnaby. This is the only appropriate facility, I'm told.

Mr. Mark Warawa: Okay. Thank you for what you're doing.

I would agree that it's very important that we know what skills we have. I congratulate you on your work and hope that you're quite successful.

In the school district of Abbotsford, to the east of you, is the Career Technical Centre with the University of the Fraser Valley and the Abbotsford school district. For a number of years, they've had this Career Technical Centre in which the secondary-school students are trained to prepare for employment. Have you looked at their example and their model, and whether or not that has been successful?

Dr. David Burns: For that example, I would like to do some research before I speak specifically to it. I have not reviewed that individual program, though I believe that the provincial government examined it. Some of this work is done in collaboration with Jan Unwin of the B.C. Ministry of Education. I believe she's quite familiar with that program.

The history of vocational programming within secondary schooling, however, has shown some mixed results. It depends very much on whether the focus is on a particular vocational path or whether it is broad preparation for adaptable employment. The model 10 to 15 years ago would have focused on specific careers. For example, the first literature review on the subject, which I did in the early 2000s, indicated that there were things like Microsoft training in high schools in Canada. On the surface, that looks quite effective, of course. When they graduate, they'll be certified to repair or maintain Microsoft-produced systems.

Of course, one of the hard lessons we've learned with the way the economy has changed is that the jobs that the education system needs to prepare us for do not yet exist. In some cases, they're based on skills we don't even know we need yet. At the high school level, it's very difficult to prepare them adequately because the provincial curricula take so long to revise. If we're going to have it in the K-12 system at the secondary level, we need some sort of interaction with the higher educational system so that we can respond to labour market needs a little bit more quickly.

Mr. Mark Warawa: Speaking about labour market needs, very close to the Cloverdale campus, just up the street, up the hill is Lord Tweedsmuir Secondary School. As part of their requirement to graduate from secondary school, the students do many hours of voluntary community service. Students from Lord Tweedsmuir go down to the local rest home, a senior care facility, and that may lead to employment in that field. We're finding now that with an aging population, there are tremendous opportunities for that.

Does Kwantlen have any training in nursing, home care, geriatrics, or palliative care? Are there any plans to make that a career option for students? There's a tremendous need.

Dr. David Burns: We had a program in gerontology, if memory serves, which was discontinued about two years ago, I believe, due to a lack of demand at that time. However, because our nursing school is so healthy, I suspect that's an offering that could be rejuvenated rather quickly, given, as you say, the changing demography.

The other piece is that we do have really extensive links to health care providers, such as nursing homes, with our nursing programs. I noted earlier, in my opening statement, the 300 partnerships we have with non-profits. A quick look at the data on my tablet here shows that it seems that a very large plurality of those are in sectors like that. There are quite a number of partnerships between the nursing schools and local health care providers, particularly field providers, in the community.

Mr. Mark Warawa: A lot of the students would prefer to be in pediatrics rather than in geriatrics because it's fun to be with babies, but I would encourage you to look at that because there are tremendous opportunities for the students to take care of an aging population.

I have a very quick question for the Welding Association on the poaching problem. That is a problem. Are these welders being poached out of the country after we've trained them, or is the poaching happening within Canada?

• (1650)

Mr. Dan Tadic: That is correct. If you look at the statistics, only 19% of companies train apprentices. That means 81% are either poaching or they would like to get access to those highly skilled tradesmen.

Our apprenticeship model in this country has not changed for centuries. A company hires an apprentice today and trains them to the best of their ability with the tools that they have in their facility, but they may be limited and that development is limited because the company may be using only one process, making only one product, have only a limited number of pieces of equipment, or have limited exposure to skilled tradesmen.

In our new model, we'd allow the apprentices to rotate as part of this study to ensure that they are much more skilled when they graduate, and that the focus is on the apprentice training and not so much on the employers themselves.

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

Now we go over to Mr. Ruimy.

Mr. Dan Ruimy (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, Lib.): Thank you all very much for coming today. I'll repeat what everybody else says, which is that it's great information.

I want to speak to you, Mr. Burns. I'm very interested in your program. There's the paper that says "4.0 GPA? Whatever. KPU to admit 6 Surrey students on portfolios alone".

We've talked a lot about Skills Link training programs. In fact, we have, in my riding of Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, Pathfinder Youth Centre, and for every single session that has a new intake of 30 students, I go and spend two hours with them.

I'm concerned about how we move those people along the system. They have—for whatever reasons—been challenged, and they've fallen through the cracks. Some of the stuff that they're learning is great.

Does your program attach to folks in that type of scenario? That's the first question.

Dr. David Burns: Do you mean those who have fallen through the cracks in the K-to-12 system?

Mr. Dan Ruimy: Right, because you're talking about their portfolio, so if I draw something really cool and I'm a great artist, I should be able to get on to your program. Is that correct?

Dr. David Burns: Yes.

Mr. Dan Ruimy: How would that apply to programs like the Skills Link training program?

Dr. David Burns: That's an excellent question.

There are two answers to it. One of them is that we actually do quite a lot of that separate and apart from the things that I'm currently testing. In British Columbia we have open access institutions for those members not from British Columbia, which are mandated to serve populations like that. So if there are ever persons in that situation who have fallen through the systemic cracks, KPU, in general, would like to hear from those persons. We do quite a lot to meet people where they are in terms of assessing what skills and abilities they bring to the university.

My project is an effort to push that a bit forward. Ideally, if we can be clear about what competencies are required to succeed in university, then we can stop obsessing over how long they spent in K-to-12 schooling and start looking at what they actually know. There are some persons, first nations persons, for example, who have an extraordinary range of competencies and skills that just don't fit very well in the K-to-12 system. Those persons shouldn't have any fewer opportunities because they fit less well within the existing system.

Mr. Dan Ruimy: I'd like to jump onto what you just said. How do we evaluate the competencies? We go through about 30 new students every five weeks. Do the math; that's a lot of students in a year.

How do we evaluate their competencies? Is that something you already have or you are working on?

Dr. David Burns: The reason we have that small group and the press release for the newspaper article you mentioned is that we have several models for how this might work. Some of them are more appropriate to an open access institution like ours which wants to serve the population as they are, and some might be more suitable for institutions that have to be really selective. We're going to test a few of these models as we go through and engage the students in conversation about what can be done.

For the students in that particular example, I have a couple of ideas for how that might work out. I'm looking forward in late summer to writing up some white papers for public consumption, identifying what can be done at different institutions for them.

Mr. Dan Ruimy: Are you tracking everything you're doing right now?

•(1655)

Dr. David Burns: In policy terms, yes; in achievement and empirical terms, no. The six-student group is getting a tremendous amount of support, so we can't generalize from those six people to say they learned 10% more.

The key is whether or not we can design a policy system that is accepting and respectful of diversity. Success, here, will be the formulation of policies rather than a statement that these students were somehow more successful.

Mr. Dan Ruimy: Okay. I also note, through a different study I've been working on, that polytechnics—versus universities—tend to trend now more towards delivering students with workplace skills. What can you tell me about the structure of your polytechnic universities that leads towards the development of workplace skills?

Dr. David Burns: Polytechnic universities are distinguished from general research-intensive universities in a couple of ways, and that's definitely one of them. Every single one of our programs has an

experiential component, and that's really crucial, right? If you're creating a program, the question asked at every step of the committee process is how are they going to be practising this in real-world scenarios or in very similar simulations?

We also have really extensive outreach to our industry partners and our communities to find out what they need as it's going on. For example, I work in policy research in education, so the students I'm teaching education policy to come with me to the ministry in Victoria to talk about policy reform. One of them recommended a change to one of our policy programs, and it's actually changing at the university level.

Every time we do something, we attempt to bring students along with us to make a meaningful, substantive differences in that thing. We have a program whereby they go out into the prisons, for example, for learning experiences. We have experimental farms, where they take their horticulture knowledge and grow things.

Mr. Dan Ruimy: I have a last question. With that, are you tracking the skill set of those new students and matching them up with job skills in the field they're applying to? We see people who are graduating from universities or polytechnics and working at Tim Hortons, for instance. Are you tracking—

Dr. David Burns: Absolutely, yes.

Mr. Dan Ruimy: —and what are you doing with that information?

Dr. David Burns: The first thing I ask all the students who work on research with me is, "Where are you going?" Then we have a conversation about how to get them there. For the incoming student group, which was just today selected—I'm getting that information later on; it was blind up until just this morning. We'll meet with them in the next couple of weeks to say, "Okay, what do you want to do in the world and what problems are you solving?" We'll then write backwards from that a story of what kinds of skills they need to accomplish that objective.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

I'm sorry, Mr. Ruimy, but you are out of time.

MP Blaney, go ahead, please.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Steven Blaney: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Ms. Violetti, I wanted to talk about the homelessness partnering strategy, HPS. In Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, those are the plateaus.

[*English*]

Madam Broome, did you mention in your presentation that a federal program was cut in 2015?

Ms. Barb Broome: In 2015 our program went from 17 weeks in the classroom to 10, and in 2015, we were told that we could not teach any more soft skills, life skills, or parenting skills.

Hon. Steven Blaney: Was that by the federal...?

Ms. Barb Broome: Yes.

Hon. Steven Blaney: Do you know the name of this program, Madam Broome?

Ms. Barb Broome: It was Skills Link.

Hon. Steven Blaney: Okay.

Ms. Barb Broome: That's what we were funded under.

Hon. Steven Blaney: You were funded under Skills Link. Do you feel that this was a program that was helping those far from the labour market to access the labour market?

Ms. Barb Broome: Definitely.

Hon. Steven Blaney: So you would recommend more of this program, not less?

Ms. Barb Broome: For sure.

Hon. Steven Blaney: Is your organization benefiting from—it's the same in French and in English—the homelessness partnering strategy? Have you ever benefited from this program?

Ms. Barb Broome: We've had our clients participate in that as well, yes.

Hon. Steven Blaney: Did you have the experience of sometimes having funding and sometimes not when you made requests? Do you have a hard time accessing those funds?

Ms. Barb Broome: We have a hard time, because there is a waiting list of over a year right now in Summerside.

Hon. Steven Blaney: That's right. Okay. So instead of reinventing the wheel, you would suggest that those programs, whether it's Skills Link or the homelessness partnering strategy, be better funded and maybe more.... You've mentioned the duration of those programs. What is it normally?

Ms. Barb Broome: On the duration, I found that when we were doing the 17 weeks in the classroom, we had the opportunity to start out with the soft skills and build the self-confidence before we got into needing the supports for employment skills on the proper way to write resumés and for interview skills and so on. When that was cut to 10 weeks, that really rushed how we had to do things.

Really, everything is based on stats. If you don't have good employment stats, nobody wants to hear from you.

• (1700)

Hon. Steven Blaney: There's the number of weeks but also the duration of the program, because every time you have to submit for a program....

Were you applying for just a 10-week program or for more than a few sessions? Were these programs over a couple of months?

Ms. Barb Broome: For a number of years, we were applying for one intake per year, and in 2015 we were asked if we could do two intakes a year, which we did. In 2016, we were told that there would be a call for proposals for three years, at two intakes per year. We put in our application for that, for the three-year process, and just last week I finally received notice that we would not be getting funding.

Hon. Steven Blaney: Now this is for three years, so that's why you mentioned.... I am a member of Parliament. I have seen those organizations fighting to get it, and it's very disappointing. Of course, now I am in the opposition, so I can't.... When you go out, you will see a nice hockey rink of \$5.1 million, which will be there for probably two months. This government is currently imposing a tax on businesses that is impacting the labour market, or they are spending money away in Asia, hundreds of millions of dollars. That certainly doesn't help to create jobs.

The Chair: Excuse me, Mr. Blaney. If you can bring it back to the topic, that would be great. Thank you.

Hon. Steven Blaney: Sure.

That's why we need to....

[Translation]

We have to walk the talk, as they say. That's my message.

We talked about two programs, and two important recommendations were made about the duration and funding. It will be important to keep this in mind when we make our recommendations.

Mr. Johnson, your presentation was very interesting. I would like to come back to your recommendation about funding. You want francophones to have more opportunities to gain experience. Can you be more specific in terms of your recommendations?

Mr. Justin Johnson: Thank you for your question.

To ensure the sustainability and vitality of francophone minority communities, those experiences must take place in the communities.

There is a problem with youth mobility or migration. We are losing young people from our communities. Sometimes, they don't return to the community to contribute to the local economy. The economy certainly must be strengthened, but we also have to promote the cultural vitality of our communities, as well as citizen leadership. Our young people must work within institutions and organizations that represent their communities and participate in the making of decisions that affect them.

At the Fédération de la jeunesse canadienne-française, we talk a lot about the industrial research assistance program, IRAP, which contains a component for young people to help them develop their ability to contribute to their community.

Hon. Steven Blaney: You talked about the young Canada works program and said that it is important that these jobs be in minority language communities. Is that correct?

Mr. Justin Johnson: Indeed. So—

[English]

The Chair: Be very brief, please.

[Translation]

Mr. Justin Johnson: The federal government established the young Canada works program as part of the youth employment strategy. The program objectives specifically target official language communities. Young Canada works is the component that helps young people pursue careers in French and English. These programs exist already, but we just need to invest more in these programs so that young people are hired.

Hon. Steven Blaney: Thank you.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Now we go over to MP Sansoucy for three minutes.

[Translation]

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

There was a lot of discussion earlier about experiential learning projects put in place by youth employment centres during their 20 years of experience or expertise. Have you evaluated this approach? Have researchers looked into this? If so, could we have the findings from that evaluation?

• (1705)

Ms. Elise Violletti: Thank you for your question.

The overall approach of youth employment centres is an ecosystemic approach, which has already been analyzed. Its effectiveness has been demonstrated many times.

The experiential learning used at youth employment centres enables young people to develop their skills and feelings. This is demonstrated by their initiative, their involvement in their community and, above all, their sustainable entry into employment. Research on the various approaches also applies to youth employment centres, since the achievements necessarily stem from existing approaches, which have been repeatedly tested. The measures are based on such approaches and on intervention expertise.

Mr. Rudy Humbert: If I may, I will round out my colleague's remarks.

More specifically, there is a lot of support beforehand for projects that include an international mobility component—this is the experiential approach. However, the results show that upon their return, nearly 90% of the young participants return to school or work. In terms of experiential approach, the international component is one of the most transformative levers we have.

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy: Well, the results speak for themselves.

We talked about the skills link program earlier. Some great projects have been developed in my riding because of this program. One of the two youth employment centres is currently impatiently awaiting a response, but there are many more applications than funds available. This program has definitely proven its worth. The other youth employment centre hasn't even applied. These people told me that the process is complicated. Still, they had good experiences in the past.

Listening to your comments, I realize how important it is to take a cross-cutting approach. Last year, this committee conducted a study on poverty. A strategy to fight poverty is being developed, and since

there are truly cross-cutting issues, it would be important to link these strategies.

One of the topics of our committee's study is youth underemployment. Some of them hold jobs that are not consistent with their education, skills or experience. Others work part time while they'd like to work full time.

What do you think are the causes of youth underemployment? What is the best way to address it?

Mr. Rudy Humbert: This is a problem that we see quite regularly at the youth employment centres. In general, precariousness in employment is growing. As our colleagues have mentioned, young people are often the first to be affected. There is a mismatch between the degrees they hold and the available jobs to which they have access. The reconciliation of work, education, family, commitment and the need, in some cases, to multiply small jobs to earn a living wage is also a problem. We are looking at it. We link this to society as a whole and to the general precariousness of the labour market to which young people are most likely to be exposed.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you.

Sorry. We will have a chance to come back. That brings us to the end of the second round of questions, but since we have about 20 minutes or so left, we can continue with a third round. I know we have a few on our side, and Mr. Warawa would like to speak as well, so we'll just keep going as the clock allows.

First up would be, in fact, Mr. Warawa.

Mr. Mark Warawa: Thank you.

Chair, I want to ask some questions about Kwantlen Polytechnic and the Lord Tweedsmuir program.

Has Kwantlen been working with or touched base with the secondary school just up the street?

David, I think you mentioned you were working with the secondary schools in Surrey. Is Lord Tweedsmuir one of those?

• (1710)

Dr. David Burns: Right now the sample is blind, as I said, up until just this morning, when the paperwork in Surrey was finished. Through the superintendent, Jordan Tinney, and Antonio Vendramin, who's a district principal for communicating student learning, I'm working with the individual schools. Between now and January, we will actually be doing site visits. I believe Tweedsmuir is one of the schools we will be going to, but I'm not certain of it yet because the students themselves haven't been named until today.

Mr. Mark Warawa: Okay. Thank you.

Part of the equation is going to be where the future jobs are going to be with artificial intelligence. Where jobs will be in the future, in short order, could actually change dramatically with artificial intelligence.

Is that part of the equation, where the jobs will be over the next five, 10, or 20 years?

Dr. David Burns: The recent history of educational policy in Canada tells us we're not very good at predicting that. We've gone through at least three waves of attempting to ascertain what the labour market will look like in 10 years, and in each of those cases, we have been largely mistaken.

When I was young, everyone was going to be a computer programmer. Then a good set of software tools, the Microsoft Suite and so forth, was developed, and all of a sudden we didn't need those programmers because we had good programs. Then we moved into apps, and you're starting to see kids today learning how to do Swift development on Apple technologies and so forth. We didn't see any of that coming, at least from the educational perspective.

I'm interested in the students' flexibility in their learning, and their ability to articulate and apply that learning to unexpected contexts, because in a certain sense, any prediction about where artificial intelligence will lead us is going to be quite fraught. As an educator, I need to make sure my students are ready for things I do not see coming, and that's very much part of what we're trying to do.

We have a program we're bringing forward right now on some of the new forms of advanced manufacturing and machine maintenance that we require in the new economy, but even that has to be very flexible, because that area is changing much more quickly than public systems can adapt.

Mr. Mark Warawa: Can I give you one final plug on taking care of the aging population? Seventy per cent of Canadians who have a need of palliative, end-of-life care do not have access to it. In your area, of course, the senior population is much higher because of the climate. In the Surrey area, you would probably find that closer to 80% of Canadians who need palliative care do not have access to it.

There's a massive need and a huge opportunity. Actually, it's the right thing to do, so I am hopeful that Kwantlen and other universities will take a serious look at providing that as part of their curriculum.

Dr. David Burns: Given our links to health care in the community right now, I think we're a natural place to start, and I will make that conversation start immediately.

Mr. Mark Warawa: Thank you, David.

Getting back to the Canadian Welding Association, Dan, you mentioned that there is a skills shortage, and welding is a great opportunity for young people to look at.

In your presentation, you mentioned a pipeline. Canada has changed course. Depending on what government we see in Canada—be it federal, provincial, or even municipal—some governments support pipelines as the safest way of moving natural resources, and some don't.

Under the current government, there's not an appetite for pipelines. Does that affect potential jobs and the training that the—

I'm being heckled a little bit, Mr. Chair.

Is that possibly going to have an effect on planning for training in welding, or will there be a continued and unrestricted need for welding?

Mr. Dan Tadic: Canada has in the range of 200,000 welders. Out of those 200,000, about 1,700 work in the pipelines. When we look at the overall number, it's relatively small in comparison to the size of the entire industry.

Mr. Mark Warawa: Regarding the question I had about poaching, are they pulling these welders out of Canada or is it by industries within Canada?

Mr. Dan Tadic: It's by industries within Canada. If I'm an employer with a job that has a timeline in terms of the delivery of that project, and I'm stuck in a situation where I must get this thing out on time or I'm going to pay penalties, my option is to offer bigger incentives and higher wages to get some of those skilled tradesmen from other companies and in order to get that project out the door and shipped on time.

It is an issue, and it's an issue that we need to address. The only way we're going to do that is by encouraging more employers to take on apprentices. That's why we are travelling the country right now and going face to face in conversation with employers to try to encourage them. I can tell you that we have been very successful so far in signing agreements with a number of employers in the Hamilton area, where we are setting up this first industry consortium.

The majority of these companies have never hired apprentices in the past, so the conversations we are having with employers today are very effective. We're changing the minds and hearts of the employers in terms of apprenticeship training, and we're seeing that change. We're seeing companies actually getting excited about apprenticeship training.

We believe very firmly in this model. We believe that it will be successful. We believe that the industry needs a seismic shift in the approach to apprenticeship training. Just keep in mind that the current model has been in place for centuries and that companies hire an apprentice and train them to the best of their abilities with the resources they have. However, allowing apprentices to rotate between a number of employers will enhance learning. It will enhance their confidence, and that is linked to the quality, productivity, and profitability of our industry.

If you have a highly skilled labour force, that will also lead to innovation and creativity, and we need to make those investments. We need to make sure that there is an opportunity for that skills development.

● (1715)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Tadic.

Mr. Dan Tadic: As an organization, we are working very hard to get this done as quickly as possible.

The Chair: Thank you very much, sir. I appreciate it.

Mr. Sangha, go ahead, please.

Mr. Ramesh Sangha: Thank you, Mr. Chair. My question will be for Barb Broome.

We have seen that there is new funding under the youth employment strategy, YES, and that there are many complementary programs under YES, such as SWE, the summer work experience program, Skills Link, which Mr. Blaney has talked about, and the career focus program. Do you know about these three programs?

Ms. Barb Broome: I know about these programs, and they work very well for 29% of our clients.

Mr. Ramesh Sangha: Are the career focus program and the summer work experience program working well?

Ms. Barb Broome: They are not working for the youth at risk.

Mr. Ramesh Sangha: The summer work employment program is not working for youth?

Ms. Barb Broome: It's not working for the youth at risk. The programs are working for a portion of the youth we deal with, but not all.

Mr. Ramesh Sangha: Is the career focus program working for the youth at risk?

Ms. Barb Broome: No.

Mr. Ramesh Sangha: Okay.

You already talked about the fact that you are dealing with youth suffering from poverty, addiction, lack of housing, mental conditions, and problems with the justice system.

Ms. Barb Broome: Yes.

Mr. Ramesh Sangha: Under which program are you dealing with these youths?

Ms. Barb Broome: We get referrals from each of those departments to work with these clients, or it may be that a client has walked in the door. Many of our clients come through income support, and we take them from there to the other organizations they need supports from, whether those be mental health services or addiction services.

Many youth will not walk through every door, especially in a government type of building, but they feel confident in coming into our organization knowing that they're going to get the supports they need. Yes, we are an employment service centre, but our goal is to help everyone get to that stage. As I said, many times it's a long road between today and employment.

• (1720)

Mr. Ramesh Sangha: The YES program is a new program coming in 2017-18, as planned by the Liberal government. Its funding is going to be helpful for vulnerable youth, for green jobs, and for jobs in opportunities for organizations that are celebrating Canadian heritage. This funding program, which Mr. Blaney was talking about earlier, was totally stagnant during the Conservative government. It was not working well.

Do you think this new program, which is funded by the Liberals, will help you in running this institution toward removing those who are indeed in need of assistance, those who need help from your organization...?

Ms. Barb Broome: To this point, I haven't seen it help any of the youth that are in our 79% of youth at risk, but it really does support the other 29% of youth who we deal with.

Mr. Ramesh Sangha: I will share my time with Mr. Ruimy.

The Chair: You have two minutes.

Mr. Dan Ruimy: Just to set the record straight, we know that folks who take those types of programs have fallen through the cracks, absolutely, but we've just recently announced a \$40-billion

national housing strategy. We need people to actually be in a home. We need people to actually be comfortable and set in a home, so that's something we are moving forward with.

We've close to doubled the Canada Summer Jobs program, which speaks to some of that, but not enough. We've just announced 10,000 paid internships through Mitacs. Over the last two years, we've announced \$8 billion in housing and education for indigenous folks. We've increased student grants. We've made it easier to take student loans.

The reason I'm here today is to find solutions to how we get those folks who are struggling through, not to point fingers, and that's why programs from Kwantlen college are critical.

Also, when we talk about the Skills Link training program, what I'm trying to find out is how we are tracking the results of the efforts that are being made through organizations like yours.

Are they moving from you to a job? If they're not, why not? Where are those challenges? Can you give me, from your experience, what's missing from that piece of the puzzle?

Ms. Barb Broome: Support with housing is a big thing for the homeless people. As you said, if you don't have a place to live, it makes it very difficult to have a job. We've had clients who carried a kit bag with a change of clothes in it because they slept on park benches.

I think that more needs to start in the school, early in the school. There is a program called Pathways to Education, which I feel is a very good start, and it seems to be doing well in all the locations where it is. Unfortunately, we don't have that on Prince Edward Island yet. I'm hoping that will happen eventually to get more supports in the school before they become youth at risk.

Mr. Dan Ruimy: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you. That's time.

Mr. Dan Ruimy: I really believe we need to tackle this problem before it gets to that point.

Ms. Barb Broome: So do I.

The Chair: Thank you.

With probably the last words, we have Ms. Sansoucy.

[Translation]

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy: I will continue what I started a little earlier.

However, before doing so, I would like to say, Ms. Broome, that I don't have any questions for you because you work in a sector I know quite well. But I would like to say that I really appreciate the clarity of your answers.

We talked about underemployment, and I will continue with that. We said that young people are more often underemployed.

In your experience, are some young people from disadvantaged groups more likely to be underemployed? If so, which ones?

How could the federal government intervene to reduce these inequities?

Mr. Rudy Humbert: Indeed, young people are among the populations most affected by underemployment. Among young people, newcomers are the ones who are most affected. First Nations are too. In addition, young people who have not completed their education or who have not obtained a university degree are also among the most affected.

The answer to this continues to be support. As my colleague Ms. Violletti said, the overall approach is to support young people overall, in other words, in all the difficulties they face, and not just in terms of employment difficulties.

It's important to provide continuity of service to these young people, so that they don't fall through the cracks we were talking about earlier. We must allow a continuity of personalized services and support that take into account all areas young people's lives.

• (1725)

Ms. Elise Violletti: I would simply like to round out my colleague's answer.

Since 2006, several actions have been carried out within the youth employment centres relating to student retention. The IDEO 16-17 measure is now part of the Creneau youth employment centre framework.

Student retention is one of the elements that promotes access to jobs, and enables young people to thrive and develop their full potential. As we know, young people who leave school early will have access to jobs that will enable them to meet their food needs rather than real careers.

Promoting student retention, support and accessibility to services is certainly essential to allow complementarity and continuity, to enable young people to integrate socio-professionally.

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy: In your presentation, you spoke briefly about how the OECD has documented the polarization of the labour market.

How is Canada, and more particularly Quebec, affected by income inequality, the gap in which is growing larger and larger?

Mr. Rudy Humbert: There is a polarization of the labour market within Canada and Quebec.

A set of middle-class jobs are disappearing, resulting in increased demand for highly skilled jobs or under-qualified jobs. This is where the problem arises because a multiplicity of well-paid and stable jobs have disappeared. We also note that young people who leave school with degrees do not have suitable opportunities, since these jobs have disappeared. They must therefore turn to underemployment.

Above all, we are seeing an increase in the profile of the difficulties faced by young people who are not participating in the labour market. We are in a period of full employment, but support is even more vital today because people who are not participating in the job market have increased difficulties, which requires even more intense support to continue on this path.

As Ms. Broome said, the road to employment is inevitably long. Support must therefore be ongoing and take into account all areas of

the young person's life. Young people don't need to get jobs as quickly as possible, since they may not be able to keep them. Sustainable insertion in employment requires fairly broad support.

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy: As you said, the importance of self-esteem is at the root of all learning. If young people are increasingly marginalized in the labour market, they increasingly question themselves because they see the widening gap between what might be available for them and their opportunities. What are the solutions?

Ms. Elise Violletti: There is no miracle solution, of course. The solutions are to support the young person, to allow accessibility to services, to make sure to provide support and to accept that the results may not occur in the short term. This is essential because we know that young people will need a lot of trial-and-error learning and experiences in order to access sustainable employment.

Finding employment is one thing, but finding sustainable employment is another, because there are different problems associated with it. This is especially true in the case of full employment. If we need all the young people and they quickly get a job, we can think that problems will necessarily crop up along the way. This can cause them to lose their jobs and to once again find themselves in a precarious situation. It is therefore essential to offer them support and to ensure that they can be supported in the context of this trial-and-error learning and in other learning they will do when they enter the labour market.

Mr. Rudy Humbert: I would like to add something quickly. My colleague really focused on the necessary support to young people. Supporting employers is also important.

In small communities, a young person who has one, two or three bad work experiences will, of course, have to face some self-esteem problems. Opportunities for that individual in the local labour market, will also be limited. Supporting young people, which is done in youth employment centres, and supporting employers must be done throughout the community to know how to support these young people, accept certain difficulties and work to resolve them. The whole situation has to be treated fairly broadly.

• (1730)

[English]

The Chair: Thank you very much.

I see the clock at 5:30. Unfortunately, that brings our first round of witnesses to an end here today. I would like to thank each of you for taking the time to be here with us and to share your knowledge on this issue.

As I said, we are right at the very beginning. We are looking forward to wrapping up this study hopefully sometime in March, and of course sharing that with each of you.

Thank you to all my colleagues.

Thank you to the folks to the left and right of me, and the folks in the booth and behind me.

Have a nice evening. The meeting is adjourned.

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