



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

Standing Committee on the Status of Women

FEWO • NUMBER 018 • 2nd SESSION • 41st PARLIAMENT

EVIDENCE

Monday, April 7, 2014

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Chair

Ms. Hélène LeBlanc

Standing Committee on the Status of Women

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• (1530)

[Translation]

The Chair (Ms. Hélène LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard, NDP)): Good afternoon and welcome to the 18th meeting of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women.

In our first hour, we'll be hearing from witnesses on economic leadership and the prosperity of Canadian women.

We are pleased to welcome, from Status of Women Canada, Linda Savoie, Senior Director General of the Women's Program and Regional Operations Directorate, and Sébastien Goupil, Director General of Policy and External Relations. From the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development, we have John Gartke, Director of Trade Missions, Consultations and Outreach, and Zoe Hawa, Trade Commissioner for Business Women in International Trade.

Ms. Savoie, from Status of Women Canada, will start us off.

You have 10 minutes. Please go ahead.

Ms. Linda Savoie (Senior Director General, Women's Program and Regional Operations Directorate, Status of Women Canada): Thank you kindly, Madam Chair.

[English]

As just mentioned, I'm Linda Savoie. I welcome the opportunity to appear before this committee as part of its study examining the economic leadership and prosperity of Canadian women, including in the area of entrepreneurship.

As you already know, for the most part Status of Women Canada works to promote and advance equality for women and girls through its focus in three priority areas. The first is ending violence; the second is increasing the representation of women in leadership and decision-making roles; and the third, which is very relevant today, is increasing women's economic security and prosperity.

These three priorities allow us to take a comprehensive approach to promoting gender equality between men and women and also to consider the needs of diverse groups of women and girls across the country.

Advancing women's economic prosperity is a responsibility that is broadly shared by the private sector, various levels of government, and certainly a number of our federal departments and agencies. Through our collective efforts over the past decades, women now represent some 47% to 48% of the Canadian workforce. Women hold leading positions in government, in the private sector, and in the

non-profit sector, and women are graduating from our academic institutions in ever-increasing numbers.

At the same time, as policy-makers we know that challenges remain. We can all recognize that because of a variety of social and economic factors. Part-time work remains considerably more frequent among women than among men. In what are often still seen as traditionally female sectors of the economy, such as the health occupations, women earn just 47¢ for every dollar earned by men, according to Conference Board of Canada data. The incidence of low income among female lone-parent families is some three times higher than that in lone-parent families headed by men.

In 2012 women represented just 4% of those working in construction trades and 20% of those working in primary industries, such as forestry, mining, and oil and gas. As apprentices, women remain under-represented. In fact, women accounted for just 14% of registered apprentices in 2011. In the business world, women held majority ownership of only a very small percentage of small and medium-sized businesses, some 16% in 2011.

Finally, as a last thought, women today still hold only about a quarter of senior management positions in Financial Post 500 companies and less than 16% of total board seats within those companies.

• (1535)

[Translation]

These statistics underscore the importance of having access to good data to inform policies at the federal level affecting the economic situation of women in Canada.

For this reason, Status of Women Canada, in its role as a knowledge broker, has financially supported regular updates to the Statistics Canada publication entitled *Women in Canada: A Gender-based Statistical Report*. The report, which we shared with you at a previous meeting, shows where the gaps and opportunities are for women in Canada. The research demonstrates that there are many determinants of economic well-being for women in Canada, which is why the federal government takes a multi-faceted approach in responding to this important issue.

In response to these challenges, the government has put in place a number of measures, some of which you will hear about from my colleagues at Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada. I also hope that you will have the opportunity to hear from other officials representing key federal departments that are working to advance economic opportunity and economic empowerment for women in Canada.

For its part, Status of Women Canada has invested more than \$53 million in funding since 2007 for projects that specifically focus on improving women's economic security and prosperity. Of this amount, over \$9 million has been approved for projects to support women in entrepreneurship, and over \$12 million has been approved to recruit and advance women in non-traditional sectors.

A recent call for proposals is helping communities create new economic opportunities for women by advancing women in non-traditional occupations, increasing economic options for women, and improving prosperity for immigrant women.

Finally, I want to highlight for the committee that Status of Women Canada's role supporting implementation of gender-based analysis across government also helps improve the quality of economic support provided to women by departments and agencies. This occurs by integrating gender considerations—that is, the unique attributes of men and women and how their circumstances may differ—into the decision-making processes of government.

Madam Chair, all of these measures indicate how Status of Women Canada works with its partners to increase the economic security and prosperity of women in Canada, which we will continue doing in the weeks and months ahead.

I hope this information will be useful as the committee embarks on its study.

I thank the committee for its time today and would be pleased to answer your questions.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Savoie.

Mr. Gartke, you now have the floor for 10 minutes.

[*English*]

Mr. John Gartke (Director, Trade Missions, Consultations and Outreach, Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development): Thank you very much, Madam Chair and honourable members, for the opportunity to join you this afternoon.

I've brought some members of my team to discuss and to share with you some thoughts on the important topic of Canadian businesswomen in international trade.

In my comments this afternoon I'll provide an overview of the Canadian businesswomen in international trade program, or BWIT as we like to call it, and highlight some of the important work being done by the BWIT program to increase opportunities for Canadian businesswomen on the global stage.

The Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development recognizes the vital role that women play in our economy. Since 1997 the BWIT program has been dedicated to assisting, promoting, and advocating for women-owned businesses in the area of international trade.

The main objectives of the BWIT program are: to develop initiatives that support and engage businesswomen in the international marketplace; to provide export advice, guidance, and access to information and services specifically for women entrepreneurs on subjects including support networks, government resources, and special trade events; to provide awareness and training to adequately prepare businesswomen to tap into international markets; and finally, to provide opportunities for women-focused trade missions.

In this vein, the trade commissioner service is well positioned to assist Canadian businesswomen. With offices in about 150 cities around the world and across Canada, the trade commissioner service offers key market insights and assists by helping businesses to prepare for international markets and grow their global footprint. The BWIT program is an important component and is strongly aligned with the trade commissioner service. The BWIT program serves as a conduit to a wealth of products and services that can be leveraged by Canadian women exporters.

Our flagship publication—I think copies have been distributed to everybody—is an annual BWIT newsletter. We have the 2013 edition. The 2014 edition should be released in, I would say, the next six to eight weeks. The publication showcases successful Canadian women exporters, promotes the benefits of exporting, and disseminates information regarding key government-wide international business programs and services. The newsletter is distributed widely to more than 2,500 entrepreneurs and stakeholders and is available to download on the BWIT or TCS websites.

Speaking of the website, it is a one-stop resource for Canadian businesswomen dedicated to growing their business internationally. Maintained by us, it receives about 25,000 hits per year and endeavours to provide up-to-date information on a range of educational and funding programs; links to key contacts in government support agencies, financial institutions, and a variety of regional, national, and international associations; as well as export advice geared to improve the competitiveness of international markets.

A couple of years ago, the BWIT team launched a LinkedIn group to connect entrepreneurs throughout Canada. With more than a thousand active members—and growing very quickly, I might add—the BWIT LinkedIn group provides a two-way conversation and a rich source of intelligence and practical information for entrepreneurs that is produced by us and by entrepreneurs. The group was recently nominated by Canadian's Internet Business as one of Canada's top business groups on LinkedIn, joining the likes of *The Globe and Mail's* small business LinkedIn group.

Through our other online e-channels, BWIT receives more than 100 service requests annually, specifically to assist women-owned businesses.

Your handout kit also flags a number of articles and achievements of the BWIT program that were included in our publication *CanadExport*, the department's bimonthly electronic trade newsletter, which boasts around 21,000 subscribers. A special edition was released to commemorate International Women's Day about a month ago featuring many successes realized by Canadian businesswomen in the international marketplace.

Success on that platform also requires public and private sector collaboration. Last month we partnered with Industry Canada to develop a specialized, women-owned directory in Industry Canada's Canadian company capabilities database, the CCC. The CCC database includes more than 50,000 Canadian companies and receives more than five million domestic and international visits and queries a year.

The specialized directory will help businesswomen, we are convinced, to identify and promote their products and services to potential customers in Canada and abroad as well as to partner with other women-owned businesses. It also provides corporations that have supplier diversity initiatives and programs access to a dedicated listing of women-owned businesses across the country.

● (1540)

A prominent feature of our BWIT program, with three or four people, is its ability to develop strong partnerships at the national, regional, and international levels to support Canadian women entrepreneurs. An example of this is the establishment of WEConnect Canada . Launched about five years ago with the assistance of Status of Women Canada and the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, this non-profit organization certifies Canadian women majority-owned businesses as well as playing a role in delivering education, training, coaching, and mentoring programs.

Our BWIT program also offers a number of strategic initiatives in collaboration with these partner organizations. For instance, we have developed a strong collaborative relationship with provincial organizations and regional businesswomen's organizations across the country. Through this partnership, a common client-base of businesswomen has been developed to create synergies to increase access to sharing information on new initiatives, such as the Canadian company capabilities database, contract opportunities, events, trade missions, and export market training opportunities.

Over the past five years, the BWIT program has played a leading role in organizing a trade mission to the Women's Business Enterprise National Council, or WBENC, at their national conference and business fair in the United States. An average number of participants per mission is 125 businesswomen and key stakeholders. The WBENC event is the largest supplier diversity procurement trade show in North America, with more than 3,000 attendees and upwards of 350 exhibitors.

Through engagement in this conference, our department provides Canadian businesswomen with supplier diversity and U.S. market insight, while connecting them with America's leading corporations that are committed to doing business with women-owned businesses. Over the last five years, hundreds of thousands of dollars of contracts have been secured from these trade missions.

A good example is the success of a businesswoman from B.C. who joined us on a women-focused trade mission to Nevada, and presented her product to the purchasing officer of MGM Grand Hotel & Casino. She is now supplying her product, which is an environmentally friendly and reusable name badge, to all of the MGM line of hotels and casinos worldwide. Another example is a businesswoman from Prince Edward Island who is now supplying abrasives and sandpaper products through major hardware chains in the United States—a result of attending a trade mission organized by the BWIT program. There are many successes like these.

It is clear that where public resources have been committed to developing and implementing targeted programs to support businesswomen, particularly in private-public partnerships, the level of awareness and the activity of women entrepreneurs increase substantially.

In closing, I'd like to highlight a recent RBC study on small and medium-sized enterprises that predicts that a 10% increase in the number of women-owned firms over the next 10 years would lead to a \$50 billion injection into the Canadian economy. This demonstrates that Canadian businesswomen are well placed to lead the charge in strengthening our economy and creating jobs, now and well into the future.

Minister Ed Fast has stated that there's no better job creator than international trade. Therefore, it's only logical that we seek ways to strengthen businesswomen's access to international markets. When Canadian businesses succeed abroad, it translates into jobs and prosperity here at home. Canadian businesswomen are poised to ramp up their efforts internationally and replicate the tremendous successes they have achieved here in Canada.

DFATD, our department, and the trade commissioner service are ready, willing, and able to help them out on that journey.

● (1545)

[*Translation*]

Thank you kindly, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We will now move on to questions.

Ms. Truppe, you may go ahead for seven minutes.

[*English*]

Mrs. Susan Truppe (London North Centre, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair, and I'd like to thank everyone for coming here today. You're our first witnesses. Welcome and thank you, that was very helpful.

I have some questions for both of you, but I think I'll start with DFATD first.

The BWIT program that you have, you said it connects the entrepreneurs across Canada. You specifically talked about the LinkedIn group and I found that very interesting.

I have a couple of questions on that. I wonder if you can elaborate a bit more on the LinkedIn group that you have there. Is it one-on-one like a mentorship program that they can talk back and forth? How do you promote it so that a lot of women know about this?

Mr. John Gartke: LinkedIn, being a social media-type vehicle, can be one-on-one, but in the short experience that I've seen with the program, one person has a question and multiple people have answers and advice.

While it can facilitate that one-on-one, what I've seen is that there's advice coming from all corners of the country to specific questions. I wouldn't say it's one-on-one mentoring. I think it takes advantage of the network and the breadth of the membership that is connected to the group to provide solutions and advice to people who have queries.

Mrs. Susan Truppe: Sorry, what's the membership?

Mr. John Gartke: It's 1,000 members and growing.

Mrs. Susan Truppe: These are women all across Canada.

Mr. John Gartke: The majority of them are women; I wouldn't have a figure on how many of them are men.

I mean, I'm on the women's LinkedIn group, so there's at least one.

Voices: Oh, oh!

Mrs. Susan Truppe: Good for you.

How does the word get out about this LinkedIn program? Is it just that when you're on LinkedIn, you seek and then you find this? Or do you actually have something where you promote it to women entrepreneurs?

Mr. John Gartke: We've promoted it in that publication. It's on our Canada exports site. It's word of mouth. As well, just through our network we're encouraging people to get out and join the LinkedIn group.

But it has a momentum of its own. Clients will refer their other clients and suppliers to it, so it grows organically.

• (1550)

Mrs. Susan Truppe: I know that social media seems to be the way to go with a lot of things. It's actually the first time I've heard about a LinkedIn group like that, so that's really good.

You also mentioned the CCC database. I think you said it had more than 50,000 companies in it. Again, these are just women's companies. Are they run or owned by women, or...?

Mr. John Gartke: No.

Mrs. Susan Truppe: This is everybody.

Mr. John Gartke: This is the universe of Canadian companies as it exists in the database.

I'm not sure how many would be women-owned.

Ms. Zoe Hawa (Trade Commissioner, Business Women in International Trade, Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development): We launched the CCC database on March 7, right before International Women's Day. If you are a woman-owned company, what's great about it is that you can simply check off that fact in order to be part of that specialized directory. That's if you are

already part of the 50,000 companies. Otherwise we are definitely encouraging it throughout all of our channels and the website.

We also blog on Industry Canada's Canada Business Network, where we also promote the program and the LinkedIn group as well as the CCC database.

Mrs. Susan Truppe: Great. Thank you.

I have one final question before I go over to Status of Women. What barriers would you say women face in international trade, whether it be financially or culturally? What are the main barriers?

Mr. John Gartke: I think the barriers that would be faced by women entrepreneurs are similar to those faced by any other small or medium-sized enterprise in Canada. Is there a market for my goods? Who is my partner? Is there a demand for my product or service? Who do I do business with in the market?

Financial aspects are another impediment. International trade is expensive to get into. It's not cost-free. It's not risk-free to go to China, for example. But the barriers are not unique to women.

Mrs. Susan Truppe: Thank you.

To Status of Women, I know you just talked about the recent call, but can you elaborate on some of the other calls that come to mind that went out, maybe even in the last couple of years? You were talking about \$53 million since 2007. What was that money used for? What specific calls would maybe help women entrepreneurs?

Ms. Linda Savoie: Okay.

Well, in 2013 we had the call that I made reference to in my opening remarks. As a result of this, we've invested a bit over \$4 million that will allow us to test certain hypotheses about engaging partners and getting them to identify barriers and opportunities within their recruitment, retention, and advancement of women in non-traditional employment.

We've invested close to another \$2 million on the component that was designed to increase economic opportunities for women, which is focusing more on engaging women and community partners to discuss what opportunities are available and to design community-specific strategies.

The third component of last year's call saw us invest \$1.3 million to tackle, more specifically, the challenges for immigrant women who continue to remain.... Despite their being better educated than their Canadian women counterparts, they still have higher rates of precarious employment and so on.

Those projects were launched in the last few months and we're looking forward to seeing how these strategies develop. But this was not unique. The previous year we launched six projects that were very specific to the role of women in the digital economy. Again, women are formally about 25% in the information and communications technology labour market. They tend to have issues in terms of not only entering the sector, but also advancing in the sector. So we've launched six projects where the funding recipients are actually working together with collaborative evaluation frameworks to look at things such as the human resource practices, the formalized networks that could be needed to help support women to advance in these environments. So, again, they're fairly new projects.

The previous year, because it was to support the international year of the girl, we had focused our efforts into trying to engage young girls and young women in identifying the barriers to their economic fulfilment. As a result of that, we launched a call that focused on the economic prosperity of girls and invested again some \$1.7 million in that on economic projects.

• (1555)

The Chair: Thank you.

[Translation]

Ms. Ashton, you have seven minutes. Please go ahead.

[English]

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Welcome to our witnesses today.

Our study here is obviously focused on economic leadership and prosperity, on looking at celebrating the successes, but also looking at the challenges. I think we know in terms of research, but also in terms of our experiences as women, that safety and safety from violence is a key factor in allowing us to prosper.

With that in mind—and I know we heard a bit about what Status of Women funding has gone to over the last number of years—I want to go to the applications for the Status of Women's agency's call for proposals on “Working Together: Engaging communities to end violence against women and girls”. It was launched in 2012. I noticed that 62 out of the 288 organizations on this list are aboriginal organizations that sought funding. Knowing, of course, that indigenous women are both over-represented in terms of marginalization, in terms of poverty, but also in terms of violence, I'm wondering why it is that only two out of the 62 organizations that sought funds, received funds?

I'm wondering why that is the case. But also, if it is a question of criteria, what is Status of Women doing to be able to work through the criteria to allow more indigenous women's organizations to access economic opportunities and opportunities of prosperity?

Ms. Linda Savoie: Thank you for that question.

You're correct that we had few aboriginal projects among the 27 that were approved under that call. In the same year though we had done significantly better with the spring call where we had a large number of aboriginal projects. I'm sorry I don't have that data with me to give you the exact number but I could certainly have that follow.

We tend to look at our statistics over the course of the year, as well as over the course of three years, but definitely it was an indication for us that we need outreach to the aboriginal communities to identify the obstacles to participation in this call.

We have a small but mighty group of three people within our national office who are dedicated to this issue, and who have engaged with aboriginal stakeholders to identify what may be the less appropriate cultural approaches we've been using. We're also very conscious that sometimes our timelines are not appropriate for the aboriginal groups and that's also something that we have been discussing with them and that we are keen on improving in future calls.

Ms. Niki Ashton: I appreciate that and also the opportunity to glean from that call to which you referred, so would you share that information with the committee? I certainly know from our side that we would like to see more than three people within Status of Women—I'm sure they're working very hard—to look at how to make Status of Women funding more available to indigenous women who we know, on almost every indicator, are particularly marginalized.

Moving to the stated priority of women's representation on corporate boards, in Canada's 2012 budget we heard of the creation of a corporate board task force meant to operate through Status of Women. It was aimed at getting more women on corporate boards.

I wonder if you could report to us on the status of that task force. Has there been tracking of its success, and what benchmarks have been put in place to ensure it is achieving its goals?

Mr. Sébastien Goupil (Director General, Policy and External Relations, Status of Women Canada): The advisory council has met on a number of occasions and has produced recommendations that are currently being examined, so there is nothing I can report further at this point.

Ms. Niki Ashton: Do you know what timeline we're looking at, when these recommendations will be...?

Mr. Sébastien Goupil: No, but I would say it's a question of weeks or months. Lots of different stakeholders are involved in the conversations. I don't have a definite timeframe on that.

• (1600)

Ms. Niki Ashton: Okay, we certainly hope to see progress on that front as soon as possible.

Moving to our guests, Mr. Gartke and Ms. Hawa, you've certainly outlined a number of very positive examples of Canadian women entrepreneurs who have been able to access foreign markets through your help, which is undeniably a very important piece of generating wealth in our own country.

But I'm also wondering about DFATD's work in ensuring that Canada's trade and business direction is benefiting women, not just here at home but also abroad. The reason I raise this is that there have been concerns around how international investments that have been supported, say, by Export Development Canada or through logistical supports at our embassies, have had a negative impact on women. I'm referring to examples in the extractive sector that have been rather public and are not good news stories for Canada by any stretch and serve to tarnish our reputation as well as exploiting women around the world.

Mr. John Gartke: Thank you very much for the question.

In terms of what the government is doing for women abroad, as former CIDA—and we are now a new department, the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development—I think you will see policies and alignment that take into account foreign policy, international trade promotion and policy, and development issues. I think you will start to see them come into a single plane where they will be weighed and better balanced.

Another angle that you were perhaps trying to get at as well, which I think is really important, is where again the trade development synergies are assisting women exporters in developing countries. There is an organization in Canada, the Trade Facilitation Office, that works with CIDA, working with women entrepreneurs in developing countries to explore the potential or the benefits of exporting and the how-to of exporting to Canada.

But to come back to the extractive portion, indeed some thought is being given to the new department on how we will better align the development interests. Maternal and child health care is an important initiative, and the extractive industries are another. I think you will see some policy coherence in this moving forward, as a result of the amalgamation that was announced last year.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Ms. O'Neill Gordon, your turn for seven minutes.

[English]

Mrs. Tilly O'Neill Gordon (Miramichi, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair.

I want to thank all of the witnesses today for bringing us such valuable information. For as you know, as MPs, as community-minded people, we certainly are being approached lots of times by women's groups, and we try very much to help them, get them sent in the right direction toward things that are out there and available to them.

This is for Mr. Gartke. You mentioned the LinkedIn group. I know it's a very important aspect in our style of life today and that lots of information is provided with that link. I'm wondering, as a result of going to the link and furthering along with it, if there are real sessions that women can go to. Do they meet other women? Is there

a process that they follow where they have a real, hands-on...? Or is it all just what they learn from LinkedIn? Is there someone there to lead them along the way in the process?

Mr. John Gartke: Thanks very much for the question.

As we prepare for two or three of the larger events—there's the WEConnect event that takes place every fall in Toronto, and the WBENC trade show and conference takes place in June in Philadelphia—we're in touch with people who have signed up and registered to go. It gives us an opportunity to provide them with, as I mentioned in the introductory remarks, an opportunity for some one-on-group training through webinars.

So we will organize an online session for those registered delegates to the WEConnect or WBENC conference who are looking for the how-to, the 30-second elevator pitch of "here's why my company is great, and here's why you want to buy from me", that sort of thing, or the nuts and bolts of exporting, trade finance. Those are the types of things we can provide to them in preparation for those key events.

Our regional offices also play an important role in reaching out to new clients, those who are, what I would say, near to export-ready, to apprise them of the existence of the trade commissioner service, and to remind them that, if and when they are looking to expand their markets beyond Canada, there's a free resource they can count on for some of the market information gaps that might exist for that particular client.

Zoe, do you want to supplement?

● (1605)

Ms. Zoe Hawa: Yes. If I can just add to John's already great comments, what the LinkedIn group does is it tries to share information. As well, it's a two-way conversation, and we try to make sure that feeling is obvious within the group, the fact of sharing information, sharing comments or requests. What we do with a request is we take it in, and as part of the trade commissioner service, we vet it. If they are potential clients for the trade commissioner service, we make sure to move them toward either the regional office or the specific geographic...if they are looking for a specific market.

If they're very new to exporting or if they are a very new business, then we make sure that Industry Canada is involved, because that's not our mandate. Our mandate is very much focused on the exporting.

In terms of how the LinkedIn group is run, we post a lot of information. We post a lot of great information in terms of how to export, anything we find interesting. We also track the kind of information that is getting hits, that is getting a response, so we have a way of trying to gauge what is of interest to the members there and how we can keep that momentum going. It's been only two years, and we do have a plan in terms of how we can become more strategic with the content and also provide the members who are already there and growing with the kind of specific information they're looking for.

Mrs. Tilly O'Neill Gordon: It certainly sounds like a great program. I'm going to get you to repeat where you said the next session is, and when.

Ms. Zoe Hawa: Do you mean the LinkedIn group?

Mrs. Tilly O'Neill Gordon: Yes.

Ms. Zoe Hawa: The LinkedIn group is on all the time, and we highly recommend that everyone here become a member of that group. We post information, but we also post events and something called the "manager's choice".

So for instance, we have two very large events that are coming up. The first is the WBENC trade mission, and that is at the end of June. Through the LinkedIn group we will be trying to get the people who are interested in going to the trade mission or interested in learning more about the trade mission onto a webinar. The LinkedIn group is a vehicle, a channel for us to talk about the initiatives that are important for women in exporting as well as to receive requests from women entrepreneurs. We also let them know about other initiatives, such as the WBENC or our WEConnect conference that is coming up in November.

Mrs. Tilly O'Neill Gordon: Is this one in November as well?

Ms. Zoe Hawa: Yes.

Mrs. Tilly O'Neill Gordon: November and June, you said.

Ms. Zoe Hawa: Yes.

Mrs. Tilly O'Neill Gordon: As you said, this is proof of it. International trade is certainly becoming a key means for entrepreneurs to become involved and get business started. With respect to increasing options for Canadian women, what do you feel was lacking in the international trade community that your organization now provides to all?

Ms. Zoe Hawa: It's very much a one-stop resource for all women entrepreneurs. So for anybody who is interested in exporting, ready to export, or is actively exporting, we have all of that information. We have funding programs. We have the contacts that you need, depending on where you are across Canada and if you don't know where to go. We also have the channels where we're trying to engage you with other partners, other women entrepreneurs, as well as trying to grow that database for you, saying, "Here's a good initiative"—for instance, the Industry Canada initiative—"why don't you go there?" and "This is a great way for you to promote." For us, we find, we are the resource for you.

• (1610)

The Chair: Thank you.

[*Translation*]

Thank you very much.

Ms. Duncan, over to you for seven minutes.

[*English*]

Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Thank you, Madame Chair.

Thank you to all of you. It's nice to have you back.

Ms. Savoie, I'm going to pick up on two things you talked about. You talked about pay equity and data.

The gender wage gap hits the Canadian economy at the macroscale and our families at the microscale. I'm wondering if you can provide an update on what recommendations of the 2004 pay equity task force have been acted upon? For example, how many recommendations were there, and how many have had action?

Ms. Linda Savoie: I'm afraid that I wouldn't be able to speak to that offhand.

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: Okay, that's fair enough. Could I ask that you table with the committee each of the recommendations, and whether the action's been completed, it's in process, or it's not been acted upon, please?

Could I ask how Canada compares internationally on pay equity?

Ms. Linda Savoie: Yes. I have some data on that. I believe the last report of the Conference Board of Canada indicated us as in 11th place.

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: We're 11 of 17.

Ms. Linda Savoie: There's been some consistent progress over the last three—

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Ms. Savoie, I have to interrupt you for a minute.

Ms. Crockatt, did you want to say something?

[*English*]

Ms. Joan Crockatt (Calgary Centre, CPC): Thank you very much, Madame Chair. On a point of order, I'm wondering about the line of questioning that's being pursued here. Since we are talking about women entrepreneurs, and entrepreneurs primarily work for themselves, they are not in the situation where they're—

The Chair: Actually, the scope of the study also talks about prosperity and economic leadership, not only about entrepreneurship.

I will allow the question to continue. The clock was stopped.

You may continue.

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: Thank you very much.

The Chair: Mrs. Savoie, you may answer. Thank you.

Ms. Linda Savoie: Yes, Canada ranked 11th in the last report. I think our ranking has been fairly consistent.

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: As a C grade.

Ms. Linda Savoie: That's correct.

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: Thank you. I'm going to quote some data. In 2005 there was a Royal Bank of Canada report that estimated that lost income potential of women in Canada due to the wage gap was \$126 billion a year. I'm wondering if Status of Women has ever undertaken a similar study? Do we have data for Canada from Status of Women Canada?

Ms. Linda Savoie: On that specific amount? You mean something newer than the Royal Bank of Canada report?

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: No. Have we undertaken a study of what we're losing to the economy? If we look at U.K. Women's Business Council, there was a 2013 study of the increased economic growth by 0.5% per year. You would see potential gains of 10% by 2013. There was a 2009 study by the Australian government that found that removing the negative effects of the wage gap could add \$56 billion, so I'm wondering if the Status of Women Canada has ever undertaken a similar study?

Ms. Linda Savoie: No, we haven't.

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: Okay, thank you.

I'm wondering what has replaced question 33 of the national household survey, which gathered data on time spent on unpaid work.

Ms. Linda Savoie: I believe my colleagues at Statistics Canada would be in the best position to respond to that. We rely on their advice and expertise to ensure we have comparable data year over year. We had assurances at the time that this was going to be information that was not going to injure the quality of our data, but I can't speak to it in any more detail.

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: To the clerk, should we be asking Statistics Canada that question? Can they assure us that the—

Ms. Wai Young (Vancouver South, CPC): On a point of order....
[Translation]

The Chair: Ms. Young, you have the floor.
[English]

Ms. Wai Young: We're just starting this new study on the economic prosperity of women entrepreneurs. So granted you may have interest in this across the floor, but obviously our witnesses here do not have the information because this is not what they came in prepared for, nor is it appropriate questioning for the topic at hand. I really would like to say that it's very clear. Let us focus on the topic at hand because that is why they are here.

•(1615)

The Chair: Thank you very much.
[Translation]

Thank you very much, Ms. Young.

Ms. Duncan, please go ahead.
[English]

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: Actually the information is extremely pertinent because question 33 dealt with data spent on unpaid work, and because for women, much of their work is spent on unpaid work, it does hurt their economic security. If we look at a recent study, women are doing 248 minutes of unpaid work versus 146 minutes for men. In order to ensure that women are making progress, we need to have that data.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Duncan.

Your point is noted. You'll have a chance to put the question to other witnesses. For the time being, however, you should perhaps

stick closer to the content of the motion, since that is what our witnesses came prepared for.

Ms. Young, would you care to add something?

[English]

Ms. Wai Young: Thank you for that ruling, Madame Chair.

[Translation]

The Chair: Ms. Duncan, you have 3 minutes and 17 seconds left.

[English]

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: Thank you.

Are you able to tell us if we have recent data on how much work women are doing in this country that is unpaid work?

Mr. Sébastien Goupil: The most recent data we have is what we commissioned through Statistics Canada. If you go back to "Women in Canada", there is a chapter that is quite comprehensive. It uses all the data on unpaid work that was available at the time the report was pulled together, and it covers a range of issues and how women compare to men. So I would refer you back to "Women in Canada". This is the publication we distributed the last time we appeared. You can also find in "Women in Canada" other very interesting chapters that touch upon related issues such as wealth, women compared to men. You can find the latest statistical information that was available through the different sorts of surveys that Statistics Canada conducts.

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: I'm sorry, can I interrupt? What would be the most recent year we will have data on?

Mr. Sébastien Goupil: The general social survey—

Ms. Linda Savoie: It was 2011, I believe.

Mr. Sébastien Goupil: In 2009?

Ms. Linda Savoie: No. There is 2011, for sure, on unpaid work.

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: Okay, 2011—

Mr. Sébastien Goupil: We would have to check with the colleagues at Statistics Canada.

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: Okay. I am going to come back to the data question because Ms. Savoie said she has been assured that it will be comparable. Question 33 is important. It's all the data prior to not having the national household survey. How are we going to make sure that we can compare the data before and afterwards?

Ms. Linda Savoie: We rely on our colleagues at Statistics Canada for that expertise.

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: Do we have an assurance that it is comparable?

Ms. Linda Savoie: I believe they appeared before this committee at the time of the discussion about the long-form census and gave us that assurance.

[Translation]

The Chair: Ms. Duncan, 55 seconds left.

[English]

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: My concern is whether you can assure us that the data will allow us to see how women are faring economically before and after so that we know how far women have come and how far they have yet to go.

Mr. Sébastien Goupil: It's difficult for us to reassure you, because we also turn to the experts at Statistics Canada to point to the best available source of information. I agree with you that this is a fundamentally important question and issue for Status of Women. This is why we keep an eye on unpaid work. This is why we wanted it to be included in "Women in Canada". We will continue to rely on whatever source of information Statistics Canada can draw on to continue to monitor the situation.

• (1620)

[Translation]

The Chair: Ms. Goupil, Ms. Duncan and Ms. Savoie, thank you.

Mr. Young, you have five minutes.

[English]

Mr. Terence Young (Oakville, CPC): Thank you, Chair.

Thanks to all of you for being here.

Madam Savoie, what ideas do you have that may not have been mentioned yet that will break down barriers for women in construction and apprenticeships in the trades? These are varied positions and women are perfectly capable of doing them if they have encouragement. These positions are really well paid, and we have shortages in every province.

Ms. Linda Savoie: That's correct.

What we've been trying to do is make sure that those people who need to own the issue ultimately are at the table and discussing with women what potential solutions exist. We try to use mechanisms such as funding partnerships for the development of sector plans so that, for instance, those in a specific sector of the construction business can get together and see how they can incorporate women into their labour shortage strategies and adapt their own practices and their own workplaces so that they become more woman-friendly.

We also work on some other levels with partners, not just through our funding arm. We have been organizing learning events. For instance, we had one very significant event on non-traditional employment just recently, where we had stakeholders from across the private sector, including those in the construction trades. They demonstrated to us their very keen interest in this issue and in working together to identify solutions.

Mr. Terence Young: Are these the colleges? Are the colleges helpful?

Ms. Linda Savoie: Yes. Colleges were in attendance at that event, for instance.

We try to encourage the education, the corporate, and the non-profit worlds to work together, to look at the actual opportunities that exist in a given area, and to make sure that things are aligned in order to make sure that no one is working in isolation.

Mr. Terence Young: I noticed today that the Government of Ontario has put out a RFP or something for communities that want more university classrooms or university campuses.

They want to have another 60,000 spaces, yet we have thousands of graduates—actually, in Ontario, the highest percentage in the world—thousands of young people who get ordinary degrees, ordinary B.A.s, and their unemployment rate is just massive. In fact, 25% of them end up going on to community college to get some skills.

I think that's the wrong direction. They should be putting money into skills and apprenticeship training, etc.

Do you have any comments on how we might get more young women involved in the trades at the earliest stage, such as the secondary school stage?

Ms. Linda Savoie: We certainly know what the barriers are in the early stages. The lack of role models in a very male-dominated classroom and program environment is a factor, but this is something that cannot be dealt with by a single player. For instance, at the federal-provincial-territorial table, there have been discussions on this issue. There's a continued interest in working together to address this in a more holistic manner.

But you're quite correct. There are certain barriers that appear very early in the life of a young girl that discourage her from those types of career choices.

Mr. Terence Young: Something that Madam Duncan raised strikes me. Is there still a wage gap that is based on or defined by equal pay for equal work? If so, how does that happen and what should be done about it?

Ms. Linda Savoie: I would not be able to give you specifics on that, I'm afraid.

Mr. Terence Young: I'm not talking about equal pay for work of equal value. I'm talking about men and women in the same job.

Ms. Linda Savoie: We know, for instance, that in the health sectors, women in the same jobs are earning less than men. We know that entry salaries continue to be lower for women than for men, although there are some definite age bracket differences and the younger generation is experiencing a smaller gap than women my age, for instance.

Mr. Terence Young: You mean if a hospital is hiring nurses, they might offer female nurses less than a male nurse, for example?

Ms. Linda Savoie: I don't believe that's the case. I believe that things are looked at in a more holistic manner than one specific hospital that probably has labour agreements.

Mr. Terence Young: Are there any other job classifications where women are hired at a lower pay level for the same job?

•(1625)

Mr. Sébastien Goupil: We've heard in conversations we have had with some stakeholders, because this is an issue that often comes up, sometimes you're going to see differences even in some more well-paying areas. You're going to see differences between women and men because women are known not to negotiate the same way as men. For example, women entering in business may start with \$5,000 less a year compared to a male colleague because they don't negotiate the same salary arrangement with their employer.

So it's a complex issue. It covers a wide span.... If you're looking, Linda was pointing at differences within the health occupation, and this is something that is noticed. Women in this occupational sector tend to make less than men. We have to see where men are located within the sector. But if we compare it to other sectors, it's interesting, I had in one of my notes that women in natural and applied science occupations earn 99¢ for every dollar that men earn. So there are those areas that probably we can learn from as well and draw some best practices. This is part of the dialogue we're trying to

Mr. Terence Young: Did you say life sciences?

Mr. Sébastien Goupil: In natural and applied sciences....

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Thank you very much. Great discussion.

Ms. Sellah, you have five minutes.

Mrs. Djaouida Sellah (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Thank you, Madam Chair.

First off, I'd like to thank all our witnesses for being with us today.

My questions are for Ms. Savoie since she is in charge of programs.

I know that Status of Women Canada encourages greater leadership by women in decision-making roles. I have some questions in that connection. How many of your programs are aimed at the economic security and prosperity of Canadian immigrant women? Could you describe one such program and tell us what it entails? I'd like you to give us a concrete example to help us understand how these programs are built and evaluated, as well as what their outcomes are.

Ms. Linda Savoie: Mechanisms certainly exist outside Status of Women Canada. But in terms of our department specifically, I can tell you about the call for proposals we issued last year for projects that supported the economic prosperity of immigrant women.

We sought to identify opportunities that would improve the conditions of immigrant women, in collaboration with the community, employers, educational stakeholders and immigrant women.

We implemented seven projects. Some are focused on immigrant women in rural settings, and others on immigrant women in urban areas. Other projects are aimed at building partnerships between chambers of commerce and immigrant women's groups, who weren't necessarily aware of the programs offered by the chambers of commerce. A number of approaches were adopted. In fact, we don't apply a single approach to all seven projects, but we hope to learn valuable lessons going forward.

We work on a project, not program, basis. Officials from Citizenship and Immigration Canada and Employment and Social Development Canada could, no doubt, tell you about other mechanisms within the federal government.

Mrs. Djaouida Sellah: Thank you.

How much time do I have left, Madam Chair?

The Chair: A minute and fifteen seconds.

Mrs. Djaouida Sellah: Very well.

The rest of my questions are for Ms. Hawa.

How much funding goes to the BWIT program? How do you spend the money? Do you need more funding so the program can provide greater support to Canada's women entrepreneurs? Do you have methods for evaluating how successful the program is? How does that evaluation work and who is in charge?

•(1630)

[*English*]

Ms. Zoe Hawa: Okay, it's a multi-faceted question.

Mr. John Gartke: If you want to start, I'll come up with the last one.

Ms. Zoe Hawa: In terms of our budget, we run approximately \$75,000 annually. This is for 2.25 full-time employees who are in the program.

We definitely use the money to develop trade missions. We work with our provincial counterparts to get as many women entrepreneurs who may be interested in trade missions as we can, and then we take them down to WBENC. When we're there, we work with one of our consulates or posts in that region to try to get business matchmaking, which means we may hire a service provider to help the businesswomen actually connect with Fortune 500 companies, so they can meet them and hopefully secure contracts.

We also host, for instance, sessions for these women entrepreneurs. Where we spend our money is very much related to our events like the trade missions. We also host store tours as well as networking receptions. So it's geared towards using the money as cost effectively as possible to get many women entrepreneurs onto that international stage and help them meet with the company that is the best fit, so that they can secure their contracts with them.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Thank you very much. That's all the time we have, Ms. Sellah.

Mrs. Djaouida Sellah: Thank you, Madam Chair, but we didn't get an answer on how it's evaluated.

The Chair: I'd like to thank all the witnesses, who helped get the committee's study off to a great start. They gave us some very useful information that committee members can share with their constituents and women entrepreneurs.

If you have more information in response to the last question, you can send it to the committee through the clerk.

We will now suspend the meeting long enough to move in camera, and then, we will continue with the second half of our meeting. *[Proceedings continue in camera]*

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