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## **Standing Committee on the Status of Women**

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**EVIDENCE**

**Thursday, November 6, 2014**

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**Chair**

**Ms. Hélène LeBlanc**



## Standing Committee on the Status of Women

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•(0845)

[Translation]

**The Chair (Ms. Hélène LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard, NDP)):** Good morning.

Welcome to the 34th meeting of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women.

We are pleased to have with us, via videoconference, Ann Armstrong, Academic Director and Lecturer from the Business Edge Program, at the University of Toronto's Rotman School of Management.

Ms. Armstrong, thank you very much for your contribution today.

[English]

**Dr. Ann Armstrong (Academic Director, Lecturer, Business Edge, Rotman School of Management, University of Toronto, As an Individual):** Thank you for having me.

[Translation]

**The Chair:** Today, we will listen to a presentation for 10 minutes, followed by a round of questions. The meeting should end around 9:45 a.m., at which point, the subcommittee of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women will meet.

Ms. Armstrong, you have 10 minutes for your presentation. You may go ahead.

[English]

**Dr. Ann Armstrong:** Thank you very much. I'm delighted to have the opportunity to address this group.

I've chosen a couple of topics. I know that I only have 10 minutes, so I'd first like to focus on what we in Canada can or need to do to make Canada a welcoming place for internationally educated professionals. That would be my first area of conversation. Second, I'd like to talk about the role of the non-profit sector and what it can do to provide some prosperity for women in Canada. I think there's a relationship between the two.

As you know, much of our growth comes from immigration. We attract very, very talented people to Canada. We have noticed, however, that immigrant women who come with many credentials and so on do not do as well, in terms of salary and so on, as native-born Canadian women. This issue has been I think a very significant one, because we attract wonderful talent, and then we turn around and we don't provide the opportunities they deserve; they can also contribute to Canada.

You mentioned in your opening remarks my role as academic director of Business Edge. If I may, I'd like to take a minute or two to explain what we're doing there. It's not because I want to brag about the program; I think it's something that perhaps could be used across Canada to provide the supports necessary for internationally educated professionals.

Our program began with a focus entirely on women because we were impressed by the research by Reitz, Curtis, Elrick, and others that while it was still difficult for internationally educated men, it was more difficult for internationally educated women. As a result of that research, we decided that we needed to develop a program that basically provides guidance on how to navigate the Canadian workplace. As someone who comes from a family that's been in Canada a long time—we are all immigrants, but I'm just one who's been here a little bit longer—I've come to realize how very different and perhaps even odd our workplace must seem to people coming from other countries. We tell them not so much that this is how it is in Canada; rather, we try to give them the unwritten rules, the unspoken rules, or just the tools to navigate.

We spend about six months working on everything from courses to coaching, both workplace and language coaching. It's amazing to see how we can take talented people whose talents are not properly recognized here yet, and, in a very short period of about six months, turn those people, who were perhaps rather dejected, into confident, contributing members of the Canadian workforce. They often are promoted and perhaps get new positions.

It's the underemployment, or really the lack of employment, of talented, internationally educated professionals, women in particular, that we try to address in a small way. We have seen some success. It would be very exciting, I think....

It's not a complex program to replicate. It focuses, really, on what the issues are and on the skills and talents we need to either reinforce or perhaps develop a little further. I can give you a rather superficial example, but I think it makes the point.

One of our participants commented that nobody was answering her e-mails. That seemed odd to us. Her language skills were excellent. She was a professional with an M.B.A. from another country. We asked a very simple question—that is, if she would mind just showing us her e-mails—because it didn't seem to make a lot of sense. Of course, the moment we looked at them, we saw that they were all in capitals, every word. She didn't know that in Canada that meant that she was angry or frustrated or something. In her own country of origin, everything was supposed to be in block capitals. It's a very minor example, but I think you can see the potentially very serious miscue—unintentional, and in fact unknown—that could derail her career.

We've really worked on how to basically provide the insights on how to navigate the workplace. We've seen, as I've said, some real success in that work.

● (0850)

The reason I want to move on in a minute or two to look at the non-profit sector is that within it there is a remarkable over-representation of women. About three-quarters of its employees are women, but sadly still, most of the people in the senior positions in the non-profit sector are men.

I see a particular link between the wonderful opportunities and talents that our internationally educated professional women bring and the possibility of their moving into the non-profit sector, where we absolutely have a real need for leaders. We need people who have some of the sensitivities and understanding of the social justice issues that we face here. Having had the real honour of working with internationally educated professionals, I can see that they bring a lot of really different perspectives, a kind of diversity of thought that would fit very well in the non-profit sector.

That isn't to say, of course, that the non-profit sector is not without its problems. It's certainly not as diverse as we would hope, given the values of the sector, or at least the proclaimed values of the sector. One of the areas where we see a particular deficiency is the degree of diversity on non-profit boards.

One of my colleagues, Pat Bradshaw, and her colleagues did a study that found that non-profit boards, quite shockingly, were not as diverse as you might expect given the nature of the work they do.

So I saw these two topics as something that were really ones that your committee and others could address head on, because we have talent that is not being used to its potential and that is not able to contribute to Canada to the extent that I find internationally educated professionals would very much like to. We also have a leadership gap in the non-profit sector, and marrying the two seems a possibility to me.

The issue still remains, though, of the systemic discrimination issues, as well as the differential pay issues for women in both those sectors. But I do think those are ones that I'd like your committee, in particular, to consider, given that we have gaps in our non-profit sector in one sense, and we have an overabundance of new Canadians with many talents who wish to contribute to our economy.

**The Chair:** Thank you for a very good and interesting presentation, Ms. Armstrong.

We will start the first round of questioning, with Madame Truppe, for seven minutes.

**Mrs. Susan Truppe (London North Centre, CPC):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you, Ann, for being here. I appreciate your coming to speak to us.

I loved your example about the e-mail. It's so funny that in one country it means something totally different when you're using caps.

You were talking about it being more difficult for internationally educated women versus men. I think you said that you spent perhaps six months working on coaching them.

What was the biggest challenge you found when you were working on this?

● (0855)

**Dr. Ann Armstrong:** The main challenge we found was that people, not surprisingly, were rather nervous about what this coaching might lead to. There was also a fair amount of discomfort—again, not surprisingly—about language coaching.

We never took the view that we were trying to do things that people have done in the past, like eradicating accents and so on. We weren't trying to do any of those things, because we thought those weren't appropriate. But we really want to make sure that everyone is conversant in, and able to function in, the workplace language.

One of the issues we noticed was that people were resistant as to “how informal” we seemed. From their countries of origin the interaction with a boss would be much more formal and distant.

The other issue I think we faced, as I mentioned in my opening remarks, was real second-guessing on the part of our participants around whether it was right that they had come to Canada, and how they needed to rebuild their self-confidence and find opportunities for them to showcase and to use their talents.

Those are really two issues that we faced.

**Mrs. Susan Truppe:** Thank you. So those were the biggest challenges you had.

What good came of it? Was there a best practice that you thought was really working and that would really help them, that you'd like to share?

**Dr. Ann Armstrong:** Of course.

One of the things was more what I would call a process. Those of us involved in the program very much acknowledged some of the changes and the struggles of people who had come, and the positive choice and the confidence they had in coming to Canada.

Many of the people in our program are people in their twenties, thirties, and forties who have come on their own. They are basically starting again, having had successful careers elsewhere.

The other thing that I think was one of the key success factors was the detailed and frequent coaching. Each participant had frequent meetings with people who were trained career coaches. They also had language coaching, again not in a wordsmithing way, but just to understand how to write an e-mail that would fit appropriately in a Canadian context.

Those were the two: I think the process of legitimating their experience; and then providing, very much, one-on-one coaching.

**Mrs. Susan Truppe:** When I was hosting round tables across Canada, mentorship came up all the time. Mentorship is very similar to coaching, because they're getting that direct feedback.

Do you find that a lot? I'm just picturing or thinking that with your experience and where you are, you would probably have women coming up to you, even young women, and asking about how they can start their own business or can be an entrepreneur, or maybe what problems they're experiencing, whether it's financial literacy, or of just not knowing where to go.

What advice would you give them? What are some of the problems you've heard?

**Dr. Ann Armstrong:** Well, because of my focus on internationally educated professionals, it tends to be a very practical one of having enough Canadian credibility and credit to get some kind of loan from a bank or a credit union. Those are some of the kinds of issues.

More broadly, because I teach in the M.B.A. program as well as the commerce program, I do get those kinds of questions around mentorship. I always recommend that someone find a person within an organization who is perhaps two levels up so they can have that kind of mentorship.

I think what you were implying in your question was the importance of mentorship. I agree, very much, that this perhaps is one of the most critical decisions that anyone early in his or her career would make.

**Mrs. Susan Truppe:** Yes, actually I agree with the mentorship because that came up many times in every single round table. Whether it's a woman or man, people just seem to need some type of help or guidance if they have a question. They simply didn't know where to go.

I think you mentioned funding as well, and that seemed to be big as well.

Just very quickly, you talked about the leadership gap in non-profit sector, I think you said. What would be the biggest issue? What advice would you give so we could close that gap?

**Dr. Ann Armstrong:** A couple of things. One, I think that governments at all levels could do a lot better in basically highlighting the successes of the non-profit sector. I think the non-profit sector is often seen as some kind of poor second, third, or tenth cousin, when, depending on which economist you talk to, it represents approximately 10% of the GDP of this country. I think there should be a focus on what this sector does.

Also, I'm afraid the gap is also one driven, in part, by money. Clearly, the non-profit sector does not, cannot, and some would say, should not pay at the market rate. But it does create, potentially, a

leadership gap because people are expecting to be paid something reasonably similar to what they could have got in the marketplace.

However, the non-profit sector also gives us opportunities to work in very meaningful ways, where perhaps compensation would not be, or perhaps should not be the sole driver.

● (0900)

**Mrs. Susan Truppe:** Great. Thank you.

Am I still okay? Thirty seconds.

Is there one best practice you would like us to take away today that you think might help a young woman?

**Dr. Ann Armstrong:** Yes, I think the most important practice, dovetailing with what you've already said, is to create a formal mentorship program that is both well supported and well advertised. By that I mean one that's legitimated by senior people in organizations, so that it's just part and parcel of everyday work and not seen as something odd or special, or as somehow that, "I must be inadequate because I need a mentor". It should be the accepted way of doing work, so that mentorship is part and parcel of everyday work.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much. You're right on time.

[*Translation*]

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

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

Thank you, Ms. Armstrong. For a very long time, I had buried many things deep down, and you stirred up experiences I had gone through before coming here and standing up for women.

I am a doctor by training. I chose Quebec because I felt an affinity for the province's language and culture. I was happy to come to a country where equality, democracy and justice were the norm. When I came here, I chose Quebec, so I am not speaking for Canada in general. I was aware that the system was very different from that in my home country. I will tell you parenthetically that I had 10 years of experience and that I worked as a volunteer doctor during the Gulf War.

Forgive me, talking about it brings back a lot of emotions.

I am very happy to be here, in Canada, and to be where I am today.

In terms of my struggle at the provincial level, I have always said that the immigrant has to put in 50% of the effort, as does the host country. We have no objection to going through a process because the cultural values of foreign doctors—except U.S. doctors—are not the same as those of the host country. Everyone can agree on that. The problem foreign doctors come up against is dealing not with government agencies but with professional bodies. Unfortunately, those bodies do not have the resources to foster an environment that is conducive to integrating foreign doctors. I have always said that is the fear of immigrants coming here who want nothing more than to integrate into the profession. And I have repeatedly pointed out the fact that these doctors did not cost the Quebec nation or Canada a dime.

The reason I fought so hard was the acute shortage that had plagued Quebec for decades. And I realized that what was lacking was genuine political will to help these immigrants integrate into the profession and to take advantage of this wealth of individuals with foreign credentials and skills arriving in the province.

What would you recommend to the committee in terms of how the federal government could enhance the leadership and economic prosperity of these women here, in Canada?

● (0905)

[English]

**Dr. Ann Armstrong:** Thank you very much for both your very thoughtful opening remarks, and also your challenging question.

As I listened to you I thought of some of our other participants who have had similar kinds of emotional discussions and who have also been very helpful to us.

Before I answer your question I'd like to say one thing. A person from South Africa who is an international sensation, at least in Africa, has said she came to Pearson airport and couldn't understand why there weren't people with signs saying, "Welcome to Canada." She was a TV personality and she found it very hard to go from being a TV personality to someone whose talents were not recognized. I think we have, to some extent, a little bit of the same lived experience, but in my case indirectly.

To respond to your question, one of the challenges that I would note—and again I'm not as clear on the jurisdictions that would be appropriate—is that our different levels of government clearly need to make it much easier for internationally educated professionals to become fast-tracked more quickly into being able to practise their profession.

We had one student who was a dentist from Lebanon. He was working as a security guard. He was one of two people, I think, who were successful in writing whatever the exams were to be able to go back to dental school. His experience was clearly not atypical. Whatever we can do to both assess the talents and credentials and fast-tracking internationally educated professionals, be they doctors, dentists, lawyers, and so on, is critical in making sure that we have the basic systems in place so that not every application is a one-off.

Clearly we can reasonably standardize what X kind of doctor should be able to do. By standardize I don't mean standardize the work, but to be able to say, "Okay, here is our checklist of the necessary skills and talents that X kind of doctor needs" and whether you're from X jurisdiction or Y, either you have it or you don't. I think that kind of ability to fast-track by using processes and working with universities to create opportunities.... Our particular program is basically focused on what people in the system are calling the "soft skills", which I call the "hard skills" because they're hard to do.

As for working with professional faculties, I think we have a great opportunity to say, "Here, we have talented people who want to work and we need doctors in particular."

That would be my recommendation to develop a standardized process that's based on research of the talents and skills that professionals from other jurisdictions already have.

[Translation]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Sellah and Ms. Armstrong.

I will now turn the floor over to Ms. O'Neill Gordon for seven minutes.

● (0910)

[English]

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

Thank you for joining us today and taking time to share your thoughts and ideas.

First of all, I want to congratulate you on your many awards and especially the Graduate Teaching Excellence Award. It certainly is an honour for anyone to receive that.

It's so nice to hear you say how these people who come to Canada bring with them confidence, talents, and experience, and that is up to us to take advantage of that. We need to capture their talents and put them to use.

What to you is the main theme you want our committee to take away from your presentation today? You certainly have lots of good ideas, but what would the main one be ?

**Dr. Ann Armstrong:** My main request to you as a committee to both reflect and, more importantly, act on is to see what you can do to reduce barriers to the progression of our internationally educated professionals. Whether it was the example that I just gave, particularly doctors and others, we need to come up with processes and further research so that we can say to internationally educated female professionals that this is what we can do to help you not only to get caught up to what you were doing before in your country of origin, but also to excel in the Canadian context.

**Mrs. Tilly O'Neill Gordon:** Thank you.

You mentioned those barriers for doctors, which we were speaking about. What are some of the barriers that other people face, especially women, when they come here ?

**Dr. Ann Armstrong:** I think one of the main barriers is actually simple ignorance—and I do just mean ignorance, lack of knowledge—by organizations about the actual talents that women from other jurisdictions bring.

I think the other major barrier—and it's one that we spend some time addressing, both through class and action—is the discomfort or just unfamiliarity with the importance of networking. Clearly, networking is the way many people get jobs. Some people from different countries of origin are not familiar with the ins and outs of what that means.

One of our participants, who is originally from Russia, said she never had a problem networking in her country of origin because she knew everybody. I think that's why we need to put much more effort into actually not only emphasizing the importance of networking, but also, more importantly, providing the tools and the opportunities to do that.

**Mrs. Tilly O'Neill Gordon:** That's a very good idea, and it's so true. When you're in your own homeland and you know where to turn, that makes things much easier.

I'm thinking that, as well, is where mentorship comes in, having someone to guide them. Would you say it would be important for us to try to set up a mentorship program with these new people coming in, to set them in the right direction? They certainly have lots of talent, but they just don't know where to turn.

**Dr. Ann Armstrong:** I couldn't agree with you more. We're really trying to see the work we do not as a settlement kind of program—there are many excellent organizations that do that—but basically as a bridge so that people can, through mentoring and networking and so on, have a successful career in the sector of their choice.

**Mrs. Tilly O'Neill Gordon:** Would developing mentorship programs be more beneficial than providing financial aid, and if so, why? How would that be more beneficial?

**Dr. Ann Armstrong:** I don't think I quite heard all of your question. Was the question whether mentorship would be more valuable than financial aid?

**Mrs. Tilly O'Neill Gordon:** So often we feel that we just have to throw money at them to fix them up, but quite often, wouldn't a mentorship program be more beneficial than financial aid? Can you explain how and why it would be more beneficial than financial aid?

**Dr. Ann Armstrong:** Certainly mentorship programs are not without cost, but assuming we have them, I think mentorship programs are much more useful because they provide opportunities for confidence-building and networking, and they empower our internationally educated professionals to find opportunities far more broadly than simply being the recipients of financial aid would.

• (0915)

**Mrs. Tilly O'Neill Gordon:** As we know, many arrive already educated, but for those who come here without education, do you feel that education is essential first in order for them to start a business or get involved in economic prosperity?

**Dr. Ann Armstrong:** I do not necessarily. One of the things we have observed is that sometimes internationally educated professionals feel they need more education to be successful in Canada. In my view at least, what they need more is the mentorship and the networking, as you've described. Certainly as a professor, I'm not going to knock education, but I think we certainly need to have a combination of education and real-world connection.

In terms of people who arrive without an education, I think education is nice, but sometimes the education might in fact dull their entrepreneurial drive, and I'd be very sorry to see that. I realize we're not all necessarily going to be like the people who drop out of school at 14 and transform the world. I think education has its place, but I certainly don't want to oversell it either.

**Mrs. Tilly O'Neill Gordon:** I too am a teacher, so I certainly wouldn't be knocking education. I don't want to go in that direction, for sure.

**Dr. Ann Armstrong:** I thought it was a bit of a trick question.

**Mrs. Tilly O'Neill Gordon:** I didn't mean for it to be one.

As well, we see many of the women coming in from other countries, and certainly when we look at other countries we sometimes see programs they provide that are really something Canada should try to implement as well. Can you think of any one

country or any one idea in particular that you would like to see us implement?

**Dr. Ann Armstrong:** I'm afraid I'm not as familiar with what goes on in other jurisdictions. I know, for example, though, that Denmark does a good deal of both language training and personal development coaching to welcome people into their country. That's one jurisdiction I'm a bit familiar with, but I'm not comfortable extemporizing, beyond the observation I have just made.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

Mrs. Duncan, you have seven minutes.

**Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.):** Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you to Professor Armstrong. I really want to say thank you for your life-changing work. It definitely is life-changing.

I serve one of the most diverse ridings in the country, Etobicoke North, and often the best conversations I have are in taxis, whose drivers may be cardiac surgeons, neurosurgeons, nuclear physicists. I've personally met with more than 100 internationally trained doctors. I want to thank Dr. Sellah for having the courage to speak this morning. As you point out, it's doctors, it's lawyers, it's engineers, it's teachers, and the list goes on.

I'd really like to know how this program works. How many people are trained; how often; for how many hours? What are the issues that are being covered? How do you follow up?

You were talking about a possible recommendation for this committee, that this be rolled out across the country. So give us your recommendation.

**Dr. Ann Armstrong:** Thank you very much.

We're now in our seventh or eighth offering of this program, and as you can imagine, over time we have improved it.

One thing we were asked to do by the partners of the women—which is rather curious—and have done was develop a program for men, because they were a bit disconcerted, I think in a positive way, that their partners, who were having a fabulous learning opportunity, were learning some things that the men wished they had known. So we keep our program somewhat integrated between men and women, but we also have separate sections. For example, we have separate sections on communication, because there are some different communication style issues and so on.

The program in short is approximately six months long. It involves both in-class activities and a lot of coaching from the career coaches and the language coaches, as I mentioned. But also we do a lot of peer coaching. We find that creating small communities—groups of about eight or ten in which people are basically coaching themselves and their colleagues—is extremely effective.

We take in approximately 45 people per session. We are now able to run the program twice a year. We are very fortunate to have received considerable funding from the provincial government. The participants pay basically as they can. We ask a very nominal fee to sign up, but we also provide a number of scholarships. So we try to do what we can to make sure that in no way is it cost-prohibitive. We're keen to open up as broadly as we can. We certainly don't want to feel that we're only, as it were, reaching out to internationally educated professionals who can pay. We're interested in reaching out to all internationally educated professionals who for whatever reason are underemployed or are perhaps just not moving anywhere.

We find that promotion is also an indicator of success. Quite often, within the six-month period participants will go from even an okay job to one that is perhaps even better than the one they had in their country of origin. So we measure our success in terms of promotion.

We continue to be actively connected to all of our participants, using typical business tools such as LinkedIn and so on. We have a strong alumni network, and we call upon its members quite frequently to be ambassadors for the program. Also, for example, one of our participants is now a coach in the program. As you can well imagine, as he himself is an internationally educated professional who was able to go from one excellent job to an even more excellent job, he is both a role model and an ambassador, and he also has direct and immediate connection with our participants. So we look at success in terms of personal development.

The one that's a little harder to measure is the degree of change in confidence. I certainly won't wax anecdotal about it, but suffice it to say, over the years I have been involved in the program I have seen a development of confidence between day one and six months later that I think is absolutely jaw-dropping. It's really helpful and exciting, because these are people who are going to go out and make the difference in the workplace.

• (0920)

**Ms. Kirsty Duncan:** Professor Armstrong, you've talked about how the program works, how you measure success, and that you're able to take in 90 people a year and that this is how it's growing, which is terrific. What is the need out there?

**Dr. Ann Armstrong:** I don't know that I can calculate it, but based on the number of people who apply to our programs, we absolutely can't take everyone because the timing is perhaps not right in terms of where they are personally, or we simply have limited capacity. But everyone goes through a rigorous interview process to make sure they're at the right stage, both personally and in their career. But given the demand we have that we can't meet, if I could extrapolate that across the country, particularly in large urban centres that welcome many new Canadians, I'd guess we wouldn't have a problem having demand. The problem is actually having the supply to meet the demand from people who need our kind of course.

**Ms. Kirsty Duncan:** So what would you like to see the recommendation be in the report?

**Dr. Ann Armstrong:** I'm glad to connect with the committee so that you can get more detailed insight into what we do, but I would be really thrilled if, after your lens of critique, you recommended that something along the lines of what we are doing and largely piloting, and I think are pioneering, be run across the country. I think we'd be

pleased by that, but it really doesn't matter. What really matters is that you, through your recommendation, would be providing a program that, like ours as a long-term pilot, is successful, has traction, is scalable, and could be tweaked to meet the demands of particular cities—and, certainly, rural areas as well.

That would be my real hope, that something along the lines of what we do, with the sort of changes you think appropriate, be recommended to go across our country.

**Ms. Kirsty Duncan:** Thank you.

**Dr. Ann Armstrong:** You're very welcome.

• (0925)

[*Translation*]

**The Chair:** Thank you.

It is now Ms. Crockatt's turn, for five minutes.

[*English*]

**Ms. Joan Crockatt (Calgary Centre, CPC):** Thank you, madam.

Thank you very much for being here, professor. I'm simply electrified listening to you, because I can see what a wonderful inspiration you must be to these women. I think that is exactly what they need.

You are probably aware that we've put together this expert panel on women's leadership that has been meeting under the direction of Kelly Leitch. They're focusing exactly on the things that you are actually implementing. So it's great for me to hear how you're doing that and I think that our research has been showing that 88% of entrepreneurs with mentors survive in business, compared to a 50% failure rate if they don't have a mentor. Obviously, that seems to be one of the great areas that we need to continue to work in.

The Calgary Immigrant Women's Association has an interesting program in which they mentor immigrant women in the workplace as kind of a job-training aspect. Do you do that, or do you recommend that?

**Dr. Ann Armstrong:** I think that's a really great idea. We try to do a little bit of job shadowing and so on, once the program is over. But I think the closer the tie-in between the mentorship and the person being mentored in a real situation, namely the workplace, the more effective it will be.

We're basically a bridging program and it would be awesome to partner with programs that move from kind of the bridging aspect into the workplace.

**Ms. Joan Crockatt:** Okay, that's valuable too.

I think in the one they do in Calgary, they are paid, but they are in an internship position. So you actually recommend their getting into the job market and picking someone in the organization who has a stake in their future and vice versa.

**Dr. Ann Armstrong:** Absolutely.

**Ms. Joan Crockatt:** Okay. That's great.



I was also really fascinated with your talking about whether we should be mentoring men, because I had made a little note about that just before you said it. I think we understand the case for mentoring immigrant men, new Canadians, because the practices here are quite different and they might have to adjust to their wife being in a different role here.

Do you recommend mentoring men who not new Canadians? Do we need any programs that are actually targeted at them, or are we beyond that now?

**Dr. Ann Armstrong:** I don't think we're beyond that. Some of the recent events would suggest that we are not. I think, though, that if I had limited resources, I would focus on those people who are most vulnerable.

In the case of what we're talking about today, those would be internationally educated professionals, men or women. I think non-internationals are, as it were, local men who probably have more built-in resources, and certainly far greater networks. So if I had limited time and money, I would put it where I think it's needed most. That would be for internationally educated professionals, both men and women. That isn't to say mentoring is not a great idea generally, but I'm assuming there are some constraints here.

**Ms. Joan Crockatt:** Okay.

Could I just ask you quickly about business experience?

One of the things that I've seen in the west is that a lot of women run the large non-profits. This is a real leap forward for them, and a great thing to put on their resumé. They're running the YWCA; they're running the science centre; they're running large organizations. But sometimes our women aren't moving into the business field, or business training, as much as they might be with the humanities these days.

Do you do any business training per se with your women?

**Dr. Ann Armstrong:** Maybe I just need to clarify something. By "business training", do you mean things like financials and so on?

**Ms. Joan Crockatt:** Yes. I mean financials, or even fundraising, so that when they're out there networking, they have an idea of how all of that works.

**Dr. Ann Armstrong:** No, we do not. Our focus is on skills such as oral communication, managing the nuances of the workplace, understanding the culture of organizations, etc. We put tremendous emphasis on communication, whether it's written communication, oral communication, or how to communicate at networking events. We also spend a lot of time on actual job interviews and resumé-building. Those are things that turn out to have many more cultural nuances than, certainly, I appreciated early on. Basically, we try to make our participants—not job-ready, because they are job-ready, but—armed with some of the skills that perhaps they didn't realize they needed in order to be effective in the workplace.

• (0930)

**Ms. Joan Crockatt:** Thank you so much. I found that fascinating.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Ms. Crockatt and Mrs. Armstrong.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Ashton now has the floor for five minutes.

[*English*]

**Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP):** Wonderful.

Thank you very much, Ms. Armstrong, for joining us today and sharing the successes of your work and that of your team.

One of the recurring issues that we've heard about from the women who have testified at this committee is the challenge that systemic barriers pose when it comes to reaching positions of leadership and achieving prosperity. The experience of immigrant women and racialized women—if they are racialized women—is different when it comes to the impact of those systemic barriers.

One of the key issues that has been raised both in this committee but also more broadly as a barrier that women face is the lack of access to child care, and how that hinders progress in one's career, being able to make long-term plans, and disproportionately hinders the success of women.

I'm wondering if you could speak to that in the context of your work—if that is something that is raised—and what you see we can do about it.

**Dr. Ann Armstrong:** Thank you for the question.

It's not something we typically tackle, although, as you can well imagine, it comes up all the time, because people in our programs have the same issue of child care as many of us across the country do. We don't particularly address it in the sense of coming up with solutions, because it's a little bit outside of our purview. But one of the challenging issues that we face is that we want to be as upfront and clear to our participants—I'm talking women in particular here—about the nature of systemic discrimination in this country. For them, it's an additional burden. I may face the same discrimination, but I'm not here as a new Canadian. We address those issues in conversation. I feel it's really imperative for people to be alert to that. I don't want to have happen what once happened. It was actually a man who said, "Because I have not been successful here in Canada, I feel that I have let down Canadian immigrants." I thought it was an extraordinary comment that somehow he felt that he represented a group of people. However, as you know, it is not an atypical experience for women. We often feel that, somehow, we are either the token woman or seen as a representative of something. We then feel concerned if we don't meet whatever this externally imposed standard is.

I try to be very upfront with our participants about the issues of systemic discrimination, but in a way that does not discourage them. Clearly, they need to go in with their eyes wide open, but they also need to avoid taking onto themselves some kind of additional burden of blame that may come because they feel they've got, as it were, a double whammy: they're women—they maybe, in fact, have a triple burden in their mind—they're racialized women, and they're new Canadians.

In short, while we don't address the issue directly, I certainly try to alert people to the challenges they face, and to the fact that they may indeed have a double or triple burden. I try to do it in a way that does not undermine their confidence because, ultimately, if I do that, then we haven't been successful.

**Ms. Niki Ashton:** Obviously, one of the things I'm sure you're familiar with, and which our committee comes up against constantly, is the lack of resources that exist outside of academic institutions—resources in terms of advocacy and support that ought to exist for immigrant women or racialized women who face discrimination, whether in terms of the workplace or housing or child care. I'm wondering if you feel it's important that we support the kind of advocacy in our broader community that the women you work with could benefit from, advocacy that would be in line with promoting equality of immigrant women in our country.

● (0935)

**Dr. Ann Armstrong:** Absolutely, and as I was listening to your question and thinking back about your previous question, one of the things that graduates of our program can do and I think would be very pleased to do, as would be similar programs, I'm sure, would be themselves to be advocates. We've created an opportunity for some degree of empowerment and we have seen the transformation that moves simply from personal empowerment to working towards advocacy in their own particular networks.

Absolutely, I couldn't agree with you more and it seems to me that we have an opportunity to prevail upon the talented, international, educated professionals to advocate somewhat on our behalf. Therefore, they will have some of the credibility and the connection with the new Canadian communities and can draw upon and really make that strong connection. So the point of advocacy to me is central.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

[Translation]

Ms. Ambler, you have five minutes. Please go ahead.

[English]

**Mrs. Stella Ambler (Mississauga South, CPC):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you, Ann, for being here. It's just been fascinating and I'm thrilled to learn more about your program. It's such an impressive program. You're clearly doing a lot of good for the women and men that you're helping.

So I have a quick question. How do you measure success?

**Dr. Ann Armstrong:** I think if I could answer that well, I'd probably have to patent it, but in any event, we certainly look at it as a long-term growth. I really feel compelled to put in a plug for the program manager who, herself, is a new Canadian and does the long-term data collection. Her name is Sabina Michael and she has been in contact with every single participant graduate since she took the pilot.

We basically do what many good non-profits do and that is to track success over time, and it's a huge part of our work. We stay connected, we report job change, and if we can, we try to get information on income change. So we look at new job progression,

income, and also, perhaps more informally, just a sense of how they feel about their personal state they are in. Those are basically three measures we can calculate, and one that's a bit more intuitive.

**Mrs. Stella Ambler:** Thank you.

You mentioned in your opening remarks that there are specific challenges to women entering the social economy and sometimes challenges that men don't face. When you said that, I was wondering if you've looked at fundraising specifically. I ask because that is a key role of many not-for-profits and I know that women sometimes don't consider themselves good at asking for money or raising funds. We've heard from witnesses in this study who've said that sometimes women don't have the same confidence; they don't put themselves out there as much as men might.

I'm wondering if you've looked at that aspect of it, of their being able to raise money.

**Dr. Ann Armstrong:** I have not done so directly, but certainly in the evidence around the approach to negotiation that men and women take, clearly we have seen some difference: women seem to come from more of a position of gratitude, whereas men come more from a position of entitlement. That's been studied. When you look at how people conduct negotiation—and fundraising absolutely is a negotiation, in that I have a cause, you have money, let's make a deal—I think it would certainly not be an unreasonable issue to think that women may feel, based on the negotiation theory, a little bit diffident about asking.

Having said that, though, there certainly are some very powerful and successful women fundraisers. But that may come in part from their social networks that have absolutely nothing to do per se with any diffidence or not about making the ask.

Your observation, based on what you said you heard from witnesses, makes total sense to me. However, it's not an area that I have done any research on, other than knowing a little about negotiation theory.

● (0940)

**Mrs. Stella Ambler:** Thank you.

It's also the same skill set, you might agree, as negotiations during interviews, because an interview is essentially a negotiation too: “You have a job you're offering; that's the job I want.”

**Dr. Ann Armstrong:** Yes.

**Mrs. Stella Ambler:** Again, your observation about gratitude versus entitlement is also very interesting. Women perhaps need a bit more confidence in being able to promote themselves, being able to negotiate from a position of confidence.

You've used that word yourself many times.

**Dr. Ann Armstrong:** Yes.

**The Chair:** Your time is up.

**Mrs. Stella Ambler:** Oh, thank you very much for being here today. I really enjoyed it.

**The Chair:** I didn't mean to cut you off. You have 20 seconds left.

**Mrs. Stella Ambler:** Twenty seconds. It's okay.

**The Chair:** A big thank you.

[Translation]

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

[English]

**Ms. Lois Brown (Newmarket—Aurora, CPC):** Thank you very much. I didn't know I was going to have the opportunity to do this.

Ms. Armstrong, thank you.

I am filling in today on the committee for one of my colleagues who is travelling with the Prime Minister. I'm delighted to be here.

I'm an entrepreneur. I come from a business background, so I am always excited to hear that there are opportunities for women to step into business.

I often speak to young people in schools. When I ask them what they are planning to do after school and they say "go to university and get a job after that", I say "what about creating a job?" When you have a job, somebody else is going to determine where you work, when you work, and how much you're going to make. The freedom of being in business for yourself and creating your own future, pursuing your own dreams, is nothing less than miraculous.

Whenever I go to ribbon-cutting events in my constituency, it is one of the most spectacular and hopeful things that I could ever do. Next to seeing a new baby, seeing the birth of a new business is seeing someone who is living their dream.

I was cutting the ribbon for a new spa in Newmarket established by a woman who came to Canada about seven years ago. She has taken her skills training and decided that this is what she wants to do. She is living a dream that is uncommon.

I always applaud women. I applaud everybody who goes into business for themselves, but particularly women who take that step and who want to live their dream. It is so exciting.

I want to step back for a minute, though, and ask for your commentary on how we move forward this whole idea of the professions. You would know better than anybody that this is provincial jurisdiction. We may bring the people in as newcomers to Canada, that's our responsibility as the federal government, but under our Constitution, licensing of professionals is purely a responsibility in the jurisdiction of the provinces. It's by Constitution. No one wants to open the Constitution and have that debate.

Oftentimes we see that it is restricted even more by the associations of the professionals. In Ontario, I know that the foreign-trained doctor program, for instance, takes in about 200 people per year. It's purely academic; it's based on academic ability.

However, there needs to be some relaxation. I agree with you that there needs to be some negotiation. If you come from a country, Germany, for instance, or France, or England, I wouldn't have any problems going to have a surgery in any of those countries.

Is there some negotiation we can start to make with these professional associations, even across Canada, where we can say, "Look, you're trained in Ontario. For goodness sake, your licence ought to be acceptable in Newfoundland", or vice versa?

We currently have some 450 credentialing agencies across this country. How do we start to break down those barriers and then have the negotiations internationally?

• (0945)

**Dr. Ann Armstrong:** That's a really difficult question.

One of the things your committee could recommend, at least using the lens of women in particular, is that we start by addressing what processes we can use and what negotiations we can start to make sure this issue of foreign accreditation is addressed fairly for both women and men.

I'm going to guess that internationally educated professionals who are women may feel a little bit diffident about going up against the credentialing organizations, as I'm sure is your experience. Many times when you go to a lab to get blood work and chat with the woman who is taking your blood, you realize she was actually a doctor in her country of origin.

It seems to me that one possible lever would be to focus first on the women's side. But again, I realize that's a little bit tricky because then it's going to be a matter of, what about the others?

I certainly think there's a case to be made that we could start by looking at how to ensure that women are given a fair shake and assessed properly by the credentialing organizations.

I've noticed with internationally educated professionals who are women that some may be more diffident than others to argue for why they should be recognized and treated as doctors, which indeed they have been in their countries of origin.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

[Translation]

The discussion was so interesting and engaging that I gave numerous people time to speak. I think we've gathered a considerable amount of information.

Thank you kindly, Ms. Armstrong, for your presentation and your input. I think everyone on the committee was delighted to learn more about not just your work, but also solutions for enhancing the economic prosperity and leadership of Canadian women, particularly new immigrants.

That brings our time with the witness to an end. The subcommittee will now meet.

Meeting adjourned.





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