



House of Commons
CANADA

Standing Committee on the Status of Women

FEWO • NUMBER 005 • 3rd SESSION • 40th PARLIAMENT

EVIDENCE

Monday, March 22, 2010

—
Chair

The Honourable Hedy Fry

Standing Committee on the Status of Women

Monday, March 22, 2010

• (1530)

[English]

The Chair (Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.)): I'd like to call the meeting to order.

I would like to welcome the witnesses today. As you well know, we are looking at discussing, and hearing from you about, your experience and any information you have to offer us with regard to the participation of women in non-traditional roles.

I want to welcome all of you today: the Status of Women Council of the Northwest Territories, with Ms. Phaneuf; the Native Women's Association of Canada, with Ms. Calder; the Métis National Council, with Ms. Watteyne; the president of the Métis Women of Saskatchewan, Madam Bailey; and Denise Thomas, the vice-president of the Southeast Region of the Manitoba Métis Federation.

I'll just quickly let you know what we do usually at these things. You have 10 minutes. There are three groups. Many of you are in one particular group. Each of the three groups—i.e., the Métis National Council, the Native Women's Association of Canada, and the Status of Women Council of the Northwest Territories—has 10 minutes to present to us. I will give you a flag when your time is ending so that you can wrap up. After that, there will be a question-and-answer series in which the members of the committee will ask you questions and you will answer.

We should begin with the Status of Women Council of the Northwest Territories.

Ms. Phaneuf, welcome.

Ms. Lorraine Phaneuf (Executive Director, Status of Women Council of the Northwest Territories): Good afternoon, everyone.

I've journeyed since Friday, because I stopped here and there. It's a long journey to get here, but I'm very happy to be here.

This year our council is just finishing up the Northern Women in Mining, Oil and Gas project. Along with our other duties, we have done a special project around non-traditional trades for women who are under-represented in the workforce.

I'll just start by giving a brief description of the project.

The Status of Women Council and their project partners introduced Northern Women in Mining, Oil and Gas, a project that attempted to answer the following research question. Given the current population of unemployed and underemployed women in the Northwest Territories, will a dedicated women-only, partnership-based, and strategic approach to training and development be

successful in increasing the interest levels and participation and retention rates of women in industrial and trades-based occupations in the northern mining, oil, and gas industries?

Having almost concluded the project, we realize our research question was too long. Were we to do another project, we would actually probably shorten up that research question a little bit.

The anticipated barriers, or social challenges, for women to enter the trades-based occupations were lack of appropriate education and skills, often; sometimes the only primary caregiver; limited training opportunities; financial restrictions; perception and traditional perspective that trades occupations are not for women; and social issues around abuse and addictions. The top three barriers identified by applicants, and consistent with proposal research, were the lack of the right skills and education, financial concerns, and an image that it's a man's working environment.

In the project, we did three different types of courses. We did exposure courses, which were five-week courses offered mainly in the evening around carpentry. We did do two community-based projects. One was in Trout Lake, which is a community of 90 people, and we did an HEO, heavy equipment operation, course there. We also did a summer airport maintenance course in Hay River, which is a bigger community in the north, with perhaps 1,000 to 1,500 people. Both of those were very successful. The women who took the training are looking for additional training. Some are working, some are faced with daycare issues, but they actually passed the course while we were there.

We did a trades access program, which was an academic program that challenged women to enter the trades entrance exam. What they did is mostly an upgrading kind of education to help them pass the trades entrance exam. The intention was for the women to write the trades entrance exam and move into apprenticeship programs, and attain employment in the trades. Prior to the conception of the project, we had made some connections with the mining companies and they had intended on hiring women once they passed. They did hire three of the women, but with the downturn of the global economy, we're still waiting for them to hire more.

We also did a building trades helper program, which was a 12-week program. It was combined hands-on training with basic academics, and a Ready to Work North program. It prepared women for entry-level positions in the trades industry. We did have a lot of success around those kinds of courses, and the mines were very happy to hire them.

The biggest issue with the mining in the Northwest Territories is because of the two weeks in, two weeks out, so if mothers are single parents, it's often very challenging for them to find a place for their youngsters.

In the project we did a wraparound service, so women in the project were offered all different kinds of wraparound services such as upgrading, so if they were having trouble at school, they could go to a tutor after hours. We did referrals to get them into housing, and we tried to get them child care, all those kinds of things. In the north they have a student FSA program, which is like a student loan program where, if people work in the north, their loans are forgiven.

• (1535)

So they all got those. Personal counselling, housing advocacy, transportation...the women were given the funds to travel from the communities, which in the Northwest Territories can be very expensive. We gave them work clothing, phone cards, grocery gift cards, and anything to help them be successful in their programs.

In year one we had 37 applications; in year two, 43 applications; and in year three, 73 applications. Now that we're waiting for funding we have women on waiting lists trying to get into the program. After three years our program is beginning to be known in the north, so women are interested, but we're waiting for new funding.

On the challenges for our program, academic entry requirements for parts of the training made it difficult to recruit qualified candidates, so a lot of the women who applied did not qualify for the upgrading at Aurora College, which is a community college in the north.

The retention of women beyond the training into trade-specific apprenticeship programs was not always successful. Often that was due to child care or addictions issues. Participants in the programs did not seem interested in pursuing careers in the trades, despite the barriers being addressed. So probably the next thing we will research is why they entered. There are different ideas about why women do that. If they are in certain programs it might be a way for them to qualify for other programs. We're not quite sure why they would enter if they weren't interested.

The mining industry requires skilled professions and educational requirements. Traditional values and child care responsibilities pose significant challenges in filling these positions. A lot of that is due to the two weeks in, two weeks out. Of course the economic recession did not allow for new staff hires.

On the successes, 23 women successfully completed the Building Trades Helper and Trades Access programs. Women have written their trades entrance exams. Five women have attained employment post training and are still working. We have found with the program that although they may not have gone into trades-related programs, they are now working. They might be working at a library; it might not be with a shovel, but they are working. So in terms of that we've had huge successes.

Am I out of time?

The Chair: You have two minutes.

Ms. Lorraine Phaneuf: Okay.

I'll give you an example of one of the very first participants. When she entered into the program she had just moved from Nunavut and was couch-surfing in Yellowknife. After having all the wraparound services, she now works at BHP and is making a very good salary. Her 15-year-old son is also working. He works at Boston Pizza. This woman was about 43 years old and she had never really had gainful employment. Now she's working and her son is working.

She once said to me, which really touched me, that having her own money—being given that opportunity—meant she was the boss of herself now and she didn't have to rely on supports in the Northwest Territories for living or even to take care of her boy. She's very independent. She's been in the De Beers posters and in the paper. She's almost a bit of a celebrity in the Northwest Territories. She's gone from that level of dependency on government support to making close to \$100,000 in three years. They're not all like that, but she was one of the very first women who applied. Throughout those three years the counsellors at the Status of Women have worked with her and encouraged her to remain in her employment.

So we're a little challenged as to what we'll do if we don't get the funding, because we've created a need in the Northwest Territories. Not only do women in the program come for advice, but women in the trades in general come for advocacy.

That's where we sit in the Northwest Territories.

• (1540)

The Chair: Thank you very much, Ms. Phaneuf.

Now, from the Native Women's Association of Canada, we have Ms. Calder.

Ms. Carey Calder (Manager, Labour Market Development, Native Women's Association of Canada): Thank you.

Good afternoon, everybody.

My name is Carey Calder. I am a two-spirited Ojibway woman originally from northwestern Ontario, and I relocated to Ottawa about seven years ago. I am the manager of labour market development with the Native Women's Association of Canada, otherwise known as NWAC.

NWAC is one of the five national aboriginal organizations in Canada and the only one specifically representing aboriginal women. Our mission is to facilitate aboriginal women's meaningful participation in the development of legislation and policies that reflect the unique needs of aboriginal women.

We strive to highlight best practice models and policy using a culturally relevant gender-based analysis in all of the approaches to the work that we do. NWAC has led the development of the CRGBA, or culturally relevant gender-based analysis tool, which provides a holistic policy perspective on where aboriginal women stand on issues and is particularly relevant to identify desired outcomes and measures of performance.

For example, using the CRGBA, one might look at the social determinants of health that have been identified in Canada, in that just being aboriginal already puts you at a disadvantage but being aboriginal and female is a double disadvantage. So we have to take that into consideration when looking at policies and programs.

NWAC is the expert at applying the CRGBA lens to legislation and policy, so it is with great interest that we are able to participate here today and provide some comments on increasing the participation of women in non-traditional occupations.

Our key message today in using the CRGBA context is to appropriately support the participation of aboriginal women in non-traditional occupations: first, to ensure that aboriginal women have equitable access and are represented and reflected in non-traditional occupations; and secondly, that aboriginal women are under-represented in all occupations, yet we have rising rates of attainment in post-secondary in the business, health, and education fields.

Further to the first point, just to start, in order to increase participation we must ensure that aboriginal women have equitable access and are represented and respected in the non-traditional occupations.

Aboriginal women who seek a rewarding career in trades, industry sectors, and apprenticeships continue to face barriers that impact equitable access and participation levels. We must first address the existing barriers that are beyond the control of job seekers. We have to consider that gender-based analysis, and certainly a culturally relevant gender-based analysis, was not utilized when recruitment strategies were originally designed. The planning around how this might have happened or evolved wasn't part of the initial discussions, so now we have to find ways to ensure that women have access and are equitably represented in all these occupations.

It is not enough to simply state a target for participation levels, although that would at least be a start. We have to make sure that all avenues and doors are opened and that we are adequately prepared to meet the unique challenges of aboriginal women.

So it's things like, how are maternity leave policies built into career plans? Is it encouraged within those environments? How does it affect their seniority when they come back to work?

We need real strategies to address the racism and the sexism that still exists in these environments. Conversations held within male-dominated work environments are not always conducive to a healthy welcoming environment for women. So we must recognize that there may need to be a cultural shift within certain environments in order to increase the participation levels in a sustainable way.

In terms of some of the recommendations, we have seen a growing focus on getting aboriginal people, in particular youth, into trades through marketing and promotional campaigns. Yet this often

lacks a connection with the employers. There needs to be real and actual opportunities for paid employment or on-the-job training, and employer commitments to apprenticeship agreements. This means shifting attention to the employers so that the demographic breakdown of their workforce is, firstly, shared, and that it is clearly understood. So how have they been performing in their own recruitment and retention strategies; and does the governing legislation, wherever those employers are located, also support the strategies they have in place? What is their demonstrated commitment to ensure aboriginal workers are well represented in the workforce? And more to the point, what specific considerations have been made for aboriginal women?

Secondly, one of our messages is that to increase the participation rates of aboriginal women in one particular sector, we must first look at the fact that aboriginal women are under-represented in all occupations, despite raised rates of attainment in post-secondary in the business, health, and education fields.

● (1545)

There's a noted decrease in the proportion of aboriginal women who are obtaining their trades certificates. For example, between 2001 and 2006 it went from 12% to 9%, and yet there's an overall increase in educational attainment based on the completion of college diplomas and university degrees. In 2006 aboriginal women were more likely to have a college and university credential than their male counterparts.

It's also important to note that the gap between aboriginal women and non-aboriginal women narrowed between 2001 and 2006. Basically what we're seeing is a trend toward aboriginal women who are demonstrating significant successes when it comes to post-secondary attainment. They're not necessarily always getting into the trade.

The recommendation based on that is that due to the fact that aboriginal women are under-represented in all occupations, we need to promote that opportunities appropriately be in place to ensure that demonstrated successes are then realized in actual employment. Focus employment initiatives for women in areas where they're attaining higher education based on where they want to be. Meet the need and the demand, which then provides the framework and the best practice models to apply in this area of work that you're doing. It's important that we not be reactionary in our responses to what is the sector of the day and try to stream people into certain areas.

In closing, we also want to address the term “non-traditional occupations”. The assumption there is that the reference here is to occupations within male-dominated environments such as trades, transport, and industry. It's critical to point out that women continue to be under-represented in management occupations generally. One could argue that senior management and decision-making occupations could also be defined as non-traditional for women, and that strategies, policies, and discussions in this area also need to be addressed. Strategies must provide models of inclusion of aboriginal women as full participants in the economic benefits that Canada has to offer.

Thank you for the opportunity to be able to present to the Standing Committee on the Status of Women and we look forward to our continued involvement in this area.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Ms. Calder. That was seven minutes: awesome.

I just want to let everyone know that NWAC brought a document, but it's only in one language. It's not in English and French. There are copies of it if you wish and you can just pick it up and take it. If you don't wish to, we won't distribute it because of the rules. If you wish to, you can have it.

The third group is the Métis National Council.

You obviously have decided who will do the speaking. Who will do the speaking?

Ms. Monell Bailey (President, Métis Women of Saskatchewan, Métis National Council): We're going to both speak.

The Chair: Both Ms. Bailey and Ms. Thomas.

Ms. Monell Bailey: Yes, I'll speak first and then Ms. Thomas.

The Chair: Okay, good. You share ten minutes, though.

Ms. Monell Bailey: Yes, we will.

I'd like to begin by thanking all the honourable members for inviting the Métis National Council to appear before you today.

The Métis National Council represents the Métis Nation at the national level. It speaks on behalf of the entire Métis Nation. Women account for 50.6% of all Métis in the Métis homeland region of Canada, which includes the provinces of Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia. The 1996 census reveals that altogether there were a little over 170,000 Métis women in our homeland.

Our population is very youthful, with 25% of Métis women in the homeland region under 15 years old and 26% between the ages of 15 and 29. In other words, the majority of our Métis women are children and youth.

We come before you today largely to talk about their future. Many of us have made career choices imposed by our times and circumstances. Although we've seen rapid change in gender-based conceptions of female roles and occupations in our own lifetime, the task is far from complete and the results are far from satisfactory. Our hope is that through the work of this committee and the persistent efforts of our leaders in industry and government, we will create a more level playing field for aboriginal women in the

Canadian labour market and a better, more promising future for our young Métis women.

It's important to put to rest one major misconception about Métis and other aboriginal women. It's a belief that we're not in the workforce. In fact when we look at it, the labour force participation rates of Métis women 15 years and older in 2006 was about 67%, which is above average for women generally in the homeland region. Overall, 62.8% of women are in the workforce. Even after adjusting for differences in age and profiles between Métis and the general population, Métis female participation rates are very close to the equivalent rates in the general population. Métis women are already integrated into the Canadian economy and it's a fiction to maintain otherwise.

The simple fact of the matter is that the economic integration has not led to equitable benefits. Our unemployment rates remain significantly high, and therefore the proportion of our working age population with a job is also lower than for the general population. But nothing illustrates the disparities between Métis women and the general population better than employment income.

The committee should be aware that based on the 2006 census, the average employment income of an adult male in Canada was \$45,588 in 2005. Male incomes are really what we have to compare ourselves to if we are looking at gender equality. Unfortunately, we have a long way to go as far as the income of Métis women is concerned. We are at a mere \$23,253 per year, which is 48.8% less than mainstream males.

Our submission contains a table that provides information on the differential between male and Métis female employment income for each of the provinces within the Métis homeland. It is interesting to find that the largest differential exists in Alberta. The province had a booming economy at the time of our last census, and boasted the highest employment income of any province in Canada. But the women were just totally bypassed. Our average income in Alberta was still only at \$24,060 a year, so we weren't in any better shape in Alberta than we were anywhere else in the homeland as far as our income rates go.

There are also disparities in the income of Métis women relative to Métis men. The average employment income of a woman is also lower than women in the general population by about 20% in the provinces of Ontario and Alberta. In Manitoba and Saskatchewan it's about 15% lower.

It's not our intention to bombard you with statistics. If the committee wants any more information on this matter we'd be happy to supply you with all the data we have.

Although Métis women participate fully in the Canadian economy, on average we have been relegated to lower-paying jobs. The question is why, and what we can do about it. There are a huge number of factors at play here. We do not pretend to have all the answers for you today.

•(1550)

There's no question the gender bias in occupational choice and hiring decisions is fundamental to understanding any differential between working men and women. High dropout rates and poor education attainment levels are also factors in explaining poor employment outcomes. Persistent discrimination and stereotyping against women and aboriginal people, though hard to measure, also no doubt contribute to the raising of the bar so high that few make it to the top.

However, fundamentally we find that Métis women tend to find employment in the more menial, less remunerative occupations within occupational sectors occupied by women. Métis women are generally drawn to the same types of occupations as women in the general population. We show a significantly higher propensity for work in sales and service occupations, which account for 39% of the Métis in the experienced workforce, compared with only 30% of women in the general population.

Within the Métis homeland, our occupational profile follows a pattern common to all women, with concentrations in the service sector, in occupations such as retail sales, health, education, government, and administration. A detailed occupational breakdown would show that, compared with women in the general population, Métis women tend to congregate in lower-paying jobs within these sectors.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Bailey.

Ms. Thomas, you have three minutes left.

Ms. Denise Thomas (Vice-President Southeast Region, Manitoba Métis Federation, Métis National Council): Okay.

This is where we become very interested in the concept of women's participation in non-traditional occupations. This concept is usually applied to occupations that traditionally have been held predominantly by men.

The U.S. Department of Labor defines a non-traditional occupation as an occupation in which women account for 25% or less of the workforce. However, alternative definitions are possible, depending on how things are measured. We find that some occupations that are not classified as non-traditional for women in the general population become non-traditional for Métis and other aboriginal women. Definitions matter, and we urge the committee to examine this question in some detail.

The reason most often cited for wanting to increase the participation of women in occupations traditionally dominated by men is that this will lead to higher employment income for women and close the income gap with men. This is certainly our goal, but we believe that some cautionary notes are warranted, not to dampen enthusiasm for this enterprise but to make sure that we consider all aspects of the issue.

The fact of the matter is that society throughout history has always undervalued women's work relative to men's. Women are increasingly, in fact, entering into male-dominated occupations—slowly, but surely. For example, this is occurring in trades and other traditional labour-oriented occupations at the present time. Métis women are leading the way in penetrating these occupations in

western Canada. Métis women account for only 1.6% of the female workforce in the Métis homeland, but they account for close to 7% of women working as logging operators and heavy equipment operators and are relatively overrepresented also in a range of trade and trade-related occupations, such as plumbers, pipefitters, and labourers.

We are far from convinced that this has had major impact on women's incomes. As women move into male-dominated occupations, it becomes more important than ever to ensure that women are paid equitably: equal pay for work of equal value.

A second point that the committee should consider is the importance of investing in education and skills development. The majority of jobs in this country do not require a university education, but they do require skills and experience. If we are trying to get more aboriginal women into the trades or into mining, forestry, and other resource occupations, or into higher-paying engineering, drafting, and information technologies, or into assembly line work, then we have to prepare them early, and particularly our young women, to enter these careers.

A number of initiatives could be undertaken to prepare Métis women to enter such occupations. First, many of you may be aware that the Government of Canada funds our aboriginal governments to provide labour market programs and services under what was formerly known as the aboriginal human resources development strategy, which has now morphed into the aboriginal skills and employment training strategy.

What you may not know is that the funding levels to aboriginal organizations under this program have remained static for over 10 years. The funding is critical. It enables our people, including our young women, to develop skills needed on the labour market. We urge the committee to recommend increased funding for this program and a stronger orientation for preparing women for non-traditional occupations.

Second, it is important to develop culturally sensitive programs that introduce Métis first nations and Inuit women to the potential of working in non-traditional occupations. How can women choose non-traditional occupations if they believe it is impossible for them to access these careers? No such program has been developed specifically for aboriginal people.

Third, we should not underestimate how significant an issue child care is to women generally and to Métis women in particular. Women are the caregivers. It is difficult for women, particularly with low incomes, to commit to a demanding career when they know that they will have to exit the labour force for extended periods to raise their children. Without adequate, accessible, and affordable child care, how can women be expected to enter challenging work environments?

For Métis and other aboriginal people, these problems are even more acute because of the high proportion of single-parent families in our communities. In the Métis homeland, some 15.1% of women over the age of 15 live in single-family households, and in provinces such as Saskatchewan the figure is even higher, 18.6%. Provincial child care subsidies are inadequate. We need a national child care system readily accessible to all women. Failing this, we would call on the committee to consider extending the first nations and Inuit child care initiative to Métis. This would enable our own organizations to begin to meet the needs of our young mothers.

• (1555)

Fourth, employers must be educated and given proper incentives to hire women, even in non-traditional occupations. The United States has had affirmative action programs in place for some time, and indications are that they have worked to increase the participation of women in non-traditional occupations. In Canada we should consider establishing employment equity standards and targets in non-traditional industries to encourage employers to hire women.

Finally, it is really important to overcome the gender and ethnic biases that poison the working environment for aboriginal women entering non-traditional occupations. We know that women can do as good a job as men. We know that aboriginal people can do as good a job as non-aboriginal people. But not only do aboriginal women face obstacles just to enter non-traditional occupations, we face all sorts of subtle and not-so-subtle discriminations in the workplace once we find a job in these non-traditional sectors. Among other things, we are less likely to be entrusted with responsibility or to be promoted. This will take time to change, but public authorities could also be more proactive in encouraging employers and co-workers to accept women and aboriginal women in the workplace.

Thank you for listening.

• (1600)

The Chair: Thank you very much, Ms. Thomas.

There is also a written presentation, but it's only in English as well. If you wish to have them, they're here.

[Translation]

Ms. Nicole Demers (Laval, BQ): Madam Chair, will you have the documents translated for us, so that we have copies by next week?

[English]

The Chair: We could translate it, if you like.

[Translation]

Ms. Nicole Demers: I'd appreciate that, because these were excellent presentations.

[English]

The Chair: We have to go to translation to do that. It takes some time.

[Translation]

Ms. Julie Cool (Committee Researcher): The presentation is no different than what is already found in the minutes of proceedings.

Ms. Nicole Demers: If it's already in the minutes of proceedings and it's translated, fine then.

[English]

The Chair: Also, the presentation that was read will be in the minutes, in both instances.

Ms. Nicole Demers: *C'est ce que je comprends.*

The Chair: Thank you.

We will begin our seven-minute round.

I would just like to explain to the witnesses that the seven minutes are for questions and answers. I'm going to depend on the questioner and the witness to focus themselves so that they can get as much in as they wish. Thank you.

Ms. Simson.

Mrs. Michelle Simson (Scarborough Southwest, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you, witnesses, for taking time out of your busy days to sit in on the committee meeting today.

My first question is for Ms. Phaneuf. I was fascinated by the Northern Women in Mining, Oil and Gas project. It sounded interesting as a dedicated women-only approach to training and development.

Can you be a little more specific about how this program varied from conventional training? And is the program going to have any impact on improving retention of women in, say, non-traditional occupations?

Ms. Lorraine Phaneuf: The program started with a proposal development team made up of community partners in Yellowknife and across the north. They worked with the college. We worked by doing enhancement courses to make the programs more relevant to women. We did things on budgeting, on what you do if you need child care, and on housing for single parents. They not only learned about the trades but they also learned about how to live and survive.

The intent was that we would get them all jobs. That did not happen. But as I said previously, because they got the self-esteem piece of it, and the life-long learning, it promoted their perhaps working in other areas.

We do wish to continue the program. The part that scares me the most about this project is that the women are still going to come to the council, because this project has made our organization user-friendly. So not only do the women of the project come, their friends come and their children come. We had to get crayons. And we do other kinds of programming for those women. It's not necessarily just upgrading.

Now we really have to think about a dedicated staff person in the Northwest Territories to continue that work. What happens is that sometimes people get discouraged. Because they've not worked for maybe 25 years, it's very difficult to all of a sudden leave their kids somewhere and go to a mine for two weeks.

So it's not only the working. It's the whole wraparound program that enables them to actually stay working. I think we'll probably keep that position there so that women in the Northwest Territories can just come to us.

• (1605)

Mrs. Michelle Simson: Again, with respect to the project, what percentage do you think would be young women who had just completed high school or post-secondary education? How many would have been somewhat older, such as adults in their thirties or forties? Do you have a sense of what the number is?

Ms. Lorraine Phaneuf: I do. We marketed to the under-represented women in the workforce. The assessment very much looked for women who were marginalized. They were the women we assessed. We went all over the Northwest Territories and conducted information sessions and assessments with the women in our project to see which referrals and programs would be best for them.

I had never even worked in the trades. I'd always been a paper-pusher and a do-gooder. I heard stories about women in the mines being faced with clothing that didn't fit and no washrooms. The most basic elements needed to be able to fulfill a job were not there.

Mrs. Michelle Simson: So that seemed to be their biggest objection. During your presentation, you said you were surprised at the number who were involved in the project but then subsequently dropped out. Do you have any numbers on how many ultimately dropped out? What percentage is it of the ones who enrolled?

Ms. Lorraine Phaneuf: We will know in about two and a half weeks. We're in the final process. Off the top of my head, I would say it's 30%.

Mrs. Michelle Simson: That's fairly significant.

Ms. Lorraine Phaneuf: Yes.

We do have programs in the north that, if people are in training, it's sometimes....

No, I'd better not say that.

Mrs. Michelle Simson: Okay.

Is this something that you are going to follow up on with the participants in the programs, specifically the ones who dropped out, to determine the various reasons, or if there was one specific trend? Do you intend to do that?

Ms. Lorraine Phaneuf: Yes. I could send the final report to the standing committee.

Mrs. Michelle Simson: I'd love to see it.

The Chair: You can send it to the clerk.

Ms. Lorraine Phaneuf: We've done an extensive evaluation. It was a component of HRSDC. Not only did we learn about the trades, we also learned about evaluation. We had it right from the very beginning. Everything has been monitored.

Our project officer has called all those ladies and tracked them down to see what we can do to help them and what other programs we can get them into. One lady would love to be in the trades, but she just cannot pass the exam. We're going to help her. She's a very good photographer. We're going to help her to get the seed money to open a small business.

Mrs. Michelle Simson: What's exciting about this particular project is by virtue of the fact that it's mining, oil, and gas; you know, it seems that it's well geared.

The Chair: You have one minute, Ms. Simson.

Mrs. Michelle Simson: Okay.

I have one final question with respect to this. You also mentioned that you worked to upgrade women to enable them to take the entrance exams. Are the majority of the upgrades to get a high school diploma or to get college or post-secondary?

Ms. Lorraine Phaneuf: Because of the literacy rates in the Northwest Territories, we had difficulty in finding women who could pass even the exam to get into the upgrading.

Mrs. Michelle Simson: What percentage would have been high school graduates?

Ms. Lorraine Phaneuf: Most were high school graduates.

Mrs. Michelle Simson: You were mostly dealing with high school graduates.

Ms. Lorraine Phaneuf: Yes, but they could not get into the program when they were assessed.

Mrs. Michelle Simson: Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Thank you.

Madam Demers.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Nicole Demers: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Good day to the witnesses. Thank you for coming here today. It was fascinating listening to you. We learned a lot about the problems faced by women living outside major urban centres. The experience of living in the regions is quite different.

As Ms. Thomas stated, "non-traditional" means different things in different communities. It's not necessarily what we here associate with "non-traditional", but these considerations can be important for women. I recall that when I travelled to Iqaluit in Nunavut, I noticed that all positions were held by White men from the South. All jobs, whether in the hotel or restaurant industry or in some other field, were, for the most part, held by non-aboriginal men who had very lucrative contracts. I wondered why these jobs were not occupied by women, given that in Iqaluit, many women are out of work and do not have the opportunity to develop these types of skills.

Since you work with Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, I was also wondering if you discuss the various situations that exist in different communities to ensure that the programs truly meet the needs of the women that you are targeting.

I would also like to know if, in your opinion, it would be important to establish more long-term funding—since you did talk about funding—instead of resorting to project-based funding. Project-based funding does not necessarily target the same people as more long-term funding.

Ms. Thomas, Ms. Phaneuf and Ms. Calder, I'd like to get your opinion on this subject.

•(1610)

[English]

Ms. Denise Thomas: I appreciate that question. You are absolutely right, it would be beneficial to have longer-term funding. We just started this work, and we're making a lot of ground, and now we have to rework our funding program.

We're afraid the flexibility will not be there to do this type of training. If we lose our flexibility, the kinds of things we are doing to help young Métis women especially, as well as Métis women as a whole, to get into these non-traditional types of jobs and skills trades and other non-traditional jobs.... So it is very crucial that we have longer-term funding.

[Translation]

Ms. Nicole Demers: Would you care to comment, Ms. Phaneuf?

[English]

Ms. Lorraine Phaneuf: In Yellowknife we have male-oriented upper echelons. We have only three women in our legislature, one cabinet minister. Up until two and a half years ago, the status of women minister was a man because there was absolutely no cabinet.... They are trying hard in the government. We all just attended gender-based analysis training in October. We are hoping to do training in programs and policies in the Northwest Territories. We would be arm's length, so we would work with the mining companies, the banks, more corporations than NGOs. The government workers, the minister's adviser, is already working trying to train programmers and lawmakers in the Northwest Territories on how we need gender-based analysis in all of our programs in the Northwest Territories.

I don't know the exact statistics, but I do know that most of the entry-level positions in the government are held by women and that the men are not there. We don't really know why that is. It's just amazing that they can jump to those next positions when the women have to go at the bottom.

[Translation]

Ms. Nicole Demers: I have another question for you. You talked about the women who had taken the courses and you mentioned that five of them are working, but not necessarily in fields for which you had trained them. However, they are working, one in a library and the others in various locations.

So then, I was wondering if being able to provide them with tools such as self-confidence and the desire to succeed is even more important that the ultimate goal of this course, which is to find them

jobs in the mines or some other type of work? Is it not more important to instill in them, through the training process, the confidence that they can do anything they set their minds to, the "yes, you can" attitude? Isn't that as important as the training itself?

•(1615)

[English]

Ms. Lorraine Phaneuf: For us, as the Status of Women, it is very important. Probably the most important part of the project is the life-long learning and having the women working in sustainable positions.

I think our project will be deemed a success by the government, because we have learned that the wraparound services for the women are crucial for them to succeed. They are women we assessed for marginalization. We did not go and say, "Who is the best in the class? These are the people we're going to help." We wanted to help the people who had been under-represented and who needed help. Even the assessment process was geared to those women.

For us, it's been a wonderful program. We have two government departments currently trying their best to fund us to continue the project. We did get funding for a pilot project. And you are right; three years is not long enough, because what it does is create a need.

Because we are an NGO, we won't stop doing the work. That work will fall on the shoulders of Lorraine Phaneuf, Annemieke Mulders, and all the women who work there, because we are not going to turn away women who need help and who we think we can help.

We had two project people, but the whole team is only a staff of six. Everybody worked on the mining project in some capacity.

The Chair: Thank you very much. Your seven minutes are up.

We'll go to Mr. Calandra.

Mr. Paul Calandra (Oak Ridges—Markham, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair.

I have a question for Ms. Phaneuf. We've been talking a lot about some recent initiatives brought forward by the Status of Women to afford northern women the opportunity to participate in non-traditional occupations. These allow them to not only compete but hopefully succeed so that there's much more broadly diverse representation in the workforce. Ms. Simson brought up Northern Women in Mining, Oil and Gas, a project that obviously is designed to boost women's representation in industrial and trade-based jobs.

I know that the emphasis is on training and skills development, but I wonder if you might comment, also, on how you would assess the role of the FTP partnership in the actual creation and implementation of the project.

Ms. Lorraine Phaneuf: For us, our journey with the federal government was very, very good. We did not really have the skill sets in the office to do their big cashflows. All of a sudden, it fell on the shoulders of...and it happened to be me. But they were very good with the partnership and with helping us build capacity in our organization. Our journey with them has actually been good.

We also had HRSDC. We were funded through the pan-Canadian initiative. We also got funding from INAC, which has the SINED fund. They helped with project management in terms of helping us figure out where we could get money and which would be the best departments to fund us.

For provincial partners, we had Education, Culture and Employment, which is the education piece in the Northwest Territories. For NGOs, we had the Native Women's Association, which we work very closely with all the time on other projects also. And we had De Beers, Diavik, and BHP, the three mining companies. We did have Irving Oil for a short period of time, but then negotiations were needed in other areas.

Our experience working with partners has been very good. I think it really added to the success of the project, because things we didn't have the capacity to do, others did.

Mr. Paul Calandra: Overall, then, it was a very positive experience and something that we can obviously learn from and utilize going forward.

Is there anything you might suggest?

Ms. Lorraine Phaneuf: I think the three-year multi-year funding is perhaps.... For the government, that may seem like a long period of time for a pilot project, but in fact it is too short, because for the women who are finishing the courses, there is no dedicated paid staff to take care of them. If the project had been even five years long—hindsight is twenty-twenty, I guess—maybe two years of the project could have been dedicated solely to helping people who had gone through the program. If I were to do it again, I would put in those two years of research, but we didn't do that.

We also learned about community-based programming. If we'd had the courses in the communities where the women live instead of bringing them in from all over the Northwest Territories.... Their families were very supportive of them and it kind of excluded that day care situation, but then we ran into the next problem, which was that, okay, the *mères* and the dads would take care of the kids to allow them to take their training, but who takes care of them after that? We have a few women, especially in Trout Lake, where they're doing a lot of work, and they have nowhere to put the kids because there's no day care.

We've been trying our best to figure it out. Maybe we could suggest some kind of cooperative program in the community, but as it sits, only x number of people live there, so some work and some take care of the old people and the kids.

• (1620)

Mr. Paul Calandra: I know that you definitely wouldn't suggest that only women who are working are good people, and mothers who—

Ms. Lorraine Phaneuf: No, their role is just as important.

Mr. Paul Calandra: —need to have their kids in day care, and that a woman who works at home, like my wife, is not contributing to society. So overall—

Ms. Lorraine Phaneuf: No, that's not what I mean. No, no.

Mr. Paul Calandra: No, no, I know. I was making a comment—

Ms. Lorraine Phaneuf: I stayed off work eight years myself to take care of my kids.

Mr. Paul Calandra: —on something else. I'm sorry.

So overall, though, from what you're suggesting, we've made some extraordinary progress in the last while, especially with what you've mentioned with respect to the territorial government and the partnerships with the federal government. We're moving in the right direction. We're starting to see some changes and it has been an overall positive experience. There's some work to be done, but the particular program we're talking about is a good example of how we should be working together, and how we have worked together to actually afford some changes.

Ms. Lorraine Phaneuf: Yes, it was a positive kind of experience. At first when you see those big cashflows, you think, “Ay-ay-ay, come on....” But after three years, you think, “Oh, maybe I could be an accountant now.” There is some value to building that capacity in the NGOs. I find myself now helping other NGOs with their financial work, because numbers people aren't the kind of people that NGOs typically would hire. They look for a different kind of people, but unfortunately, if you don't have the money, you can't do the projects.

Mr. Paul Calandra: So it's a good spinoff, then. The investment has led to a maturing of all of the organizations that help. Perhaps one day it might not just be southern white men working in the north, as my colleague—

Ms. Lorraine Phaneuf: Well, Iqaluit is in Nunavut, so that's different. Where I work, I'm an Acadian from Nova Scotia, so I'm very used to.... Most of the men were fishermen and the moms had different kinds of jobs. Having moved to the north, I thought it seemed that there were a lot of people not working, and I could never really understand that.

I think the more training and the more resources that are pumped in.... It's not just the training with people. They have to want to go to work and they have to feel they're wanted there and that there are good opportunities for them to grow. You can't just say, “Here's a two-week training course, so okay, you're set now.”

The Chair: Thank you very much, Ms. Phaneuf.

Ms. Mathysen.

Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you for your wonderful presentations and your candour. It has been a very important and helpful addition to our deliberations and I do appreciate the advice that you've given this committee. I'm hoping that in our report we can indicate how very much we value that and how integral it will be in terms of addressing the needs of women, no matter where they work, whether it's inside the home—because we know that women work very hard in the home—or if they choose to aspire to work outside the home.

I have some little points of clarification. I hope you can help me. I'll start with Ms. Phaneuf, but anyone who has any thoughts, please jump in.

You talked about your training program being very successful, with 37 participants in year one and 41 in year two, and by year three, you were up to 73 participants. So very clearly there was a need and there was a real uptake.

Now, when you were talking about the funding, who funded you? Was it the mining companies plus Irving or was there another funder?

•(1625)

Ms. Lorraine Phaneuf: No, it was pan-Canadian initiative funds. They funded us for \$1.3 million over three years.

For INAC, for the federal government, I think it's probably close to \$200,000 over the three years. But in all fairness to the INAC folks, they had also funded us in the proposal development phase, so it's probably even a little bit higher.

Ms. Irene Mathysen: Now you're looking for new funders. Who are you looking to? Where does the hope lie?

Ms. Lorraine Phaneuf: Well, we have applied to....

Are you allowed to say if you haven't been funded yet? I guess you are.

The Chair: You're allowed to say whatever you wish, Ms. Phaneuf, other than obscenities.

Voices: Oh, oh!

Ms. Lorraine Phaneuf: I never would do that.

We've applied to the INAC folks, but unfortunately they can only fund us if we have a major funder because they can only fund a portion. They can't be the big funder. And we've applied to Status of Women Canada.

The federal minister, Helena Guergis, came to Hay River for our big opening. Maybe I'm being too boastful, but I feel she was impressed with the work we had done there, in seeing all of the community there for the opening of the course and all of the equipment there ready for the women. She had at that point urged me to apply for the funding for the corporate proposal. So we're just waiting to hear on that funding.

But if we don't get it, we're not going to stop. We're going to apply...you know, other funders will fund us. There is a labour market territorial fund, but it's very regional, so the communities would go in and we would probably have to apply for the money, and we could maybe help them implement the project and help them with the paperwork.

So it all depends on how the funding flows. It would be better if it just came to us, and then we can just help the communities when they need help.

Ms. Irene Mathysen: But there is no indication from the Status of Women when you'll get this funding, or if you'll get this funding? You haven't had a date given?

Ms. Lorraine Phaneuf: No.

Ms. Irene Mathysen: As soon as you hear, will you let the committee know? I'd really like to hear.

Ms. Lorraine Phaneuf: I will.

Ms. Irene Mathysen: There's been some discussion about post-secondary education and young women who have obtained secondary diplomas, but it seemed to me that from your discussion you were talking about young women who had really much more basic needs. It would sound like basic literacy and numeracy skills were missing.

Do you have any idea why? What was that gap caused by? How could it be addressed so that women aren't starting at such a disadvantaged spot? It's tough getting up to a post-secondary—

Ms. Lorraine Phaneuf: Sorry, I didn't mean to interrupt you.

I don't know why. I do know that the Native Women's Association of the Northwest Territories is now working on a math tool and a kind of holistic tool to give to the adult educators in the Northwest Territories to help them get to that level. That is actually a project that's going on as we speak.

So we're very hopeful that this might actually engage some of the women, because there was a fair amount of women who would have wanted to take the upgrading, and even some who did take it but just couldn't succeed.

Ms. Irene Mathysen: Yes, it's hard.

Yes, Madam Thomas.

Ms. Denise Thomas: If I may, there is also a problem in some of the communities, in Manitoba, especially. In our northern communities we have a division that's called Frontier School Division. Even if a lot of the women coming out of there have a higher level, grade 11 or 12, it's a low level of education. When we try to get them into the trades, we have to upgrade them first. If we don't have the funding to do that, then those women are stuck in the muck, I would say. So that is a really crucial problem, the education system.

We also had a partnership with Manitoba Hydro in our province. We did have a partnership where we did a lot of upgrading.

Also, too, what happens is the cultural shock in leaving their communities, so that's another problem we face. We do a lot of upgrading, as much as we can, if we can get the people to come out of those communities. We have to put support systems in place so that they don't have to deal with this cultural shock. All that costs a lot of money, and our funding has stayed the same for 10 years, as we mentioned in our submission.

We're making a lot of groundwork with the Métis women as a whole. We just don't want to lose that now. We want to continue doing the good work that we're trying to do for the women.

•(1630)

Ms. Irene Mathysen: Okay.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Thomas, and thank you, Irene.

Madame Zarac, this round is for five minutes, including questions and answers.

Mrs. Lise Zarac (LaSalle—Émard, Lib.): Okay, thank you.

My question is to Ms. Phaneuf.

I can understand why you're so enthusiastic about this project even though the number who got jobs was low, but you said they got other jobs. I would give you this warning: be careful when you make your...the sum of this project, because we can interpret numbers differently. I believe it is a success, even if the objective wasn't quite met. With all of the barriers you had, I believe it is a very good subject.

I have a question. You mentioned that most of the people who followed the program wanted additional training. What additional training were they seeking?

Ms. Lorraine Phaneuf: Depending on the women, they sometimes wanted training around budgeting for their homes or forklift training. We brought some women into that. There are bears in the Northwest Territories and so we had bear training, and sound-blast training. Those are all trainings that were not available through the college at that time. We also did a cultural camp because most of our women were aboriginal, due to demographics. It's not that we really planned it that way, but just because of where we live. We also tried to bring in a few cultural programs, but I wouldn't say there was an emphasis on that. If they asked for something, we would try to find it.

Mrs. Lise Zarac: So you delivered what they wanted. Their needs were answered.

Ms. Lorraine Phaneuf: We tried to within the parameters of the project. We have tweaked our method a little bit. I haven't, but our very talented evaluator has tried to grab those kinds of successes. So it's not only in terms of women working at De Beers, and I think you'll see that in the summative evaluation. That will come out loud and clear.

Mrs. Lise Zarac: Would you say they were asking for the basic needs that they thought would give them an opportunity to find a well-paying job?

Ms. Lorraine Phaneuf: Yes.

•(1635)

Mrs. Lise Zarac: You said that some of the programs you included, but would there be a reality in making new programs to answer these needs?

Ms. Lorraine Phaneuf: It would depend on what the training is, I guess. For the training we did, honestly, we couldn't think of anything else to help those ladies. We felt we did the best job we could.

Sometimes unintended things come out when you're doing work. The one thing we found, and I think this will come out in the evaluation, is that they had a whole list of boxes to tick off for what they felt were barriers to being successful. Women with children sometimes did not tick off child care. Their children had been left in the community where they live, and they came to the city to take their training. But it's still an issue, because they miss those kids.

In hindsight, we might have sent them home in the middle of the training and let them come back, not just March break or Christmas. That might be something we'd do differently.

Mrs. Lise Zarac: You mentioned lots of funding partners. If you don't get those partnerships in the future, will you still be able to continue the work you're doing?

Ms. Lorraine Phaneuf: Not to the extent.... The only thing we could commit to is if women needed advocacy while they're working in the trades they could come to our organization. But if we don't have funding, we don't have wage subsidy or work clothing or teachers or courses.

Mrs. Lise Zarac: You said it was a three-year funding, right? So your funding is finished now.

Ms. Lorraine Phaneuf: On February 26.

Mrs. Lise Zarac: What would the ideal program be? How long would you need to be funded? Ms. Thomas also mentioned that long-term funding helps to better the programs.

Ms. Lorraine Phaneuf: I think it would have to be in there long enough to see significant changes in how many women enter into trades or maintain...because the last statistics in the Northwest Territories indicated that only 3% of women are in the trades. Now, that was in 2006. They haven't upgraded their apprenticeship report yet.

Until we see a significant change in the direction of where women are actually working in the Northwest Territories, I could almost see it as being indeterminate. I'm sure funders would not be happy, but at a minimum, it would be five years.

The Chair: Thank you. No, that's it. Sorry about that.

Ms. McLeod.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair.

I also would like to really thank all the witnesses. It's been a really informative day.

Also, I want to note your comment on spending some time on the definition. Certainly when we prepare our report, we'll need to spend a little bit more time making sure we have a definition that's really suitable for moving forward, so I appreciate that comment.

I can't remember our original definition—it seems so long ago—but I think it is worthy for us to note and discuss.

The Chair: That makes us, as MPs, a non-traditional workplace; you know that.

I just thought you should think of that one.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod: I have two questions about some statistics, and then another question.

Ms. Calder, you said there is a decrease in trades and an increase in college participation. Would you care to speculate on what's behind that at all? Do you have any sense of what's happening there?

Ms. Carey Calder: One of the things we're noticing when we're talking about the participation of aboriginal women is that all aboriginal women tend to find professions that end up contributing back to families and communities. For quite some time we actually haven't done, and still continue not to do, a very good job, when we're doing census information, of capturing statistics of where we're already working and where we have been working. We tend to stay in our homes, sometimes caring for children longer but also caring for the elderly, and yet that's not being taken into account as being an actual certified personal support worker. With things like midwifery, traditionally if you're doing that but you don't have a mainstream certificate, that's not being captured.

So a lot of this work has already been done. As opportunities are increasing for post-secondary, we're finding oftentimes that the interest lies in health, education, and the types of fields we are already working in.

That's not to say that we don't absolutely need specific supports for women who are looking outside of those traditional roles. We do, but when we put the emphasis in the promotion to say, "Get a job in the trades", or, like my pen says, "Apprenticeship is hip".... But what does that mean, and how is that actually contributing back? So we are suggesting to really look at supports for what we are already working towards.

The other point I was really trying to make on that is that despite the fact that we are performing...and aboriginal women are exceedingly successful at getting their post-secondary when that opportunity is available to them. There are a lot of barriers to that opportunity being available, but when it is, there are not always employment opportunities at the other end.

We know we're still dealing with racism. We know we're still dealing with sexism. We know we're still dealing with sometimes lack of opportunities or, I guess, "checkbox-able" opportunities in some locations; it might be informal work that is available in their community rather than perhaps what would be considered a job on the census.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod: My next question is around statistics, and I know again I'm asking for a bit of speculation from either Ms. Thomas or Ms. Bailey.

You were giving some statistics on Métis women. Proportionately you were saying they were more represented in the non-traditional trades. Can you speculate as to why that is happening?

• (1640)

Ms. Monell Bailey: I think it's partially because of training dollars that have been used to train women. I'm going to revert to Saskatchewan because that's where I'm from, and I'm a little more knowledgeable about what's happened out there. A lot of training has been done. A lot of women have trained in the non-traditional roles of heavy equipment, plumbing, and electrical. They have taken advantage of that training and gone into the trades areas and been very successful.

I'm talking about a lot of our urban people, because they aren't bombarded with quite the same number of issues when it comes to child care and transportation and what not.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod: So have you had a focus on that area for awhile then?

Ms. Monell Bailey: Yes. I think it's probably been the past 10 years that Saskatchewan has really been emphasizing women in the trades.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod: Great.

Perhaps I have time for one other quick one.

Ms. Phaneuf, you have airport maintenance courses for women in the Northwest Territories. Was that part of your mining...? I don't think I heard you talk about that one at all.

Ms. Lorraine Phaneuf: They took the summer maintenance, and hopefully the next piece they'll take is the winter maintenance. We picked that one because that's a transferable skill. If they did not work out, if they went to the mines, that is a skill that is needed in every community that has fly-in in the Northwest Territories. Every community needs someone to clear the runway.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod: Was it part of the larger project, but sort of a subsection?

Ms. Lorraine Phaneuf: It was supposed to be an exposure course. It's a department in the GNWT where they do community-based training and they do that piece. So they helped us out with that.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Monsieur Desnoyers.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Desnoyers (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Welcome to our witnesses.

What the witnesses are telling us is very interesting indeed. We have already heard at length from witnesses and organizations on the subject of non-traditional fields, and one thing bothers me. Generally speaking, aboriginal women seem to experience far more obvious problems than women living in urban areas or non-aboriginal women. Aboriginal women have problems getting access to training. Not everyone has access to projects like yours in the different provinces.

That raises some questions in my mind about the situation of the different bands across the country and also in Quebec. In some communities in Quebec, and indeed in the North, women are experiencing major problems and cannot find any work. Training does not appear to be an important tool.

I would imagine that given your knowledge of your communities, you could tell me if there was an even stronger mindset present among aboriginal men, one that discourages women from leaving their communities or reserves and pursuing an interesting career?

I believe you have some statistics on this subject.

[English]

Ms. Carey Calder: I'll try to answer that. That's a really big question.

I think you are hitting on a really important point. Aboriginal women are performing at lower indicators when it comes to social determinants of health than all other Canadians, and it's not a matter of what aboriginal men are doing on reserve. And even if you were to look at that example, that's a very small segment of the aboriginal population. It doesn't include Métis and Inuit.

One of the bigger things that we've been looking at in the work that we've been doing is really connecting how, holistically, it is difficult to have one program or one strategy that doesn't address some of the other realities that we continue to face. So when aboriginal people and communities are performing at a different level, the comparisons no longer relate. Living in poverty, not having access to health care, not having access to food or shelter—these certainly change the priority of whether or not you're deciding to get into a certain profession.

We talk a lot about aboriginal youth being the largest part of our population right now, but who's having those aboriginal youth? Aboriginal women have been starting their families, raising their families, and not participating in some of the other stimulus programs that have been available. So by the time they're ready to get in there, did they have a chance to finish high school? Did they have a chance to go to post-secondary? At what point are they going back and starting their career? I think all of the different layers that contribute to the realities of aboriginal people is what you're seeing in just this one example.

That's a very big question. We could probably spend a couple of months just on that alone.

•(1645)

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Desnoyers: Are there any support groups or organizations in your communities that provide women working in non-traditional fields with opportunities to meet and exchange ideas?

You spoke at length about discrimination and harassment in the workplace. That is no doubt a reality, because these problems are often present in our plants. Most likely the situation is even worse in remote regions. I think there should be a working group to support training so that women can provide each other with the tools they need to better take on all of these jobs in non-traditional fields generally filled by men.

[English]

Ms. Denise Thomas: In Manitoba, we have a Métis women organization that's part of the Manitoba Metis Federation—she has a seat on the board—so anything for training for women, the organization does give a lot of support to the Métis women of Manitoba. We give them a lot of support.

Well, I'm with the mainstream Manitoba Metis Federation, and we have a spokesperson, so we give a lot of support to the women who want to get into the non-traditional trades.

We have a lot of success stories. One of the things that we brought here today is a book that profiles the impact of the Métis labour force development program, *Métis Works*. If we can, we can leave this book for your information.

One of the examples of what we've done for the education of the Métis women—and for students as a whole, but it's been really helping the women—is we have a program that's called Standing Tall. It copies Tu Tangata from New Zealand. It's a pilot project, and we have videos on this. It is really helping the students to get a better education because this is where the parents are working within the school system. Through our aboriginal human resource development dollars, we are able to bring in some students—I think they were all Métis women because I was signing their cheques—to work within the schools to help the parents to be more involved in the education system. So that was a real success story.

Of course, we did a partnership and we're very much hoping that we continue with the Standing Tall project. We were able to second a school teacher from one of our school divisions to work with us on this. We do give a lot of support to the women in our province, and we'll continue to do so. But for non-traditional trades I think our problem is that a lot of them are in these non-traditional trades and their wages are not equitable with the men's.

We also do community-based training. We held community-based training for such things as firemen, and such things as heavy equipment operators. We've done that. I see one of my women who is operating one of those big machines. We're really proud of all that.

•(1650)

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Thomas.

We've gone over time on that one.

Irene Mathyssen.

Ms. Irene Mathyssen: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I want to come back to the list that Madam Thomas provided. I think it's a significant list. Of course, we heard this from other presenters, and it revolved around the need for safe, affordable, reliable child care. I think the reality is we've heard from many witnesses that this applies to women all across the country, this need to know that they can access proper child care and their kids will be safe.

I think there was mention made of pursuing a co-op, and I wondered, what do you need to establish that co-op? Have you been able to explore that? Is this a possibility?

Ms. Lorraine Phaneuf: I don't know. The way we think, we were thinking a co-op could be formed in a small community so the child care provider would actually work for the same person as the people who are running the bulldozers. I don't know exactly how that would work, but you'd have to have the backing of industry if you did it that way, or it could be a co-op with the women. But then there's always the issue of reimbursing them. Would it be equitable? There are so many factors to take into account.

We've made a lot of presentations to mining companies on how that could work in mines. The logistics alone of the mining industry in the Northwest Territories are not conducive to family life.

Ms. Irene Mathysen: Yes, and we found that there was a proposal by which the government would encourage the private sector businesses to create child care spaces, and I think they offered up lots of money, but for practical reasons there was no uptake. So now we're back to a community need and a need to establish some kind of solid, community-based child care system, one that's free-standing, safe, and affordable and that doesn't put a burden on parents. I was interested in that.

Also, in terms of this list and in response to Mr. Desnoyers' question, Ms. Calder, you talked about the disadvantages or the challenges, including safe, affordable housing. Would you add the need for safe, affordable housing to the list of needs for supporting women in the communities?

Ms. Denise Thomas: Yes, definitely.

Ms. Irene Mathysen: Okay.

I guess finally—and I'm back to the list—I was quite interested in the fourth proposal, that “The United States has had affirmative action programs in place for some time, and indications are that they've worked to increase the participation of women”, and that we need these in Canada.

What do the American programs look like? Could you describe them to me? Do you have a sense of how they work?

Ms. Denise Thomas: Do you mean in the United States?

Ms. Irene Mathysen: Yes. What would they look like? I'd be very interested.

Ms. Denise Thomas: I'll have to give you a copy of this on affirmative action for the United States. I guess I could get you a copy of what the indicators would look like. Sure, I'll get you a copy of that.

Ms. Irene Mathysen: That would be wonderful. I appreciate it. It's very clear that if it is indeed achieving the purpose of getting

women into non-traditional roles, then we should certainly have some sense of it here.

I want to come back quickly to something Ms. Bailey said. You talked about the biggest difference in terms of income: \$45,000-plus among males in the general population, and Métis women at \$23,253, 48% less than males. And you mentioned that even in Alberta, where wages and income were quite significant during the boom, that gap was still present. I wondered about that and about the reasons for it.

Ms. Monell Bailey: I don't know if it's pay equity issues. A lot of times, it's women still remaining in those traditional roles, the low-paid positions—the waitress thing, cashier jobs, that sort of thing. It's still the fact that they're not getting the skills required, perhaps. Or perhaps we have women out there with the skills who just aren't getting the positions.

• (1655)

Ms. Irene Mathysen: Do we need pay equity?

Ms. Monell Bailey: Oh, definitely.

The Chair: Ms. Mathysen, can you hold that question for the third round? We're now over on your time.

Ms. Irene Mathysen: Okay.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Wong.

Mrs. Alice Wong (Richmond, CPC): Good afternoon, and thank you very much for coming to give us a wonderful presentation.

In capturing what your presentation is about, I can see that there are quite a few challenges related not just to the job itself but also to skills. In other words, the challenges aboriginal women are facing going into non-traditional trades might even be the same as for any women in Canada or elsewhere in the world going into those non-traditional jobs.

My question is related to pre-assessment. You especially, Lorraine, mentioned that you cannot keep the women long enough, because they seem to be interested, but once they get into it they lose interest. Are there any pre-assessment tools to decide whether they actually are suitable for the job? Sometimes, if we push someone into something they really are not capable of doing or are not really interested in, these women may start jumping from one professional or trade training to another, but at the end of the day will not go into these and will go back into the traditional ones. Can you share some light on that, please?

Ms. Lorraine Phaneuf: Do you want to know how we assess?

Mrs. Alice Wong: Yes. It's a question about pre-assessment.

Ms. Lorraine Phaneuf: What we did for assessment was go to communities in the Northwest Territories and do an information session on what their training would look like. From there, women applied. Once they applied, they would speak to the staff of that project team, and they also filled out an assessment...I don't want to call it a test, but it was done by a psychologist to determine whether they had the skills for trades-related work.

So they were assessed lightly, but there are some training programs across Canada that actually do three- to four-day assessments. In the Northwest Territories, we just do not have the capacity or the areas to send women to do that. Women Building Futures for youth in Edmonton has a tremendous assessment program, but they have a volume of people applying; they have hundreds of women wanting to get in, whereas in the Northwest Territories we are faced with very small populations and also populations of women who would have to leave their homes and move to the city. We were challenged by that.

Mrs. Alice Wong: I am glad you mentioned the Alberta-based Women Building Futures, because they have actually successfully helped Canadian women bridge into traditional male bastions. And they focus on some of the things you mentioned: community outreach, skills development, and peer mentorship. In other words, Women Building Futures complements all of the three pillars that Status of Women Canada maintains as its platform, such as increasing women's security and prosperity, preventing violence against women, and enhancing women's leadership.

In your programming, is it possible that those—community outreach, skills development, and peer mentorship—could also be built in, on a smaller scale, ideally?

Ms. Lorraine Phaneuf: We had partnership with WBF. Their assessment is fantastic for the program that they do. When they came to the Northwest Territories, there didn't seem to be as much of a fit with us, because of the low literacy rates and because our project was actually looking to help the most marginalized. They assess a little bit differently. This is not to say it is not an excellent program, because it is; it just didn't quite fit.

When the partners looked at it, they felt that it was too onerous and that we would have a very hard time filling our courses. There are not the resources. Some of the resources are to go to different companies to do things or to go to the employment centre. We don't have full resources.

Mrs. Alice Wong: What about other provinces? In the Métis situation, have you been able to utilize some of the programs that have already been developed under community outreach, skills development, and also peer mentorship?

• (1700)

The Chair: There is only one minute in which to answer that.

Ms. Denise Thomas: In Manitoba, yes, we do the peer mentorship. Our Standing Tall program is one in which we do that in other areas. It works for the women.

What we started off with was life skills courses in our northern communities. That really helped women to come out of themselves, I guess you would say. It's very much needed in some of the communities for training.

What has also hurt the women we were trying to help was losing our Aboriginal Healing Foundation dollars, when we were trying to help the women who had gone to the residential schools and have not dealt with all that healing. We have to find other ways to help those women now, to bring them out of the communities to get an education.

The Chair: Thank you.

Now we'll go to a third round. It's a five-minute round. I'm going to cut everybody off, if you go overtime, because we have exactly 25 minutes to finish up.

We will start with Ms. Simson and Madam Zarac. You will split your time, you told me.

Mrs. Michelle Simson: Absolutely. I have only two quick questions.

To follow up on my colleague from the NDP with respect to the request you made, Ms. Phaneuf, to Status of Women for funding, I know you haven't heard yet, but you said you'd let us know, because we'd all be interested. Are you able to share the amount of funding you requested, and over what term?

Ms. Lorraine Phaneuf: It was \$175,000 for two years.

Mrs. Michelle Simson: Thank you. And you're anticipating a response in what kind of timeframe?

Ms. Lorraine Phaneuf: Soon; very soon.

Mrs. Michelle Simson: Meaning within weeks, days, months?

Ms. Lorraine Phaneuf: Probably days.

Mrs. Michelle Simson: Okay, thank you. I appreciate that.

Before I turn it over to my colleague, the next question I have is for Ms. Thomas.

You touched on the fact that there were some Métis women who were going to volunteer or work in schools to maybe address a disconnect. There seems to be an educational component that underscores all of this, that education is the key at the very beginning.

I'd like to read you something quickly and ask for your comment, if it's still applicable.

Many [aboriginal] mothers interviewed in the Yukon expressed ambivalence toward education in public schools. In terms of goals, both mothers and educators agree that the future of the child is important but because of lack of contact between the two, the family and the schools, neither knows what the other is doing about it.

Would that be a fair statement?

Ms. Denise Thomas: Yes, it would be.

Mrs. Michelle Simson: Is it a significant problem?

Ms. Denise Thomas: Yes, it is a significant problem. This is not only in the city schools and the rural schools also—

Mrs. Michelle Simson: But referring particularly to, say, the aboriginal—

Ms. Denise Thomas: We picked two schools in our city of Winnipeg, and there is a higher dropout rate in the city than the rural communities. We seem to have lost the connection; the parents send their kids to school, and.... This why we started with that Standing Tall program.

Mrs. Michelle Simson: This is something we really have to address. It saddens me to say that I read that excerpt from the Royal Commission on the Status of Women, which is over 40 years old, and it seems to me that we haven't been able to come to grips with it or to come up with a solution that appears to be working for the aboriginal communities. That was my observation, if that was still an issue.

Thank you. I'll turn it over to Ms. Zarac.

Mrs. Lise Zarac: I have two questions.

To Ms. Thomas, you mentioned that your funding has been static for the last 10 years. Have your costs increased in the past 10 years? Do you believe that the demands have increased also? Would you be able to put a percentage on the number of people you're helping compared to those you could help?

•(1705)

Ms. Denise Thomas: In terms of jobs, 35,000, and we could help a whole lot more.

What we appreciated about the program was the flexibility we were allowed. The flexibility allowed us to hire those young women to work within the schools, to connect the parents with their...for example, and the women—

Mrs. Lise Zarac: Have your costs, for example your rent, increased in the past 10 years?

Ms. Denise Thomas: Oh yes, everything has increased. Our rent has increased, for sure. We had to buy bigger buildings. I own a building and it's just about paid for, but there are some of us who have had to buy bigger buildings, especially in one of our northern communities. Yes, our costs have increased substantially. This is why we hope—

Mrs. Lise Zarac: Thank you.

You all mentioned racism, culture shift, discrimination—all of you mentioned those words. Is that related to co-workers, or to the companies, the employers? If it's related to the employers, is there an incentive we could give the employers to eliminate this?

Ms. Carey Calder: One of the things is that it's not just employers or just in a certain field; I think it's Canadian society. When we look at some of the programs we're doing—for example, with the new AHRDS program, which is now becoming the ASETS program—one of the main pillars is that as aboriginal organizations we're required to develop partnerships with industry. But there's no guarantee that those industries are going to want to partner with us. We have to educate and explain why it's a benefit to include aboriginal people—aboriginal women, aboriginal youth—within their targets.

So I think getting to the education system within Canada—so that people, all of us in this room, already fully understand what the history is of aboriginal people, and get that community, so that this

isn't the first time we're hearing about it, you know, later on in life—would really actually address that.

Mrs. Lise Zarac: Do you believe the government has a role in that?

The Chair: No, we're going over here. I'm sorry, I'm going to have to cut that question off.

Ms. Brown.

Ms. Lois Brown (Newmarket—Aurora, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you, ladies. I think you've given us some significant insight into some of the issues.

There are a couple of things, and I'm going to try to bundle some of these questions.

First of all, I think we need to correct the record. The money for the healing centres is now just coming from a different fund. There's \$199 million coming through Health Canada, not through INAC. So it's a different funding source.

Ms. Calder, could you give us any percentages of women who are working in traditional roles from the aboriginal community, women who have gone into, say, nursing or teaching? Are there pay standards in the provinces so that women in those jobs would be accomplishing a certain income level?

Ms. Carey Calder: I don't have an answer. I wish I did. We need to have a tool that clearly identifies all of those different inequities. What I can do, and I'll have to provide it later, is provide a summary based on the 2006 census data that shows where women are working more in the health field and not so much in the trades, and then make a comparison with some of the labour market information, which isn't always easily available. I'll have to follow up on that.

Ms. Lois Brown: Okay.

The reason I'm asking is one statistic Ms. Phaneuf had offered here, that according to the 2001 census 36% of senior management workers in the Northwest Territories are women. I don't know whether there's any breakdown for aboriginal women.

Do you have that statistic, Ms. Phaneuf?

Ms. Lorraine Phaneuf: I don't, but I could get it, probably.

Ms. Lois Brown: I think that would be a very interesting one.

Ms. Carey Calder: I can go through this, if you like:

Poverty is in fact the reality which attaches to most Aboriginal women, as their average income in 2000 amounted to just \$16,519; their median income was \$12,311. These figures are the lowest of all Canadians' income; Aboriginal men's average income was \$21,958, and that of Canadian women and men was respectively \$22,885 and \$36,865.

So it was in 2000, in fact; it may have been a regional reality she was looking at, but in 2000 that certainly wasn't the case across Canada.

Ms. Lois Brown: I just think it would give us some comparisons. I think that's what I'm looking for here.

Ms. Carey Calder: Absolutely.

Ms. Lois Brown: One of the things I think is very significant is that our government has recently put in place some significant dollar values: \$200 million over two years for schools construction and \$75 million in a two-year aboriginal skills and training strategic investment fund.

So then I look at this next statistic, that says in 2000 women were the majority owners of 16% of northern businesses. Is incentive being given to women to begin their own enterprises? What are the barriers to doing that?

Would access to assets like matrimonial homes be a positive influence for them to go into a bank and say, hey, I've got this much in dollar value that I can use as an asset for collateral? Is that the kind of area where women can see some improvement?

• (1710)

Ms. Carey Calder: I think in terms of some of the government initiatives we were just talking about, the examples you gave are actually industry-related types of sectors. So the ASTSIF and ASEP programs are generally pumping dollars into male-dominated environments already. I think it has to go back to what types of incentives there are for women to get in. What are the minimum standards the government is setting and mandating these employers, who are benefiting directly from those packages, that increase and encourage participation?

I got all excited because the time is short. I can't remember the second part of your question.

Ms. Lois Brown: Again, my question is about access to assets, knowing they've got collateral. Are they being encouraged? Many people who go through skills training in southern Ontario go into their own businesses. They establish their own enterprise and they offer themselves as an independent business. Are the women being given those kinds of business skills to set themselves up?

Ms. Carey Calder: Work is being done right now in the economic framework development plan. The Native Women's Association of Canada is working directly with INAC to develop a culturally relevant gender-based analysis framework. So we are looking at other ways to see what types of assets women do already have that perhaps just haven't been looked at the same way.

This goes back to seeing what access they had in the past in order to be able to establish a track record, and what types of things need to be considered in order to allow them the same opportunities to access loans, etc.

Ms. Lois Brown: But if a woman is—

The Chair: Sorry, Lois. Thank you.

Madam Demers.

[Translation]

Ms. Nicole Demers: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I found Ms. Brown's comments quite interesting. In Quebec, the SOCLE provides microcredit to persons looking to start up a business. I think that is very interesting, because in terms of employment opportunities, small businesses are probably the solution for the future.

Ms. Phaneuf, I was very interested to hear what you had to say about child care for women who want to enter the labour force. When I'm confronted with a problem, I see an opportunity. You mentioned cooperatives, and I was wondering if perhaps one solution might be to set up cooperatives managed by aboriginal grandmothers who would be paid for their services and at the same time transfer their values and cultures to the children in their care. Grandmothers always make the best babysitters, of course. If there is an opportunity to have well-structured child care services, then so much the better.

What about possibly setting up user cooperatives? Persons using day care services could determine the needs of these cooperatives and how they should be run. I like this idea, which could be an answer to your problems.

[English]

Ms. Lorraine Phaneuf: I think that could work, except in some of the communities,

[Translation]

a grandmother could have 75 grandchildren.

[English]

So I don't know if there are enough grandmas in the small communities, but in the larger communities in the Northwest Territories....

You have given me food for thought, because we do have an older woman's program,

[Translation]

and it could work.

[English]

Maybe that could work.

[Translation]

Ms. Nicole Demers: I like the idea. Also, small businesses could extend microcredit to persons wanting to set up a small private daycare, which obviously would be subject to state regulations, but which would nevertheless provide opportunities in this area.

I believe that all of you are working very hard for your communities and that the answers you need lie within you. I am confident, Ms. Phaneuf, that the minister who reviewed your work will give your project the green light. I wouldn't be worried if I were you, because she has stated repeatedly that she looks favourably on this type of initiative. She has visited you and seen first-hand the work that you are doing.

So then, I expect that you will receive a positive response. I truly hope that you will. I also hope that you will continue your amazing work and that you will get the funding you need. Thank you, on behalf of all the women you are helping. Thank you very much.

• (1715)

[English]

The Chair: Merci, Madam Demers.

Ms. Mathyssen.

Ms. Irene Mathyssen: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I don't want to put you on the spot, but when the discussion came up about the loss of Aboriginal Healing Foundation dollars, you responded. I wondered if you had something to add to that.

Ms. Denise Thomas: Well, I guess I did bring that up. It's close to my heart. When it came to Manitoba, I was kind of looking after that. We did a lot of groundwork, working with the young people, and the healing started. Now that the funding has gone over to another area, truth and reconciliation, how many more times do we have to tell our stories? That's kind of what we thought. Now we have no counsellors for those people who were healing.

It was something that was close to my heart. We used to have life skills programs, for example, and we can still have them. We always implemented the cultural component and the wellness component, so it took more dollars, but it was very important in the work we did. Because we don't have our dollars now to keep our counsellors hired, we'll have to look at something else. I guess we'll use our training dollars to do that.

Ms. Irene Mathysen: You're sort of starting again.

Ms. Denise Thomas: We can't just drop those people. We have to continue to try to help them.

Ms. Irene Mathysen: Thank you.

I want to get back to the pay equity question. There was reference made to the large number of women who are pipefitters for heavy equipment and are earning less than their male counterparts. How on earth are employers getting away with that? If they're doing the same job or they're at the same level as other workers, how can they be paid less?

Ms. Denise Thomas: I think some of the ones who are hired for construction jobs are paid less. They start on heavy equipment and are then moved to something else so that they'll be paid less. It's very difficult to keep women in those positions and to have them paid equitable wages.

For example, there was a lot of racism in the hydro project. The people who were hired were let go or the women who were hired were given more menial jobs.

I'll give you a very good example from when I first became a vice-president. I live in a tourism area. Grand Beach is one of the biggest beaches in Manitoba. I had to fight with our provincial government so that Métis women could get jobs other than janitorial and maintenance positions. We had to fight so that women could get jobs working at such things as the campground office and the gates. Transients, like the ones who came to work for hydro, would get the jobs. It was and it still is a real problem.

A lot of it is racism. For construction jobs, I don't know. I guess they still try to keep women down.

Ms. Irene Mathysen: We heard about that from another group last week. Women were trained for one job and were then relegated to something that paid much less.

• (1720)

Ms. Denise Thomas: Yes, that's what happens. They are relegated to something else.

Ms. Irene Mathysen: Thank you for clarifying that.

Ms. Wong started to ask a question about women not being suited for certain jobs. Perhaps it's more a matter of this exodus occurs because they don't have the support systems in place to stay in the jobs. Is that another way of looking at the situation?

Ms. Denise Thomas: Yes, it is. There is a lot of that, especially when trying to get women into the fire department. It's looked down on. There are women who want to be firewomen.

The fishers are now called "fishers", not fishermen. We had that cleared up.

Ms. Irene Mathysen: We need "firefighters".

Ms. Denise Thomas: We train some truck drivers. We have a lot of community-based courses for truck drivers. It's still very looked down on for a woman to drive a truck. I don't know why. It just is.

Ms. Irene Mathysen: It's interesting.

The Chair: Irene, I think you've come to the end.

Ms. Irene Mathysen: Thank you very much.

The Chair: Madam Boucher.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Limouilou, CPC): Thank you very much to our witnesses.

I very much enjoy listening to you. It's interesting to see the problems faced by women in general who work in non-traditional fields. This is truer still for aboriginal women. We have heard from many witnesses, but one question often comes to mind. I write it down often, but I've never asked it before. But that's about to change.

I'll put the question to you, because you are aboriginal women and the situation is even more difficult for you. Do men react negatively to you when you express the desire to work in a non-traditional field? Are men the ones slamming the door in your face, or do you also get this reaction from women? Are men opposed to the idea of women working in non-traditional fields?

[*English*]

Ms. Carey Calder: I don't know if it's literally someone slamming a door in your face, but it's what opportunities are provided. So building on one of the things about pay equity, if a certain amount of dollars is available for types of jobs, if those jobs are just the entry level and they're not getting the apprenticeship agreement, then they could be entry level labourers year after year. There's no question, just by their nature, apprenticeships are male-dominated environments. In many cases, it's about what opportunities are already there. So you're hearing about things because your uncle has worked there or maybe your dad. That's how things are; that's the network connection that apprenticeships were originally based on.

To get past that, sometimes, when we're talking about having women in non-traditional occupations, we're not looking for women to get into these fields to be one of the guys. We're looking for women to be working in these fields as women. We're now looking at how to increase the participation. If there wasn't a plan in place on how to deal with it or how that looks, there is an intimidation factor somewhere, and I'm not sure what we need to do. I guess that's the work you're doing, providing a road map on how things have to change to increase the participation.

I guess one of the questions I've been having with the committee, because I'm not aware of the work, is how much information you already have about retention for women in non-traditional roles to date. What are building on, based on recommendations from retention strategies thus far?

I didn't realize that specific work was being done with aboriginal women as part of this panel, but it would be interesting to see more work with the NAOs about what we can contribute to the work we've already been doing for over 10 years in the employment and training sector.

[Translation]

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: Politics are a non-traditional field for women. It is often said that politics is a men's world, even though more and more women are entering the political arena. There are still not enough women in politics.

It surprised me, Ms. Phaneuf, to hear you say that about 30% of the women did not look for jobs. Why was that? Was the pressure on them to great? Did they feel threatened? Why is it that women in general tend to throw in the towel in such situations?

• (1725)

[English]

Ms. Lorraine Phaneuf: The numbers were small, so for it to be 30%... Our target was small, so it could even be a bit of a skewed number.

Some of the women actually did graduate but did not apply for jobs. It's not that they didn't finish the training. They may not have applied for jobs afterwards, or the jobs were not available.

[Translation]

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: They did not look for...

They received training, but it is not clear why they did not look for work in their field.

[English]

Ms. Lorraine Phaneuf: We're going to try to get that research done, and I hope we'll come up with some answers. It's very difficult to get an answer from a person who has not been successful on why they're not successful. So that's always a challenge to get them to say, because they'll say the words they think you expect them to say, such as they didn't have child care, the training allowance wasn't enough to live on. We may need further research to figure that out.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

A little under five minutes are left, and I would like to ask a question of the panel.

It's recognized...and I think it's following up on Ms. Brown's question, the idea of women going into entrepreneurial jobs and going to banks. We know what banks have always said. I mean, some of the work done on indicators for women going into business is that banks have a gender neutral policy in which they require certain concrete pieces of chattel to lend money. It is well known that only certain women have the concrete pieces of chattel. Many women don't. So then they have to go to a male person, either the father or the brother or the uncle, to put up the piece of chattel for them.

We had brought forward, as the government of that day, something called women's enterprise centres, in which women could do the kind of microcredit that Ms. Demers was talking about. It was only for women to go to. It helped women to develop a work plan. It lent them tiny amounts of money if they wanted, and they didn't have to put up the usual chattel. They just had to have a good work plan, one in which the women's enterprise centres kind of shuffled them along.

Is that occurring still, and do you think that would be very helpful for aboriginal women?

Ms. Denise Thomas: Yes, I think it would be very helpful.

In the past we always had Aboriginal Business Canada. I think it's kind of on the wayside now. Of course, one of the problems was always that you needed that 15% or 20% equity down to even start a business. We never could find that amount of money, and you weren't allowed to borrow it.

So I think that would work, the micro-program. It could be something that could work.

Ms. Carey Calder: We can also share with you the work that the Native Women's Association of Canada is doing about the financial literacy program within that economic development framework. Financial literacy within aboriginal communities really is needed for the women. What also comes with that is the recognition that the typical requirement that would normally have to be in place to start these types of loans or to start these types of enterprises perhaps has to be reconsidered or re-evaluated so that it can appropriately support what's going on. Again, we have to also recognize some of the other contributions or other types of work that's already being done by aboriginal women. That could be credited towards that type of situation.

We'll definitely follow up with more information for the committee to review about that work that's been done.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

I would like to thank the witnesses for coming today and for giving us a very thorough and comprehensive understanding of how difficult it is for aboriginal women to go into non-traditional jobs—although, it would seem, many jobs that we consider to be traditional in the non-aboriginal communities are in fact non-traditional for aboriginal women.

Thank you very much.

We are adjourned.

MAIL  POSTE

Canada Post Corporation / Société canadienne des postes

Postage paid

Port payé

Lettermail

Poste-lettre

**1782711
Ottawa**

If undelivered, return COVER ONLY to:
Publishing and Depository Services
Public Works and Government Services Canada
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0S5

*En cas de non-livraison,
retourner cette COUVERTURE SEULEMENT à :*
Les Éditions et Services de dépôt
Travaux publics et Services gouvernementaux Canada
Ottawa (Ontario) K1A 0S5

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

SPEAKER'S PERMISSION

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.

Additional copies may be obtained from: Publishing and Depository Services
Public Works and Government Services Canada
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0S5
Telephone: 613-941-5995 or 1-800-635-7943
Fax: 613-954-5779 or 1-800-565-7757
publications@tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca
http://publications.gc.ca

Also available on the Parliament of Canada Web Site at the following address: <http://www.parl.gc.ca>

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

PERMISSION DU PRÉSIDENT

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.

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.

On peut obtenir des copies supplémentaires en écrivant à : Les Éditions et Services de dépôt
Travaux publics et Services gouvernementaux Canada
Ottawa (Ontario) K1A 0S5
Téléphone : 613-941-5995 ou 1-800-635-7943
Télécopieur : 613-954-5779 ou 1-800-565-7757
publications@tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca
http://publications.gc.ca

Aussi disponible sur le site Web du Parlement du Canada à l'adresse suivante : <http://www.parl.gc.ca>