



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

45th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

---

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

EVIDENCE

**NUMBER 009**

Tuesday, October 21, 2025

---

Chair: Robert Morrissey





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

Tuesday, October 21, 2025

• (1100)

[English]

**The Chair (Robert Morrissey (Egmont, Lib.)):** Good morning, committee members. It is 11 o'clock. The clerk has advised that we have a quorum, so we will begin meeting nine of the HUMA committee.

Pursuant to the motion adopted on Thursday, September 18, 2025, the committee is meeting on youth employment in Canada.

Today's meeting is taking place in a hybrid format, pursuant to the Standing Orders of the House. Members are appearing in the room or on Zoom. There are a few points we'll go over. The witnesses appearing electronically have been sound-tested and have passed. All members have the choice to participate in the official language of their choice. I advise those of you in the room to make sure that you have your earpiece on and you're on the appropriate channel for the language you choose. To those appearing virtually, use the icon at the bottom of your Surface to choose the official language of your choice. If there's a breakdown in translation services, please get my attention and we'll suspend while it is being corrected. To those online, use the "raise hand" icon to get my attention. We'll do that as well.

Also, for the benefit of our translators, I would ask that all of your devices be put on mute or silent so they do not ring during the meeting. Please refrain from tapping the microphone boom. It can cause popping, which can be a problem for our translators. As well, please wait until I recognize you by name before speaking and direct all questions through me, the chair.

We will begin today's meeting of 2 one-hour sessions. Appearing in the first panel on youth employment today, I would like to welcome, as an individual, Christopher Worswick, professor; and from Youth Employment Services, appearing online virtually, Timothy Lang, president and chief executive officer.

Each witness will have five minutes to do a presentation. If you're getting over a bit, I will say, "Thank you", at which time I will expect you to wind up your comments quickly.

With that, I begin with Professor Worswick for five minutes or less, please.

**Christopher Worswick (Professor, As an Individual):** Thank you, everyone, for giving me this opportunity to present to the committee and answer any questions you may have.

As I see it, the recent increase in youth unemployment in Canada is concerning and is likely due to, first, the recent weakening of the

Canadian economy in response to the U.S. tariffs imposed and the threats of new ones and, second, the recent rapid expansion of the Canadian population driven mainly by an unprecedented increase in the temporary resident population of younger individuals.

When we think about this using basic economic supply-and-demand arguments, the labour supply curve of the lower-wage service sector of the Canadian economy shifted out dramatically just prior to the labour demand curve shifting in due to a weakening of aggregate demand in Canada. These two effects should each lower wages for this segment of the labour market, and given that these workers are close to the minimum wage, either effect could lead to higher youth unemployment.

It is difficult to know how to attribute weight or importance to each of these potential causes. However, the second cause is no doubt important, and certainly the flow of temporary residents in and out of the country is within the federal government's control, so I will focus my comments on this policy area.

The expansion of the temporary resident population was due mainly to growth in three subcomponents: the temporary foreign worker program; the international mobility program; and the international student population.

I've taken some comments from a recent Globe and Mail opinion piece that I wrote on this topic.

In response to the original temporary foreign worker program controversy under the Harper government, Pierre Brochu, Till Gross and I explored the labour market implications of this program in a 2020 article in the Canadian Journal of Economics. In our model, workers exert higher work intensity, resulting in higher productivity, in situations where the wage paid is higher than their next best alternative.

For Canadian citizens and permanent residents, the alternative to a Canadian job is likely another job in Canada with a similar wage. In contrast, a temporary foreign worker may much prefer the job in Canada to what they would have in their home country, since a temporary foreign worker is normally not allowed to move to another job in Canada. Consequently, a temporary foreign worker will have higher work intensity and may be prepared to tolerate illegal activities by their employer, such as unsafe work conditions and a holding back of part of their wages.

The TFW program can not only slow wage growth but may actually cause wages to fall. Employers should anticipate the higher work intensity of temporary foreign workers and offer a lower wage when initially advertising the job to Canadians, because failing to fill the position means they can hire a temporary foreign worker, yielding higher expected profits for the firm. International mobility programs and international student programs have similar issues, so the surge in numbers in all three programs is likely to have hurt the employment prospects of younger Canadians.

In contrast, permanent immigration programs do not have these issues, as the rights of permanent immigrants are nearly identical to those of Canadian citizens. Consequently, the Canadian labour market can be expanded through permanent immigration rather than temporary foreign workers. Curtailing or even eliminating the TFW program need not limit the number of foreigners being welcomed to Canada.

International students working off campus may be a greater threat to youth employment prospects than temporary foreign workers. The surge in the past five years in international student numbers, especially at the college level in Ontario, coupled with relaxed rules on numbers of hours worked, has greatly expanded the supply of lower-wage service sector workers.

Canada needs to go back to stronger restrictions on hours of work off campus to limit the extent to which international students compete with lower-wage young workers. International student numbers need to be monitored more closely and ideally limited to post-secondary programs leading to earnings above the Canadian average after graduation, as these individuals are strong candidates for permanent residency as economic immigrants.

We should also consider eliminating the temporary foreign worker program especially in areas where these workers compete with younger Canadians. It could be replaced with higher permanent immigration. We should also look at the international mobility program to see if there may be components of this suite of visas that should be eliminated or capped.

Thank you.

• (1105)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Professor Worswick, for your time.

We'll now hear from Mr. Lang.

You have five minutes or less.

**Timothy Lang (President and Chief Executive Officer, Youth Employment Services):** Thank you, Chair, and honourable members. It's good to be here.

I'm Tim Lang, president and CEO of Youth Employment Services. We serve close to 15,000 youth a year, with partners right across Canada. Primarily, our offices are GTA-based and across Ontario, but as just a quick aside, I'm happily joining you from Saskatchewan, where I am originally from—Saskatchewan and Winnipeg.

I only mention that because it reminds me of my own father, who served in cabinet for about 11 years in the sixties and seventies. I thank you so much for your hard work and dedication. As a kid, I certainly saw first-hand the sacrifices you all make, so thank you for your service to Canada. I will mention that my father unfortunately left politics due to illness. The voters of Saskatchewan got sick of him. Hopefully, that does not befall any of you.

I'm happy to be here today to talk about, hopefully, real solutions. There's no silver bullet, but certainly some of the work we do is a partial solution. I'll just quickly talk about what we do.

We are Canada's largest and leading youth employment service provider. As I like to joke, when we started, the Toronto Maple Leafs were Stanley Cup champions. We've been around a long time.

Over those 60 years, we've seen everything through the ups and downs of the economy. We have learned to adapt to ensure that we can place the tens of thousands of youth we see—largely youth who have great barriers to employment—into employment. We have close to a 90% success rate. We work with tens of thousands of businesses to give youth a chance. Through our training programs or our one-on-one counselling, we provide them with job-ready skills and also life skills, letting them know that they're going to get knocked down and they have to get back up. We're giving them the resiliency skills and the hope. Then we work with businesses, all for free, to help put them into employment.

We now have cybersecurity programs, which is an in-demand area. The Ontario government has been great at the trades, and now the federal government is looking at that as well. It's so important. We have trades programs. We have general programs. We have entrepreneurial programs. We have mentorship programs.

A new significant area of focus has been in helping youth with mental health disabilities. Through our WorkAbility programs, we're working across the country to help businesses understand the importance of hiring people with mental health disabilities. They can sometimes be their longest-term employees and are a benefit to the organization.

All that to say, we have a great impact. Our frontline staff work with youth, day in and day out, and it works. The return on investment—the investment in organizations like ours and our partners across Canada—is that every dollar spent returns three to the economy.

I have always said that Canada is a great nation for a lot of reasons. Two of the biggest factors are, obviously, a strong market economy with businesses that hopefully create jobs and innovation, balanced by our social safety net—primarily, of course, our universal health care. We're the next layer of an important part of that social fabric that keeps us strong and helps those who don't need a handout but do need a hand-up.

I mention this because what we do works. It has a true impact, day in and day out. We have targets we have to hit. My background is in the private sector, which is a hard-driving, results-driven environment, and I've created that in our organization because we cannot fail: Our targets are actual people.

This is something that works. Part of the message I wanted to tell you today is that the investment works and we need it to continue. I admit, though—and I'm not going to make any friends here with the people in this sector—that it is disappointing when I see sometimes hundreds of millions spent on organizations that do research, round tables and have fancy, glossy outputs and data and more data on things we see every day and know every day. Here we are getting a very small amount of investment, and we see tens of millions spent on that.

I know all of you in the room agree that youth employment is important. Deloitte research lately said that if nothing is done, it could cost the economy up to \$18 billion by the 2030. If we act, the contrary is true, and it could grow the economy and create hundreds of thousands of jobs.

I'm hoping that, increasingly, we look not at giving valuable, scarce resources to organizations that do more research, but instead give it to what I call “impact organizations” like ours, which actually have an impact that's been proven. You have to look closely because a lot of organizations say that they have an impact, but is it trickle-down? Is it through research, consulting or round tables?

• (1110)

There's no silver bullet, of course, but certainly we are part of a social fabric that really can help improve youth unemployment because we've seen it work. We do it, day in and day out.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Lang.

I assume your father was Otto Lang.

**Timothy Lang:** That's correct. He's 93. I have a cabinet picture on the wall, and everyone's dead except Jean Chrétien and my dad.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Chair:** They're the same age.

Thank you for your comments.

We will begin the first round of questioning, which is six minutes, with Madam Falk.

**Rosemarie Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster—Meadow Lake, CPC):** Thank you very much, Chair.

Thank you to both of our witnesses for being here and sharing your experience and knowledge with our committee.

I will begin with Mr. Worswick.

First, how does Canada's current immigration policy impact the labour market for young people, particularly when it comes to those early-entry jobs?

**Christopher Worswick:** If you define the immigration program broadly to include the temporary migration program, then, as I argued in my opening statement, I do think there are concerns that we have admitted large numbers of temporary residents under different categories, including the temporary foreign worker program, international mobility program and international student program, who all have, to differing degrees, the capacity to work for income.

All these people are typically quite similar in age to young Canadians so it's reasonable to think that they're competing for similar types of jobs. I'm not saying that every temporary foreign worker competes directly with young Canadians, but I think there's a lot of overlap there. That's why I stressed in my comments the international students, because I think international students tend to be near campus and in cities where a lot of young Canadians are on average. I am concerned that this is putting downward pressure on wages.

In cases where the jobs are close to minimum wage, it may be creating youth unemployment.

• (1115)

**Rosemarie Falk:** If we talk beyond the labour market, what broader impacts do you see stemming from the current immigration levels?

**Christopher Worswick:** The labour market is the obvious place.

I guess housing could be an issue. I don't consider myself an expert on housing economics. Whatever population growth we have, we need to have growth in dwellings to match that. My sense is that it hasn't kept up. Large population growth requires that our public health system expand proportionally. I'm doubtful that this has happened. I've seen numbers to indicate that it hasn't happened.

Those, what I would call, “regulated parts” of the labour market would be where I would be most concerned. I think you can expand economies with immigration. You can do it in a way so that wages do not need to fall, although it's not a guarantee, but if immigration or temporary migration is concentrated in particular segments of the labour market, you can see negative outcomes there, even if you're not seeing average effects.

It comes down to, in the labour market setting, whether the temporary migrants are substitutable in production with the people you're concerned about—in this case, younger Canadians.

**Rosemarie Falk:** I know something I have heard over and over so far in this committee is that this isn't siloed. It seems like the government members, through their questioning, are led to believe that our labour impact is siloed and not affecting these other facets. People need a house to live in. When you look at health, you need good health to be able to work. We also have mental health. There are these wraparound services that also need to be available and accessible.

I guess that's where my question's coming from. How much is this affecting these other areas? It doesn't matter if you're a temporary worker here, you still have access to health services, etc., and so do Canadians. How much of that is impacting other things and making a ripple effect?

**Christopher Worswick:** They must be connected. I haven't seen quantitative studies that say how important they are, but I think what we're seeing with international students is that many people are living in small dwellings. Even if you say, well, that's the international students and perhaps they're choosing that out of necessity, it will still have an impact on that part of the housing market.

For some temporary foreign workers, they probably alleviate health care shortages—I'm thinking of nursing assistants and PSWs—but it's very hard to get doctors accredited in Canada if they're foreign-trained. It's very hard to see how that part of the health care system isn't under strain because of the population growth. This isn't meant to be a negative statement about immigration. It's more that if you have high levels of immigration, you need to have all sectors of the economy growing, and highly regulated sectors haven't been growing.

There's also the issue of temporary and permanent that we tend to gloss over in Canada. I think we should be looking at permanent immigration. Those workers will have more rights. They can move to whatever job is best for them. That's what we did prior to 2000 almost exclusively in Canada.

**Rosemarie Falk:** Thank you.

Mr. Lang, thank you for your opening remarks.

How important is it for young people to have access to an entry-level job as a stepping stone to their career development or goals?

**Timothy Lang:** It's critically important. The Deloitte research that I quoted also showed what they termed as “scarring”. When young people are unemployed for long periods of time, the evidence shows that it affects them the rest of their lives. By the time they're 40, they can earn as much as 20% less. That's a GDP issue, but we also know that employment is a social determinant of health. That

winds into it as well. It's really critical that we act and do all we can.

• (1120)

**Rosemarie Falk:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mrs. Falk.

Madam Koutrakis, you have six minutes.

**Annie Koutrakis (Vimy, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to our witnesses for joining us here today. Thank you for the work you do to support Canadian youth.

Professor Worswick, you said in your opening remarks that the two biggest issues you see leading to the current youth unemployment situation are, first, the “weakening of the Canadian economy” due to the uncertainty in the U.S. tariffs and everything that comes with that; and second, the “rapid expansion of the Canadian population”. You go on to mention the temporary foreign worker program, international students and temporary foreign worker mobility. You also said that the “greater threat” of those three is the international student.

In November 2024, the federal government did reduce both the number of hours that international students are able to work and the level coming in. Have you seen an impact since then on youth employment due to that change?

**Christopher Worswick:** The short answer is that I have not, but I have not seen research on it, to be fair. As well, the timing would be difficult to disentangle, because the economy is slowing at the same time.

To perhaps get at your question more deeply, I think those were good policy changes. I just think more should be done. The changes you described were a movement in the right direction.

**Annie Koutrakis:** Currently, would you say that the biggest threat to youth unemployment and the barrier it presents is the weakening of the Canadian economy due to the U.S. tariffs, or do you still think it's the rapid expansion? Of the two, which one do you believe is the bigger barrier right now?

**Christopher Worswick:** It's a good question. I'm not sure, to be honest. I put them as pretty equal, in my mind.

**Annie Koutrakis:** Thank you.

Mr. Lang, thank you for being here and for your testimony. Thank you for the work you do through YES. I know a little bit about your organization. I try to stay up to date with it. It's quite the model.

I'm wondering if you can share with us today a particular model of collaboration that you have seen in your work experience that makes a difference, and if you can provide some details of what that collaboration looks like and who is involved.

**Timothy Lang:** Thanks for the question.

Since we're always trying to get better and progress, we are constantly trying to improve our model. We have a great model, but as far as collaboration goes, part of the key is, of course, collaborating with the tens of thousands of businesses. We work not only with large organizations but also with a lot of small organizations as well. We're able to—especially for the small and medium enterprises—be almost like a free HR resource. We provide them with talent that is job-ready, and then, if they have issues, they can call us, and we can either find someone new or work with that person.

Certainly, collaboration in the market has been so important and has to continue, but it also allows us to hear what the new needs are. It allows us to adapt and change. That collaboration has been critical to our success and, more importantly, to the success of allowing us to place hundreds of thousands of youth into employment, partially because a lot of youth don't know what's out there. That's why the free resources in every community like ours helps youth when they come, a lot of times, distraught, especially lately. We've been seeing more at our doors than in a long time. They're not even aware of what's out there and what's possible, so that's why that collaboration is so important.

The other thing is that, of course, any time there's more collaboration between organizations across the country.... Because we're seen as the leader, we help to provide free curriculum or training, especially in mental health lately because it's on the rise. Every collaboration and type of collaboration works.

Then of course, finally, the all-important support from government has been fantastic when it's there. We just need it obviously to be maintained or increased. That's why I said that it's sometimes disappointing to see tens of millions spent on organizations that do research and so on, when I wish it was more towards the frontline impact, like you had said. Thank you for acknowledging that.

I thank my frontline staff who work with youth, day in and day out.

**Annie Koutrakis:** I'm just wondering if you're familiar with some of the programs that are in place in jurisdictions like Germany and Japan, for instance. We hear that their youth unemployment numbers are a lot less than we see here in Canada, in North America or elsewhere around the world. I'm just wondering if there are some learnings that we can take away from those two jurisdictions that you may be familiar with and that you can share with us here.

How can we be doing better when looking at those models?

• (1125)

**Timothy Lang:** I love the question because I wrote about that exact thing a couple of years ago for the Osgoode Hall Law Journal. I always believed in, even back in my private sector days.... Why recreate the wheel? We should replicate best practices around the world. It saves our own government or organizations time and money.

You're absolutely right. Germany is the model. Certainly, starting even in high schools, they have a more advanced apprenticeship program, where people can go into the high-paying, great jobs in the trades, and, of course, the other stream where they're going into an academic career, which is all-important as well. As much as

STEM has been pushed so much, I'm still a big believer in the all-important critical learning that you learn in any kind of education.

All that to say, you're absolutely right. We should look at a place like Germany where they have, I think, the lowest youth unemployment in the world. Although Canada fares a lot better than a lot of nations, we should always strive to be the best. Copying best practices like that would be something that we should definitely endeavour to do.

[*Translation*]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Koutrakis.

Mrs. Gill, you have the floor for six minutes.

**Marilène Gill (Côte-Nord—Kawawachikamach—Nitassinan, BQ):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to thank the witnesses for enriching the discussions today on a subject that is of great interest to us.

Of course, there is the issue of youth unemployment. People are saying there's a crisis. It goes in cycles, but the youth unemployment rate is unfortunately higher than it is in other segments of the labour force.

That said, this issue is set against programs for foreign workers, including programs for temporary foreign workers.

Mr. Worswick, you talked about your research, and I'm very interested in it.

Do you see any differences between the situation in urban centres, such as Toronto, Montreal or large suburban cities, and the more outlying regions?

Yesterday, I met with entrepreneurs who have temporary foreign workers as employees. In their workforce, they don't see young people or students competing with temporary foreign workers. There are a number of reasons for that. For example, young people aren't able to do the type of work that is often full-time, and sometimes on the night shift. Also, these jobs sometimes require skills that students don't necessarily have.

Furthermore—I don't know if you also noted this effect in your research—even if students had access to certain jobs, they were not so-called entry-level jobs. It seems that a certain segment of the population have left some higher-paying jobs with benefits, including insurance. Young people are therefore taking up these jobs to start with rather than the people who they were traditionally intended for in my time, some 30 years ago.

I'd like you to tell me more about that. I would then ask that you address the issue of temporary foreign workers and young people. Later on, I will talk to you about students.

[*English*]

**Christopher Worswick:** Certainly. Thank you for the question.

There are reasons to believe that the impacts of, let's say, removing the temporary foreign worker program would impact different sectors of the Canadian economy and different cities versus suburban areas, rural areas, small towns and somewhere in between.

In the absence of a temporary foreign worker program, if a firm advertises a position and is unable to fill it at the advertised wage, one would expect that three main things could happen. The first is that they might readvertise at a higher wage and they might get applicants at that higher wage. The second is that they might instead say, "Well, I need to make investments in technology, and then my existing workers are more productive or it's easier to attract people to these job vacancies." The third possibility is that the company may go bankrupt because the company is not viable at these higher wages.

It's in that flexible wage framework. There is no maximum wage in Canada, so firms can always advertise at a higher wage if their profitability allows it, but that could vary by types of jobs, regions and levels of experience. For example, I don't love the idea of a carve-out for agricultural workers, but there's a possibility that it might be the right thing to do because farms might have to raise the wage too much to get these workers doing jobs that are fairly remote geographically and seasonal.

How this would impact different employers, if we were to eliminate the temporary foreign worker program, depends a lot on that context.

• (1130)

[*Translation*]

**Marilène Gill:** Thank you.

I like the fact that we can put the effects into perspective, because they're not the same everywhere. The same thing goes for the unemployment rate. Some places are approaching full employment, while others have a 20% unemployment rate. You mentioned agriculture. I'm also thinking of fishing.

In some places, going to a restaurant may be considered a luxury, while in others, it can be seen as an essential service, particularly for workers.

The same logic can also be applied to student workers. You talked about cities, but in rural areas, the very existence of some educational institutions depends on access to foreign students. They often end up settling in our regions, which have experienced a negative demographic shift, as is the case in my riding. In my constituency, more people leave than are born there or stay there.

I'd like you to tell me about studies. It can be about institutions after high school, such as colleges or universities.

[*English*]

**Christopher Worswick:** With international students, it's a more complicated situation because while they do work.... I remember the days when our students at Carleton University could work a maximum of 10 hours per week, and it had to be on campus. At that time, there were clear benefits to that program. The international students at the university level pay a remarkable tuition. I think it's three, four or sometimes five times as much as what a domestic stu-

dent does, so it is very important to these institutions and, arguably, to the Canadian economy.

The problem is that once you say to the students that they can work 25 hours per week off campus—which is a big difference from 10 hours per week on campus, as it used to be—and that they can work as many hours as they want when they're not in the teaching semester, suddenly you're starting to have a big labour-market impact, given the number of students involved.

I think it was more of an Ontario problem at the private and community college level, to be fair to institutions across the country.

You mentioned commercial fisheries. I think there is an open question there as to whether you would treat those the same as farming. My preference would be to have very targeted temporary foreign worker programs.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Madam Gill.

Now we have Mr. Genuis for five minutes.

**Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Thank you, Chair.

Thank you to the witnesses.

Last week, we announced a Conservative youth jobs plan, and one of the pillars of it is fixing immigration.

Professor Worswick, I appreciate hearing your reflections on the immigration policy problems and their impact on youth unemployment.

As part of our plan, we also recognized and highlighted some of the differentials between urban and rural areas by promising policies to make it easier for employers to attract employees into more remote areas with workforce housing. I note that in your testimony you highlighted how the immigration policies of the current government have exacerbated unemployment, particularly by bringing newer immigrants to urban centres with, in many cases, already high levels of unemployment. This shows particularly how there has been a misalignment between the immigration policies pursued by the government and the labour market needs.

On this issue of the urban-rural distinction, what policy changes do you think could help unemployed people in areas of higher unemployment consider opportunities and take opportunities more easily in areas with lower unemployment, often rural or remote areas?

**Christopher Worswick:** Do you mean that people within rural areas move to higher-wage areas?

**Garnett Genuis:** No. For people who are living in areas with high unemployment and who might want to consider opportunities in regions of low unemployment—because they're having trouble finding work where they are—what kinds of policies do you think can make it easier for people to take some of those opportunities?

• (1135)

**Christopher Worswick:** Obviously, there could be informational barriers. People may not know about opportunities. It's costly to move, and there is a lot of risk. There may be scope for government programs to support that type of thing. It could be expensive.

My view is that I'm a little bit of a laissez-faire economist on a lot of these issues. I do support our social safety net. I think we do want, as the other speakers have said, to help people up when they're down. However, whenever we do a program to try to help people move or change or retrain, I think we should be doing a pretty rigorous cost-benefit analysis.

**Garnett Genuis:** Yes, I agree, and we're not proposing a program to do it. What we're proposing is an incentive to make it easier for employers to attract folks.

Can I ask about your analysis and your dialogue with the government around it? You've done a lot of analysis showing how a suite of immigration policies that the government has pursued has contributed to higher youth unemployment. You've spoken and written a lot about this whole area.

Does the government have its own analysis that contradicts your analysis? Did it come up with numbers previously, to justify the previous policy, that are different from your numbers, or is it your sense that it pursued these policies in the absence of that analysis?

**Christopher Worswick:** I haven't had that kind of dialogue with the government, to be fair, so I haven't seen numbers that suggest that this was.... I think these policies didn't have the negative consequences that I'm arguing they did. Obviously, the previous federal government did change direction on some of the policies, as was already noted.

I have interactions with researchers at IRCC, and I know that the government has been concerned about getting the non-permanent population rate down from around 7.2%, if I remember correctly, to under 5%. I would say that 5% is historically extremely high, so we went from an even more extremely high level down to that.

**Garnett Genuis:** I'm sorry, but my clock is ticking.

**Christopher Worswick:** No problem.

**Garnett Genuis:** I just want to understand. Have you seen an economic analysis done by them in advance of these policies, though? Is that publicly available? Have they shared it?

**Christopher Worswick:** No, I have not.

**Garnett Genuis:** Okay. Do you think they've done an economic analysis of this or...?

**Christopher Worswick:** To my knowledge...not prior to the changes that we saw.

**Garnett Genuis:** Okay.

Just very quickly, you didn't mention the significant growth in inland asylum claimants. Do you see that as contributing to the youth unemployment problem as well?

People often have to wait for years before their claims are adjudicated.

**Christopher Worswick:** I haven't actually looked at that, but it's a candidate, certainly, yes. It's not an ideal situation. I tend to try to

focus more on the economic programs, given my expertise, but obviously everyone needs to work or generate income, so it's possible.

**Garnett Genuis:** Yes, it has economic implications.

**Christopher Worswick:** Yes.

**Garnett Genuis:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** We have Madam Fancy for five minutes.

**Jessica Fancy (South Shore—St. Margarets, Lib.):** Thank you.

Thank you very much, gentlemen, for being here today.

I'd like to take us a little bit away from the immigration issue right now to look at regulations. Within our platform that we wrote and our mandate in the election, we talked about taking away some of those regulations and silos among provincial governments or from private sector employees.

I'm going to also share my time with my colleague here, Mr. Joseph, but my first question is for Mr. Lang. Thank you very much for being here.

I read a little bit about you the other day and the depth and breadth of what you do within the YES program. Looking at that regulation piece, I'd like to know what types of private sector partnerships or collaborations you feel we could do as a federal government to help strengthen our ability to connect youth and with employers.

**Timothy Lang:** From my view, with all due respect, I can't think of a collaboration between the government and the private sector. I think the better avenue would be allowing organizations like ours to go and do that work and certainly with more resources or encouragement to ensure there's greater collaboration at different levels.

We work with all organizations—lots of entry-level jobs for really barriered youth, but also engineers, people with a Ph.D. We work with all youth. There is already, you could say, a system where there is collaboration between the private sector and a not-for-profit, an NGO. Off the top of my head, I can't think of anything the government could do better other than more resources or encouragement to ensure that this happens.

We're always thinking of different ways to drive youth employment, and even in the last conversation with MP Genuis.... I know for a fact that a friend of mine who runs a manufacturing plant in Calgary said he depends on temporary foreign workers. As he was speaking, I was thinking that maybe there could be a program where we encourage young people, if the wages are right, to go and take those jobs. We know that lots of times they won't, but again, test everything. We love testing things. If it fails, it fails. That could be another type of collaboration. We know in some sectors—manufacturing and, certainly, agriculture—that a lot of youth just will not take those jobs, but maybe we should try to encourage them through incentives, relocation and higher wages.

As far as collaboration with the private sector goes, we do it well. I can't think of anything other than what's already in place.

● (1140)

**Jessica Fancy:** Thank you very much.

You mentioned in your introduction about getting bang for your buck versus investment in impact. I'd like you to expand a little bit, then, regarding what we as a federal government can do with our investments to help gain further impact.

**Timothy Lang:** Yes, I appreciate that. I'm proud of my organization. Again, maybe coming from the private sector, I run it like a small business—entrepreneurial. We know every dollar saved can go to a youth who might not have enough money to even get to our program, so we try to save money so they can have it for food if they come hungry, or for TTC tokens, transportation or whatnot.

To your very important point of what the government could do, again, my strong belief is to look at the programs that are results-oriented, that work and have impact and hopefully fund them more. Organizations like ours are relatively small, and certainly in terms of funding from the federal government, very small. Just a little bit more funding could go a long way, because we see changed lives day in and day out. That's why I go back to knowing there will be people in my sector who will be annoyed, because they do sometimes get tens of millions—10 times more than us—for research and round tables, and ministers will come to speak and it looks impressive.

Even on this panel I saw some past transcripts where someone was saying that youth who are unemployed develop more mental health issues. Well, I'm sorry for being cynical, but obviously. Some of the things are obvious. We know that first-hand, and we do our own research.

All that is a long-winded way of saying—I apologize—put more focus on impact organizations and make sure there truly is impact. We have targets we have to hit.

**Jessica Fancy:** It's accountability and targeting.

Thank you so much, Mr. Lang.

**Timothy Lang:** Yes.

**Jessica Fancy:** I would like to share the rest of my time with Mr. Joseph.

[*Translation*]

**Natilien Joseph (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, Lib.):** Good morning, Mr. Worswick.

I'll be blunt. I've been listening to you for some time—

**The Chair:** I'm afraid your time is up.

Thank you, Ms. Fancy and Mr. Joseph.

Mrs. Gill, you have the floor for two and a half minutes.

**Marilène Gill:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

My question is for both Mr. Lang and Mr. Worswick.

Mr. Lang mentioned that some fields of employment would be less attractive to young people or students. Yesterday I drove 1,000 kilometres. I drive a lot on a regular basis, and I see a lot of businesses with job offers. However, there are no takers for these positions.

In your respective work and with your responsibilities, are you seeing a change in what the workforce expects from a job?

[*English*]

**Christopher Worswick:** Thank you for the question.

Employer expectations probably are shifting. That's my reading of what's happening. If I owned a small business and I could hire a 28-year-old person from Mexico who has a family to feed versus an 18-year-old Canadian who is a bit lost and hasn't decided what they want to do, I think I would want to hire the temporary foreign worker. However, that's not what the program is really about. The program is supposed to be about filling gaps in the labour market and helping when searches fail.

● (1145)

[*Translation*]

**Marilène Gill:** I'm sorry to interrupt you, but I don't have much time.

I was talking more about the employees themselves, because the jobs are available. One entrepreneur told me that, in four years, he had received only 10 résumés from young people in the region, and that he had no choice but to turn to another workforce.

Are young workers' expectations different, which would explain why, for perfectly legitimate reasons, they wouldn't accept certain positions?

[*English*]

**Christopher Worswick:** I'm sorry that I misunderstood the question.

Jobs with higher wages are more attractive, all things being the same—that's obvious—but we have a situation where we're reliant and where firms are benefiting from international temporary migrants of different types. It's hard to know the counterfactual. If the wages were higher, would Canadian citizens and landed immigrants who are young take these jobs? I think they would. In my mind, the question is how much higher the wages would have to be.

[*Translation*]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mrs. Gill.

[*English*]

Mrs. Goodridge, go ahead for five minutes.

**Laila Goodridge (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to thank both of the witnesses for being here today.

I will start with you, Mr. Lang.

Would you say there's a tendency in this Liberal government to spend millions on strategies and round tables rather than targeting the root causes of these issues?

**Timothy Lang:** I've definitely seen, from ESDC or other departments, investment in organizations like ours, which we greatly appreciate, but certainly the last government did cut funding. It was said that they didn't cut funding; it was that they were just oversubscribed. To me, that was hard to hear, because that means they cut funding from organizations like ours and gave it to new organizations. That was a mistake, I think, because they don't understand that it means not only cuts. We then have to lay off people, pay severance and pay leases that we don't have programs for.

If programs work and you're reaching your targets, they should at least be maintained or continued, but then, as I said before, I've seen organizations that get tens of millions and, again, have these round tables, fancy websites and 17 executives for every position. In our organization, my VPs wear three or four hats, like IT and programs. They do three or four things because we know every dollar saved can go to help youth.

I have seen that and I am hoping, through today, we will all agree that more should be done for organizations that have real impact, and I think it's important to look at what real impact is. I go back to the—

**Laila Goodridge:** The WE Charity...?

**Timothy Lang:** Yes. For the WE Charity, we used to say their impact.... They counted the whole school as an impact when they really just meant the student council or volunteer. I'll use that as the example.

Even when you have organizations that have impact, it's important to look closely. What is their impact? Ours is clear: It's jobs. We get tens of thousands of people. Do we put them in employment? It's true that we include impact as going back to school or into some sort of training, but what is the impact?

**Laila Goodridge:** I appreciate that. It leads into my next question.

Do you track the percentage of youth from your internships, placements and mentorship programs, etc., who remain with the employer post-program?

**Timothy Lang:** That's a great question. We get it all the time. Because of our own resources, we track them up to a year. Beyond that, it's hard. Usually, if they're in employment for a year, we know anecdotally. I've met people who have been out 20 years and say, "You changed my life" and so on.

We know the hardest part is getting their foot in the door. Sometimes, as you can imagine, the things we take for granted.... There are really sad situations. In their own home, they might have a parent saying, "You're no good. You're a loser." We have to—

• (1150)

**Laila Goodridge:** I appreciate that. We have a limited amount of time.

**Timothy Lang:** Sure.

**Laila Goodridge:** I share your concern. I think it's absolutely shameful that for the last 10 years, we've had a government that has spent tons of money on all kinds of make-work projects and the WE scandal. There are so many scandals that have added up. The result we are seeing is a youth unemployment crisis.

I'm the member of Parliament for Fort McMurray—Cold Lake. People from all across the country and all across the world have come to Fort McMurray for generations. We've seen no housing starts this year in Fort McMurray. We don't see any growth because all we see are antidevelopment policies coming from the government.

Do you think the anti-energy policies from the government are having an impact on youth jobs?

**Timothy Lang:** That's probably out of our area of expertise. I couldn't comment on that.

**Laila Goodridge:** Mr. Worswick, could you speak to that? Are Liberal anti-energy policies having an impact on youth employment in Canada?

**Christopher Worswick:** I'm not sure I can link it directly to youth employment, but I think it's fair to say that if the energy sector were allowed to grow more quickly, it would improve employment generally in Canada.

**Laila Goodridge:** I'll lay out a few facts. Fort McMurray has a very young population base. We have a very high percentage of people who work in the energy industry. Therefore, there is a high percentage of young people who are working in the energy industry.

When you are doing things to restrict the energy industry from growing and are, in fact, actively shutting it down, it has to have an impact on youth employment.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mrs. Goodridge. Your time is gone.

[Translation]

Ms. Desrochers, you have the floor for five minutes.

**Caroline Desrochers (Trois-Rivières, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you very much to the witnesses for being here today.

[English]

I'll share my time with Natilien. Can you please let me know when there's one minute left? *Parfait.*

These are challenging times for Canadians and our economy. It's challenging for young Canadians as well. I think we are tackling that. We've taken a lot of action in the last few months. I don't want to spend too much time on that.

I want to go back to something that was said about an analysis or a lack thereof. We publish a labour force survey every month. The last one was published on October 10.

I want to go back to the temporary foreign worker program because I'd like to understand something that has been brought up by previous witnesses as well. Just to be clear, temporary foreign workers are a last resort. I think they make up 1% of our labour force. For an employer, there's a huge administrative burden in getting a temporary foreign worker in addition to having to do the labour market impact assessment and proving they cannot find someone else, having to pay them a premium, in many cases, and having to find housing for them.

I'm trying to understand what the business argument is for a small business to say, "I will go through all of that burden so I can avoid hiring a Canadian worker who is in the country." If you have that answer, please share it with me, because I'm missing something here.

[Translation]

My first question is for Mr. Lang. I'm going to ask my second question right away, and I'd like us to make sure we leave him time to answer.

I'd like to come back to my colleague Mrs. Gill's question. We didn't have time to get into it a lot, but I think it's a critical question.

In recent years, have you seen any changes in the kinds of jobs that young people take on and the way they want to enter the labour market?

[English]

What has changed that led to a gap? As my colleague said, clearly, there are areas where there are positions open, and I don't think that just increasing the wage we're paying them is viable for businesses. Otherwise, they would be doing that.

What are the things that have changed in terms of how youth are entering the job market and what kinds of jobs they're willing to take? I'll stop here.

• (1155)

[Translation]

**Timothy Lang:** I've been with Youth Employment Services for 10 years. We haven't seen much change in the way things have been done in recent years.

The big change is how employers are hiring young people. Most of the problems stem from many young people not knowing what kinds of jobs are out there, so it's important that organizations like mine be able to provide information to young people.

Not knowing what's out there is a real problem. We often hear from businesses that they're looking for employees.

[English]

They think that doesn't make sense. How can there be young people looking for work when the organizations can't find people? Organizations like ours are good for that match—

**Caroline Desrochers:** There's a gap of information.

**Timothy Lang:** —but as far as expectations....

**Caroline Desrochers:** Maybe, I'll just go to Mr. Worswick because I want to leave some time for my colleague, Natilien.

Go ahead.

**Christopher Worswick:** Just really quickly in response, a labour force survey is a dataset; it's not analysis. I was saying that I have not seen analysis, and if any of you have analysis, I'd be happy to—

**Caroline Desrochers:** Really, my key question is why someone would go out of their way to pay more and have more administrative burden to hire someone?

**Christopher Worswick:** It's because of productivity.

The article I mentioned in the document I submitted to the committee cites my co-authored Canadian Journal of Economics article where we looked at the data. We found that temporary foreign workers worked longer hours, were less likely to be laid off and had lower turn over, presumably because they have to go back to their home country if they quit, so the firms get higher productivity from temporary foreign workers.

You are right that there are extra costs, but I suspect it's because of higher productivity.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Madame Desrochers. Your time is up.

**Caroline Desrochers:** I have 20 seconds.

[Translation]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Desrochers. You only had five minutes.

[English]

It's over.

Thank you, Madame Desrochers.

I'm going to go to Madame Gill for two and a half minutes to conclude this round.

[Translation]

**Marilène Gill:** I'd like to give my time to Mr. Joseph.

[English]

**The Chair:** We'll start with Madame Gill, and then we'll go to Monsieur Joseph.

[Translation]

Mrs. Gill, you have the floor for two minutes.

**Marilène Gill:** My question is for you, Mr. Worswick.

You said that eliminating the temporary foreign worker program would be a solution.

Do you think parts of the economy in certain regions will simply have to die out? I talked about fisheries and restaurants. Would we tell those employers that they don't fit into the logic of the market, that they don't have workers and therefore they have to just shut down?

[English]

**Christopher Worswick:** I'm more confident talking about restaurants than I am about fisheries.

My sense on restaurants is that you may see turnover of restaurants. Some restaurants may close. Others will open. However, I think that this idea of trying to keep wages low and fill positions at low wages to keep restaurants working in smaller areas is ultimately self-defeating. If the wages were to rise, young people in those regions would be less likely to leave.

I think it would be better to keep the temporary foreign worker program out of the service sector as much as possible.

What's unclear to my mind is that whether fisheries are the same as agriculture. I don't feel like I know enough about the fisheries sector to know for sure, but I think that's the question in my mind.

[Translation]

**Marilène Gill:** In my riding, there is the regional county municipality, or RCM, where salaries are the highest. People live there, but some jobs still need to be filled by temporary foreign workers. We don't necessarily have a shortage of jobs, but we do have diversity.

That's more of a comment than a question. I think we really need to make some distinctions, and I thank Mr. Worswick for doing so.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Madame Gill.

We'll now go to Mr. Reynolds for two minutes.

**Colin Reynolds (Elmwood—Transcona, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to the witnesses. I'll pose my first question to both of you.

Mr. Worswick, could you answer first?

I'm a Red Seal electrician. I've been in the trade for 20 years. In your research, have you seen a decline of interest in skilled trades among the youth of today?

• (1200)

**Christopher Worswick:** That's a great question.

I haven't noticed a decline, but I think it would benefit Canada if more youth were interested in the trades, the skilled trades in particular. I'm not sure that I have a great answer to your question, but I think it's an important area that we should be encouraging more young people to look at.

**Colin Reynolds:** Okay.

Mr. Lang, the same question is for you.

**Timothy Lang:** I have basically the same response. We've seen an increase in interest in the trades, which is good, but we believe that there should be an even greater increase. Again, for many generations, unfortunately, it's like you had to be a doctor or a lawyer. We have to continue the education of young people—and again, replicating Germany and places like that—and say that this is a great career that helps build our nation, and it's a great long-term career, as you know.

**Colin Reynolds:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** You have 40 seconds, Mr. Reynolds, if you want them.

**Colin Reynolds:** Mr. Lang, do you see anything that we can do better to promote the trades among young people and change that stigma?

**Timothy Lang:** Yes, continuing in schools.... The colleges do a good job in their trades programs, but certainly in the high schools, it's to continue to change the mentality. I know that it's sometimes hard, even in boards of education, to encourage that. In my day, they had shop classes. I think that some of those have gone away in schools.

From a government perspective, I know that the Ontario government has done a good job of continuing to try to fund organizations that not only promote this but that hire young people into the trades.

We're one of the recipients. We have a trades program. The programs are more expensive because some of the trades programs of course include all the tools and so on, but it's well worth it in the long run. We can't grow housing if we don't have the tradespeople to do it.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Reynolds.

[Translation]

Mr. Joseph, you have two minutes.

**Natilien Joseph:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I thank Mrs. Gill for giving me her time.

We're talking about shutting down the temporary foreign worker program, but these workers hold the majority of full-time jobs in economic sectors like agriculture, food processing and construction, and those sectors are saying that they simply can't operate without these workers. In my riding, I've been approached by companies like Kabs Laboratories Inc. about the temporary foreign worker program.

Can you suggest a realistic alternative for people in these sectors, or are you talking about possibly sacrificing the economy for ideological reasons?

[English]

**Christopher Worswick:** I certainly wouldn't sacrifice the economy for ideological reasons, but I would say that in the absence of a temporary foreign worker program, I would expect—as I've said already—that firms would readvertise at a higher wage rate. They might attract Canadian citizens or landed immigrants to the jobs, or they might invest in new technology.

The Nobel Prize in economics was awarded last week, I think, to Peter Howitt, an esteemed professor at Brown University, who taught at Western University for many years. Their theories are about “creative destruction”—that new companies come in and replace old companies. There are papers in that literature that basically say that if you protect companies that rely on low-wage workers, they will invest less in innovation and new technology, and you'll short-circuit that growth.

These are the concerns I have. It's the impact for younger, low-wage workers in Canada, Canadian citizens and landed immigrants, and what the implications are for economic growth for the country.

[Translation]

**The Chair:** Mr. Joseph, you have 10 seconds left.

**Natilien Joseph:** That will be all.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you to the two witnesses for appearing this morning.

We'll suspend for two minutes while we transition to the final panel group.

• (1200)

(Pause)

• (1205)

**The Chair:** Committee members, if you could take your seats, we will begin the second hour of today's meeting on youth employment.

I welcome the witnesses. You have the option to speak in the official language of your choice. As you are all appearing virtually, use the globe icon at the bottom of your Surface. Choose the official language of your choice. If there is an issue with interpretation, please use the “raise hand” icon, and I will suspend while it is being corrected. As well, please direct all questions through the chair.

Each one of you have a five-minute opening statement. At five minutes or a little over, I will thank you, which means that I would like you to wrap up quickly so we can get to our questioners.

With that, I would like to welcome, from CEE Centre for Young Black Professionals, Agapi Gessesse, executive director. From the Kiewit Corporation, we have Shaudia Ricketts. From Youth Jobs Canada, we have Joe Hersch.

I will begin with the Centre for Young Black Professionals.

Ms. Gessesse, you have the floor.

• (1210)

**Agapi Gessesse (Executive Director, CEE Centre for Young Black Professionals):** Good afternoon, Chair, Vice-Chair and committee members. Thank you so much for the opportunity to be here.

My name is Agapi Gessesse. I have the honour and the privilege of serving as the executive director of CEE Centre for Young Black Professionals, an organization that was founded in 2012 after the “summer of the gun”, and our mission is to create an economy where Black youth can become financially prosperous, live high-quality lives and contribute to the advancement of Canada.

We do this work by providing holistic skills training, mental health supports, mentorship and strategic partnerships with both employers and community organizations. We focus on the workforce development part by looking at where there are labour gaps in the Canadian market and how we can get Black youth from the back of the unemployment line to the front by looking strategically at where industry has the largest labour gaps, and that's what we base our programming off of. We then find employers to support our efforts, alongside government as well.

We have been doing this work for nearly 15 years, and we have three very distinct approaches.

Number one is a person-centred approach. It's really focusing on the young people furthest from the labour market. We have full-time social workers who are able to support a young person not only in their skills training but also in their life stabilization. We have full-time social workers who work on their food security and their housing security. We have an employer attached to most of our programs. We look at their transportation, how they plan to get to and from work, and, if they have children, their child care. We're really focusing on the individuals themselves and supporting them not only while they're in our program but also as they transition into the workforce. We keep our young people on a case management load for two years after they've graduated.

The second approach is what we call a trauma-informed approach. By virtue of the demographic we're serving, young people are coming from all walks of life and are experiencing different levels of trauma. One that we see very often is academic trauma that is experienced in our education systems and also might be related to life stabilization at home, etc. We have full-time psychotherapists on staff to support our young people who need extra mental health supports in order to be prepared for the workforce.

The third approach we take is a culturally relevant approach that we have tweaked over the years we've been doing this work, and it really speaks to the soft skills of a young person. We believe in experiential learning and learning things like social capital: What is it, and how are you going to create a conversation with your colleagues at work who, outside of the workplace, you might not have anything in common with? How do you network? How do you set up your LinkedIn profile? It's all of those soft skills that are super critical for this work economy.

We started in Toronto and now have turned into a national organization. We have expanded our reach outside and scaled into other urban centres, like Ottawa, Montreal, Edmonton and Halifax. We partner with other grassroots and emerging Black-led organizations to support our expansion and to be able to see the fruits of our model.

Over our entire existence, we have an 87% retention rate, which means, two years after graduation, 87% of the young people who graduate through CEE's programs are working in the industry we trained them in. We've served over 4,500 young people, and we're not only equipping them for the workforce. We're also supporting them as individuals to help them imagine where it is they would like to contribute to the economy and how they would like to do that. All of our programs are really centred around a skill that cannot be taken away from them. Then they decide what it is they'd like to do with that—if they would like to become an entrepreneur, if they would like to work a nine-to-five or if they would like to take that skill and become a freelancer. However they decide they would like to contribute to the economy is where we would like to see our young people thrive, and we've been able to see 87% of them do so.

Of the young people we serve at CEE, 70% are on social assistance, and 77% of that 70% have successfully transitioned off of social assistance after joining our programs. We know that our model works, and our model also needs to be expanded so that we can serve more young people. In June 2025—I'm sure these stats are not foreign to any of you—our unemployment rate for young people sat at a national average of 14.2%, the highest since the pandemic.

- (1215)

Black youth, unfortunately, are at 24.4% as of last year. That's more than double the national average. In Ontario, nearly one in four teenagers in the labour force is unemployed and some demographic groups face as high as 22%. These are not just statistics. These represent wasted potential and an untapped talent pool that we at CEE try to address.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Gessesse.

We'll now go to Ms. Ricketts for five minutes, please.

**Shaudia Ricketts (Head of Trades Strategy and Recruitment, North America, Kiewit Corporation):** Good afternoon, Mr. Chair and members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to speak about youth employment in Canada, particularly in the skilled trades and construction sector.

My name is Shaudia Ricketts and I serve as the head of trades strategy and recruitment at Kiewit Corporation, one of North America's largest construction and engineering companies. Additionally, I serve on the board of directors for the Canadian Apprenticeship Forum, a national non-profit that brings together industry, labour, educators and government to strengthen Canada's apprenticeship system.

From both points, I see the same reality. The skilled trades offer incredible opportunity, yet too many young Canadians are still struggling to access, complete and thrive in these careers.

Skilled trades are vital to Canada's economy, contributing over \$150 billion annually to GDP and employing 1.6 million Canadians. With nearly one in five construction workers retiring by 2030, we must increase youth participation and apprenticeship completion to meet infrastructure and housing goals. Meanwhile, youth unemployment has climbed to 14.6%, its highest level in 15 years.

The disconnect is striking. We have the jobs and we have the youth, but the bridge between them remains too weak to overcome persistent barriers.

The first barrier is limited early exposure. Too few students encounter trades careers in school. Underfunded shop programs and insufficient guidance mean many miss out on early engagement, which is crucial for changing perceptions and opening doors.

Second is complex apprenticeship systems. Varied provincial and territorial regulations, coupled with inconsistent certification processes, create confusion and discourage completion. A harmonized approach is essential to improve mobility and completion rates.

Third is financial and mobility pressures. Apprentices often travel far and pay out-of-pocket for housing and tools. Limited financial support leads many to drop out before certification.

Fourth is employment insurance gaps. Many apprentices are ineligible for EI during training or face delays in benefits. Financial barriers are the leading cause of program discontinuation.

Fifth is representation challenges. Women, indigenous youth and newcomers remain under-represented. Many communities lack local training or culturally relevant supports. Removing these barriers is absolutely essential to growing our talent pipeline.

Despite these challenges, promising initiatives are emerging across Canada: mentorship and early outreach programs that introduce trades careers before high school graduation; industry-indigenous partnerships that embed cultural relevance in local employment pathways; employer-led retention programs that support apprentices through certification and federal initiatives such as the apprenticeship service program, which incentivizes small employers to hire first-year apprentices. However, large employers, those training thousands of apprentices annually, were excluded from this program. To achieve meaningful scale and address national labour shortages, we need inclusive policies that engage all employers, large and small.

To build a sustainable, inclusive and future-ready workforce and to address the barriers outlined above, I respectfully recommend the following actions.

First is to strengthen early career awareness. Invest in modern shop facilities and school-industry partnerships and use real-time labour market data to guide students towards high-demand trades.

Second is to expand apprenticeship access and incentives. Introduce targeted tax incentives for project developers and major industrial owners who demonstrate a commitment to workforce development by ensuring all contractors meet or exceed federally recognized apprenticeship hiring requirements. Establish targeted tax incentives or funding programs for employers who retain apprentices through to certification completion, reinforcing employer investment in long-term workforce development. Incorporate apprenticeship completion metrics into public procurement and infrastructure contracts, rewarding employers who successfully train and certify apprentices. Continue harmonizing apprenticeship standards across provinces and territories to improve mobility, consistency and credential recognition nationwide.

Third, we need to modernize the employment insurance program. We need to adapt EI eligibility to reflect project-based trades work and guarantee uninterrupted support during training, and have pilot models that reimburse employers who maintain wage support for apprentices during training blocks, strengthening retention and reducing dropout rates.

Fourth, we need to reduce the financial and mobility barriers for apprentices. We need to provide targeted supports for travel, housing and tools to enable apprentices to access training when it is unavailable locally. We need to expand non-repayable grants rather than loans to reduce financial burdens, recognizing that debt-based models have not been shown to improve completion outcomes.

Fifth, we need to grow Canada's skilled trades talent pipeline from under-represented groups. We need to fund preapprenticeship, mentorship and bridging programs for women, indigenous youth, newcomers and other equity-seeking groups, and support indige-

nous-led training partnerships that reflect community cultural strengths and regional economic opportunities.

The skilled trades offer purpose, pride and prosperity for young Canadians, but the system must evolve with policies that reflect how apprentices actually live, learn and work. Canada needs a national apprenticeship strategy, codesigned by industry, labour, educators and government—not in silos but in partnership.

● (1220)

Thank you, Mr. Chair, and members of the committee. I welcome your questions.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Ricketts.

Mr. Hersch, you have five minutes or less.

**Joe Hersch (Managing Director, YouthjobsCanada):** Good day, everyone. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

My name is Joe Hersch. I'm the managing director of YouthjobsCanada. We have been in operation for eight years. We were founded in 2017.

The YouthjobsCanada mission statement is to bridge the divide in Canada between youth and at-risk youth ages 15 to 30 and employers by helping provide the building blocks for youth of all diversity, with an innovative, integrated and singular platform offering graduating options to building long-term relationships with employers.

The YouthjobsCanada vision statement is to provide a valuable resource in Canada to youth and vulnerable youth and employers in order to improve the job-ready skills of at-risk youth by working together in transition opportunities today in order to improve and lower the high youth unemployment rate in Canada tomorrow.

At the moment and since about 2021, we have been working with the Canada job bank with a feed of jobs that are posted on Canada job bank into YouthjobsCanada. We're in a somewhat unique position that way, and we value and respect the relationship we've been able to build with the Canada job bank and ESDC.

We also, in our heartfelt best wisdom, had this mission to truly help make a difference and bring down that high youth unemployment rate since 2017. Taking snapshots from year to year—and it's hit a lightning rod this year—everybody has come to the realization that youth unemployment is still really high.

Although we see some successes with the YESS program, we'd sure like to stimulate some further conversation between ESDC and the YESS program leadership group to find out how we can better collaborate and work together.

There are some contributing factors to why the youth unemployment rate is high. Earlier today, some individuals hit on some of those points, which we agree with. There are barriers there. There are individuals with disabilities and challenges to integrating into the workforce. That's not disputed but in order to try to really come up with a level playing field relative to why organizations may be choosing to look abroad, there has to be more work done to adjust youth expectations—we still see that as a concern—to increase reliability, to lessen turnover and to increase the productivity of youth. Those are undeniable from our standpoint.

The major industries that we continue to have employers post roles for...and we've had thousands and thousands of postings over the eight years that we've been in operation. The top three are still restaurant and hospitality, trades and technical, and health care. These seem to be the jobs that most traditional employers have a hard time filling. These typically end up with groups that are looking to try to make inroads into the workforce, and that's fine.

Working with ESDC and the YESS program, we'd like to see options for resource availability, not just to ourselves but to other external organizations. It appears that the program for YESS funding had a brief window of funding options, last available in 2023, but we'd sure like to recommend that this be looked at again to allow organizations to apply for funding so that support services can be put into place.

We've run quite the successful operation. We're privately funded, and we've been quite financially stable. The same can't necessarily be true for the organizations that are trying to make inroads to help solve the challenge; however, we're open to working together with ESDC and the YESS program leadership group.

We have three recommendations for you to consider.

First is options for solutions in the future for greater and improved integration and collaboration between YESS and ESDC involving the 11 federal departments and 14 federal programs. We see these programs as good but not necessarily enough. They're great starters to help youth have that work sensation and work experience, but they don't necessarily get them into industry because these 14 federal programs are with departments that have jobs internally available. It doesn't really get them into the market economy. We'd like to propose greater working co-operation among the YESS program, ESDC and other organizations, including YouthJobsCanada.

- (1225)

The second recommendation is options to consider incentive programs for employers in Canada for year-round wage subsidy op-

tions to stimulate investment in youth employment. We see that as pretty key because that way there's equity from both the market perspective and the social perspective that the federal government is trying to support.

The last recommendation is how the youth employment ecosystem we see could look in the future by modelling and focusing better on connecting the market employer opportunities and the YESS program deliverables. We see that as a gap—

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Hersch. You can continue those comments in questioning. I'm sure you'll get several questions.

We'll begin the questioning round with Mr. Genuis for six minutes.

**Garnett Genuis:** Thank you, Chair.

Thank you to all the witnesses. I'll start with Ms. Gessesse.

As you mentioned, youth unemployment is very high—it's even higher in the community you serve—and because of that, we need to be especially clear about the importance of evaluating the effectiveness of programs, especially programs that are publicly funded.

You talked about the effectiveness of your programs, and thank you for doing that. Those are incredible numbers. Congratulations on the work you're doing and the results you are achieving. Those numbers highlight the importance of identifying outcomes.

We've also heard testimony that the government has spent money in ways that are, in the views of other witnesses, ineffective with organizations that do not produce results. Most infamously, we've had mention of the WE Charity scandal, but there are other cases. There doesn't seem to be a systematic evaluation of outputs for spending.

You talked about the right outputs. Are young people working in the fields they were trained in years out from the training programs? It's not enough to say that we've hosted  $x$  number of conferences or even that we've trained a certain number of youth. The question isn't whether you've run training programs but whether those training programs have achieved the objective, which is young people in jobs.

I'd appreciate hearing your insights on how we can propose shifting dollars from less effective forms of training and support programs to more effective programs, and more effectively align government spending with the desired outputs.

**Agapi Gessesse:** One of the challenges that CEE has experienced has been in the call-out process. Although we have very high impact, we're not a very large organization. Part of the issue that we have come across is the fact that every time we reapply for a grant, it's about what's written on the paper and not necessarily the track record of what we've been able to do with the funds prior to.

A perfect example of this is the YESS program—you know, I didn't get to finish—which is a program that we encourage this government to continue to fund and support organizations like ours, but we have been unsuccessful. We've been successful in receiving the funds after a lot of advocacy around the work that we're doing, and we have exceeded our numbers, much to what I've described. However, then after, when the call-out came again, we were unsuccessful, so it doesn't allow for us to have continuity around us. It also impedes our ability to bring employers on board.

The way our model works is really for employers, government and us, as community, to come together, but the reality is that corporations are not going to fund the entire program based on the needs of the young people we have. The wraparound supports and all of that are really reliant on foundations and government funding. Then the employers can pay for the pieces that they're benefiting from, which are the actual hard skills and workforce development training.

I think, looking at—

• (1230)

**Garnett Genuis:** Can I just jump in? I'm sorry.

It sounds like you're saying that the applications that you're being asked to fill out don't put questions about outputs and results front and centre. Is that the case: that they're focused on asking you other questions that are not as oriented toward the actual outputs you produce?

**Agapi Gessesse:** I think the issue.... There's an opportunity for you to explain what you've done. However, for organizations like ours that have a very strong track record and do have results, I think that should be accounted for in the evaluation process so that it's not like a fresh, new situation where bureaucrats can't look at your past track record and can only see what's on the paper. You can only explain your impact through numbers, of course, but there's a lot more to it outside of numbers that you can't really fit in a 500-word box.

**Garnett Genuis:** Yes, it seems so foundational that we should be focusing on actual outputs in the spending, so thank you for your attention to that.

In the time I have left, Ms. Ricketts, our party has proposed direct support for high school vocational programs around trades to try to get young people exposed to these programs as early as possible. I wonder if you could tell us briefly what you think about that and also about the state of programs targeted at young people—high-schoolers, teenagers—to expose them to the trades.

**Shaudia Ricketts:** I absolutely support it. It's important, actually, that we expose students as early as grade 6, because children actually start to think about a career and what they want to do when they're older. They typically already have an idea by the time they've hit the high school era as to where they want to go, so organizations like Skills Canada, which is an incredible organization, do expose students to the trades as early as grade 6. There are different books they will read to kids in elementary school that give them exposure to the trades.

The issue is that not a lot of people know about the opportunities that are present in the trades. As a parent, I would say we all want our children to do the best, and we assume the best is university, but I've met some really incredible trades professionals. The idea is that there's a stigma that a trade is not a profession, when it is a profession.

**Garnett Genuis:** Thank you for that.

How can we remove the stigma? What other steps would you like to see to remove the stigma?

**The Chair:** Give a short answer, please.

**Shaudia Ricketts:** Expose not just the students but also the parents to the financial benefits of a trade and the long-term opportunities for individuals who go into the trades.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Ricketts.

Thank you, Mr. Genuis.

Madame Desrochers, you have six minutes, please.

**Caroline Desrochers:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to the speakers. I think you've all brought a lot of very thoughtful engagement to this, and I really appreciate the constructive aspect of today's discussion.

My first question is to all of you. We're seeing an increase around the world and in Canada of polarization, whether it's around immigration issues or the importance of DEI initiatives. You spoke about how Black youth have a higher rate of unemployment.

Ms. Ricketts, you also talked about under-represented groups.

How much do you think that divisive, polarizing language impacts those groups when it comes to finding employment? That is for whoever wants to start.

• (1235)

**Shaudia Ricketts:** I can start, if you want.

I don't know if it's the polarizing words or anything else. I think it's just that traditionally you would have found a Caucasian male in the trades. The opportunities that should be presented are more unknown. I believe they say indigenous people make up 5% of our trades workforce. I think women make up 12% of the construction industry. These are the individuals we need to reach out to. We just need to make it more encompassing and make them more aware of the opportunities and, again, remove the stigma as to what the construction industry is like to work in and the idea of this traditional role.

**Caroline Desrochers:** Thank you.

**Agapi Gessesse:** From my perspective, in the conversation around whether DEI should or shouldn't exist, etc., folks are very concerned about the numbers and the success rates. The numbers don't lie, and the numbers are telling us that Black youth are being left behind. Whether we want to call it DEI or whether we want to call it whatever, something needs to change. Whatever we want to call it, opportunity needs to start knocking on their doors. The conversation is irrelevant if we're not going to move towards actual change.

For our organization, it's about access for all Canadians, including Black youth. Right now, if we sit at a 24.5% unemployment rate, that is a problem for Canada to address, not Black youth and not our organization as a whole. The conversation can continue, but it needs to then move into some type of action that addresses this very immediate need.

**Caroline Desrochers:** Thank you.

We've talked a lot about skills and the lack of youth enrolling in the skilled trades. That's been a recurring theme of this study over the last few weeks.

Would you agree that the government has sent a very strong signal, whether it's setting up Build Canada Homes, setting up the Major Projects Office, launching the programs on the skilled trades or helping groups to re-skill? We are sending those signals that those are important and those are the jobs we need to rebuild.

Are those the right signals to send?

**Shaudia Ricketts:** They are, yes. The careers, the jobs and the projects are really important, but there's a push and pull.

You can push the information out and you can try to push the youth into the trades, but there has to be a pull factor from employers as well. That's why I talk about incentives. There have to be jobs. It doesn't matter if you're a small employer or a large one, there's a budget to meet, there are financial obligations and it's a cost to a project. You have to be able to ensure that your employers—your clients—are creating positions for apprentices.

The reality is that it is expensive. It's more expensive to hire somebody and train them on a project in an apprenticeship role than just to hire a journeyman in that same position and have them do the work.

**Caroline Desrochers:** Thank you.

Mr. Hersch, I wonder if you have anything to add on that.

**Joe Hersch:** I entirely agree with Ms. Ricketts. The stimulus has to come from the employer level. We can't emphasize that enough.

In our recommendations, there's a theme in there. We see a disconnect between what's going on with the efforts.... It's not to discredit or undervalue anything the federal government has invested in terms of the skills and experience layers for youth, but it has to be looked at in an equation, which is skills and experience plus opportunities equal results. It's just that simple. We have an incomplete equation going on right now across the country.

The employers need to be on board. In order to get the employers on board to start that employment curve back in high school.... Looking at countries that are the educated, industrialized countries in western Europe, they do this. We don't. We need to do a better job with this.

In short form, there's a disconnect that we see. We need to work on closing that gap between what's going on in the free market economy and what employers need. We need to look at this as an equity investment from the stakeholders on both the market side and the social side, supported by the federal government. Once we start to change that philosophy to be a bit more holistic, I think we're going to start seeing real results.

I'll leave it at that.

• (1240)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Hersch and Madame Desrochers.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Gill, you have the floor for six minutes.

**Marilène Gill:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Once again, I'd like to thank all the witnesses who are sharing their expertise with us today. It will help the committee to go further in its reflection and recommendations.

Ms. Gessesse, in your experience with Black youth, what barriers do you see most often? You mentioned the daunting 24% unemployment rate. How can this be solved?

I know it's general, but the committee needs recommendations to be able to help these young people.

[*English*]

**Agapi Gessesse:** Number one, we can't just offer skills development. This also has to come with wraparound supports. It's about paying attention to the life stabilization of a young person, because even if they find a job, if their mental health is not where it needs to be or they are experiencing housing or food insecurity, it will be very difficult for them to show up for their job as their best self.

Number two, I think the government can play a much better role in coordinating with non-profits like ours. In terms of government corporations, there needs to be significant collaboration, using the government as a connector. Most of the time, what we're doing is looking at the labour gaps, doing a study, figuring out where there are labour gaps and looking at where the government is putting its money.

I'll use the example of critical minerals. The government has been talking highly about it and has been investing money in that industry. There will be jobs, so we develop a program. However, there seems to be a disconnect between what we're seeing and where the government sees value in an organization like ours creating an opportunity for that to happen.

We're following where we see labour gaps, but that doesn't always mean that employers are going to be flocking to us just because we're doing that. Like I said, we're a charity. We don't have much of a reach or many resources, so if the government is investing in industry, it needs to initiate those relationships with community organizations to better collaborate. That would be a huge help, because we are looking at where the government is putting its money and we're looking at what the labour trends are. We have the young people and we have their readiness. The reality is that there needs to be an assist in getting to industry. That's one thing.

The other thing is that a lot of the industries we're doing work on are very foreign to our communities. Ms. Ricketts spoke about this. Talking about critical minerals, for instance, when we decided we wanted to go into that industry, we had to run an exploratory program so that people could understand what critical minerals were and what types of jobs they could have. We can then see the interest of young people and narrow down exactly where we should be running the skilled trades part of the program.

It's about access and understanding what opportunities are out there, because our young people are exploring this in their schools. We run an entertainment trades program so that people understand you can have trades in the entertainment industry, such as carpenters, electricians and set designers. All of those folks are also needed in the entertainment industry, and that is something new to the young people we're serving. We have 125 applicants for 15 spots.

It's about exposure and having access to employers who are doing this work. It's not as easy as following where the labour gaps are, because industry needs encouragement to engage with not-for-profit organizations as well.

• (1245)

[*Translation*]

**Marilène Gill:** Thank you very much, Ms. Gessesse.

Ms. Ricketts, in a completely different vein, you talked about access and understanding. That's definitely what's keeping us from generalizing. As Ms. Ricketts mentioned earlier, the issue of youth unemployment is sometimes associated with the issue of employment insurance.

You also mentioned some potential solutions for employment insurance. Some young people aren't necessarily in school or unem-

ployed, and the lack of funding sometimes makes it harder to have training initiatives.

What would you suggest we do to support young people in difficult situations in terms of their training and employment endeavours?

[*English*]

**Shaudia Ricketts:** I think it's grants. We talk about loans, but I think grants are the way to go. There is a cyclical nature to a lot of the construction work. I don't want to say project-based work is feast or famine; it's not famine all the time. There's an ebb and flow.

I have a lot of friends who are trades professionals. When they had done their first period of school.... When they were doing their training because they had gotten into an apprenticeship, they still had to go off to school. In some cases, it took up to a month or a month and a half to get EI. On apprentice rates, people aren't making a huge amount of money. If they're living with their family, that might help, but they probably still have some payments to make. If they are single parents, they cannot go without a paycheque or any income for six to eight weeks. That's where the grants really come in.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Madame Gill.

Now we go to Mr. Reynolds for five minutes, please.

**Colin Reynolds:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, witnesses, for coming today.

My question is for Ms. Ricketts. I'm actually a construction electrician myself, so I've been through the apprenticeship program and everything. What do you see as the single biggest barrier preventing our youth from entering the trades?

**Shaudia Ricketts:** It's opportunity—finances and opportunity. You can expose the youth to the opportunities, but they don't know how to access them and there might not be jobs available. Even if they do start an apprenticeship, it's being able to finish that apprenticeship all the way through. It's not only attracting them in, because we did increase the number of apprentices who registered, but completion rates. In 2022, completion rates for apprentices for men in the 15 Red Seal trades was 46%, so 54% of people who registered for the trades dropped out of them.

**Colin Reynolds:** Do you think our slowing economy is affecting those completion rates?

**Shaudia Ricketts:** I do, yes. We need to have the jobs and projects. We know that. I was really happy to see the government stimulate the economy with projects, but again, we're going to have to really look at incentivizing the employers to ensure that they are creating opportunities.

It comes down to clients as well. I saw this with the Dow project, in Edmonton, with ITC requirements. They actually have to meet a minimum. There are a minimum number of apprentices they have to hire on their projects, so they have to ensure that contractors are hiring that number of apprentices.

**Colin Reynolds:** What do you think, other than the economy, of course, and having the projects...? Completion rates are still a problem in apprenticeships. Assuming that we have the jobs and the work, what can we do to improve apprenticeship completion rates?

**Shaudia Ricketts:** It comes down to the finances—ensuring that our apprentices have the money that allows them to ebb and flow with the projects, and ensuring that we're giving money to the schools so that we have enough seats open to get individuals into the technical training they need to do.

• (1250)

**Colin Reynolds:** In your opening statement you talked about apprenticeship mobility and standardizing that federally. Obviously, apprenticeships are provincially managed. It isn't until you're a Red Seal that you have mobility. What do you think we could do to...? That's a tough fight to have. You're fighting it out with each province, and the programs are so different in each province. What could we do federally to standardize apprenticeship and enable apprentice mobility interprovincially?

**Shaudia Ricketts:** We manage to do it with the Red Seal program. I really believe it's bringing those provincial bodies into a discussion and really looking at the technical training elements of each different apprenticeship and level of apprenticeship. Even right now, between Alberta and B.C., I can't take an Alberta apprentice pipefitter and have them work in B.C. without going through the B.C. government, through SkilledTradesBC. I think there needs to be a credential recognition. If somebody is a registered apprentice in a province, and they are able to prove and show some of the skill set—i.e. a letter from an employer saying they had specific training—then it should be easily recognized in another province where they're going to be working.

**Colin Reynolds:** Do you see an openness or willingness from the provinces to look at that?

**Shaudia Ricketts:** I haven't dealt with any of the provinces in the east or the Maritimes, but, yes, in the west, for sure. I sit at the board of directors with a few of the people from the different apprenticeship programs, and, yes, there is definitely a willingness to look at credential recognition.

**Colin Reynolds:** I know that if you're an apprentice in Ontario and you move to Manitoba—I'm from Manitoba—you now have to deal with Apprenticeship Manitoba to try to transfer your schooling and your hours. It's very difficult. I think there's a lot of room for improvement there.

Have you spoken with any of the provincial representatives from the respective apprenticeship branches and gotten feedback?

**Shaudia Ricketts:** Yes, I sit on the board with Shelley Gray, from SkilledTradesBC. We went through this issue because Kiewit itself has a couple of different projects in those provinces, between Alberta and British Columbia. For her, it was, "Okay, let's work together so that we can solve this issue." I think they would be will-

ing to look at the issue and try to solve it. Again, it comes down to ensuring that the credentials and technical training are similar.

**Colin Reynolds:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Reynolds.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Joseph, you have the floor for five minutes.

**Natilien Joseph:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Good afternoon, Ms. Gessesse. I wanted to congratulate you on your fight to help young people. I know it's not an easy fight. Rest assured, it's a legitimate fight.

In collaboration with community organizations like yours, what concrete steps should employers take to ensure that systemic inequities in access to employment for Black youth are no longer perpetuated?

I'll give you time to answer my question. I may have another question for you after that.

[*English*]

**Agapi Gessesse:** Thank you for the question.

I think we have a lot of examples of this if we look at our partners. Zurich Insurance has identified a labour gap in their organization. They came to us and said that they wanted to see more insurance underwriters. They helped us build the curriculum. They helped us deliver the curriculum to the young people through their employee engagement. That allowed for familiarity to be there. In the end, they hired the entire cohort. They built the program with us so that they could create a pipeline. Not only did they help us create that pipeline; they brought along other insurance companies, such as Marsh, to also become employer partners.

There's a lot of power that corporations have to ensure that this happens. This is also beneficial to the employers. The employers are able to, number one, get to know the young people before they enter into their workforce. They're able to make our curriculum and experience as realistic as possible to when program participants actually end up in their workplace. I also think that, instead of just hiring someone off of Indeed or LinkedIn, you actually have time to spend with someone, to really understand them and to know exactly what skills they're going to have coming into the organization, because you've helped foster that development and build those skills.

From a corporation's perspective, there are a lot of things that can be done, but I think it needs to come outside of just the will of organizations that know they want to reach a broader demographic of Canadians and that this is an untapped pool. There need to be incentives and some pushing of government to also initiate those relationships as well.

• (1255)

[*Translation*]

**Natilien Joseph:** I'm going to follow up with another question for Ms. Gessesse.

The government has put in place quite a few initiatives that you've had a chance to participate in, and you've been able to get young people to benefit from them. Which of these federal initiatives have had the greatest concrete impact on the lives of the young people you support?

Can you give us an example or share a personal story of a young person who benefited from a program supported by the federal government?

[*English*]

**Agapi Gessesse:** Yes, for sure I can do that. I have many.

I would definitely say right now that the YESS program is one of the programs that the federal government is providing that really speaks to the demographic we serve. It is really focused on the wraparound supports that are necessary and the life stabilization that's necessary for a young person. It allows us, as an organization, the flexibility to really understand where the funds should go based on the young person's needs. Again, not every young person is the same. There isn't a magic formula as to how we're going to serve Black youth specifically. It takes intentionality and an individual approach to each young person who walks through our doors.

I think the YESS program is a perfect example of something that was developed, and CEE was part of the development or shaping of that. That's a perfect example of a program that has worked. I've worked with many young people who have benefited from that, but I do have one individual who was furthest from the labour market, who was, for lack of a better term, making money on the black market, who had come out of incarceration and who ended up going and making a decision that he wanted to change his life. The life stabilization supports that CEE provided really helped him with that because for many of the young people, particularly the ones who might have been in contact with the law or might have been incarcerated, when they come back out, they're coming back to the same communities where maybe friends or those folks may put them in the same situation.

One of the wraparound supports that were provided was a safety plan for this young person. When you're telling friends you used to roll with that you don't want to be their friend anymore, that you don't want to engage in what they're doing, that puts a target on your back as well, so we were able to put a safety plan in place for this young man. He went from, at the beginning of—

[*Translation*]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Gessesse.

Thank you, Mr. Joseph.

Mrs. Gill, you have the floor for two and a half minutes.

**Marilène Gill:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Hersch mentioned something earlier that was discussed by the previous panel, young people's expectations.

I know we haven't been able to get very far on that topic, but I imagine it's about young people's expectations when it comes to jobs.

Mr. Hersch, I'd like to know more about this.

[*English*]

**Joe Hersch:** A little bit of complacency is a theme that we've seen over the years—that things are just going to magically land in people's laps. Anybody who's in this room has probably been in the same boat as I have and everybody else. There's no magical thing that's going to happen. I'm not sure where this whole thing emanates from, but you have to start at the bottom. I worked at a couple of fast food restaurants when I was 15 years old to start with, and I'm sure that other people can attest to similar experiences. There has to be a bit of a change in the attitudes and philosophy of youth.

There are other factors, too, about reliability, turnover and productivity. They're complex things. Nobody can come up with a single statement or a single solution at this point. It's a difficult thing. However, we definitely see that as a problem: that expectations are.... I'm not quite sure how to put this in a politically correct way, but yes, there has to be a change from the youth. They do have to start at the bottom. I guess there has to be incentive, too. Like Ms. Ricketts pointed out with the trades industries and as we can also attest to, how do we incent people to want to do those things?

The youth are a little bit confused and clouded in their viewpoints. I'll leave it at that.

• (1300)

[*Translation*]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mrs. Gill.

[*English*]

That concludes the second hour of witness testimony on this important study. I would like to thank the witnesses for appearing and sharing their information this afternoon with the committee.

Thank you.

With that, is it the will of the committee to adjourn?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** We are adjourned.







Published under the authority of the Speaker of  
the House of Commons

---

### SPEAKER'S PERMISSION

---

The proceedings of the House of Commons and its committees are hereby made available to provide greater public access. The parliamentary privilege of the House of Commons to control the publication and broadcast of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its committees is nonetheless reserved. All copyrights therein are also reserved.

Reproduction of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its committees, in whole or in part and in any medium, is hereby permitted provided that the reproduction is accurate and is not presented as official. This permission does not extend to reproduction, distribution or use for commercial purpose of financial gain. Reproduction or use outside this permission or without authorization may be treated as copyright infringement in accordance with the Copyright Act. Authorization may be obtained on written application to the Office of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Reproduction in accordance with this permission does not constitute publication under the authority of the House of Commons. The absolute privilege that applies to the proceedings of the House of Commons does not extend to these permitted reproductions. Where a reproduction includes briefs to a committee of the House of Commons, authorization for reproduction may be required from the authors in accordance with the Copyright Act.

Nothing in this permission abrogates or derogates from the privileges, powers, immunities and rights of the House of Commons and its committees. For greater certainty, this permission does not affect the prohibition against impeaching or questioning the proceedings of the House of Commons in courts or otherwise. The House of Commons retains the right and privilege to find users in contempt of Parliament if a reproduction or use is not in accordance with this permission.

---

Also available on the House of Commons website at the following address: <https://www.ourcommons.ca>

Publié en conformité de l'autorité  
du Président de la Chambre des communes

---

### PERMISSION DU PRÉSIDENT

---

Les délibérations de la Chambre des communes et de ses comités sont mises à la disposition du public pour mieux le renseigner. La Chambre conserve néanmoins son privilège parlementaire de contrôler la publication et la diffusion des délibérations et elle possède tous les droits d'auteur sur celles-ci.

Il est permis de reproduire les délibérations de la Chambre et de ses comités, en tout ou en partie, sur n'importe quel support, pourvu que la reproduction soit exacte et qu'elle ne soit pas présentée comme version officielle. Il n'est toutefois pas permis de reproduire, de distribuer ou d'utiliser les délibérations à des fins commerciales visant la réalisation d'un profit financier. Toute reproduction ou utilisation non permise ou non formellement autorisée peut être considérée comme une violation du droit d'auteur aux termes de la Loi sur le droit d'auteur. Une autorisation formelle peut être obtenue sur présentation d'une demande écrite au Bureau du Président de la Chambre des communes.

La reproduction conforme à la présente permission ne constitue pas une publication sous l'autorité de la Chambre. Le privilège absolu qui s'applique aux délibérations de la Chambre ne s'étend pas aux reproductions permises. Lorsqu'une reproduction comprend des mémoires présentés à un comité de la Chambre, il peut être nécessaire d'obtenir de leurs auteurs l'autorisation de les reproduire, conformément à la Loi sur le droit d'auteur.

La présente permission ne porte pas atteinte aux privilèges, pouvoirs, immunités et droits de la Chambre et de ses comités. Il est entendu que cette permission ne touche pas l'interdiction de contester ou de mettre en cause les délibérations de la Chambre devant les tribunaux ou autrement. La Chambre conserve le droit et le privilège de déclarer l'utilisateur coupable d'outrage au Parlement lorsque la reproduction ou l'utilisation n'est pas conforme à la présente permission.

---

Aussi disponible sur le site Web de la Chambre des communes à l'adresse suivante :  
<https://www.noscommunes.ca>