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CANADA

THE ECONOMIC LEADERSHIP AND PROSPERITY OF CANADIAN WOMEN

Report of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women

**Hélène LeBlanc
Chair**

APRIL 2015

41st PARLIAMENT, SECOND SESSION

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THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

has the honour to present its

FIFTH REPORT

Pursuant to its mandate under Standing Order 108(2), the Committee has studied the economic leadership and prosperity of Canadian women and has agreed to report the following:

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THE ECONOMIC LEADERSHIP AND PROSPERITY OF CANADIAN WOMEN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women¹ (“the Committee”) undertook a study on the economic leadership and prosperity of Canadian women, where testimony was provided by 37 witnesses – 2 of whom appeared as individuals, and the remainder representing 25 organizations – over a total of 10 meetings held from April to November 2014. These meetings confirmed that women are an exciting part of the entrepreneurial movement in Canada.

In a briefing by Industry Canada, the Committee learned that in 2011, 14% of small businesses were solely owned by women, and around 18% of small businesses were owned in equal measure by both men and women.² Statistics Canada, in a briefing to the Committee, stated that one in eight women was self-employed, compared with one in five men.³

It was emphasized that women are highly educated, yet hesitate to pursue entrepreneurial opportunities. Women are more likely to pursue such an entrepreneurial path if they are involved in either formal or informal mentorship.

Ms. JudyLynn Archer, President and Chief Executive Officer at Women Building Futures, explained that women entering her organization’s trade program had an average salary increase of 127%, as compared with their previous salary, on their first day of hire.⁴ Furthermore, she explained that “this industry provides incredible opportunity. It comes with no student debt, a way to earn as you learn, and a way to make an income that most women would not dream about.”⁵

In his testimony, Mr. John Gartke, a director at Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada, shared information from a recent report: it predicts “a 10% increase in the number of women-owned firms over the next 10 years would lead to a \$50 billion injection into the Canadian economy. This demonstrates that Canadian business women

1 The evidence cited in this document is from the [House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women \[FEWO\], 2nd Session, 41st Parliament](#), unless otherwise noted.

2 [Evidence](#), 9 April 2014, 1530 (Shereen Benzvy Miller, Assistant Deputy Minister, Small Business, Tourism and Marketplace Services, Industry Canada).

3 [Evidence](#), 14 May 2014, 1535 (Alison Hale, Director, Labour Statistics Division, Statistics Canada).

4 [Evidence](#), 4 November 2014, 0945 (JudyLynn Archer, President and Chief Executive Officer, Women Building Futures).

5 Ibid.

are well placed to lead the charge in strengthening our economy and creating jobs, now and well into the future.”⁶

Those who testified also discussed some of the obstacles women face while pursuing economic prosperity and leadership; these included access to education, access to child care and challenges specific to marginalized groups of women, such as Aboriginal women, immigrant and racialized women, and disabled women.

The Committee heard that financial training is valuable for immigrant women to help them succeed in finding employment or launching a business. In addition, witnesses spoke about the difficulty immigrant women face in obtaining recognition for foreign accreditation.

Ms. Hodan Nalayeh, Executive Producer of Integration TV, said that while her Somali community had “great entrepreneurial spirit,” the members of the community struggled in Canada to expand their businesses to mainstream society beyond their community.⁷

Countless witnesses recognized the vital role that women play in Canada’s economy. With the guidance and testimony from the Committee’s witnesses, the Committee developed a set of recommendations.

Through the recommendations at the end of this study, the Committee continues to show its support of women’s economic leadership and prosperity.

Examples of these recommendations include:

The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada consider developing a national mentorship campaign for female entrepreneurs to encourage support among business women.

The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada implement a “comply or explain” approach for increasing women’s representation on corporate boards, with targets, timelines and increased transparency.

The recommendations presented in this study provide a path towards improved economic leadership and prosperity of all Canadian women.

6 [Evidence](#), 7 April 2014, 1540 (John Gartke, Director, Trade Missions, Consultations and Outreach, Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada).

7 [Evidence](#), 18 November 2014, 0900 (Hodan Nalayeh, Executive Producer, Integration TV, as an Individual).

INTRODUCTION

For Canadian women of a century ago, having paid employment outside the home would have been unimaginable. Starting in the 1970s, women's representation in the labour force experienced sustained growth. Women now make up around 47% of the Canadian labour force, with many women holding positions of economic leadership. Women now play a greater role in the economy than at any other time in Canada's history.

The House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women ("the Committee") agreed in March 2014 to conduct a study on the economic leadership and prosperity of Canadian women.⁸ The Committee adopted the following motion:

That, in keeping with the stated priorities of Status of Women Canada, the Committee undertake a study examining the economic leadership and prosperity of Canadian women, with women entrepreneurship being one of the areas explored.

The Committee was briefed by officials from Status of Women Canada, Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada, Industry Canada, the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, the Business Development Bank of Canada, Statistics Canada, and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. The Committee received testimony from 37 witnesses – 2 of whom appeared as individuals, and the remainder representing 25 organizations. The briefings and testimony were received over a total of 10 meetings held from April to November 2014. In addition, the Committee received briefs from a number of organizations, many of which had appeared before the Committee, along with written speaking notes and follow-up responses to questions from Committee members.

This report summarizes the evidence gathered during the study on economic leadership and prosperity of Canadian women and examines a number of key themes that emerged during the testimony, those being: emerging frontiers in women's economic leadership and prosperity; practices to support women's economic leadership and prosperity; and barriers to women's economic leadership and prosperity. These themes are interconnected and serve to underpin the report's recommendations included in this report.

Throughout this study, the Committee was reminded of women's perseverance in the economic realm, particularly in terms of their membership on corporate boards, roles as entrepreneurs, and participation in non-traditional employment. In addition, the Committee heard of progressive practices serving to advance women's participation in the economy, including initiatives to develop leadership and financial skills, support from mentors and role models, family-friendly workplace policies, and efforts to recognize women's success. While witnesses applauded the progress that women in Canada have made, they acknowledged that some challenges persist for women in terms of economic

⁸ The evidence cited in this document is from the [House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women \[FEWO\], 2nd Session, 41st Parliament](#), unless otherwise noted.

leadership and prosperity. These challenges include access to education; unpaid work; the gender pay gap; access to child care; misogyny and violence; and poverty and living conditions. As well, specific challenges remain for marginalized groups, such as Aboriginal and immigrant women. This report addresses all of these successes and challenges, and provides eight recommendations to the Government of Canada to strengthen women's economic leadership and prosperity and their place in Canada's economy.

The Committee recognizes the important contributions made by witnesses and thanks them for sharing their knowledge, ideas and insights. The Committee congratulates and applauds the women who shared their own compelling stories of economic success. These women are inspirational role models to all Canadians – men and women. The Committee hopes that this report will play a role in inspiring women of all ages to pursue positions of economic leadership and to improve their economic prosperity, and in this way, contribute to the advancement of Canada's economy as a whole.

OVERVIEW OF WOMEN'S ECONOMIC PROSPERITY AND LEADERSHIP IN CANADA

Over the course of the study, the Committee learned of the important progress being made, and the challenges remaining, with respect to women's economic leadership and prosperity in Canada. The Committee learned that the economic prosperity of women is a measure of the economic opportunities available to them and their level of economic self-sufficiency; such prosperity can be limited by barriers to fulfilment of their economic potential. The Committee was informed that the extent of women's economic leadership can be determined by the number of women in economic decision-making positions, which includes women in board director positions, in senior management, as entrepreneurs and as business owners.⁹

The Committee heard that women's advancement over the past decades in terms of economic leadership and prosperity is due in part to the increase in women's participation in post-secondary education.¹⁰ Ms. Linda Savoie, Senior Director General at Status of Women Canada, said "women are graduating from our academic institutions in ever-increasing numbers."¹¹ Ms. Kathleen Lahey, a professor at Queen's University, told the Committee that "[w]omen in Canada have by their actions, generation after generation, demonstrated that they are very strongly motivated to achieve as much as possible with their educational backgrounds, with their abilities, with their energies."¹² The Committee heard that there is no "supply challenge" as women are well-represented among university graduates;¹³ in fact, recent data indicate that women make up 62% of university graduates

9 Status of Women Canada, "[Statement by Minister Leitch on International Women's Day](#)," *Statements*, 8 March 2014.

10 [Evidence](#), 4 November 2014, 0855 (Anne-Marie Roy, President, Student Federation of the University of Ottawa).

11 [Evidence](#), 7 April 2014, 1530 (Linda Savoie, Senior Director General, Women's Program and Regional Operations Directorate, Status of Women Canada).

12 [Evidence](#), 12 May 2014, 1600 (Kathleen Lahey, Professor, Faculty of Law, Queen's University).

13 [Evidence](#), 12 May 2014, 1530 (Clare Beckton, Executive Director, Centre for Women in Politics and Public Leadership, Carleton University).

in Canada.¹⁴ It should be noted, however, that while more women are enrolling in post-secondary education, they remain underrepresented in trades and science, technology, engineering and mathematics fields.¹⁵

Women's economic leadership and prosperity has also improved as women's representation in the labour force in Canada has steadily increased in recent decades. In 2014, women represented around 47% of the labour force. As well, the gap between men's and women's labour force participation continues to narrow.¹⁶ Women's labour force participation rate in 2014 was approximately 62%, compared with 71% for men. Among the 15 to 24 years' age group, there was no noticeable gap in the labour force participation rate (around 64%) between men and women.¹⁷

After considering women's economic achievements, the Committee agreed with Ms. Danièle Chouinard, Director General of Com'Femme, who lauded women's "perseverance, courage and intelligence."¹⁸ However, the Committee learned about the ongoing challenges for women in Canada's labour force. Ms. Janice McDonald, co-founder of This Space Works, said "[c]hange is hard and it's slow, but I'm an eternal optimist. I believe we will get there, but I also think that we have to agitate to get there."¹⁹ Some of these challenges include:

- women remain more likely to work part time (less than 30 hours per week at their main job), with 26.9% of women employed part time in 2009, compared with 11.9% of men;²⁰
- women's wages are about 90% of those of men, and women consistently earn less than men at every level of education and across occupations and industries;²¹ and

14 [Evidence](#), 12 May 2014, 1545 (Mary Cornish, Chair, Equal Pay Coalition).

15 [Evidence](#), 9 April 2014, 1630 (Alison M. Konrad, Professor, Ivey Business School, University of Western Ontario, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada).

16 [Evidence](#), 7 April 2014, 1530 (Linda Savoie, Status of Women Canada); Statistics Canada, "[Labour force characteristics by sex and age group](#)," *Summary tables*, 2015.

17 [Evidence](#), 14 May 2014, 1530 (Alison Hale, Statistics Canada); Statistics Canada, "[Labour force characteristics by sex and age group](#)," *Summary tables*, 2015; Statistics Canada, "[Labour force, employment and unemployment, levels and rates, by province](#)," *Summary tables*, 2014.

18 [Evidence](#), 18 November 2014, 0940 (Danièle Chouinard, Director General, Com'Femme).

19 [Evidence](#), 4 November 2014, 1035 (Janice McDonald, Co-Founder, This Space Works).

20 [Evidence](#), 14 May 2014, 1530 (Alison Hale, Statistics Canada); Vincent Ferrao, "[Paid Work](#)," *Women in Canada: A Gender-based Statistical Report*, Statistics Canada, December 2010, p. 17.

21 [Evidence](#), 4 November 2014, 0855 (Anne-Marie Roy, Student Federation of the University of Ottawa); [Evidence](#), 14 May 2014, 1600 (Alison Hale, Statistics Canada); [Evidence](#), 12 May 2014, 1540 (Mary Cornish, Equal Pay Coalition); [Evidence](#), 30 April 2014, 1530 (Kate McInturff, Senior Researcher, National Office, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives).

- women hold approximately 50% of entry-level positions in FP500²² companies, around 36% of management positions, and 16% of board positions.²³

Ms. Savoie explained to the Committee that “as policy-makers we know that challenges remain. We can all recognize that because of a variety of social and economic factors.”²⁴ While discussing these ongoing challenges, Ms. Chouinard asked the Committee “why are we so under-represented in economic and governance structures? I am here this morning and a lot of other women around the table are here to say that we have a place. Why can we not take that place?”²⁵

Ms. Heather Kennedy, Vice-President, Government Relations, Suncor Energy Inc., shared with the Committee the challenges, but also the important benefits, that came with her economic success:

I have ... experienced harassment, missed opportunities, wondered every working day what my children were up to, and learned that not everyone values diversity at the decision-making table. But those experiences have been overshadowed by great support, openness for the leadership that I've been able to bring, and pride in being part of advancing the cause of professional women in my own small way.²⁶

The Committee was reminded that women’s economic success is not only beneficial for the women themselves, but also has a direct positive impact on the country’s economy and society.²⁷ Ms. Lahey explained to the Committee that evidence from international organizations such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, shows that when gender equality is upheld in a country, the country’s economy is more resilient and residents experience greater economic stability.²⁸

Dr. Kate McInturff, Senior Researcher at the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, agreed: “An investment of political and financial resources into increased economic security for women in Canada will pay dividends, not only in the quality of life of Canadians but also in the economic stability of the country.”²⁹

The Committee heard, in testimony from witnesses and briefings from departments, of a number of federal government-led initiatives that are aimed at improving women’s

22 FP500 companies stands for *Financial Post* 500 companies, Canada’s largest 500 companies by revenue.

23 [Evidence](#), 30 April 2014, 1540 (Alex Johnston, Executive Director, Catalyst Canada Inc.).

24 [Evidence](#), 7 April 2014, 1530 (Linda Savoie, Status of Women Canada).

25 [Evidence](#), 18 November 2014, 0850 (Danièle Chouinard, Com’Femme).

26 [Evidence](#), 7 May 2014, 1640 (Heather Kennedy, Vice-President, Government Relations, Suncor Energy Inc.).

27 [Evidence](#), 12 May 2014, 1545 (Mary Cornish, Equal Pay Coalition); [Evidence](#), 12 May 2014, 1605 (Kathleen Lahey, Queen’s University).

28 [Evidence](#), 12 May 2014, 1605 (Kathleen Lahey, Queen’s University).

29 [Evidence](#), 30 April 2014, 1535 (Kate McInturff, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives).

economic leadership and prosperity and at addressing the aforementioned challenges facing women in the labour force in Canada. A number of these initiatives are listed below:

- One of Status of Women Canada’s priority areas is to increase women’s economic security and prosperity.³⁰ Status of Women Canada has made a recent call for proposals with the goal of creating “new economic opportunities for women by advancing women in non-traditional occupations, increasing economic options for women, and improving prosperity for immigrant women.”³¹ Previous years have seen projects specific to “women in the digital economy,” “economic prosperity of girls,”³² and “building partnerships between chambers of commerce and immigrant women’s groups.”³³
- The Business Women in International Trade (BWIT) program, led by the Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada’s (DFATD) Canadian Trade Commissioner Service, is “dedicated to assisting, promoting, and advocating for women-owned businesses in the area of international trade.”³⁴ The program’s central objectives are “to develop initiatives that support and engage business women in the international marketplace; to provide export advice, guidance, and access to information and services specifically for women entrepreneurs on subjects including support networks, government resources, and special trade events; to provide awareness and training to adequately prepare business women to tap into international markets; and finally, to provide opportunities for women-focused trade missions.”³⁵ The BWIT program also manages a website, produces an annual newsletter, and hosts a LinkedIn group.³⁶ In addition, the BWIT program organizes trade missions of Canadian business women and stakeholders to the Women’s Business Enterprise National Council, a national conference and business fair in the United States.³⁷
- The Business Development Bank of Canada (BDC) is “the only bank in Canada that deals exclusively with entrepreneurs” by providing financing and consulting services to entrepreneurs. It focuses on the “needs and

30 [Evidence](#), 7 April 2014, 1530 (Linda Savoie, Status of Women Canada).

31 Ibid., 1535.

32 Ibid., 1550.

33 Ibid., 1625.

34 [Evidence](#), 7 April 2014, 1535 (John Gartke, Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada).

35 Ibid.

36 Ibid.

37 Ibid., 1540.

challenges faced by Canadian businesses with a particular focus on small and medium-sized businesses.”³⁸

- The Directory of Women-Owned Businesses, developed by both DFATD and Industry Canada, is “a specialized, women-owned directory in Industry Canada’s Canadian Company Capabilities database.”³⁹ The directory helps business women promote their products or services to potential customers and to partner with other businesses owned by women. As well, the directory provides “corporations that have supplier diversity initiatives and programs access to a dedicated listing of women-owned businesses across the country.”⁴⁰
- The Canada Business Network, managed at the national level by Industry Canada, “delivers access to reliable information and tools to Canadian businesses and entrepreneurs.”⁴¹ The aim of the Network is to “reduce the complexity of dealing with multiple levels of government; consolidate business information in one convenient service; enable [businesses] to make well-informed business decisions in a global economy; and contribute to [businesses’] success through sound business planning, market research and the use of strategic business information.”⁴² There is a centre for the Network in every province and territory, and these centres work in partnership with communities and not-for-profit organizations.⁴³
- The Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency provides “financial support for not-for-profit business organizations across the region that in turn provide women entrepreneurs with the resources they need to improve the growth and competitiveness of their business.”⁴⁴ Some of these organizations include Nova Scotia’s Mount Saint Vincent University Centre for Women in Business, the Prince Edward Island Business Women’s Association, the New Brunswick Association of Community Business Development Corporations, and the Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Women Entrepreneurs.⁴⁵

38 [Evidence](#), 9 April 2014, 1550 (Gina Gale, Senior Vice-President, Financing and Consulting, Atlantic, Business Development Bank of Canada).

39 [Evidence](#), 7 April 2014, 1535 (John Gartke, Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada).

40 Ibid.

41 [Evidence](#), 9 April 2014, 1535 (Shereen Benzvy Miller, Industry Canada).

42 Canada Business Network, [About Canada Business Network](#).

43 [Evidence](#), 9 April 2014, 1535 (Shereen Benzvy Miller, Industry Canada); Canada Business Network, [About Canada Business Network](#).

44 [Evidence](#), 9 April 2014, 1545 (Daryell Nowlan, Vice-President, Policy and Programs, Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency).

45 Ibid.

- The federal government’s Advisory Council for Promoting Women on Boards,⁴⁶ launched in 2013, had the aim to: “provide advice on how industry can increase women’s representation on corporate boards; suggest how industry and government can track and measure progress on this initiative and what tools, if any, could be employed to achieve this goal; and make recommendations on how best to recognize leaders in industry and applaud companies that have reached their targets.”⁴⁷ The Advisory Council’s report, *Good for Business: A Plan to Promote the Participation of More Women on Canadian Boards*, was released in June 2014.⁴⁸
- The federal government’s Advisory Council on Women Entrepreneurs and Business Leaders, established in 2014 for a two-year period, has the mandate “to provide a forum for the exchange of views, experiences, best practices and solutions on issues related to helping women entrepreneurs succeed in starting and growing their businesses.”⁴⁹

A number of witnesses expressed their appreciation for the ongoing support of these government initiatives, and acknowledged the difference these programs made in their economic success. For example, Ms. Julia Fournier, President and Chief Executive Officer of HCMWorks Inc., made the following remarks about BDC:

BDC rocks It's true. We wouldn't have been able to do that transaction without BDC. It was more than \$400,000, and they were incredibly supportive of me as a woman who is the majority owner of an enterprise. They led me through the process to ultimately be the exclusive owner of the company.⁵⁰

As well, Ms. Alex Johnston, Executive Director of Catalyst Canada Inc., spoke positively of Canada's Advisory Council for Promoting Women on Boards, calling it “an influential platform” where the federal government can “make a difference.”⁵¹

The Committee heard about the importance of providing ongoing funding for such programs with a proven track record in order to foster women’s economic leadership and prosperity.⁵² The Committee also heard that the funding paradigms for such programs

46 [Evidence](#), 7 April 2014, 1555 (Sébastien Goupil, Director General, Policy and External Relations, Status of Women Canada); [Evidence](#), 30 April 2014, 1620 (Alex Johnston, Catalyst Canada Inc.).

47 Status of Women Canada, [Women on Boards](#).

48 Canada's Advisory Council for Promoting Women on Boards, [Good for Business: A Plan to Promote the Participation of More Women on Canadian Boards](#), Status of Women Canada, June 2014.

49 Status of Women Canada, “[Minister Leitch announces advisory council on women entrepreneurs and business leaders](#),” *News Releases*, 30 September 2014.

50 [Evidence](#), 9 April 2014, 1705 (Julia Fournier, President and Chief Executive Officer, HCMWorks Inc., Business Development Bank of Canada).

51 [Evidence](#), 30 April 2014, 1655 (Alex Johnston, Catalyst Canada Inc.).

52 [Evidence](#), 4 November 2014, 0905 (JudyLynn Archer, Women Building Futures).

should focus on collaboration, rather than competition, in order to overcome the complex challenges still facing women.⁵³

Witnesses also stated that it was important that good data on women's economic participation in Canada be collected and shared in order to inform these programs, as well as policies and legislation relevant to women's economic leadership and prosperity, at the federal level.⁵⁴

Recommendation 1

The Committee recommends that Status of Women Canada support evidence-based programming to promote women's increased participation in the labour force, resulting in improved economic prosperity for those women.

EMERGING FRONTIERS IN WOMEN'S ECONOMIC LEADERSHIP AND PROSPERITY

A. Entrepreneurship

Given the economic value of Canada's small and medium-sized enterprises, encouraging greater participation in business ownership among women would significantly benefit both women and the overall Canadian economy. Witnesses told the Committee that an increasing number of women are turning to entrepreneurship for economic success.⁵⁵ Ms. Victoria Lennox, co-founder and Chief Executive Officer of Startup Canada, spoke proudly of her personal experience to the Committee; she stated "I am a serial entrepreneur and I am a woman."⁵⁶

The Committee heard that Canada's small businesses are the "backbone of the economy" and that small and medium-sized enterprises represent 98% of Canadian businesses and 45% of GDP.⁵⁷ In a briefing by Industry Canada, the Committee learned that in 2011, 14% of small businesses were solely owned by women, and around 18% of small businesses were owned in equal measure by both men and women.⁵⁸ In a briefing to the Committee, Statistics Canada stated that one in eight women was self-employed, compared with one in five men.⁵⁹

53 Society for Canadian Women in Science and Technology, "Speaking Notes," *Submitted Speaking Notes*, 1 December 2014.

54 [Evidence](#), 7 April 2014, 1535 (Linda Savoie, Status of Women Canada); [Evidence](#), 12 May 2014, 1625 (Kathleen Lahey, Queen's University); [Evidence](#), 14 May 2014, 1615 (Robyn Benson, National President, Executive Office, Public Service Alliance of Canada).

55 [Evidence](#), 18 November 2014, 0925 (Fariba Pacheleh, President, Society for Canadian Women in Science and Technology); [Evidence](#), 30 April 2014, 1545 (Alex Johnston, Catalyst Canada Inc.); [Evidence](#), 18 November 2014, 0940 (Hodan Nalayeh, Integration TV, as an Individual); [Evidence](#), 5 May 2014, 1555 (Victoria Lennox, Co-Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Startup Canada).

56 [Evidence](#), 5 May 2014, 1530 (Victoria Lennox, Startup Canada).

57 [Evidence](#), 9 April 2014, 1530 (Shereen Benzvy Miller, Industry Canada).

58 Ibid.

59 [Evidence](#), 14 May 2014, 1535 (Alison Hale, Statistics Canada).

Many witnesses were happy with women's increased participation in the workforce as entrepreneurs, and called for more women to launch small and medium-sized businesses. Mr. John Gartke, a director at DFATD, referenced a recent report by the Royal Bank of Canada on small and medium-sized enterprises:

[The report] predicts that a 10% increase in the number of women-owned firms over the next 10 years would lead to a \$50 billion injection into the Canadian economy. This demonstrates that Canadian business women are well placed to lead the charge in strengthening our economy and creating jobs, now and well into the future.⁶⁰

In the field of entrepreneurship, the Committee learned of the family-friendly benefits afforded by running one's own company, such as working from home and flexible hours.⁶¹ Ms. Julia Fournier, President and Chief Executive Officer of HCMWorks Inc., shared her perspective:

When I had my children it was incredibly difficult, and that's one of the reasons that I started a business. That's one of the reasons that I needed to start a business. If my children were sick, not going to an office wasn't too tolerated in business, and I knew I was being disadvantaged as a result. My kids were probably three and four and running around on the floor, and I was working on my laptop at the time.⁶²

The Committee heard that some women would prefer to work at home in order to have flexible hours; Ms. Lennox referred to women who may be "thinking about starting her own company so she can stay at home with her children."⁶³ Ms. Hodan Nalayeh, Executive Producer of Integration TV, shared similar challenges which led her down the path to entrepreneurship:

Tuition was expensive. I had a mortgage to pay. I had no one to look after my children, no grant, no loan, and I had to work long hours. After graduation, it was impossible to find a job in television, so instead of looking for someone to give me a job, I created a job for myself.⁶⁴

The Committee learned that entrepreneurship is a challenging field, requiring as one witness said "confidence, competence, capital, and connections" for business success.⁶⁵ Entrepreneurs look for solutions to problems, identify opportunities in markets, and generate new ideas.⁶⁶ The Committee was told that women bring a different approach to business;⁶⁷ Ms. Janice McDonald, co-founder of This Space Works, provided the

60 [Evidence](#), 7 April 2014, 1540 (John Gartke, Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada).

61 [Evidence](#), 5 May 2014, 1600 and 1620 (Victoria Lennox, Startup Canada).

62 [Evidence](#), 9 April 2014, 1655 (Julia Fournier, HCMWorks Inc., Business Development Bank of Canada).

63 [Evidence](#), 5 May 2014, 1600 and 1620 (Victoria Lennox, Startup Canada).

64 [Evidence](#), 18 November 2014, 0905 (Hodan Nalayeh, Integration TV, as an Individual).

65 [Evidence](#), 18 November 2014, 0910 (Jill Earthy, Director, British Columbia and Yukon, Futurpreneur Canada).

66 [Evidence](#), 7 May 2014, 1715 (Christine Day, Chief Executive Officer, Luvo Inc.).

67 [Evidence](#), 4 November 2014, 0930 (Janice McDonald, This Space Works).

example of benefit corporations, often launched by women, where the bottom line is not just profit, but also includes “people,” the “planet” and a “purpose.”⁶⁸

The Committee heard that some obstacles are the same for small and medium-sized enterprises run by both men and women; such obstacles include “maintaining cash flow, time management, recruiting and retaining employees, managing debt levels, lack of monitoring of business operations to make improvements, and lack of knowledge about competitors and market trends.”⁶⁹

However, the Committee heard that female-owned enterprises have different characteristics than male-owned businesses: they tend to be smaller in size; 33% of firms with 1 to 99 employees are owned by women, compared with 17% of firms with 100 to 499 employees.⁷⁰ As well, female-owned firms are less likely to expand than those of their male counterparts.⁷¹ In addition, women tend to launch businesses in specific industries, such as the service sector, health care, arts and entertainment, and accommodation and food services.⁷²

Witnesses outlined specific challenges for female entrepreneurs. Ms. Shereen Benzvy Miller, Assistant Deputy Minister at Industry Canada, outlined a few of these gender-specific obstacles:

Women ... face ... gender discrimination in the business community in terms of gaining access to credit, information, training, markets and technology. They also tend to face pressures from dual roles as business owners and family caregivers.⁷³

The Committee was informed that women, when compared with their male counterparts, often had business networks that were less extensive, had less expertise in financial management or business planning, and faced financing constraints as they were more likely to launch businesses in sectors that lenders deem to be at greater risk of failure.⁷⁴ The Committee heard that women must often put greater effort than their male counterparts in developing social capital. According to Dr. Catherine Elliott, assistant professor at the Telfer School of Management at the University of Ottawa, “research [shows] that [women’s social capital] tends to be a bit more focused on a close group of

68 Ibid., 0935.

69 [Evidence](#), 9 April 2014, 1550 (Gina Gale, Business Development Bank of Canada).

70 Ibid., 1550 and 1555.

71 [Evidence](#), 9 April 2014, 1610 (Catherine Elliott, Assistant Professor, Telfer School of Management, University of Ottawa, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada); [Evidence](#), 9 April 2014, 1635 (Gina Gale, Atlantic Business Development Bank of Canada).

72 [Evidence](#), 9 April 2014, 1550 and 1555 (Gina Gale, Business Development Bank of Canada); [Evidence](#), 9 April 2014, 1530 (Shereen Benzvy Miller, Industry Canada).

73 [Evidence](#), 9 April 2014, 1535 (Shereen Benzvy Miller, Industry Canada).

74 [Evidence](#), 9 April 2014, 1545 (Daryell Nowlan, Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency).

connections, so [women] need to expand that out to more professional networks and associations.”⁷⁵

While the Committee was told that female business owners are highly educated, with 70% reporting that they hold a post-secondary degree, witnesses explained that these same women report, on average, fewer years of management and ownership experience compared with that of male business owners.⁷⁶ The Committee also heard that women are pursuing entrepreneurship later in life: the share of female majority-owned business owners who are over the age of 65 has almost doubled in the last four years.⁷⁷ This situation highlights the role that mentors can play in assisting female entrepreneurs of all ages with financial and management advice; the value of mentorship is elaborated upon in the section of the report on mentorship and role models.

The Committee heard that in order for women to become entrepreneurs, they often need role models within that field, which can be challenging in a male-dominated field.⁷⁸ Ms. Lennox explained that it will be necessary to take steps to educate the male-led start-up and entrepreneurship community on the benefits of diversity and the need to address women-specific workplace concerns.⁷⁹ To encourage greater participation of women in the entrepreneurship field, witnesses also suggested the creation of peer networks which act as valuable communities where women entrepreneurs can help one another in their business advancement.⁸⁰

The Committee heard that it is a challenge for women to access capital to launch or expand their businesses. While some witnesses acknowledged the value of alternative financing options, such as crowd funding, they emphasized the importance of traditional financing.⁸¹ Ms. Lennox said that “statistically, men will invest in other men, so having men investors who understand women entrepreneurs and who will invest in them is very important.”⁸²

Another significant barrier to following the path to entrepreneurship is the balance of family and work, compounded by a lack of access to affordable child care.⁸³ Ms. Lennox said that when organizing conferences, her organization has “a hard time finding women entrepreneurs to sit on panels because they're so busy either taking care of their children

75 [Evidence](#), 9 April 2014, 1640 (Catherine Elliott, Telfer School of Management, University of Ottawa, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada).

76 [Evidence](#), 9 April 2014, 1530 (Shereen Benzvy Miller, Industry Canada).

77 *Ibid.*, 1645.

78 [Evidence](#), 5 May 2014, 1555 (Victoria Lennox, Startup Canada).

79 *Ibid.*, 1550.

80 [Evidence](#), 5 May 2014, 1550 (Victoria Lennox, Startup Canada); [Evidence](#), 4 November 2014, 0915 (Janice McDonald, This Space Works).

81 [Evidence](#), 4 November 2014, 0930 (Janice McDonald, This Space Works); [Evidence](#), 5 May 2014, 1555 (Victoria Lennox, Startup Canada).

82 [Evidence](#), 5 May 2014, 1555 (Victoria Lennox, Startup Canada).

83 *Ibid.*, 1600.

or building their businesses that they don't have time to do something superfluous like a panel.”⁸⁴

As it concerns girls and young women, witnesses spoke of the value in encouraging youth to become economic leaders and to develop their abilities in sales and marketing, skills which give them the capacity to sell ideas, concepts or products.⁸⁵ The Committee heard that the Internet provides an opportunity to develop these skills in youth as it has created an accessible marketplace, through companies such as eBay and Etsy.⁸⁶ Ms. Fournier told the Committee:

I was always a salesperson, probably from about the age of 16 or 17, in retail. That was my thing. I think as a result, I understood revenue; I understood profit; I understood a profit and loss statement; I understood different aspects of business.⁸⁷

To encourage young women’s participation in the entrepreneurship field, it was recommended that financial literacy and entrepreneurship skills be developed on an ongoing basis, starting at a young age.⁸⁸ Financial literacy is discussed in greater detail in a later section of the report.

A further suggestion to improve women’s participation in entrepreneurship was that the federal government launch an advisory council on women’s entrepreneurship, managed by Status of Women Canada;⁸⁹ this has already been established with the 2014 creation of the federal government’s Advisory Council on Women Entrepreneurs and Business Leaders.⁹⁰

Recommendation 2

The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada consider focusing on programs to encourage female entrepreneurs to access capital in order to grow their businesses.

B. Corporate Boards

The Committee heard that over the past decade, corporate leaders and shareholders have started to acknowledge that company leadership should reflect the composition of the workforce and society more broadly. As a result, many corporations are taking steps to improve diversity on corporate boards, in particular the representative

84 Ibid., 1625.

85 [Evidence](#), 18 November 2014, 0935 (Hodan Nalayeh, Integration TV, as an Individual).

86 [Evidence](#), 7 May 2014, 1715 (Christine Day, Luvo Inc.).

87 [Evidence](#), 9 April 2014, 1650 (Julia Fournier, HCMWorks Inc., Business Development Bank of Canada).

88 Futurpreneur Canada, “Brief: Futurpreneur Canada – Jill Earthy, Regional Director, B.C. and Yukon,” *Speaking Notes*, 18 November 2014.

89 [Evidence](#), 5 May 2014, 1605 (Victoria Lennox, Startup Canada).

90 Status of Women Canada, “[Minister Leitch announces advisory council on women entrepreneurs and business leaders](#),” *News release*, 30 September 2014.

participation of women.⁹¹ Ms. Alex Johnston, Executive Director of Catalyst Canada, shared her organization's data, which indicate women hold approximately 50% of entry-level positions in FP500 companies, around 36% of management positions, and 16% of board positions.⁹²

Witnesses explained that having more women on corporate boards supports the principle of gender diversity and equal opportunity, but it also makes good economic sense; research shows that companies with a higher proportion of women on their boards of directors outperform companies with lower proportions of female directors.⁹³

The Committee also heard that increasing women's presence on corporate boards can improve a company's ability to respond to their clients. Ms. Johnston provided an example:

The reason that ... the CEO for Coca-Cola, became so fixated on women was that he said 80% of purchasing decisions were made by women but this was not reflected through the ranks, so over the course of time there was no way they could continue to be a successful company if women weren't developing products and making decisions.⁹⁴

The Committee was also told that when more women occupy board positions, evidence indicates that workplaces become more inclusive, employees are more engaged in their work, and there is greater customer satisfaction.⁹⁵

The Committee heard that the relatively low representation of women on corporate boards is not because of a lack of board-ready female candidates.⁹⁶ In sharing Catalyst Canada's work on improving women's representation on corporate boards, Ms. Johnston suggested that "to get to 25% would require every FP500 company to add 1 more woman to their board, so 90 more women a year for the next 5 years. That is out of 4,200 board seats. You cannot tell me there is a dearth of women who are qualified to take those 90 spots. We simply need to increase demand. Supply is well in hand."⁹⁷ There was agreement from Ms. Janice MacDonald, co-founder of This Space Works, who stated "we have many qualified and board-ready women across Canada."⁹⁸

91 [Evidence](#), 18 November 2014, 0920 (Fariba Pacheleh, Society for Canadian Women in Science and Technology); [Evidence](#), 30 April 2014, 1655 (Alex Johnston, Catalyst Canada Inc.).

92 [Evidence](#), 30 April 2014, 1540 (Alex Johnston, Catalyst Canada Inc.).

93 [Evidence](#), 18 November 2014, 0920 (Fariba Pacheleh, Society for Canadian Women in Science and Technology); [Evidence](#), 4 November 2014, 1035 (Janice McDonald, This Space Works); [Evidence](#), 7 May 2014, 1640 (Heather Kennedy, Suncor Energy Inc.); [Evidence](#), 30 April 2014, 1655 (Alex Johnston, Catalyst Canada Inc.).

94 [Evidence](#), 30 April 2014, 1655 (Alex Johnston, Catalyst Canada Inc.).

95 *Ibid.*, 1650.

96 [Evidence](#), 4 November 2014, 0935 (Janice McDonald, This Space Works); [Evidence](#), 30 April 2014, 1545 (Alex Johnston, Catalyst Canada Inc.).

97 [Evidence](#), 30 April 2014, 1545 (Alex Johnston, Catalyst Canada Inc.).

98 [Evidence](#), 4 November 2014, 0855 (Janice McDonald, This Space Works).

Witnesses explained that while women sought membership on corporate boards, they were held back for a number of reasons. Dr. Alison M. Konrad, professor at the Ivey Business School of University of Western Ontario, told the Committee that there is a:

[S]ubstantial amount of evidence showing that women who are interested in business are equally ambitious as their male counterparts and equally likely to desire advancement to top leadership positions, but several elements limit women's career progress compared to their male counterparts of equal ability and motivation.⁹⁹

Ms. Johnston shared the same concerns: “[T]his is not a glass ceiling. Women are not entering as 50% and then moving up to management consistently through the ranks and then all of a sudden hitting a barrier. Increasingly we are saying it's a sticky floor.”¹⁰⁰

The Committee learned that a central reason for women's disproportionate representation on corporate boards is that corporate culture can unintentionally uphold gender stereotypes and that there are still gendered notions of leadership in workplaces, whereby the capabilities and qualities of men, rather than women, are seen to embody “leadership.”¹⁰¹ Ms. Clare Beckton, Executive Director of Carleton University's Centre for Women in Politics and Public Leadership, suggested that some promotional boards look at leadership capabilities “through the lens of the existing male models,” which means that they see assertive women as aggressive – a negatively quality – whereas men who are assertive are viewed as “go-getters” – a positive quality.¹⁰²

Ms. Heather Kennedy, Vice-President of Government Relations at Suncor Energy Inc., described a troubling gender stereotype: “men are bosses and women are bossy.”¹⁰³ She said, “[t]he next time you hear someone call ... a little girl bossy, go up to them and say that the little girl is not bossy; she has executive leadership skills.”¹⁰⁴

In addition, the Committee was told that there are unconscious and unintended automatic biases against women seeking leadership positions.¹⁰⁵ Psychology tests have demonstrated that “people are more likely to associate men with success and women with failure in a leadership position” and that when women do demonstrate leadership qualities,

99 [Evidence](#), 9 April 2014, 1605 (Alison M. Konrad, Ivey Business School, University of Western Ontario, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada).

100 [Evidence](#), 30 April 2014, 1540 (Alex Johnston, Catalyst Canada Inc.).

101 [Evidence](#), 12 May 2014, 1535 (Clare Beckton, Centre for Women in Politics and Public Leadership, Carleton University); [Evidence](#), 18 November 2014, 1000 (Hodan Nalayeh, Integration TV, as an Individual); [Evidence](#), 30 April 2014, 1605 and 1615 (Alex Johnston, Catalyst Canada Inc.).

102 [Evidence](#), 12 May 2014, 1535 (Clare Beckton, Centre for Women in Politics and Public Leadership, Carleton University).

103 [Evidence](#), 7 May 2014, 1640 (Heather Kennedy, Suncor Energy Inc.).

104 Ibid.

105 [Evidence](#), 9 April 2014, 1720 (Michèle Boutin, Executive Director, Canada Research Chairs Program, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada); [Evidence](#), 9 April 2014, 1605 (Alison M. Konrad, Ivey Business School, University of Western Ontario, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada).

like trying to negotiate, “[p]eople rate them as less nice, more demanding, and are less likely to want to work for [those] women leaders.”¹⁰⁶

Speaking from her experience with Catalyst Canada, Ms. Johnston said there is a need to collect data on the progress of men and women within a company; in that way, there is evidence to support the claim that corporate culture holds women back.¹⁰⁷

Witnesses suggested that it is necessary to get leaders of corporations to recognize the need for diversity, to make a deliberate effort to select candidates of diverse backgrounds for board positions, and to change the workplace culture so that it promotes diversity.¹⁰⁸ The Committee heard that in a corporate boardroom where the majority of members are white men, it is easier for the board members to connect with candidates who are similar to themselves.¹⁰⁹ It was recommended that conversations on diversity go beyond an internal company discussion, and develop into sector-wide conversations, particularly in fields where women are underrepresented.¹¹⁰ Ms. Heather Kennedy told the Committee that “diversity should not overshadow the need for expertise, but rather, diversity combined with expertise is relevant.”¹¹¹

The Committee learned of the value of sponsorship, whereby a business leader actively advocates on behalf of, and creates advancement opportunities for, a high-potential individual; it is often seen as a form of succession planning.¹¹² According to testimony, women who are sponsored are more likely to succeed and advance in business.¹¹³

However, the Committee was told that male employees, compared with female employees, are more likely to be sponsored and that those sponsors are more likely to be senior in the organization, which creates greater opportunities for the employees. Often as a result of sponsorship, male employees benefit from “files and projects with bigger budgets, more direct reports, significantly more exposure to senior executives,” which is the experience required for advancement in a corporation and appointment to a corporate board.¹¹⁴ The Committee heard that these differences in sponsorship are not

106 [Evidence](#), 9 April 2014, 1605 (Alison M. Konrad, Ivey Business School, University of Western Ontario, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada).

107 [Evidence](#), 30 April 2014, 1645 (Alex Johnston, Catalyst Canada Inc.).

108 [Evidence](#), 4 November 2014, 0850 (Janice McDonald, This Space Works); [Evidence](#), 12 May 2014, 1530 (Clare Beckton, Centre for Women in Politics and Public Leadership, Carleton University); [Evidence](#), 30 April 2014, 1605 (Alex Johnston, Catalyst Canada Inc.).

109 [Evidence](#), 18 November 2014, 1000 (Fariba Pacheleh, Society for Canadian Women in Science and Technology).

110 [Evidence](#), 30 April 2014, 1615 (Alex Johnston, Catalyst Canada Inc.).

111 [Evidence](#), 7 May 2014, 1640 (Heather Kennedy, Suncor Energy Inc.).

112 [Evidence](#), 30 April 2014, 1645 (Alex Johnston, Catalyst Canada Inc.).

113 [Evidence](#), 9 April 2014, 1720 (Alison M. Konrad, Ivey Business School, University of Western Ontario, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada).

114 [Evidence](#), 30 April 2014, 1540 (Alex Johnston, Catalyst Canada Inc.).

“orchestrated,” but are a result of “subtle” workplace behaviours and patterns.¹¹⁵ The Committee was provided with a compelling example:

[T]he CEO of Kimberly-Clark ... said that when he took over in 2008 and started to focus on diversity and inclusion, he went across the world, met with his regional country heads, and asked them to give him a list of the people they were sponsoring, the top five. He looked at the lists they gave him and said, “You’re an Asian man, and every name on this list is an Asian man”, or “You’re a white European male, and every name on this list is a white European male.” He told them that when he went back in six months, those lists needed to look different. That’s the kind of leadership that will break those systemic barriers.¹¹⁶

Witnesses suggested that corporate leaders need to actively sponsor women with the goal of enhancing diversity in their companies.¹¹⁷

The Committee heard that corporations must retain women in order to have a pool of talent for senior positions; such retention can be encouraged through the establishment of “workplace policies in inclusion and collegiality, work flexibility, active sponsorship, and access to role models and mentors.”¹¹⁸ Ms. Johnston asked Committee members directly, as influential leaders “to challenge Canadian business leaders ... to set targets, to set goals around women’s representation, to develop the strategies to help them get there.”¹¹⁹ An example of a strategy to encourage change among companies is Catalyst Canada’s Catalyst Accord, which challenges FP500 companies to set a goal and a target for women’s board representation and to reach that goal by 2017.¹²⁰

To increase the presence of women on corporate boards, a number of witnesses recommended establishing a “comply or explain” approach to promote diversity in corporate board membership, whereby a level of government establishes diversity goals, with which listed companies should comply, or if they do not comply, explain publicly why not.¹²¹

115 Ibid., 1600.

116 Ibid.

117 [Evidence](#), 18 November 2014, 0925 (Fariba Pacheleh, Society for Canadian Women in Science and Technology); [Evidence](#), 30 April 2014, 1600 (Alex Johnston, Catalyst Canada Inc.).

118 [Evidence](#), 18 November 2014, 0925 (Fariba Pacheleh, Society for Canadian Women in Science and Technology).

119 [Evidence](#), 30 April 2014, 1545 (Alex Johnston, Catalyst Canada Inc.).

120 Ibid.

121 [Evidence](#), 18 November 2014, 1000 (Hodan Nalayeh, Integration TV, as an Individual); [Evidence](#), 18 November 2014, 0925 (Fariba Pacheleh, Society for Canadian Women in Science and Technology); [Evidence](#), 4 November 2014, 0935 (Janice McDonald, This Space Works); Canadian Federation of University Women, “Brief to the Standing Committee on the Status of Women: Study on Economic Leadership and Prosperity of Canadian Women,” *Submitted Brief*, 30 May 2014.

Witnesses spoke positively of “the comply or explain” model for corporate boards.¹²² The Committee heard of the recent review process and public consultation by the Ontario Securities Commission (OSC) to study the possibility of introducing disclosure requirements regarding gender diversity on corporate boards. Following the OSC’s review of this subject, the Canadian Securities Administrators announced in October 2014 that nine jurisdictions (Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Nunavut and Northwest Territories) would be implementing amendments to the *National Instrument 58-101: Disclosure of Corporate Governance Practices*, one of the national instruments that govern securities markets. These amendments, which came into effect on 31 December 2014, require all non-venture issuers, which include companies listed on the Toronto Stock Exchange, to report annually on their plans and policies with respect to the representation of women on their boards of directors and in senior management.¹²³

Speaking of the “comply or explain” model, Ms. Johnston indicated that the model is “a best practice and a really good model for Canada right now.”¹²⁴ She provided the example of Australia:

[Australia] implemented comply or explain and there was a 7% increase in three years in their board numbers. They absolutely took off. What you’re seeing is that seat turnover now is increasingly being filled by women. That to me is where we’re headed.¹²⁵

Recommendation 3

The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada implement a “comply or explain” approach for increasing women’s representation on corporate boards, with targets, timelines and increased transparency.

C. Non-traditional Employment

Canadian women have made progress in terms of their representation in industries and occupations traditionally dominated by men, deemed “non-traditional,” such as the trades (construction and mining, for example) and STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) fields. Improved participation rates in the non-traditional employment sector can be an important contributor to women’s economic success.¹²⁶

122 [Evidence](#), 30 April 2014, 1545 and 1605 (Alex Johnston, Catalyst Canada Inc.); [Evidence](#), 18 November 2014, 0925 (Fariba Pacheleh, Society for Canadian Women in Science and Technology); Canadian Federation of University Women, “Brief to the Standing Committee on the Status of Women: Study on Economic Leadership and Prosperity of Canadian Women,” *Submitted Brief*, 30 May 2014; [Evidence](#), 18 November 2014, 1000 (Hodan Nalayeh, Integration TV, as an Individual).

123 Canadian Securities Administrator, [Multilateral CSA Notice of Amendments to National Instrument 58-101: Disclosure of Corporate Governance Practices](#), 15 October 2014.

124 [Evidence](#), 30 April 2014, 1605 (Alex Johnston, Catalyst Canada Inc.).

125 *Ibid.*, 1545.

126 [Evidence](#), 4 November 2014, 0905 (JudyLynn Archer, Women Building Futures).

The Committee heard that many non-traditional jobs have relatively high salaries, which offer female employees economic security and prosperity. Ms. JudyLynn Archer, President and Chief Executive Officer at Women Building Futures, explained that women entering her organization's trade program had an average salary increase of 127%, as compared with their previous salary, on their first day of hire.¹²⁷ She stated: "[t]his industry provides incredible opportunity. It comes with no student debt, a way to earn as you learn, and a way to make an income that most women would not dream about."¹²⁸

In addition, many vocational sectors are experiencing shortages of skilled labour, a situation that offers important employment opportunities.¹²⁹ Ms. Archer explained to the Committee that:

Canada needs all hands on deck to support the continued industrial investment that helps drive our economy.... Underemployed women in Canada comprise the largest underutilized workforce in Canada. Canada needs to support any and all proven initiatives that attract and prepare those who want to enter this industry, in particular women.¹³⁰

However, the Committee was told that there remains an underrepresentation of women in the trades and STEM fields. Young women are going into traditionally female-dominated industries such as public administration, teaching and nursing, rather than exploring career options in the trades or STEM fields. Witnesses told the Committee that young women's choices are shaped by socialization in their school years, and by advice from teachers and guidance counsellors.¹³¹ Because these sectors are male-dominated, there is a shortage of female role models for young women, and as Ms. McDonald told the Committee: "you can't be it unless you see it."¹³²

The Committee heard that another barrier to women wanting to enter the trades is that these occupations are perceived as having long hours, involving physically hard work or being in remote locations.¹³³ Another barrier to women entering the trades or STEM fields was a lack of access to child care, which is discussed in a later section.¹³⁴

127 Ibid., 0945.

128 Ibid.

129 Ibid., 0905.

130 Ibid.

131 [Evidence](#), 12 May 2014, 1705 (Clare Beckton, Centre for Women in Politics and Public Leadership, Carleton University); [Evidence](#), 9 April 2014, 1615 (Alison M. Konrad, Ivey Business School, University of Western Ontario, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada).

132 [Evidence](#), 4 November 2014, 1015 (Janice McDonald, This Space Works).

133 [Evidence](#), 7 May 2014, 1710 (Heather Kennedy, Suncor Energy Inc.).

134 [Evidence](#), 4 November 2014, 1020 (JudyLynn Archer, Women Building Futures); [Evidence](#), 14 May 2014, 1630 (Robyn Benson, Public Service Alliance of Canada).

In addition, testimony addressed the need to change workplace culture in male-dominated fields with the goal of welcoming women.¹³⁵ Ms. Heather Kennedy shared with the Committee her personal experience working in a male-dominated sector:

I've also experienced a few firsts.... At one company I was the first professional employee to need maternity leave. I've been the first female supervisor or manager for several staff on numerous occasions. I am a metallurgical engineer by training, having graduated 34 years ago from Queen's University. Today I am part of the 17% of the engineering workforce that is female.¹³⁶

Witnesses explained that to increase the number of women in non-traditional occupations, it is necessary to raise awareness among women of the opportunities, the benefits and the challenges in those areas.¹³⁷

The Committee was told that raising awareness of the opportunities presented by non-traditional occupations must be accompanied by skills training, job coaching and access to apprenticeship, as well as supports such as bursaries.¹³⁸ Ms. Archer suggested modifying the Canada Job Grant, which helps employers train new or existing employees for jobs that need to be filled, in order to improve access for women; she recommended that the grant be expanded to include living costs, such as child care and transportation.¹³⁹ Ms. Archer explained that employers are willing to contribute to the training costs of an individual, but they will not pay the living costs typically associated with women, and a result “women are being left out of the picture.”¹⁴⁰

Witnesses pointed to evidence showing that starting in high school, young women lose interest in classes related to the trades or STEM fields.¹⁴¹ The Committee was told that stakeholders must develop trades and STEM outreach programs to show young women the opportunities in those career paths.¹⁴²

Finally, the Committee learned that it would be beneficial to develop initiatives aimed at breaking gender stereotypes in certain industries; this would benefit men, as well

135 [Evidence](#), 18 November 2014, 0955 (Jill Earchy, Futurpreneur Canada).

136 [Evidence](#), 7 May 2014, 1640 (Heather Kennedy, Suncor Energy Inc.).

137 [Evidence](#), 4 November 2014, 1005 (JudyLynn Archer, Women Building Futures); [Evidence](#), 7 April 2014, 1535 (Linda Savoie, Status of Women Canada); [Evidence](#), 7 May 2014, 1710 (Heather Kennedy, Suncor Energy Inc.).

138 [Evidence](#), 4 November 2014, 0905 (JudyLynn Archer, Women Building Futures); [Evidence](#), 30 April 2014, 1625 (Shannon Phillips, Director, Policy Analysis, Alberta Federation of Labour).

139 [Evidence](#), 4 November 2014, 1025 (JudyLynn Archer, Women Building Futures).

140 *Ibid.*, 0940.

141 [Evidence](#), 9 April 2014, 1630 (Alison M. Konrad, Ivey Business School, University of Western Ontario, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada); [Evidence](#), 30 April 2014, 1635 (Kate McInturff, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives).

142 [Evidence](#), 18 November 2014, 1010 (Fariba Pacheleh, Society for Canadian Women in Science and Technology); [Evidence](#), 4 November 2014, 1030 (JudyLynn Archer, Women Building Futures); [Evidence](#), 12 May 2014, 1705 (Clare Beckton, Centre for Women in Politics and Public Leadership, Carleton University); [Evidence](#), 7 May 2014, 1715 (Heather Kennedy, Suncor Energy Inc.).

as women. Dr. Kate McInturff, Senior Researcher at the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, explained:

[I]f you look at the kind of inflexibility of our labour market, in terms of men and women both still tending to go into particular job types, men's roles in the job market have also been fairly inflexible. So I think when we talk about moving women into non-traditional trades, we also need to think that this could be a real benefit for men, that we could also open up new doors for men who maybe don't want to be engineers, maybe they want to be nurses and we're still putting up barriers to that kind of labour force flexibility.¹⁴³

The Committee also learned of the benefits of another non-traditional occupation for women, that being a career in the field of politics. Ms. Beckton stated that women must be “in positions where decisions are being made [as] it is significantly linked with their prosperity and economic well-being.”¹⁴⁴ The Committee heard that women face unique barriers in the nomination process or while seeking political office; for example, women often face stereotypical societal norms and expectations, women lack the same extensive network for support and funding as male candidates, and women face media that focus on cultural stereotypes instead of female politicians' accomplishments.¹⁴⁵ However, the Committee was informed that women are making important progress in the field of politics in Canada, and that “you need gender-inclusive leadership because of the way men and women approach issues differently.”¹⁴⁶

PRACTICES TO SUPPORT WOMEN'S ECONOMIC LEADERSHIP AND PROSPERITY

A. Developing Women's Leadership and Financial Skills

Witnesses shared with the Committee the need to develop women's leadership and financial skills, starting at a young age, in order to improve their economic leadership and prosperity. The Committee heard that a central element to building leadership skills is the development of confidence; with a solid confidence in her abilities, it is easier for a woman to reach for positions of economic leadership and to establish a level of economic prosperity.¹⁴⁷ It was explained that women who lack confidence will not take risks, like starting a business, or will not present themselves as candidates for career progression opportunities.¹⁴⁸ As well, without solid confidence, women will not participate to their full potential and will not have their opinions and ideas heard.¹⁴⁹

143 [Evidence](#), 30 April 2014, 1635 (Kate McInturff, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives).

144 [Evidence](#), 12 May 2014, 1530 (Clare Beckton, Centre for Women in Politics and Public Leadership, Carleton University).

145 *Ibid.*, 1630.

146 *Ibid.*, 1635.

147 [Evidence](#), 18 November 2014, 1020 (Jill Earthy, Futurpreneur Canada); [Evidence](#), 12 May 2014, 1645 (Clare Beckton, Centre for Women in Politics and Public Leadership, Carleton University); [Evidence](#), 9 April 2014, 1715 (Michèle Boutin, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada).

148 [Evidence](#), 18 November 2014, 1020 (Jill Earthy, Futurpreneur Canada).

149 *Ibid.*

Ms. JudyLynn Archer, President and Chief Executive Officer at Women Building Futures, spoke to the Committee of the confidence that is developed by working in the trades: “[B]uilding huge projects gives you a sense of confidence that for most women takes a long time to get.”¹⁵⁰ Ms. Christine Day, Chief Executive Officer at Luvo Inc., said that it is important to intervene early for women and to build women’s confidence in making important decisions – in “being the actual leader.”¹⁵¹ Ms. Heather Kennedy, Vice-President of Government Relations at Suncor Energy Inc., painted an image for the Committee; she said women need to “be bold enough to dance with fear.”¹⁵²

Witnesses said that an assertive voice is also a key leadership skill, including the ability to express opinions, share ideas, or speak in public.¹⁵³ Ms. Day said that her employees have been offered leadership courses where public speaking skills were taught: “learning to present, to sell yourself, and to sell ideas.”¹⁵⁴ Ms. Heather Kennedy explained that her company runs a training program to help employees develop a strong voice: the training called “taking the stage,” helps women “empower themselves and be assertive” and develop public speaking skills.¹⁵⁵

Ms. Anne-Marie Roy, President of the Student Federation of the University of Ottawa, spoke of the challenge of making her voice heard:

I would say that all women face certain prejudices, even if sexism is sometimes subtle. Yes, I have faced certain obstacles. In meetings, for example, we are regularly interrupted by men. We always need to fight a little harder, yell a little louder to be heard. I have also experienced sexual comments and attacks aimed at degrading me or taking away the credibility that I had earned on my campus. So yes, there are certainly challenges in this area.¹⁵⁶

A central element of building leadership skills is through mentoring and sponsorship, which is discussed in another section of the report. The Committee also heard of training programs specifically focused on female leaders, in order to give them opportunities.¹⁵⁷ The Committee learned that many women in leadership roles put extra effort into advancing other women into leadership positions. Ms. Heather Kennedy explained how she uses her leadership position to assist other women:

What do I personally contribute? I am a role model and I'm well aware that my actions at work, where only 25% of the employees are female, and as I volunteer, do matter to young women and they help create space for them to be considered for new

150 [Evidence](#), 4 November 2014, 1010 (JudyLynn Archer, Women Building Futures).

151 [Evidence](#), 7 May 2014, 1700 (Christine Day, Luvo Inc.).

152 [Evidence](#), 7 May 2014, 1700 (Heather Kennedy, Suncor Energy Inc.).

153 [Evidence](#), 7 May 2014, 1700 (Christine Day, Luvo Inc.); [Evidence](#), 7 May 2014, 1700 (Heather Kennedy, Suncor Energy Inc.); [Evidence](#), 4 November 2014, 0950 (Anne-Marie Roy, Student Federation of the University of Ottawa).

154 [Evidence](#), 7 May 2014, 1700 (Christine Day, Luvo Inc.).

155 [Evidence](#), 7 May 2014, 1700 (Heather Kennedy, Suncor Energy Inc.).

156 [Evidence](#), 4 November 2014, 0950 (Anne-Marie Roy, Student Federation of the University of Ottawa).

157 [Evidence](#), 7 May 2014, 1650 (Heather Kennedy, Suncor Energy Inc.).

opportunities. I'm a mentor. For any woman who asks, I'll find time to chat, to help, and to provide insights. I help form and lead women's initiatives internal to Suncor that look to attract and retain females. I hire and promote with diversity in mind. As a manager of people, I create a safe space for flexible work conditions within my company's policies.¹⁵⁸

Women's economic success also depends on their level of financial training and education; witnesses addressed the importance of improving financial literacy among women. Some examples of helpful programs include educational workshops and support services to help with filing taxes, launching a business, applying for tax credits and saving for retirement.¹⁵⁹ Ms. Jill Earchy, Director of the British Columbia and Yukon branches for Futurpreneur Canada, said that in her experience working with young entrepreneurs, youth often lack an understanding and basic knowledge of financial topics, such as credit scores and loans.¹⁶⁰

The Committee learned about the role of Canada's Financial Literacy Leader, who acts under the authority of the Financial Consumer Agency of Canada. The first Financial Literacy Leader, Jane Rooney, appointed in 2014, is working to "coordinate financial literacy initiatives by collaborating with stakeholder groups across the country."¹⁶¹ Through her work, her goal is to "strengthen the knowledge, skills and confidence of Canadians in dealing with financial matters."¹⁶² The Committee heard support from witnesses for this type of financial literacy work.¹⁶³ Ms. Hodan Nalayeh, Executive Producer of Integration TV, said "I strongly believe the only way out of poverty is to teach people economic success. Very few women are being taught those [financial literacy] skills."¹⁶⁴

B. Mentoring and Role Models

There was widespread agreement among witnesses of the value of mentoring of women, as well as the value of having female role models, in order to inspire and guide women towards economic prosperity and leadership.¹⁶⁵

Many of the witnesses appearing before the Committee had been mentored themselves, had generously given their own time to mentor and support other women in

158 Ibid., 1640.

159 [Evidence](#), 18 November 2014, 0900 (Hodan Nalayeh, Integration TV, as an Individual); [Evidence](#), 18 November 2014, 1025 (Jill Earchy, Futurpreneur Canada); [Evidence](#), 30 April 2014, 1550 (Shannon Phillips, Alberta Federation of Labour).

160 [Evidence](#), 18 November 2014, 1025 (Jill Earchy, Futurpreneur Canada).

161 Financial Consumer Agency of Canada, [Financial Literacy Leader's biography](#).

162 Ibid.

163 [Evidence](#), 18 November 2014, 1020 (Hodan Nalayeh, Integration TV, as an Individual).

164 Ibid., 0940.

165 [Evidence](#), 7 April 2014, 1620 (Linda Savoie, Status of Women Canada); [Evidence](#), 4 November 2014, 1015 (Janice McDonald, This Space Works); [Evidence](#), 5 May 2014, 1600 (Victoria Lennox, Startup Canada); [Evidence](#), 9 April 2014, 1615 (Alison M. Konrad, Ivey Business School, University of Western Ontario, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada).

their careers, and had plans to provide ongoing mentoring support to other women.¹⁶⁶ Chief Betsy Kennedy, Chief of War Lake First Nation, told the Committee: “I’ve been there to provide any kind of assistance I can to every woman I’ve met who has run as councillor or chief.”¹⁶⁷

Witnesses explained that having a mentor is critical to a mentee’s advancement as the mentee is provided with someone to consult who is invested in his or her career and success.¹⁶⁸ The Committee heard that mentors are able to assist mentees with specific professional challenges, identify areas for improvement, or point to strengths that can be built upon.¹⁶⁹ Ms. Janice McDonald, co-founder of This Space Works, explained:

That’s where I think mentorship is very important. It allows you to talk to someone who is invested in your career, but in an impartial way, if you will. They are perhaps willing to call you out, nudge you in some ways, and sometimes just be a great sounding board.¹⁷⁰

One witness indicated that female entrepreneurs with a mentor or champion are more likely to have successful businesses than women without a mentor.¹⁷¹ In the Futurpreneur Canada program, the five-year survival rate for businesses of entrepreneurs with mentors was 50% to 60%, compared with a five-year survival rate of 36% for new businesses in general in Canada.¹⁷²

Witnesses indicated that having female role models in economic leadership positions and celebrating their successes can inspire other women and encourage them to pursue similar career paths.¹⁷³ Dr. Alison M. Konrad, professor at the Ivey Business School of University of Western Ontario, suggested changing the mindset of all Canadians, by presenting more “positive images of successful women.”¹⁷⁴ In addition, witnesses stated that women do not have to be mentored by other women; rather, witnesses invited men’s participation as mentors and sponsors for promising women in the field of business and entrepreneurship.¹⁷⁵

166 [Evidence](#), 12 May 2014, 1620 (Chief Betsy Kennedy, Chief, War Lake First Nation); [Evidence](#), 4 November 2014, 0850 (Janice McDonald, This Space Works).

167 [Evidence](#), 12 May 2014, 1620 (Chief Betsy Kennedy, War Lake First Nation).

168 [Evidence](#), 4 November 2014, 1015 (Janice McDonald, This Space Works).

169 *Ibid.*, 0915.

170 *Ibid.*, 1015.

171 [Evidence](#), 18 November 2014, 0935 (Jill Earthy, Futurpreneur Canada).

172 *Ibid.*, 0915.

173 [Evidence](#), 7 April 2014, 1620 (Linda Savoie, Status of Women Canada); [Evidence](#), 4 November 2014, 1015 (Janice McDonald, This Space Works); [Evidence](#), 5 May 2014, 1600 (Victoria Lennox, Startup Canada); Futurpreneur Canada, “Brief: Futurpreneur Canada – Jill Earthy, Regional Director, B.C. and Yukon,” *Speaking Notes*, 18 November 2014.

174 [Evidence](#), 9 April 2014, 1615 (Alison M. Konrad, Ivey Business School, University of Western Ontario, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada).

175 [Evidence](#), 4 November 2014, 0915 (Janice McDonald, This Space Works); [Evidence](#), 7 May 2014, 1650 (Christine Day, Luvo Inc.); [Evidence](#), 7 May 2014, 1640 (Heather Kennedy, Suncor Energy Inc.); [Evidence](#), 5 May 2014, 1620 (Victoria Lennox, Startup Canada).

A number of witnesses spoke of informal mentoring opportunities, but others pointed to the need for more formalized mentorship opportunities. Some witnesses recommended establishing a national mentorship program for women entrepreneurs, with the objective of building networks of support between female economic leaders and women pursuing similar economic goals.¹⁷⁶ Another recommendation was the creation of a women's entrepreneurship mentorship program, which could be coordinated through a national organization, such as Startup Canada.¹⁷⁷ A similar recommendation was to provide further support for Futurpreneur's national MoMENTum program, which provides mentorship to entrepreneurs.¹⁷⁸

The Committee heard that mentorship and similar forms of support are being enabled by new technologies and that the online world fosters new connections.¹⁷⁹ Ms. McDonald explained that the use of technology allows "mentors and mentees to get together across distances and time zones."¹⁸⁰

As mentioned in a section of the report on corporate boards, the Committee was also told that sponsorship of high-potential women in corporations is critical to their professional advancement and that corporate leaders need to make a conscious choice to sponsor more female employees.¹⁸¹

Witnesses also spoke of the influential power of parents, teachers, and school counsellors in directing girls and young women towards economic success and of the cultural norms that limit young women's economic leadership.¹⁸² Ms. Fariba Pacheleh, President of the Society for Canadian Women in Science and Technology, told the Committee that "[w]e need to scrutinize the personal values and cultural context in the home that prevent progress and to review how girls are socialized and how cultural expectations place limitations on them and their futures."¹⁸³ The Committee appreciated the advice of Ms. Day:

The advice I gave [my daughter] was, "Don't be a satellite to anyone else." It means having your own life and being your own person with your own dreams, your own goals, and your own ambition. Live that goal and then you're more interesting, more self-confident, more self-assured.... [Y]oung women in particular need to see themselves as

176 [Evidence](#), 5 May 2014, 1605 (Victoria Lennox, Startup Canada); [Evidence](#), 9 April 2014, 1640 (Catherine Elliott, Telfer School of Management, University of Ottawa, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada).

177 [Evidence](#), 5 May 2014, 1645 (Victoria Lennox, Startup Canada).

178 [Evidence](#), 18 November 2014, 0955 (Jill Earchy, Futurpreneur Canada).

179 [Evidence](#), 4 November 2014, 0915 (Janice McDonald, This Space Works); [Evidence](#), 5 May 2014, 1545 (Victoria Lennox, Startup Canada).

180 [Evidence](#), 4 November 2014, 0915 (Janice McDonald, This Space Works)

181 [Evidence](#), 18 November 2014, 0925 (Fariba Pacheleh, Society for Canadian Women in Science and Technology); [Evidence](#), 30 April 2014, 1600 (Alex Johnston, Catalyst Canada Inc.).

182 [Evidence](#), 5 May 2014, 1615 (Victoria Lennox, Startup Canada); [Evidence](#), 12 May 2014, 1630 (Clare Beckton, Centre for Women in Politics and Public Leadership, Carleton University).

183 [Evidence](#), 18 November 2014, 0925 (Fariba Pacheleh, Society for Canadian Women in Science and Technology).

their own person in their own right with the same rights and entitlements as anybody else to happiness, to a career, and to choice in their life.¹⁸⁴

Recommendation 4

The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada promote mentorship among female entrepreneurs by supporting programs that assist women in accessing mentors, with the goal of helping them launch their businesses.

Recommendation 5

The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada consider developing a national mentorship campaign for female entrepreneurs to encourage support among business women.

Recommendation 6

The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada focus on increasing mentorship support for women across the country.

C. Family-Friendly Workplace Policies

Witnesses spoke of innovative family-friendly workplace policies; these policies tend to increase the number of women employed in the workplace and assist parents, both women and men, with balancing family and work responsibilities. The Committee was provided with a number of examples of valuable family-friendly workplace policies, such as:

- providing flexible work hours;¹⁸⁵
- offering job sharing, whereby a position is shared between two colleagues, both working part-time, for a certain length of time, allowing for career progression and time with family;¹⁸⁶
- limiting meeting hours, such as providing employees with a guarantee that meetings are held only between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m.;¹⁸⁷
- allowing employees to work from home;¹⁸⁸ and
- providing access to transportation to and from work.¹⁸⁹

184 [Evidence](#), 7 May 2014, 1725 (Christine Day, Luvo Inc.).

185 [Evidence](#), 30 April 2014, 1610 (Kate McInturff, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives).

186 [Evidence](#), 9 April 2014, 1605 (Alison M. Konrad, Ivey Business School, University of Western Ontario, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada).

187 [Evidence](#), 7 May 2014, 1635 (Christine Day, Luvo Inc.).

188 Ibid.

189 Ibid.

Ms. Heather Kennedy noted that as a 24-hours-a-day, 7-day-a-week operation, the company had created a number of options for shift-workers in order to best accommodate the employees' child-care preferences.¹⁹⁰

Ms. Day spoke of the value of technology, such as GoToMeeting or FaceTime, to allow employees who were absent because of family responsibilities the ability to participate in workplace activities.¹⁹¹ Ms. Day said that in the case of one employee, who had moved to a remote area in British Columbia because of her spouse's job, the office used technology to ensure the employee's continued participation in the workplace: "We literally just let her work at home, and we carried her around on an iPad and put her in meetings. ... I think there are far more creative solutions if we think outside the box as business and in the federal government."¹⁹²

Ms. Day also shared her personal experience of the benefit of flexible works hours for employees with young families:

I do have three children, and I did participate at one time, when my daughter was young, working three days from home and two days at the office.... It is hard when you're trying to balance that, but I found that by working in the evenings and just being flexible in my hours to deliver my work, as opposed to having to do it within set times, I was able to accommodate the workload at home by working with my husband.¹⁹³

The Committee learned that while both women and men benefit from the implementation of family-friendly workplace practices, the impact is greater among women who tend to have more caregiving responsibilities. For these women, family-friendly policies are effective at helping women enter or return to the workplace, advance professionally, and take on a leadership position.¹⁹⁴

Despite the benefit of family-friendly policies, witnesses cautioned against implementing family-friendly policies in the workplace that are focused on assisting only women with family obligations, as they reinforce the idea that women are the primary caregivers. Instead, family-friendly policies should be gender-neutral to support men and women in their caregiving roles.¹⁹⁵ Ms. Clare Beckton, Executive Director at the Centre for Women in Politics and Public Leadership at Carleton University, provided an example to the Committee:

I spoke to a senior mining executive who told how much he supported women with their family responsibilities. I asked him what he did for the men. He asked me why I had asked and told me that they didn't do anything. I asked him why they didn't do anything.

190 [Evidence](#), 7 May 2014, 1655 (Heather Kennedy, Suncor Energy Inc.).

191 [Evidence](#), 7 May 2014, 1635 (Ms. Christine Day, Luvo Inc.).

192 *Ibid.*, 1700.

193 *Ibid.*, 1710.

194 [Evidence](#), 9 April 2014, 1645 (Alison M. Konrad, Ivey Business School, University of Western Ontario, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada).

195 [Evidence](#), 12 May 2014, 1535 and 1725 (Clare Beckton, Centre for Women in Politics and Public Leadership, Carleton University); [Evidence](#), 7 May 2014, 1700 (Heather Kennedy, Suncor Energy Inc.).

If you do not do it for the men then you harm the women because you continue to reinforce the same cultural norms. It was not by any conscious decision on his part, but simply an unconscious lack of awareness of what the implications were.¹⁹⁶

The Committee heard that it would be valuable to highlight the work of firms that are moving forward with family-friendly policies and who are implementing changes to rigid traditional career hierarchies.¹⁹⁷

D. Recognizing Success

The Committee heard that celebrating women's victories and recognizing their successes in the economic field serves to support women's economic leadership and prosperity.¹⁹⁸ Witnesses noted that recognizing women's successes, both of present-day and of past generations, provides images of accomplished women as role models for young women.¹⁹⁹ Ms. Victoria Lennox, co-founder and Chief Executive Officer at Startup Canada, told the Committee it would be valuable to develop a collection of female role models, and their life stories, to provide to educational institutions and not-for-profit organizations in Canada.²⁰⁰

Some witnesses highlighted the work of specific organizations that are recognizing effective and powerful female leaders, as well as leaders who promote gender diversity in the workplace.²⁰¹ Dr. Konrad told the Committee that it is important to put "those images forward where people can say that, yes, women are effective and powerful leaders in Canada."²⁰²

Ms. Alex Johnston, Executive Director at Catalyst Canada Inc., described how providing international and national recognition and awards serves to highlight promising practices and to develop "peer pressure" among corporations, whereby corporate cultures start to change.²⁰³

196 [Evidence](#), 12 May 2014, 1535 (Clare Beckton, Centre for Women in Politics and Public Leadership, Carleton University).

197 [Evidence](#), 9 April 2014, 1710 (Alison M. Konrad, Ivey Business School, University of Western Ontario, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada).

198 [Evidence](#), 4 November 2014, 0855 (Anne-Marie Roy, Student Federation of the University of Ottawa); [Evidence](#), 9 April 2014, 1615 (Alison M. Konrad, Ivey Business School, University of Western Ontario, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada); [Evidence](#), 30 April 2014, 1615 (Alex Johnston, Catalyst Canada Inc.).

199 [Evidence](#), 9 April 2014, 1615 (Alison M. Konrad, Ivey Business School, University of Western Ontario, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada); [Evidence](#), 5 May 2014, 1610 (Victoria Lennox, Startup Canada).

200 [Evidence](#), 5 May 2014, 1610 (Victoria Lennox, Startup Canada).

201 [Evidence](#), 9 April 2014, 1615 (Alison M. Konrad, Ivey Business School, University of Western Ontario, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada); [Evidence](#), 4 November 2014, 0845 (Janice McDonald, This Space Works); [Evidence](#), 30 April 2014, 1605 (Alex Johnston, Catalyst Canada Inc.).

202 [Evidence](#), 9 April 2014, 1615 (Alison M. Konrad, Ivey Business School, University of Western Ontario, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada).

203 [Evidence](#), 30 April 2014, 1615 (Alex Johnston, Catalyst Canada Inc.).

It was recommended that the federal government provide awards and recognition for outstanding achievements in advancing entrepreneurship among women, in order to provide incentives to the business sector.²⁰⁴

CHALLENGES TO WOMEN'S ECONOMIC LEADERSHIP AND PROSPERITY

A. Access to Education

The Committee learned that the educational success of girls and women has an important impact on their future participation in the workforce and on their economic prosperity. In particular, the ability to pursue a post-secondary education can affect the future income of young Canadians, as post-secondary education is now a pre-requisite for a great number of jobs in a variety of fields. The Committee learned that women with a post-secondary education have higher income levels. Recent Statistics Canada data indicate that women aged 35 to 39 with a university degree earned almost \$53,000, on average, compared with women of the same age with only a high school diploma who earned, on average, \$32,000.²⁰⁵ However, the Committee also heard that even with a post-secondary education, there exists a gender pay gap, as discussed in an upcoming section;²⁰⁶ as an example, while women aged 35 to 39 with a university degree earned around \$53,000, men of the same age earned over \$65,000.²⁰⁷ In addition, while more women are enrolling in post-secondary education in trades and STEM fields, they remain underrepresented, and these fields lead to well-paying employment opportunities.²⁰⁸

The Committee heard that over the past 20 years, women's participation in post-secondary education has increased significantly.²⁰⁹ However, witnesses indicated that the cost of tuition acts as a barrier to women's access to post-secondary education.²¹⁰ Ms. Anne-Marie Roy, President of the Student Federation of the University of Ottawa, shared details: "In 1991, average tuition fees in Canada were \$1,706. As of 2014, that number has increased to \$5,959. For many women, this cost alone can mean that getting a post-secondary education is simply not an option."²¹¹ For women from marginalized groups in particular, such as Aboriginal women, women with disabilities, and women from low-income households, the high cost of post-secondary tuition bars them from furthering

204 [Evidence](#), 5 May 2014, 1610 (Victoria Lennox, Startup Canada).

205 Martin Turcotte, "[Women and Education](#)," *Women in Canada: A Gender-based Statistical Report*, Statistics Canada, December 2011, p. 22.

206 [Evidence](#), 30 April 2014, 1530 and 1535 (Kate McInturff, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives); [Evidence](#), 12 May 2014, 1540 (Mary Cornish, Equal Pay Coalition).

207 Martin Turcotte, "[Women and Education](#)," *Women in Canada: A Gender-based Statistical Report*, Statistics Canada, December 2011, p. 22.

208 [Evidence](#), 9 April 2014, 1630 (Alison M. Konrad, Ivey Business School, University of Western Ontario, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada).

209 [Evidence](#), 4 November 2014, 0855 (Anne-Marie Roy, Student Federation of the University of Ottawa).

210 [Evidence](#), 4 November 2014, 1030 (Anne-Marie Roy, Student Federation of the University of Ottawa); [Evidence](#), 18 November 2014, 0925 (Fariba Pacheleh, Society for Canadian Women in Science and Technology).

211 [Evidence](#), 4 November 2014, 0855 (Anne-Marie Roy, Student Federation of the University of Ottawa).

their education and improving their employment opportunities.²¹² Ms. Roy elaborated on the costs: “Rising tuition fees particularly impact women, who account for 60% of borrowers from the Canada student loans program. On average, after a four-year degree, a student in Canada will graduate with over \$26,000 in debt.”²¹³

The Committee was informed that although both male and female students take out student loans, women end up with more debt, on average, than male students because women typically enter the workforce with lower salaries, which limits their ability to pay back loans and increases the interest accumulated on loans.²¹⁴

Speaking from her experience as a student president, Ms. Roy recommended that the federal government adopt a national vision for post-secondary education.²¹⁵ In a submitted brief, the Canadian Federation of University Women, was more specific, recommending the development of a national post-secondary education strategy or legislation that would establish dedicated transfer payments for post-secondary education, improve financial aid for lower income students, and restore “funding of the post-secondary sector to the 1983 GDP level of 0.56%.”²¹⁶

Some witnesses suggested specific educational goals, such as the implementation of an adult literacy strategy,²¹⁷ making entrepreneurship skills part of school curriculums,²¹⁸ and increasing the focus on science, technology, engineering and mathematics at all levels of education.²¹⁹

In the field of education, the Committee also heard about the work of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), specifically two programs they administer: the Canada Research Chairs (CRC) program and the Canada Excellence Research Chairs (CERC) program. The CRC enables Canadian universities to attract and retain successful scientists and scholars from Canada and abroad, to conduct innovative research, and to train and mentor the upcoming generation. The CERC provides funding to universities with the goal of supporting ground-breaking research programs. Ms. Michèle Boutin, Executive Director of the CRC at SSHRC, told the Committee that both the CRC and CERC programs had a disproportionately low percentage of female nominees, and as a result, a number of initiatives were developed to increase the representation of women. As a result of these steps, Ms. Boutin told the Committee that

212 Ibid.

213 Ibid.

214 Ibid., 1030.

215 Ibid., 0925.

216 Canadian Federation of University Women, “Brief to the Standing Committee on the Status of Women: Study on Economic Leadership and Prosperity of Canadian Women,” *Submitted Brief*, 30 May 2014.

217 Ibid.

218 [Evidence](#), 18 November 2014, 0900 (Hodan Nalayeh, Integration TV, as an Individual).

219 Society for Canadian Women in Science and Technology, “Speaking Notes,” *Submitted Speaking Notes*, 1 December 2014; [Evidence](#), 18 November 2014, 0920 (Fariba Pacheleh, Society for Canadian Women in Science and Technology).

women's representation was improving, and provided an example: the "percentage of Canada research chairs awarded to women has almost doubled, from 14% in 2000 to 26% in 2014, and in the latest announcement just four weeks ago, 29% of all chair holders were women."²²⁰

B. Unpaid Work

A number of witnesses told the Committee that women work a higher number of unpaid hours than their male counterparts, which limits their participation in the workforce and hurts their economic advancement.²²¹ Witnesses explained that unpaid hours are spent on housework, elder care and care of children.²²² Ms. Kathleen Lahey, professor at Queen's University, indicated that women do over 60% of the unpaid work in a household; if this work is combined with women's almost equal numbers of hours of paid work, as compared with men, women are working more hours in total every year than men are in Canada.²²³

Mr. François Nault, a director at Statistics Canada, shared with the Committee that according to 2010 data, the average amount of time that women spend daily on housework is 4 hours and 15 minutes, compared with 3 hours and 42 minutes for men.²²⁴

The Committee was informed that cultural norms tend to reinforce women as being the primary caregivers for children and parents.²²⁵ As well, witnesses said that policies described as "family-friendly" are sometimes applicable only to women, which upholds women's role as caregivers and dissuades men who seek to be equal caregivers.²²⁶ Ms. Clare Beckton, Executive Director of Carleton University's Centre for Women in Politics and Public Leadership, gave an example to the Committee of a mining executive who "supported women with their family responsibilities," but had not thought to implement the same policies for male employees.²²⁷ Ms. Lahey explained that women need "some

220 [Evidence](#), 9 April 2014, 1605 (Michèle Boutin, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada);

221 [Evidence](#), 14 May 2014, 1555 (François Nault, Director, Social and Aboriginal Statistics Division, Statistics Canada); [Evidence](#), 12 May 2014, 1605 (Kathleen Lahey, Queen's University); [Evidence](#), 30 April 2014, 1530 (Kate McInturff, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives).

222 [Evidence](#), 14 May 2014, 1555 (François Nault, Statistics Canada); [Evidence](#), 12 May 2014, 1605 (Kathleen Lahey, Queen's University); [Evidence](#), 30 April 2014, 1530 (Kate McInturff, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives).

223 [Evidence](#), 12 May 2014, 1600 (Kathleen Lahey, Queen's University).

224 [Evidence](#), 14 May 2014, 1550 (François Nault, Statistics Canada).

225 [Evidence](#), 12 May 2014, 1535 (Clare Beckton, Centre for Women in Politics and Public Leadership, Carleton University).

226 [Evidence](#), 12 May 2014, 1535 (Clare Beckton, Centre for Women in Politics and Public Leadership, Carleton University); [Evidence](#), 7 May 2014, 1700 (Heather Kennedy, Suncor Energy Inc.).

227 [Evidence](#), 12 May 2014, 1535 (Clare Beckton, Centre for Women in Politics and Public Leadership, Carleton University).

relief from the unequal responsibility that they bear for such activities as home care, child care, elder care, community care, and so on.”²²⁸

It was recommended that the federal government play a role in examining possible strategies that could be implemented at the federal level to increase the sharing of unpaid work in households, including public programs and workplace policies that help women balance work and family responsibilities.²²⁹ Ms. Lahey highlighted policies that encourage the sharing of unpaid work, as such policies benefit both men and women.²³⁰ Ms. Lahey provided some examples of policies that exist in other countries:

[W]hen a child is born the father's entitlement to paid leave is sometimes tied to his income-earning capacity, which actually gives him more of a realistic economic reward for withdrawing from paid work for short periods of time to take care of children. In some countries, women's access to additional parental leave is contingent on men taking their share, because many men don't want to take their share as they know that it may withdraw them from paid work and endanger their prospects of advancement and promotion.²³¹

A number of witnesses spoke against income-splitting measures, saying that such measures did not encourage the sharing of unpaid work and dissuaded women from entering the workforce. Income-splitting is a tax policy whereby part of the income earned by one spouse is attributed to the other spouse for the purpose of assessing personal income tax in order to reduce the family's overall tax level. According to witnesses, income splitting encourages the lower income earner in a couple, who is usually the woman, to put more effort into unpaid work rather than paid work, which in turn limits that person's economic independence. In addition, witnesses suggested that income splitting provides the lowest level of savings to lower income families, while providing the greatest benefit to wealthier families.²³²

C. The Gender Pay Gap

The Committee was told that the gender pay gap “represents the difference between the earnings of men and women in a jurisdiction” and can be measured in a number of ways, by comparing total annual earnings of all men and women, measuring the full-year, full-time wage gap between men and women, and measuring the hourly wage gap between men and women.²³³ In the briefing from Statistics Canada, the Committee heard that “women's wages are about 90% that of men, even when you

228 [Evidence](#), 12 May 2014, 1605 (Kathleen Lahey, Queen's University).

229 [Evidence](#), 12 May 2014, 1640 (Kathleen Lahey, Queen's University); Public Service Alliance of Canada, “Submission by the Public Service Alliance of Canada,” *Submitted Brief*, 14 May 2014.

230 [Evidence](#), 12 May 2014, 1640 (Kathleen Lahey, Queen's University).

231 *Ibid.*

232 [Evidence](#), 12 May 2014, 1500 (Kathleen Lahey, Queen's University); Kathleen A. Lahey, “Women's Increasing Inequality in Canada: Economic and Fiscal Dimensions,” *Submitted Brief*, 12 May 2014; [Evidence](#), 30 April 2014, 1630 (Kate McInturff, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives).

233 Equal Pay Coalition, “Canada's Growing 33% Gender Pay Gap: What Needs to be Done?,” *Submitted Brief*, 12 May 2014.

[take into consideration] ... years in the labour market, work experience, and different types of education,” as well as “types of jobs.”²³⁴ Witnesses told the Committee that at every level of education and across occupations and industries, women consistently earn less than men.²³⁵

The Committee was told that eliminating the gender pay gap is a matter of fairness and non-discrimination, and that it would also improve the economic security of women and their families. A narrower gender pay gap would help female lone-parent families in particular, since these families are more likely than others to live in poverty.²³⁶

Dr. Kate McInturff, Senior Researcher at the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, explained that World Bank estimates suggest that “closing the gender wage gap in industrialized nations like Canada could boost our GDP by as much 9%.”²³⁷ Witnesses provided a number of contributing factors which lead to the gender pay gap. Dr. McInturff argued against the stereotypical view that women are responsible for the pay gap. She explained that the pay gap is not a result of women with young children who choose to do less paid work; instead, she indicated that 69% of women with children under the age of 6 are employed, which is only 1% less than the employment rate for women overall.²³⁸

The Committee heard that one central reason for the gender pay gap is that many industries remain male- or female-dominated, with female-dominated industries typically having lower salaries because of historic and ongoing under-valuation of women’s work.²³⁹ Dr. McInturff stated “that women with university degrees today are most likely to work in the same fields they worked in 20 years ago, education and nursing. Men tend to work in technology and finance.... [And] workers in male-dominated fields are paid more in general than are workers in female-dominated fields.”²⁴⁰ However, additional factors are at play, since even within an industry, there are gender pay gaps; as an example, in the female-dominated education sector, the annual salary of male elementary school teachers is \$10,000 a year more, on average, than their female counterparts.²⁴¹ As well, in

234 [Evidence](#), 14 May 2014, 1530 (Alison Hale, Statistics Canada).

235 [Evidence](#), 4 November 2014, 0855 (Anne-Marie Roy, Student Federation of the University of Ottawa); [Evidence](#), 14 May 2014, 1600 (Alison Hale, Statistics Canada); [Evidence](#), 12 May 2014, 1540 (Mary Cornish, Equal Pay Coalition); [Evidence](#), 30 April 2014, 1530 (Kate McInturff, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives).

236 [Evidence](#), 30 April 2014, 1530 and 1535 (Kate McInturff, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives); Equal Pay Coalition, “Canada’s Growing 33% Gender Pay Gap: What Needs to be Done?,” *Submitted Brief*, 12 May 2014.

237 [Evidence](#), 30 April 2014, 1530 and 1535 (Kate McInturff, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives).

238 *Ibid.*, 1530.

239 [Evidence](#), 30 April 2014, 1610 (Kate McInturff, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives); [Evidence](#), 12 May 2014, 1545 (Mary Cornish, Equal Pay Coalition); Equal Pay Coalition, “Canada’s Growing 33% Gender Pay Gap: What Needs to be Done?,” *Submitted Brief*, 12 May 2014.

240 [Evidence](#), 30 April 2014, 1530 (Kate McInturff, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives).

241 *Ibid.*, 1530 and 1535.

the female-dominated health sector, women earn, on average, \$50,700 less annually than men.²⁴²

Secondly, in any sector, women are generally overrepresented in part-time, temporary and contract work and have difficulty gaining access to permanent, full-time work.²⁴³ A further contributing factor to the wage gap is that women typically receive lower rates of promotion to higher-paid positions.²⁴⁴

In addition, witnesses pointed to evidence that the gender pay gap starts early, with female graduates earning less than their male counterparts as soon as their post-secondary education ends.²⁴⁵ Some witnesses suggested that this initial gap is caused, in part, by women who do not negotiate their salaries, because levels of self-confidence of young women are lower than those of young men and because cultural norms dissuade women from self-promotion.²⁴⁶ Ms. Alex Johnston, Executive Director of Catalyst Canada Inc., shared results from Catalyst Canada's report tracking MBA graduates:

What we're finding is that right out of the gate there's a compensation gap. Globally the compensation gap is \$4,200. In Canada it's \$8,200. The question I always get when I table that is, "Isn't that just men going into investment banking and women going into marketing?" No. That is men and women going into similar jobs and similar fields. The compensation gap starts early and grows with time.²⁴⁷

Some witnesses spoke of employers' responsibility in keeping track of pay inequities and addressing any noticeable gender gaps in pay.²⁴⁸ One witness suggested that pay secrecy policies serve to reinforce pay inequity, and that pay transparency should be an obligation for companies and business as women have the right to know the salaries of equivalent male jobs.²⁴⁹ Ms. Mary Cornish, chair of the Equal Pay Coalition, recommended the federal government require "federally regulated public sector employers, and also federal contractors in terms of contract compliance, to be transparent about their pay."²⁵⁰

242 [Evidence](#), 12 May 2014, 1540 (Mary Cornish, Equal Pay Coalition).

243 [Evidence](#), 30 April 2014, 1645 (Kate McInturff, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives).

244 Ibid.

245 [Evidence](#), 7 April 2014, 1620 (Linda Savoie, Status of Women Canada); [Evidence](#), 30 April 2014, 1540 (Alex Johnston, Catalyst Canada Inc.); [Evidence](#), 12 May 2014, 1530 (Clare Beckton, Centre for Women in Politics and Public Leadership, Carleton University).

246 [Evidence](#), 12 May 2014, 1535 (Clare Beckton, Centre for Women in Politics and Public Leadership, Carleton University); [Evidence](#), 7 April 2014, 1620 (Sébastien Goupil, Status of Women Canada).

247 [Evidence](#), 30 April 2014, 1540 (Alex Johnston, Catalyst Canada Inc.).

248 [Evidence](#), 30 April 2014, 1610 (Kate McInturff, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives); [Evidence](#), 7 May 2014, 1635 (Christine Day, Luvo Inc.).

249 [Evidence](#), 12 May 2014, 1705 (Mary Cornish, Equal Pay Coalition).

250 Ibid.

Witnesses gave the public sector's longstanding pay equity policies as an example of a good practice.²⁵¹ The Committee heard that significant gains in terms of representation and equal pay had been made in the federal public service as a result of the federal *Employment Equity Act*.²⁵² Dr. McInturff told the Committee that "where there is a proactive pay equity policy in place, the wage gap narrows."²⁵³

The Committee was told that there is a need to raise awareness of the gender pay gap, which could be achieved through the recognition of an "Equal Pay Day"; this day would mark the date in the new year up to which a woman must work on average to earn the same salary as a man who would have worked until 31 December of the year before.²⁵⁴

Witnesses also recommended developing a national action plan for closing the gender pay gap, which would be led collaboratively by the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, Status of Women Canada and Finance Canada.²⁵⁵ One witness recommended that the federal government incorporate in its decision-making processes a "closing the gender pay gap" analysis as part of overall gender-based analysis conducted by Status of Women Canada and some government departments.²⁵⁶

According to witnesses, a valuable measure to address gender wage disparities is pay equity policies and legislation, which uphold the idea of equal pay for work of equal value. Pay equity legislation was originally developed as a way of eliminating gender-based discrimination in pay within the federal public sector.²⁵⁷ Witnesses recommended that the federal government develop a plan on pay equity, embedding it in economic strategies and women's equality strategies in Canada.²⁵⁸ As well, it was recommended that the federal government repeal the *Public Sector Equitable Compensation Act* and replace it with pay equity legislation based on the recommendations from the Pay Equity Taskforce (2001–2004).²⁵⁹

251 [Evidence](#), 30 April 2014, 1705 (Kate McInturff, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives); [Evidence](#), 14 May 2014, 1620 (Robyn Benson, Public Service Alliance of Canada).

252 [Evidence](#), 14 May 2014, 1615 (Robyn Benson, Public Service Alliance of Canada).

253 [Evidence](#), 30 April 2014, 1530 and 1535 (Kate McInturff, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives).

254 [Evidence](#), 12 May 2014, 1545 (Mary Cornish, Equal Pay Coalition); Equal Pay Coalition, "Canada's Growing 33% Gender Pay Gap: What Needs to be Done?," *Submitted Brief*, 12 May 2014.

255 [Evidence](#), 12 May 2014, 1645 and 1720 (Mary Cornish, Equal Pay Coalition).

256 *Ibid.*, 1705.

257 Public Service Alliance of Canada, "Submission by the Public Service Alliance of Canada," *Submitted Brief*, 14 May 2014.

258 [Evidence](#), 4 November 2014, 0855 (Anne-Marie Roy, Student Federation of the University of Ottawa); Equal Pay Coalition, "Canada's Growing 33% Gender Pay Gap: What Needs to be Done?," *Submitted Brief*, 12 May 2014; [Evidence](#), 12 May 2014, 1705 (Mary Cornish, Equal Pay Coalition).

259 Public Service Alliance of Canada, "Submission by the Public Service Alliance of Canada," *Submitted Brief*, 14 May 2014; [Evidence](#), 14 May 2014, 1620 (Robyn Benson, Public Service Alliance of Canada); Canadian Federation of University Women, "Brief to the Standing Committee on the Status of Women: Study on Economic Leadership and Prosperity of Canadian Women," *Submitted Brief*, 30 May 2014.

D. Access to Child Care

Lack of access to child care was identified by many witnesses as a significant barrier to increasing the economic prosperity of women. The Committee was informed that women across Canada and in diverse sectors, from health care to mining, encounter difficulties accessing affordable child care, which limits access to work and hurts their ability to achieve professional goals.²⁶⁰ With suitable child care options, the Committee heard that women with children are able to access education and fully and equally participate in the workforce.²⁶¹

Ms. Harriett McLachlan, President of the Board of Directors of Canada Without Poverty, explained to the Committee that “for women to move forward, it is critical to have affordable, accessible day care where you can have peace of mind and take care of whatever – education, or entrepreneurship, or whatever is in front of you.”²⁶² Dr. McInturff agreed, saying that “[e]conomists from across sectors have demonstrated the benefits of affordable child care, benefits reaped by children, benefits to women’s economic security, and benefits to the overall economic health of a community.”²⁶³

The Committee learned that while 70% of mothers in Canada are in the workforce, balancing work and child care duties remains a challenge.²⁶⁴ Witnesses spoke of societal expectations and workplace cultures that assume women who want to work should be responsible for arranging child care.²⁶⁵ As explained in a brief submitted by the Public Service Alliance of Canada, after women give birth, the duty of care generally falls on women because of gendered family roles.²⁶⁶

Ms. Danièle Chouinard, Director General of Com’Femme, explained that women’s “role in society” is assumed to be that of a caregiver, and that “a woman must think about her children.”²⁶⁷ As noted in the section of the report on unpaid work, women spend a

260 [Evidence](#), 30 April 2014, 1530 (Kate McInturff, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives).

261 [Evidence](#), 18 November 2014, 0955 (Hodan Nalayeh, Integration TV, as an Individual); [Evidence](#), 18 November 2014, 0940 (Danièle Chouinard, Com’Femme); [Evidence](#), 4 November 2014, 1020 (JudyLynn Archer, Women Building Futures); [Evidence](#), 18 November 2014, 0925 (Fariba Pacheleh, Society for Canadian Women in Science and Technology); [Evidence](#), 18 November 2014, 0945 (Harriett McLachlan, President, Board of Directors, Canada Without Poverty); [Evidence](#), 4 November 2014, 0900 (Anne-Marie Roy, Student Federation of the University of Ottawa); [Evidence](#), 14 May 2014, 1630 (Robyn Benson, Public Service Alliance of Canada); [Evidence](#), 12 May 2014, 1725 (Kathleen Lahey, Queen’s University); [Evidence](#), 12 May 2014, 1555 and 1650 (Chief Betsy Kennedy, War Lake First Nation); [Evidence](#), 5 May 2014, 1540 and 1640 (Brenda Thompson, Member, Board, Canada Without Poverty); [Evidence](#), 5 May 2014, 1600 (Victoria Lennox, Startup Canada); [Evidence](#), 30 April 2014, 1550 (Shannon Phillips, Alberta Federation of Labour).

262 [Evidence](#), 18 November 2014, 0945 (Harriett McLachlan, Canada Without Poverty).

263 [Evidence](#), 30 April 2014, 1530 (Kate McInturff, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives).

264 [Evidence](#), 14 May 2014, 1615 (Robyn Benson, Public Service Alliance of Canada).

265 [Evidence](#), 4 November 2014, 1020 (JudyLynn Archer, Women Building Futures); [Evidence](#), 14 May 2014, 1630 (Robyn Benson, Public Service Alliance of Canada); [Evidence](#), 12 May 2014, 1650 (Chief Betsy Kennedy, War Lake First Nation); [Evidence](#), 18 November 2014, 0940 (Danièle Chouinard, Com’Femme).

266 Public Service Alliance of Canada, “Submission by the Public Service Alliance of Canada,” *Submitted Brief*, 14 May 2014.

267 [Evidence](#), 18 November 2014, 0940 (Danièle Chouinard, Com’Femme).

disproportionate share of unpaid hours compared with men on caregiving, including caring for children. The Committee was told that single mothers face an even greater challenge in balancing work and child care responsibilities.²⁶⁸

The Committee heard that the relatively high cost of child care may dissuade women from entering or returning to the workforce.²⁶⁹ In addition, a woman's salary is often considered the secondary income, and is generally lower than a male partner's salary, which plays a role in the decision of which parent should return to the workplace.²⁷⁰ Ms. Roy said that for women who want to access post-secondary education, child care facilities on campuses are also costly and have long waiting lists.²⁷¹ For women in careers with irregular hours or after-hour commitments, access to child care is very difficult as many child care services operate with "regular" business hours.²⁷²

According to testimony, women who withdraw from the workforce for reasons such as maternity leave or to care for older children are financially affected in several ways, such as losing out on salary increases, seniority benefits and pension contributions.²⁷³ Furthermore, women who are still in the workforce may spend a significant amount of time on child care responsibilities which can hurt their professional development, as they may reduce their hours or turn down advancement opportunities.²⁷⁴

The Committee heard personal stories from a number of witnesses of the difficulties of balancing work with family responsibilities because of a lack of access to child care. Ms. Brenda Thompson, a board member of Canada Without Poverty, shared her personal story of how access to child care made a difference in her own life:

It was only when my daughter was four years old that subsidized child care became available in our local town day care. I snapped up the opportunity, and then could take a job that did not pay very well but enabled me to participate in the economy and go back to work full time. [This] enabled me to move my daughters and I into full participation in the economy, our culture, and our democratic process.²⁷⁵

Ms. Julia Fournier, President and Chief Executive Officer of HCMWorks Inc., told the Committee that with limited access to child care, she struggled with balancing work and children "from the moment they were born until they were in grade 1."²⁷⁶

268 [Evidence](#), 7 May 2014, 1635 and 1655 (Christine Day, Luvo Inc.).

269 Public Service Alliance of Canada, "Submission by the Public Service Alliance of Canada," *Submitted Brief*, 14 May 2014.

270 *Ibid.*

271 [Evidence](#), 4 November 2014, 0900 (Anne-Marie Roy, Student Federation of the University of Ottawa).

272 [Evidence](#), 14 May 2014, 1615 (Robyn Benson, Public Service Alliance of Canada).

273 [Evidence](#), 14 May 2014, 1615 (Robyn Benson, Public Service Alliance of Canada); Public Service Alliance of Canada, "Submission by the Public Service Alliance of Canada," *Submitted Brief*, 14 May 2014.

274 [Evidence](#), 14 May 2014, 1615 (Robyn Benson, Public Service Alliance of Canada).

275 [Evidence](#), 5 May 2014, 1540 (Brenda Thompson, Canada Without Poverty).

276 [Evidence](#), 9 April 2014, 1655 (Julia Fournier, HCMWorks Inc., Business Development Bank of Canada).

The Committee heard that evidence from Canada and internationally indicates that having on-site child care at the workplace contributes to recruiting and retaining employees, particularly women, as it provides convenience and affordability.²⁷⁷ A number of witnesses referred to Quebec's child care program as an example of the positive changes that result from increased access to child care; they listed rising employment levels among women, narrowing gender pay gaps and economic benefits to the province's economy as being linked to the introduction of the program.²⁷⁸

While witnesses recognized the provincial and municipal roles in providing child care, they requested federal leadership in examining child care options and improving access to child care.²⁷⁹ A number of witnesses recommended that the federal government play a role in improving access to child care; these recommendations include establishing a universal child care program,²⁸⁰ a national child care strategy²⁸¹ or a national child care program.²⁸² Chief Betsy Kennedy of War Lake First Nations recommended that the federal government provide funding to increase the number of head start and child care programs on reserves.²⁸³

The Committee heard that the federal government's "day care tax credit" is a good practice because it provides flexibility to parents in their choice of child care.²⁸⁴

Some witnesses who are leaders in their corporations acknowledged that the business world should play a stronger role in addressing the issue of access to child care.²⁸⁵ The Committee was interested in the variety of child care options made available by private companies to their employees. For example, Ms. Christine Day, former CEO of

277 [Evidence](#), 14 May 2014, 1615 (Robyn Benson, Public Service Alliance of Canada); [Evidence](#), 12 May 2014, 1725 (Kathleen Lahey, Queen's University).

278 [Evidence](#), 30 April 2014, 1530 and 1610 (Kate McInturff, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives); [Evidence](#), 14 May 2014, 1645 (Seema Lamba, Human Rights Program Officer, Membership Programs Branch, Public Service Alliance of Canada); [Evidence](#), 14 May 2014, 1615 (Robyn Benson, Public Service Alliance of Canada); [Evidence](#), 12 May 2014, 1650 (Kathleen Lahey, Queen's University).

279 [Evidence](#), 5 May 2014, 1645 (Laura Cattari, Member, Board, Canada Without Poverty); [Evidence](#), 5 May 2014, 1640 (Brenda Thompson, Canada Without Poverty); [Evidence](#), 7 May 2014, 1655 (Heather Kennedy, Suncor Energy Inc.).

280 [Evidence](#), 4 November 2014, 0950 (Anne-Marie Roy, Student Federation of the University of Ottawa); [Evidence](#), 4 November 2014, 1020 (JudyLynn Archer, Women Building Futures); Canadian Federation of University Women, "Brief to the Standing Committee on the Status of Women: Study on Economic Leadership and Prosperity of Canadian Women," *Submitted Brief*, 30 May 2014.

281 [Evidence](#), 5 May 2014, 1540 (Brenda Thompson, Canada Without Poverty).

282 [Evidence](#), 14 May 2014, 1620 (Robyn Benson, Public Service Alliance of Canada); Public Service Alliance of Canada, "Submission by the Public Service Alliance of Canada," *Submitted Brief*, 14 May 2014.

283 [Evidence](#), 12 May 2014, 1555 (Chief Betsy Kennedy, War Lake First Nation).

284 [Evidence](#), 7 May 2014, 1710 (Christine Day, Luvo Inc.).

285 [Evidence](#), 7 May 2014, 1700 (Christine Day, Luvo Inc.); [Evidence](#), 7 May 2014, 1655 (Heather Kennedy, Suncor Energy Inc.).

Lululemon, said that at Lululemon, “we funded and helped support the child care programs and guaranteed spaces for sick children.”²⁸⁶

As well, Ms. Heather Kennedy, Vice-President of Government Relations at Suncor Energy Inc., explained that her company offers two models of child care to their employees: for those at the head office, a child care centre is available on-site, while for those at remote sites, funding and support is provided to the private-sector providers of child care.²⁸⁷

E. Misogyny and Violence

A number of witnesses spoke of the dynamic between women’s economic prosperity and misogyny and sexual and gender-based violence; increasing women’s economic security has a positive impact on women’s personal security, and investing in women’s personal security improves their economic well-being.²⁸⁸

The Committee was told that violence in the home, the community or the workplace hurts women’s economic independence as it affects self-esteem and self-respect and can limit women’s freedom of movement.²⁸⁹ At the same time, women experiencing violence have a significant need for economic security in the form of stable employment, affordable housing and a liveable wage in order to escape such violence.²⁹⁰

The Committee also heard that certain groups of women are at greater risk of experiencing violence, such as Aboriginal and transgender women.²⁹¹

The Committee learned that women’s safe and equal access to education can be threatened by sexual and gender-based violence on campus. Young women aged 15 to 24, when compared with women of any other age group, experience the highest instances of sexual violence in Canada, on campuses, in workplaces and in communities.²⁹²

Ms. Roy told the Committee that she is encouraging the University of Ottawa administration to “ensure that at least one class of gender studies is mandatory for all students” with the goal that “all genders [are] to be educated on the various barriers and the various challenges that present themselves based on your gender identity.”²⁹³ In addition, she suggested “educating men on the systemic violence that’s present in our

286 [Evidence](#), 7 May 2014, 1655 (Christine Day, Luvo Inc.).

287 [Evidence](#), 7 May 2014, 1655 (Heather Kennedy, Suncor Energy Inc.).

288 [Evidence](#), 12 May 2014, 1655 (Kathleen Lahey, Queen’s University); [Evidence](#), 12 May 2014, 1550 (Chief Betsy Kennedy, War Lake First Nation); [Evidence](#), 5 May 2014, 1535 (Laura Cattari, Canada Without Poverty); [Evidence](#), 30 April 2014, 1610 (Kate McInturff, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives).

289 [Evidence](#), 5 May 2014, 1535 (Laura Cattari, Canada Without Poverty).

290 [Evidence](#), 12 May 2014, 1655 (Kathleen Lahey, Queen’s University); [Evidence](#), 30 April 2014, 1610 (Kate McInturff, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives).

291 [Evidence](#), 4 November 2014, 0900 (Anne-Marie Roy, Student Federation of the University of Ottawa).

292 Ibid.

293 Ibid., 0920.

society and also challenging our conception of masculinity.”²⁹⁴ Ms. Roy said that it would be ideal to have educational programs about gender-based violence, including information on bystander intervention, in elementary and high schools, and mandatory gender studies classes in university.²⁹⁵

Witnesses also spoke of how misogyny, taking the form of verbal, physical or cyber violence, could be used to intimidate and discourage women from seeking positions of leadership.²⁹⁶ The Committee heard from Ms. Roy who spoke of her own experience with online misogyny directed against her, and she suggested educating communities on how to recognize and challenge gender-based violence and misogyny.²⁹⁷

The Committee also learned that violence against women affects women’s “self-esteem and self-respect,” which in turn hurts their ability to develop as a leader.²⁹⁸

F. Poverty and Living Conditions

Witnesses also spoke of the cycle of poverty, and how it reinforces economic exclusion. Ms. Thompson explained: “Poverty is the opposite of prosperity. It is not being able to participate in the economy, in the culture, and in the democratic process. When women are in poverty, that is a huge barrier to them. On the continuum of prosperity, poverty is at the opposite end.”²⁹⁹

Ms. Shannon Phillips, a director at Alberta Federation of Labour, provided examples from her province, Alberta, of the impact of low-wages on families: “60% of Alberta children who live below the poverty line have at least one parent in the workforce full time, full year. One in five full-time working Albertans earns less than \$15 an hour and one in four of those is a woman.”³⁰⁰

Ms. Laura Cattari, Board Member of Canada Without Poverty, also spoke of the impact of poverty on children and youth:

Without exposure, and especially in young children's lives – exposure to opportunity, to ideas, to growth – leadership, ownership, entrepreneurship do not become options. They're not on the horizon. When you have teenagers in areas where deprivation exists, unfortunately thinking ahead to big and bright futures is not what they're thinking. They're thinking about getting enough money to eat, getting enough money to have a

294 Ibid.

295 Ibid.

296 [Evidence](#), 4 November 2014, 0925 (Anne-Marie Roy, Student Federation of the University of Ottawa); [Evidence](#), 12 May 2014, 1535 (Clare Beckton, Centre for Women in Politics and Public Leadership, Carleton University).

297 [Evidence](#), 4 November 2014, 0925 (Anne-Marie Roy, Student Federation of the University of Ottawa).

298 [Evidence](#), 5 May 2014, 1535 (Laura Cattari, Canada Without Poverty).

299 [Evidence](#), 5 May 2014, 1600 (Brenda Thompson, Canada Without Poverty).

300 [Evidence](#), 30 April 2014, 1555 (Shannon Phillips, Alberta Federation of Labour).

roof over their head, maybe adequate clothing, and a phone. They're really not thinking about the big picture and long term.³⁰¹

It was suggested that the federal government establish a national anti-poverty plan, which would include a national housing strategy and food security measures, and would involve all levels of government and sectors of civil society.³⁰²

Many witnesses spoke of the connection between economic prosperity and living conditions, such as access to affordable housing, food security and living with a disability.³⁰³ Some witnesses explained that women face an additional roadblock to economic security if they live in housing that is “crowded,” substandard, and not “affordable”.³⁰⁴ The Committee was told that affordable and secure housing is a basic need that must be guaranteed before women can attain economic prosperity.³⁰⁵

The Committee was informed that mixed housing co-operatives that include subsidized housing, rent-to-buy apartments, and mainstream condominiums for purchase provide successful examples of integrative, safe communities.³⁰⁶ Some witnesses recommended that the federal government develop a framework and legislation for a national housing strategy.³⁰⁷ As Ms. Thompson explained:

The subsidized social housing co-op gave me an affordable, warm, safe home for my daughter and me. In addition, it gave me a sense of community with our co-op meetings and social events such as picnics. The people in the co-op were just like me, working hard to make a better place for our families and for our communities.³⁰⁸

Witnesses identified a lack of food security as a barrier to economic prosperity and a symptom of economic insecurity. Women with low incomes cannot afford the cost of healthy foods, such as fruits and vegetables, and often live with their families in impoverished neighbourhoods that do not have easy access to supermarkets.³⁰⁹ In contrast, providing children with nutritious foods, through school food programs, for

301 [Evidence](#), 5 May 2014, 1620 (Laura Cattari, Canada Without Poverty).

302 [Evidence](#), 18 November 2014, 0855 (Harriett McLachlan, Canada Without Poverty).

303 [Evidence](#), 18 November 2014, 0945 (Harriett McLachlan, Canada Without Poverty); [Evidence](#), 12 May 2014, 1720 (Chief Betsy Kennedy, War Lake First Nation); [Evidence](#), 5 May 2014, 1540 (Brenda Thompson, Canada Without Poverty); [Evidence](#), 5 May 2014, 1610 (Laura Cattari, Canada Without Poverty).

304 [Evidence](#), 18 November 2014, 0945 (Harriett McLachlan, Canada Without Poverty); [Evidence](#), 12 May 2014, 1720 (Chief Betsy Kennedy, War Lake First Nation); [Evidence](#), 12 May 2014, 1625 (Kathleen Lahey, Queen's University); [Evidence](#), 30 April 2014, 1610 (Kate McInturff, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives).

305 [Evidence](#), 18 November 2014, 0945 (Harriett McLachlan, Canada Without Poverty).

306 *Ibid.*, 0855.

307 [Evidence](#), 18 November 2014, 0855 (Harriett McLachlan, Canada Without Poverty); Canadian Federation of University Women, “Brief to the Standing Committee on the Status of Women: Study on Economic Leadership and Prosperity of Canadian Women,” *Submitted Brief*, 30 May 2014; [Evidence](#), 5 May 2014, 1540 (Brenda Thompson, Canada Without Poverty).

308 [Evidence](#), 5 May 2014, 1540 (Brenda Thompson, Canada Without Poverty).

309 [Evidence](#), 5 May 2014, 1610 (Laura Cattari, Canada Without Poverty); [Evidence](#), 5 May 2014, 1635 (Brenda Thompson, Canada Without Poverty).

example, improves educational results and reduces stigmatization of students from low-income families, which leads to future economic success.³¹⁰

Women with disabilities face additional barriers and challenges in accessing education³¹¹ and in finding employment;³¹² one witness stated that 75% of women with disabilities are unemployed.³¹³ Speaking from her own experience, Ms. Cattari, told the Committee that her disability resulted in her exclusion from the economy and subsequent poverty:

At the peak of my career I built digital cable networks, led research and development teams, and wrote industry white papers. I was a consultant to major cable corporations; in short, an industry leader. I was also the only female among my peers. In January of 2003 I was declared officially disabled with stress-related illnesses.... With disability came poverty and economic exclusion.³¹⁴

G. Challenges Specific to Aboriginal Women

With respect to First Nations, Inuit and Métis women, the Committee heard that these women, who make up 4% of the total female population, face additional barriers to economic prosperity.³¹⁵ The Committee learned that the female Aboriginal population is growing rapidly; from 1996 to 2006, the growth rate among the female Aboriginal population was 45%, compared with 9% in the non-Aboriginal population. In 2006, the median age among the female Aboriginal population was around 28 years old, compared with 40 years for the total female population. As a result, this young population requires significant resources and support in accessing head start programs, child care programs and education.³¹⁶

The Committee was told that Aboriginal women have difficulty attaining post-secondary education, as demonstrated in significantly lower educational achievement; 8% of Aboriginal persons hold a university degree compared with 23% of the non-Aboriginal population.³¹⁷ Ms. Roy recommended lifting the funding cap on the Post-Secondary Student Support Program, which provides financial assistance to Status

310 [Evidence](#), 5 May 2014, 1635 (Laura Cattari, Canada Without Poverty); [Evidence](#), 7 May 2014, 1700 (Christine Day, Luvo Inc.).

311 [Evidence](#), 4 November 2014, 0855 (Anne-Marie Roy, Student Federation of the University of Ottawa).

312 [Evidence](#), 14 May 2014, 1615 (Robyn Benson, Public Service Alliance of Canada).

313 [Evidence](#), 5 May 2014, 1535 (Laura Cattari, Canada Without Poverty).

314 Ibid.

315 [Evidence](#), 12 May 2014, 1555 (Chief Betsy Kennedy, War Lake First Nation); [Evidence](#), 14 May 2014, 1555 (François Nault, Statistics Canada); [Evidence](#), 4 November 2014, 0855 and 0900 (Anne-Marie Roy, Student Federation of the University of Ottawa).

316 [Evidence](#), 12 May 2014, 1555 (Chief Betsy Kennedy, War Lake First Nation); Covadonga Robles Urquijo and Anne Milan, [Female Population](#), *Women in Canada: A Gender-based Statistical Report*, Statistics Canada, July 2011, p. 11.

317 [Evidence](#), 4 November 2014, 0855 and 0900 (Anne-Marie Roy, Student Federation of the University of Ottawa).

Indian and Inuit students who are enrolled in eligible post-secondary programs, in order to ensure that all qualified Aboriginal women and men gain access to such funding.³¹⁸

Witnesses spoke of what they understood to be the barriers for Aboriginal women in accessing education and attaining economic prosperity. According to these witnesses, these barriers include crowded and unhealthy living conditions on reserve,³¹⁹ relatively high instances of violence directed at Aboriginal women,³²⁰ substandard education because of a lack of funding,³²¹ and the fact that Aboriginal women have more children at a younger age than the general population.³²² The Committee learned that 20% of First Nations women are single parents and that many First Nations communities do not have access to suitable child care programs, which is a significant barrier for mothers who want to access education and participate in the workplace.³²³ It was recommended that the federal government provide funding to head start and child care programs in First Nations communities.³²⁴

Ms. JudyLynn Archer, President and Chief Executive Officer at Women Building Futures, spoke of the high interest among Aboriginal women in working in the trades and other non-traditional industries, and the economic prosperity this work provides to the women; she noted that 30% of the student population in her organization's trades training program were Aboriginal women.³²⁵ She stated: "We go out and engage with Aboriginal women in their communities throughout the province. We listen to what they have to say, and engage with them in the conversation about this particular opportunity. What we find consistently is that Aboriginal women are very interested."³²⁶

H. Challenges Specific to Immigrant Women

The Committee was informed that among immigrants, women in particular, there is underemployment and lack of employment opportunities.³²⁷ Immigrant women with foreign accreditation often experience higher rates of precarious employment and do not receive comparable salaries to native-born Canadian women.³²⁸ As explained by one witness, an

318 Ibid.

319 [Evidence](#), 12 May 2014, 1720 (Chief Betsy Kennedy, War Lake First Nation).

320 [Evidence](#), 4 November 2014, 0900 (Anne-Marie Roy, Student Federation of the University of Ottawa); [Evidence](#), 12 May 2014, 1550 (Chief Betsy Kennedy, War Lake First Nation).

321 [Evidence](#), 12 May 2014, 1555 (Chief Betsy Kennedy, War Lake First Nation).

322 [Evidence](#), 14 May 2014, 1555 (François Nault, Statistics Canada).

323 [Evidence](#), 14 May 2014, 1555 (François Nault, Statistics Canada); [Evidence](#), 12 May 2014, 1555 (Chief Betsy Kennedy, War Lake First Nation).

324 [Evidence](#), 12 May 2014, 1555 (Chief Betsy Kennedy, War Lake First Nation).

325 [Evidence](#), 4 November 2014, 1000 (JudyLynn Archer, Women Building Futures).

326 Ibid.

327 [Evidence](#), 6 November 2014, 0845 (Ann Armstrong, Academic Director, Lecturer, Business Edge, Rotman School of Management, University of Toronto, as an Individual).

328 [Evidence](#), 6 November 2014, 0845 (Ann Armstrong, University of Toronto, as an Individual); [Evidence](#), 7 April 2014, 1550 (Linda Savoie, Status of Women Canada).

October 2014 study showed that the wages of university-educated visible minority workers are 20% lower than their non-visible minority counterparts.³²⁹

The Committee was told that some of the barriers specific to immigrant and minority communities include “barriers of integration, lack of understanding of [the] culture and religion, lack of acceptance, lack of support for university and college entrance.”³³⁰ The Committee heard that female immigrants are challenged by several layers of discrimination: “[T]hey’re racialized women, and they’re new Canadians.”³³¹

In addition, witnesses spoke of the challenges that immigrant women and men face in attaining positions that are commensurate with their training and education.³³² Witnesses explained that obtaining recognition of foreign accreditation is challenging. As a result, many immigrant women, when they arrive in Canada, are unable to find suitable employment, which can lead to isolation, and in turn difficulty integrating in wider Canadian society.³³³ Ms. Hodan Nalayeh, Executive Producer of Integration TV, said that while her minority community had “great entrepreneurial spirit,” the members of the community struggled in Canada to expand their businesses to mainstream society beyond their community.³³⁴

The Committee heard that financial training is valuable for immigrant women to help them succeed in finding employment or launching businesses. Immigrant women also benefit from coaching on oral and written communication, with a focus on writing CVs and preparing for interviews, as well as how to communicate at networking events. Training on navigating the workplace also helps the transition into Canada’s workplace culture.³³⁵ According to officials from Industry Canada, immigrant women have seen particular success in the entrepreneurship field in Canada; nearly one in four female business owners in Canada was born outside Canada.³³⁶

One witness encouraged governments to reach out to minority communities by conducting roundtables and starting a dialogue on economic prosperity and entrepreneurship.³³⁷ As well, it was suggested that the federal government work with other

329 [Evidence](#), 18 November 2014, 0900 (Hodan Nalayeh, Integration TV, as an Individual).

330 Ibid.

331 [Evidence](#), 6 November 2014, 0930 (Ann Armstrong, University of Toronto, as an Individual).

332 [Evidence](#), 18 November 2014, 0900 (Hodan Nalayeh, Integration TV, as an Individual); [Evidence](#), 6 November 2014, 0945 (Ann Armstrong, University of Toronto, as an Individual).

333 [Evidence](#), 18 November 2014, 0845 (Danièle Chouinard, Com’Femme); [Evidence](#), 6 November 2014, 0945 (Ann Armstrong, University of Toronto, as an Individual).

334 [Evidence](#), 18 November 2014, 0900 (Hodan Nalayeh, Integration TV, as an Individual).

335 [Evidence](#), 18 November 2014, 0900 (Hodan Nalayeh, Integration TV, as an Individual); [Evidence](#), 6 November 2014, 0855 and 0925 (Ann Armstrong, University of Toronto, as an Individual).

336 [Evidence](#), 9 April 2014, 1530 (Shereen Benzvy Miller, Industry Canada).

337 [Evidence](#), 18 November 2014, 0900 and 0955 (Hodan Nalayeh, Integration TV, as an Individual).

levels of government to reduce barriers to recognizing foreign accreditation, with the goal of helping internationally educated female professionals “excel in the Canadian context.”³³⁸

Recommendation 7

The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada continue building on the work of Employment and Social Development Canada and Citizenship and Immigration Canada on the Foreign Credential Recognition Program, with the goal of improving foreign and interprovincial credential recognition of the existing talents and skills of professionals immigrating to Canada.

Recommendation 8

The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada, in collaboration with the provincial governments, set timelines for the recognition of international and interprovincial credentials.

338 [Evidence](#), 6 November 2014, 0850 (Ann Armstrong, University of Toronto, as an Individual).

LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1

The Committee recommends that Status of Women Canada support evidence-based programming to promote women's increased participation in the labour force, resulting in improved economic prosperity for those women. 10

Recommendation 2

The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada consider focusing on programs to encourage female entrepreneurs to access capital in order to grow their businesses. 14

Recommendation 3

The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada implement a “comply or explain” approach for increasing women’s representation on corporate boards, with targets, timelines and increased transparency. 19

Recommendation 4

The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada promote mentorship among female entrepreneurs by supporting programs that assist women in accessing mentors, with the goal of helping them launch their businesses. 27

Recommendation 5

The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada consider developing a national mentorship campaign for female entrepreneurs to encourage support among business women. 27

Recommendation 6

The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada focus on increasing mentorship support for women across the country. 27

Recommendation 7

The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada continue building on the work of Employment and Social Development Canada and Citizenship and Immigration Canada on the Foreign Credential Recognition Program, with the goal of improving foreign and interprovincial credential recognition of the existing talents and skills of professionals immigrating to Canada. 46

Recommendation 8

The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada, in collaboration with the provincial governments, set timelines for the recognition of international and interprovincial credentials. 46

APPENDIX A LIST OF WITNESSES

Organizations and Individuals	Date	Meeting
<p>Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development</p> <p>John Gartke, Director Trade Missions, Consultations and Outreach</p> <p>Zoe Hawa, Trade Commissioner Business Women in International Trade</p> <p>Status of Women Canada</p> <p>Sébastien Goupil, Director General Policy and External Relations</p> <p>Linda Savoie, Senior Director General Women's Program and Regional Operations Directorate</p>	2014/04/07	18
<p>Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency</p> <p>Daryell Nowlan, Vice-President Policy and Programs</p> <p>Business Development Bank of Canada</p> <p>Julia Fournier, President and Chief Executive Officer HCMWorks Inc</p> <p>Gina Gale, Senior Vice-President Financing and Consulting, Atlantic</p> <p>Department of Industry</p> <p>Dan Batista, Senior Director Service Delivery and Partnerships</p> <p>Shereen Benzvy Miller, Assistant Deputy Minister Small Business, Tourism and Marketplace Services</p> <p>Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada</p> <p>Michèle Boutin, Executive Director Canada Research Chairs Program</p> <p>Catherine Elliott, Assistant Professor Telfer School of Management, University of Ottawa</p> <p>Alison M. Konrad, Professor Ivey Business School, University of Western Ontario</p>	2014/04/09	19
<p>Alberta Federation of Labour</p> <p>Shannon Phillips, Director Policy Analysis</p> <p>Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives</p> <p>Kate McInturff, Senior Researcher National Office</p>	2014/04/30	21

Organizations and Individuals	Date	Meeting
Catalyst Canada Inc. Alex Johnston, Executive Director	2014/04/30	21
Canada Without Poverty Laura Cattari, Member Board Brenda Thompson, Member Board	2014/05/05	22
Startup Canada Victoria Lennox, Co-Founder and Chief Executive Officer		
Luvo Inc. Christine Day, Chief Executive Officer	2014/05/07	23
Suncor Energy Inc. Heather Kennedy, Vice-President Government Relations		
Carleton University Clare Beckton, Executive Director Centre for Women in Politics and Public Leadership	2014/05/12	24
Equal Pay Coalition Mary Cornish, Chair		
Queen's University Kathleen A. Lahey, Professor Faculty of Law		
War Lake First Nation Betsy Kennedy, Chief		
Public Service Alliance of Canada Robyn Benson, National President Executive Office Seema Lamba, Human Rights Program Officer Membership Programs Branch	2014/05/14	25
Statistics Canada Alison Hale, Director Labour Statistics Division François Nault, Director Social and Aboriginal Statistics Division		
Student Federation of the University of Ottawa Anne-Marie Roy, President	2014/11/04	33
This Space Works Janice McDonald, Co-Founder		

Organizations and Individuals	Date	Meeting
Women Building Futures JudyLynn Archer, President and Chief Executive Officer	2014/11/04	33
As an individual Ann Armstrong, Academic Director Lecturer, Business Edge, Rotman School of Management, University of Toronto	2014/11/06	34
Canada Without Poverty Harriett McLachlan, President Board of Directors	2014/11/18	35
Com'Femme Danièle Chouinard, Director General		
Futurpreneur Canada Jill Earthy, Director British Columbia and Yukon		
Society for Canadian Women in Science and Technology Fariba Pacheleh, President		
As an individual Hodan Nalayeh, Executive Producer Integration TV		

APPENDIX B LIST OF BRIEFS

Organizations and Individuals

Canadian Federation of University Women

Childcare Resource and Research Unit (CRRU)

Equal Pay Coalition

Futurpreneur Canada

Public Service Alliance of Canada

Queen's University

Society for Canadian Women in Science and Technology

Western Economic Diversification Canada

REQUEST FOR GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the Committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this Report.

A copy of the relevant *Minutes of Proceedings* ([Meetings Nos. 18, 19, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 33, 34, 35, 42, 48, 49, 50 and 52](#)) is tabled.

Respectfully submitted,

Hélène LeBlanc

Chair

NDP Dissenting Opinion

FEWO study on The Economic Leadership and Prosperity of Canadian Women

March 20, 2015

New Democrats believe immediate action is required to address the lack of progress in women's economic security. We are concerned that women's equality has been deteriorating rapidly in Canada: there are consistently more women than men living in poverty in Canada, affecting indigenous, racialized and women living with a disability in particular; women's employment levels are below men's; and violence against women plagues women's socio-economic security.

For a decade, Stephen Harper's Conservatives have left women behind, ignoring their priorities. They've cut services women rely on. They've stopped funding services that advocate for women. They have introduced tax policy which experts fear will result in reducing women's workforce participation. And they've refused to call an inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women in Canada.

While New Democrat members of the committee recognize the importance of applauding, supporting and encouraging successes for women in leadership roles, we must first and foremost call attention to the fact that there remain systematic barriers to reducing the gender gap and income inequality and therefore to giving women access to choice and to opportunities.

As one witness' brief said:

“In recent decades, debates have shifted away from asking what it is about women that makes leadership difficult to attain towards analyzing the structural or systemic barriers. Or, what it is about leadership positions and the organizational structures in which they are embedded that make it disproportionately difficult for women to access leadership positions. Building on a solid body of research demonstrating that women’s competence or capabilities are not primary culprits for the gender gap in leadership, research has pointed instead to a vast array of factors including: economic disadvantage (e.g. when a financial investment is necessary to leadership eligibility), ideological conventions and cultural sexism, insufficient support for career development, familial obligations etc.¹”

Many witnesses spoke to a lack of action and leadership on the part of the federal government in addressing barriers to gender equality in Canada and the continued economic insecurity faced by many Canadian women.

Further, while we welcomed the chance to participate in the study, New Democrats feel the resulting report is not representative of the testimony. The report is overly favourable to the government while most witnesses’ testimony and correspondence were overtly critical. New Democrats are dismayed that the report was not a synthesis of the evidence gathered providing a piece of the puzzle towards true gender equality, as it should be and that the recommendations contained in the report are not representative of the recommendations heard by the committee during the study.

The committee received over one hundred recommendations including many on

¹ Submission by the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC) to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women Economic Leadership & Prosperity of Canadian Women May 14, 2014, p.2

commonsense policies like the need for a national housing strategy and for recognizing foreign credentials, for measures to close the gender pay gap and to reduce poverty, and for a federal vision for post secondary education. Another 15 recommendations spoke of the need for a national childcare strategy. While New Democrats believe these recommendations are crucial to the economic prosperity of Canadian women, none of them made it into the report. Furthermore, New Democrats decry that there is no proposed long term, strategic plan. Canadian women deserve better.

New Democrats know that when women thrive, Canada thrives. Canada cannot do so without them. In the words of Professor Kathleen Lahey, “sex equality is a fundamental strategy for achieving prosperity.”² Further, “[w]hat we are facing here is a question of how economic policies and social policies intersect with women's life aspirations to produce a very disturbing picture showing the deterioration of sex equality in Canada.”³

NEW DEMOCRATS THEREFORE PROPOSE THE FOLLOWING RECCOMENDATIONS:

- That the Government of Canada immediately implement pro-active pay equity legislation for all federally regulated workers based on the recommendations from the 2004 Pay Equity Taskforce Report and repeal the Public Sector Equitable Compensation Act.
- That the Government of Canada work with the provinces, territories and Indigenous communities to create a universal early childhood and childcare program delivered with common principles like affordability, availability and quality that costs no more than 15\$/day per child.
- That the Government of Canada, in collaboration with the provinces, territories, Indigenous

² Prof. Kathleen A. Lahey (Professor, Faculty of Law, Queen's University), presentation to the Standing Committee on the Status of Women, EVIDENCE, Monday, May 12, 2014

³ Prof. Kathleen A. Lahey (Professor, Faculty of Law, Queen's University), presentation to the Standing Committee on the Status of Women, EVIDENCE, Monday, May 12, 2014

communities, municipalities, community partners and other stakeholders, ensure secure, adequate, accessible and affordable housing for Canadians that takes into account the unique needs of women.

- That the Government of Canada reinstate the federal minimum wage to 15\$ an hour.
- That Status of Women Canada fund organizations for advocacy work and independent research with the goal of advancing women and girls equality in Canada
- That the Government of Canada develop, in collaboration with the provinces, territories, First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples and their representatives and other stakeholders, a coordinated National Action Plan to Address Violence Against Women which would include:
 - (a) initiatives to address socio-economic factors contributing to violence against women;
 - (b) policies to prevent violence against women and policies to respond to survivors of violence;
 - (c) benchmarks for measuring progress based on the collection of data on levels of violence against women over time;
 - (d) independent research on emerging issues that relate to violence against women;
 - (e) a national public inquiry into missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls;
 - (f) strategies that address the specific needs and vulnerabilities of different communities including specific attention to Aboriginal women, women with disabilities, women from minority groups and young women;
 - (g) participation by community and other civil society organizations, including support for those organizations to participate in the implementation of the national action plan; and
 - (h) human and financial resources earmarked specifically to carry out the program of action set by the plan.
- The Government of Canada adopt a long term plan and vision to achieve gender equality in Canada including addressing barriers, and restoring the long term census for the much needed data and research needed.
 - The Government of Canada cancel its income splitting proposal

LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA DISSENTING REPORT: THE ECONOMIC LEADERSHIP AND PROSPERITY OF CANADIAN WOMEN

Kirsty Duncan, Member of Parliament for Etobicoke North

INTRODUCTION

Committee reports have changed since I first came to Parliament.

Committee members used to ask probing questions to draw out recommendations from witnesses, and reports used to provide real direction to the Government.

Committees have recently been delivering what I call “let’s consider” or “let’s think about” reports, which protect the *status quo*. No real direction is given to the Government.

With respect to this particular study, it became very clear that the Government was interested in implementing (1) a mentorship program, as in fact, three of eight recommendations (38 percent) deal with this issue; and (2) a “comply or explain” approach for increasing women’s representation on corporate boards. A comply or explain approach is one where a government would establish diversity goals, with which listed companies should comply, or explain publicly why they have not complied.

Issues which interest the Government are found at the front of the report, while long-standing issues like child care (a subject matter that has been an issue for over four decades in our country), pay equity (a subject matter that has been an issue for 100 years in our country), and poverty are buried at the end of the report. For these core issues, there are no recommendations.

Despite this glaring omission, the Government’s own submission to the 20-year review on implementing the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action did recognize the

outstanding challenges of pay equity, and the fact that poverty remains an issue among Aboriginal women, immigrant women, senior women, and women with disabilities.

REPORT'S RECOMMENDATIONS

Like other reports before it, this report uses words like “consider focusing on”, “consider developing”, “continue building”, and “promote” and “focus”. What specific action will come from recommendations that resort to such language?

Let me now address in turn the specifics of each of the eight recommendations:

Recommendation 1 is to “support evidence-based programming to promote women’s increased participation in the labour force”. I would hope all our programming is based on evidence, and I find it more than disappointing that a recommendation is limited in its effect to ‘promoting’ an increase rather than to directly ‘increasing’.

Recommendation 2: Over and over, we heard that Canadian women entrepreneurs could not access capital, and that they were looking for real solutions to this problem. However, Recommendation 2 is for the Government to “consider focusing on programs to encourage female entrepreneurs to access capital”. They do not need to be encouraged; they need *real* programs to access *real* capital.

Recommendation 3 focuses on “comply or explain.” Yet, as of October 14, 2014, seven provinces and two territories had already signed onto new rules that will require listed companies to report annually on their approach to adding more women to their boards of directors and to senior management. This Recommendation seems more than redundant.

Recommendation 4 is to promote mentorship, Recommendation 5 is to “consider developing a national mentorship campaign”, and Recommendation 6 is to “focus on

increasing mentorship support for women”. The questions that beg to be asked are how, by whom, and by when?

Recommendation 7 is to improve foreign and interprovincial credential recognition. This step is urgently needed, but no details are given with respect to goals, process, or timelines.

Recommendation 8 is to set timelines for the recognition of international and interprovincial credentials. Why not identify the challenges by sector, set goals, and take action, rather than set timelines?

WHAT WITNESSES ASKED FOR.

There is a real gap between what witnesses asked for, and what is found in the report’s recommendations.

Let me provide three specific examples of the gap between testimony and the lack of recommendations—namely, for childcare, pay equity, and unpaid work.

Childcare

Over ten witnesses talked about the need for affordable, quality childcare, and six pages of the report are devoted to childcare, yet there is not one recommendation to be found in the report.

This is particularly troubling. With 75 percent of Canadian mothers in the workforce, childcare is a necessity for countless families, many of whom are forced to spend close to \$20,000.00 a year, and who are stretched to their maximum.

Moreover, the evidence clearly shows that the *status quo* is not working. In 2006, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) showed that Canada had the lowest share of public expenditure on early childhood education

services (0.25 percent of GDP) among comparable countries. In 2008, the United Nations Children's Fund ranked Canada last out of 25 affluent countries on early childhood education and child care; our country achieved only one of 10 benchmarks for access, financing, and quality. In 2010 there were regulated child care spaces for only 21.8 percent of Canada's children under six years of age.

Early childhood development specialists, and economists recognize that access to quality child care is fundamental to Canada's prosperity. They very much understand that investing in the early years is first and foremost about investing in our children's emotional, intellectual, physical, and social well-being, but also about ensuring that Canada remains competitive with other modern economies. Only our government does not seem to understand this.

The Government might also consider flexible work hours and location, and collaborative workplaces. Telecommuting is also efficient for many people these days.

Pay Equity

Over ten witnesses talked about the need to close the gender pay gap, yet there is not one recommendation to be found in the report.

According to the World Economic Forum (WEF), Canada ranks 19th among 142 countries regarding the gender gap; 42nd in female parliamentary representation and a shocking 100th on health and survival.

According to the same WEF 2014 report, Canada scores 17th on economic participation and opportunity, 25th on labour force participation, and 27th on wage equality for similar work.

Women have been fighting for pay equity for one-hundred years in Canada, yet the gap in income between men and women in Canada still remains at 19 percent. A 2005

Royal Bank of Canada report estimated the lost income potential of women in Canada due to the wage gap at about \$126 billion a year.

The reality is that the gender wage gap does have an impact on families at the micro level and the economy at the macro scale. Addressing the gap must be an economic imperative.

Unpaid Work

Three pages of testimony are devoted to unpaid work, yet there is not one recommendation to be found in the report.

A staggering two-thirds of the 25 billion hours of unpaid work Canadians perform every year is undertaken by women, and is estimated to be valued at up to \$319 billion in the money economy or 41 percent of GDP.

In 2009, almost sixty percent of women, or over eight million women in Canada were employed in the labour market. After finishing work, both women and men face a “second shift” when they return home, undertaking such responsibilities as caring for children, cleaning, home maintenance/management, meal preparation, and unpaid help to other households.

But a 2011 study for the Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development reported that Canadian women spend “a lot more hours working than women in other prosperous countries do, piling housework on top of paid work”; in fact, women in Canada spent 248 minutes per day in unpaid work, whereas men spent 146.

The lack of pay for much of women's work has a direct impact on their economic security, and even on their health. When women spend their time on unpaid work, they cannot undertake paid work, and as a result, their earning potential decreases considerably.

Moreover, women are often forced to fit in paid work around their responsibilities; the struggle leads to increasingly stressful lives. One Canadian study showed that almost forty percent of working mothers are severely time-stressed, averaging 74 hours of paid and unpaid work each week; single mothers are particularly impacted, as they do not have a partner who can contribute time..

I think it is important to point out that in the summer of 2010, the Government eliminated the mandatory census, and later replaced it with the voluntary National Household Survey (NHS). Question 33, which gathered data on the time spent on unpaid work, was cut from the NHS, despite Canada's commitments at the 1995 UN World Conference on Women in Beijing.

How will we know how women are faring economically and socially, and how far they have come, or how far they have yet to go; and why we are paying more money to receive less information?

CONCLUSION

This Committee study had the potential to make a real difference to Canadian families, and to our economy in identifying obstacles to women's economic prosperity and offering solutions.

Unfortunately, the Government largely focused on asking questions that would advance their less-than-hidden agenda of putting in place a mentorship program, and implementing the "comply or explain" approach for increasing women's participation on corporate boards, both of which are admirable but will not address other more structural issues.

What Canadian families need is the basics addressed: women must earn the same as men for equal work, they should have access to affordable, quality childcare, and women's unpaid work should be tracked and recognized.

