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# Standing Committee on the Status of Women

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**EVIDENCE**

## Tuesday, October 31, 2017

## Chair

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio**

# Standing Committee on the Status of Women

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● (1100)

[*English*]

**The Vice-Chair (Ms. Pam Damoff (Oakville North—Burlington, Lib.)):** I'm going to call the meeting of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women to order. We're going to continue our study on the economic security of women in Canada.

We're pleased to welcome Dr. Imogen Coe to the committee today. She is dean of science at Ryerson University.

Welcome, Dr. Coe. You have 10 minutes for your presentation.

**Professor Imogen Coe (Professor, Dean, Faculty of Science, Ryerson University, As an Individual):** It's a great pleasure to be here. Thank you very much for this opportunity to present to the committee on the topic of economic security of women in Canada. As you know, I'm the dean of the faculty of science at Ryerson, and a professor of chemistry and biology. Ryerson University is a national leader in understanding equity, diversity, and inclusion and their role and importance in aspects of Canadian society.

I'm also a research scientist. I have a research lab at St. Michael's Hospital in Toronto and I've supported many students along the way in conducting research on fundamental aspects of drug efficacy.

I've also, over the last 30 years perhaps, been a vocal advocate for those who have not been treated fairly in science, technology, engineering, and math, which I will refer to as STEM. Under the university system in Canada, as in other parts of the world, it's really important to note that the most privileged are the last to see the inequities, because they are the ones who have benefited the most.

Some of what I'm going to say here comes from a piece I wrote in response to a particularly nasty inflammatory piece by Margaret Wente in *The Globe and Mail* in June of this year, in which she commented on the federal government's policy around Canada research chairs. I wrote a response to that which, as they say, went viral.

In my work over the last 30 years, I've heard the voices of many people, including the voices of girls who, data show, participate in equal numbers to boys in STEM through high school, but who, after being gender stereotyped and marginalized in their choices since birth, doubt their self-worth and their potential for contribution to STEM in Canada. I collect these stories now and I share them in the many talks I give, over a hundred in the last 18 months to two years.

I've also heard from young gay men who want to forge careers in tech, but who are wary of the “bro” culture. I've heard from young men of colour who are interested in aspirational pathways in STEM and would like more than just more after-school basketball programs, and I've barely heard from the first nations students, whose voices seem to be hardly more than whispers, who have so much to contribute but who are neither seen nor heard by so many in the educational system and in the universities and by us in science.

The owners of these voices, and particularly women, represent the future potential of Canada in many ways, including beyond STEM, and that requires us to respond with, I and many others submit, evidence and informed data-driven strategies that will address the inequities. These inequities to access and in access and participation directly impact the future career and employment prospects of young women and thus their economic security, as well as the economic development of the nation, because we know that diversity is a driver of innovation and we know that we must have diversity in order to innovate. It's an economic imperative.

Many OECD countries and G20 countries, including Canada, now understand that diversity and equity, particularly in the STEM-based career pathways, are an economic imperative, and many countries have recognized the economic value and importance of improving diversity and closing the gender gap to their economic future, financial stability, and competitive abilities. A highly skilled workforce with advanced skills in STEM-based disciplines is essential if Canada is to remain competitive.

These highly skilled jobs of the future are also going to provide economic security for these workers, so by increasing accessibility to STEM career pathways and education, which lead into these highly paid jobs, we can improve the economic security of women and the nation. To do this we must ensure that as many members of Canadian society as possible—that is, women, people with disabilities, our first nations, and our under-represented groups—have access to STEM-based education and training.

This means that education, academia, industry, business, government, media, and society at large must work together to mobilize, support, and retain as large and as diverse a STEM education-to-workforce pipeline as possible.

However, we live in a sexist, racist, homophobic, and ableist world. It's a fact. If you want to understand gender stereotyping for children, I have a TEDx talk I gave a couple of years ago. Babies are born natural scientists, but from the moment they're wrapped in a blue blanket or a pink blanket, their frame of reference is defined. They're drenched in cultural conditioning and they are gender stereotyped. While we think we're a progressive country in Canada, we're just as bad at this as everybody else is.

These societal attitudes frame their worlds and limit their potential, both boys and girls. Gender stereotyping disenfranchises boys as much as it does girls. A recent study showed that by the age of six, girls will articulate what they think girls are good at or not good at, including perceptions around their own abilities in, for instance, math.

● (1105)

Without their actually having had much experience in math, they can articulate what they think girls are good at, not from their experience but because they've absorbed messages from the world around them about what girls can and can't do.

These messages continue to build. They're micro-messages. They're like a death by a thousand cuts. Girls and their interest—or lack of interest—in STEM are not the problem.

I see the high achievers by the time these young women get to university. They're A+ students, but they are sometimes paralyzed with self-doubt and concerns about their worth and their contribution to science or to society. They've experienced a couple of decades of gender stereotyping that no amount of science camps, “leaning in”, or mentorship can fix.

We all, as society, are the problem, and we all must address that problem.

As you can tell, I grew up in the U.K. I tell students that I went to Hogwarts.

**Voices:** Oh, oh!

**Prof. Imogen Coe:** I didn't, but I went to a school a little bit like Hogwarts, and for Halloween that's appropriate. My experiences are typical. At the age of about seven, the girls in my class were gathered up and sent off to one room to take sewing lessons while the boys went off to another room, I think for woodworking lessons, but I don't know, because I didn't get to go.

I didn't know that it was a girl-boy thing. I just knew at that time that it was not fair. It's not a gender issue. It's a human rights issue. It's not fair. I couldn't advocate for myself at that time, and no one else seemed to notice because that was the norm. That was the way the system worked, yet, to quote somebody I have a lot or respect for, I “persisted”.

When I was about 12, my father—and fathers are incredibly influential and important in supporting young women in STEM-based pathways—who thought it was normal for girls to do math and science and had no sympathy with my struggles with physics, took me to the open house at my local university, which happened to be the University of Cambridge.

It included a visit to the world-famous British Antarctic Survey. This is a scientific research unit based at Cambridge, but it has a research station at the South Pole. I thought this was the most exciting, exotic thing that I could think of. I wanted to do this. I was naturally curious. I loved the outdoors. I wanted to be an explorer. I wanted to be a scientist.

With great excitement, I bounced up to the British Antarctic Survey rep who was manning the booth there and asked, “So, how many women do you have at the base station at the South Pole?” His rather tired response was—it has since burned into my brain—that “the environment there is very stressful for the men doing research and we don't want to add to that stress by introducing women”. I heard the slamming of a door to a potential pathway that I was interested in.

The door closed. That was it. I knew that it was not something for me, yet I persisted, because here I am. I'm the exception.

I was reminded of this experience at the British Antarctic Survey about a year ago when I was at the Ontario Science Centre to see Commander Chris Hadfield receive an award for science outreach. He told a story of seeing, as a young boy at the science centre, a piece of the moon, and at that point realized that he wanted to go into space. He wanted to be an astronaut. There was no slamming of the door for him. Nobody said to him that it's too stressful to send white men into space for that all-women crew. As an aside, it'll probably be an all-women crew that goes to Mars, because of physiological reasons.

There was no slamming of the door. That pathway was wide open to him. There was nobody who said, “You don't fit and you don't look like an astronaut.” Nobody said he was the wrong colour or the wrong gender or anything. Culture and context support the dominant group. Culture and context repeatedly, over and over again, say to girls and to women that you don't fit, girls suck at math, you don't look like a scientist, and we can't have girls in the lab because they cry.

We often focus on girls as being the issue that needs attention, although data, science, and studies show that this is not the most effective way for increased participation in the absence of concomitant cultural change.

For instance, we can support girls in access to robotics through something like FIRST Robotics—my colleague there knows about that—but if we don't at the same time teach boys how to work with girls on teams in robotics, then we're not going to see a change. Those girls are still going to experience the reality that the boys ask them to do the fundraising, the boys ask them to do the marketing, and the boys won't let them do the software and the hardware or drive the robots. We have to engage everybody and not focus just on the girls.

● (1110)

Supporting science camps for girls makes us all feel good, and it allows corporate Canada to check their corporate responsibility box, but until we acknowledge that society has an issue—and society is sexist, racist, and homophobic—and we challenge and address that, we're not going to see significant change systemically.

**The Vice-Chair (Ms. Pam Damoff):** Dr. Coe, I'm going to have to ask you to wrap up.

**Prof. Imogen Coe:** Okay.

How do we address this? We address this through systemic, organizational, structural change.

Last week, I was in Washington, D.C., at the invitation of NSERC, to learn about the SEA change initiative, which is based on the Athena SWAN initiative in the U.K., which has been very effective in shifting institutional culture.

This program does not focus on women. It focuses on the culture. It holds leaders, who are often men, accountable, and there are consequences for failure to meet the goals of the program.

The most compelling feature of the Athena SWAN program in the U.K. is that it was proposed to be tied to funding. The Minister of Health in the U.K. mused that maybe she would tie funding to Athena SWAN outcomes. That immediately got all the universities on board, and they started working on cultural change.

We have an opportunity here to bring SEA change to Canada. I implore you to support that work. I applaud and support the work of the Minister of Science and the CRC secretariat in bringing accountability to the CRC program.

Promoting cultural changes doesn't come easy, and there has been some significant push-back, but this is the way that we will see pathways opened and barriers to full access removed for girls and young women in Canada. Please, support the fundamental science review across parties, and the initiatives in that review around equity, diversity, and inclusion, which are core, foundational principles for a better economic future for women and for Canada.

**The Vice-Chair (Ms. Pam Damoff):** Thank you very much, Dr. Coe.

I know that FIRST Robotics will be thrilled with the shout-out you just gave them.

Our first questions, for seven minutes, are going to be from Mr. Serré.

**Mr. Marc Serré (Nickel Belt, Lib.):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you, Dr. Coe, for your excellent presentation and the work that you've done. Thank you so much. I couldn't agree more with all the comments you made.

I want to touch base on a few elements, in the seven minutes or so that I have.

First, you indicated the need for data-driven research, especially in the STEM field. Can you give some examples of what you would recommend Stats Canada or the federal government...? Do you feel that we should be gathering better data, and what type of data?

**Prof. Imogen Coe:** If you look, for example, at the census data the U.S. collects, which is disaggregated way beyond gender to socio-economic group, ethnicity, and things like parental levels of education, that's a good model in terms of the data they collect.

The challenges exist to some extent between provincial and federal jurisdictions. We definitely have the ability to collect data on participation rates, but I think we also need data on other groups. We've had a lot of discussions around how to collect data on, for instance, people with disabilities, if the disability is not an issue that actually impacts their access to STEM.

For STEM programming, for things like Athena SWAN and SEA change, I would look to the models that the U.K. and the U.S. have used. There are so many different levels of data you could collect, but that would have to be thought through.

**Mr. Marc Serré:** Thank you.

My second question is this. You mentioned the last 30 years and the unfair treatment at universities when you look at STEM. You also mentioned the Canada research chairs. We know that we have a goal. I think it's 30%, which is still very low. It's currently at 15%. What do you feel the federal government should do to possibly shock the system? Thirty per cent is still a low target. This is appalling. What can we do to change that?

**Prof. Imogen Coe:** You legislate it. If you want to change it overnight, you legislate it and you tie funding to it.

We do that for people with disabilities, right? We have legislation that says you take out the steps and you put in a ramp. We don't ask people in wheelchairs to try harder or lean in. I think that's one way to do it.

There is one way to do it. They didn't end up doing that in the U.K., but simply the concept that it might be done really caught the attention of the universities, and then it became a competitive process where the competitive spirit took over and the universities wanted to compete with each other to get these awards.

There is the accountability and the consequences piece, or there is the incentivization and the reward-based piece. Money will always incentivize.

I think the federal government can do that through, for instance, the research funding. I sat on the Canada excellence research chairs selection board as the equity, diversity, and inclusion champion, and each university was required, in those applications, to put in an equity plan. For the most part, they were really, really substandard.

I think we could do what we do with other types of funding mechanisms that say that, until you have your biosafety certification in place, or until you have your animal care certification in place, or until you have your human research participants ethics certification in place, you don't get funding. It's not released to the universities.

You could do the same thing and say that you're not going to release the funding to the universities until you are satisfied that their equity plan is in shape and is acceptable, and it deals not just with teaching your hiring committees what implicit bias training is or having the training. We know that is not particularly effective. We need to go beyond that and we need to ask questions of how they are going to have sustainability, how they are going to ensure retention, how they are going to build their teams, and what the processes and policies are that they have in place. I want all of those things codified, and how they are going to improve them over the next three years.

We get universities to take responsibility for that and adopt SEA change or adopt Athena SWAN, and then reward those universities that do that.

● (1115)

**Mr. Marc Serré:** A bit along the same lines, I want to get your comments—because it was raised here previously—related to quotas. Some of the OECD countries have quotas, and it has worked well. When we talk about legislation tying into the funding, I want to get your comments on.... Because not much has happened in the last 30 years linked to universities, are we at the stage where we should consider it? What are your thoughts related to quotas?

**Prof. Imogen Coe:** I hear a lot of young women in science saying, “I don't want the position just because I'm a woman.” I don't think anybody ever got a position just because they were a woman, except maybe those very specialized programs, and then there was a stigma associated with it, which is a problem.

However, I do believe that, if institutions are not going to engage in processes that will shift the needle and affect culture, then we need to do something else. We have the 30% comply or explain, which hasn't done anything in 10 years for boards. Next, if you're not going to do it yourself, then we're going to have to bring in some kind of legislation that will do it, and it may be that it is quotas.

In order to do that, there has to be a whole plan in place to deal with the conflict that will come out of that, because inevitably there is a big piece in terms of organizational change management and conflict management that needs to be done, be in place, and be ready. You need to be ready for that before that's launched.

But quotas, or the implementation of quotas, is a way to make an unfair system fair. That messaging has to be absolutely explicit. It's a way to make an uneven playing field even. Quotas can work.

**Mr. Marc Serré:** Thank you.

In the last few seconds I have left, thank you so much for the shout-out for the fundamental science review and the support for the 35 recommendations. I had a question about immigration, but I'll have to leave that aside. The chair has said my time is up.

Thank you so much for what you're doing.

**The Vice-Chair (Ms. Pam Damoff):** Thank you.

We'll now move to Mr. Shields for seven minutes.

**Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I appreciate the expertise you have, which is obviously very significant.

I have just a couple of clarifications. When you mention disabilities, what definition do you have that you're using for disabilities?

**Prof. Imogen Coe:** I use that in terms of the four designated groups. We've had a lot of discussions at Ryerson on what that means in terms of people self-identifying: whether they need to self-identify if it doesn't have an impact, or the fact that people who have mental health disabilities may not self-identify.

People with disabilities, as a designated group, are who I was referring to.

● (1120)

**Mr. Martin Shields:** Okay. Thank you.

The history of medical and legal, in the sense of gender, are some numbers that I've seen over the years, and they've changed in those professions, as far as universities. Do you have any knowledge of those two professions from your background, as to the change in gender?

**Prof. Imogen Coe:** In participation rates at the undergraduate level?

**Mr. Martin Shields:** Right.

**Prof. Imogen Coe:** Both medicine and law are second entry, so an undergraduate degree is required.

Yes, those numbers have gone up. There's a great article that I would recommend to everybody, which is called “When Women Stopped Coding”. It describes the increase in participation rates of women in law, medicine, life sciences, and computer science until the mid 1980s, when the participation rate really dropped in computer science, relative to medicine and law, which are now pretty stable. Depending on where you are, it's roughly fifty-fifty, as it is in life sciences. Computer science was on the same trajectory—you can actually look at the data—and it dropped significantly.

The interpretation of those data are that media and marketing started it. The PC arrived on the scene, and it was marketed as a boy's toy. It became a cultural reference point that computers were for boys. Then we saw this drop off.

**Mr. Martin Shields:** What were the successful indicators for legal and medical, then, that brought them to that fifty-fifty ratio?

**Prof. Imogen Coe:** I think television had a lot to do with it. I think girls would see themselves potentially as a doctor. It was a desirable lifestyle. However, if you look at the retention rates in law and medicine, that's something quite different.

If you look at the participation rates in high school, girls are participating in high school at very equivalent rates, except in physics. We have those numbers, but their lived experience, their experience of themselves in those environments, is very negative. That carries through to a point where you decide the culture, the context around me, is not supportive.

**Mr. Martin Shields:** I appreciate your context of cultural change.

Finland, from my understanding in reading, 20 years ago decided to change their culture, and they used the education system to do it. Are you familiar with what Finland did?

**Prof. Imogen Coe:** I'm familiar with a little about some of the things that go on in Scandinavian countries. They have been very intentional around things like shared parenting, extensive parental leave, and some cultural changes in terms of making society more equitable.

Interestingly, I would say that those changes have not been absorbed by the university sector in Scandinavia to the extent that they should have been.

**Mr. Martin Shields:** It's harder to be a teacher in Finland than it is to be a doctor because they wanted to change the culture in their country. They focused on the education system to do it, starting with kindergarten on through. That's how they've focused and have made a cultural change in 20 years. Specifically that's Finland, not Scandinavia as a whole but Finland.

I think that goes to the culture you're talking about. If you want to change the culture, you have to start at four years old and five years old.

**Prof. Imogen Coe:** Yes, but they're still coming up in a culture all around them that says we value girls for the way they look, where Kim Kardashian is the most followed person on Instagram.

If we had a culture that said it doesn't matter whether you're male or female, and we raised four-year-olds in that culture, we would see people achieving their potential, not saying, “I don't look like anybody out there. I don't look like the pathway ahead of me.”

**Mr. Martin Shields:** I agree.

I would agree with you, as well, that incentivization is a piece that can work at that level. However, if you want to change the culture, I think university is a little late.

**Prof. Imogen Coe:** No. We're talking about the fact that society has to change. We have to get away from focusing on its being a problem with the kids. It's not a problem with the kids. It's a problem with us. It's a problem with media. It's a problem when you look at who is in power.

When I walked into this building coming from Toronto, I'll tell you right now, it's a very white building. That struck me right away. If somebody is here and they have an aspiration to go into politics, that's great. There are a lot of people who might look like my daughter and who have that aspiration. There are not a lot of people who look like probably 75% of my class.

We have to look to ourselves, and we have to shift the responsibility and accountability back on to the people who control the culture and the context.

● (1125)

**Mr. Martin Shields:** That's a long range, then.

**Prof. Imogen Coe:** Money is a very powerful incentive.

**Mr. Martin Shields:** Yes.

**Prof. Imogen Coe:** I think we have to get away from.... It feels really good to support little kids in science. We all get warm and fuzzy around that, but that little kid in science will grow up, and 20 years from now she's going to be asking for venture capital. You know what? The same corporate leader who funds that science camp is not going to give her venture capital because she doesn't look like she can handle a start-up. That's the change. That's the cultural change.

Frank Vettese is the CEO and chief diversity officer of Deloitte. He has taken it upon himself to be the person responsible. He's an older white male—the stereotype—but he says, “It's my job to do that.” That's what we need to be doing.

**Mr. Martin Shields:** Thank you.

**The Vice-Chair (Ms. Pam Damoff):** Thank you very much.

We'll now go to Ms. Malcolmson for seven minutes.

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP):** Thank you for your testimony and your work. The themes you're hitting on line up with what we're hearing from the OECD, which has been evaluating Canada's record on gender parity, and particularly where it intersects with women's success in the economy.

We note the report from this year, which says, “While women earn more bachelor’s degrees than men in Canada, there are lower proportions of women in STEM fields and in doctoral studies. Canadian girls and women perform worse than their male peers in mathematics as teenagers, and these gaps become greater as they move into adulthood”. It very much reflects the testimony you're giving.

Eleven months ago, the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women gave an assessment of Canada in relation to how much it has fulfilled its commitments to the UN around gender equality. I'm going to read you just a couple of their concerns and then their recommendations. This is the November 25, 2016, CEDAW report.

Under “Education”, the committee notes with concern—this is in 36(c)—“That women are still concentrated in traditionally female-dominated fields of study and career paths and are underrepresented in vocational training and in certain fields of higher education, such as mathematics, information technology and science”.

The committee recommends, in paragraph 37(b), that Canada “Strengthen its strategies to address discriminatory stereotypes and structural barriers that may deter girls from progressing beyond secondary education and enrolling in traditionally male-dominated fields of study, such as mathematics, information technology and science”.

In 39(b), UN CEDAW recommends that Canada “Adopt effective measures, including skills training and incentives for women to work in non-traditional professions, and temporary special measures to achieve substantive equality of women and men in the labour market and eliminate occupational segregation, both horizontal and vertical, in the public and private sectors, and adopt quotas to enhance the representation of women in managerial positions in companies”.

In paragraph 39(e) the recommendation is to “Take into account the needs of disadvantaged groups of women, especially indigenous, Afro-Canadian, migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women, as well as women with disabilities, and consider the use of targeted measures, including temporary special measures, to create further employment opportunities for women belonging to such groups”. That's the end of the quote.

That, to me, all sounds very consistent with the testimony that you're hearing in your work as a teacher, for the most part. Does anything stand out for you, as far as of the alignment with what you've seen in your study?

**Prof. Imogen Coe:** There's a very good study that came out in 2014 that looked at STEM through a gender lens. It looked at who was responsible for increasing participation, at which level, and what things worked. It came out of the U.K. One of the things it identified as not working was targeted programs for girls. If you look at the data and the evidence, you see that doesn't seem to be as effective as people think it is, but it does make us all feel good.

There was a very recent study that came out of the U.S., George Washington University, just last month, that looked at young women in universities and their perceptions of efforts to say, “We want to encourage you to get into this discipline.” Their perceptions were that by continually describing it as a discipline that we're trying to get them into, it made it seem more like a masculine-defined discipline. It actually backfired.

If you look at a country like Estonia or Croatia or others in eastern Europe, there is nothing strange or unusual about girls doing physics or women being engineers. Again, it comes back to a culture that says, if you love physics, go do physics. You're good at math. There's some great OECD data. If you look at Ireland, which is about the same size, you see that participation rates in math are really small for girls. If you look at Estonia, which isn't that far away, about the same size, you see the participation rates for girls are really high. It's not geography. It's not size, or the educational systems. It's about the culture and context.

The mechanisms that need to be put in place are complex. They have to be based on data and evidence and good studies, which we have in other places, not so much in this country. We can derive leading practices from other places. They have to look at both the support system that you put in place for the under-represented group and.... Women are not a diversity group. Women are a half of the world, so why we're a designated group I don't know. We're a half of the world.

Shirley Malcolm of the AAAS, last week in Washington, asked why we have targeted interventions for the majority, because we have targeted interventions for women, we have targeted interventions for black youth, we have targeted interventions for first nations, we have targeted interventions for marginalized communities, and we have targeted interventions for LGBTQ. That's most of what we have, so why do we have targeted interventions for the majority when it's actually white, middle-class, gendered men who are the predominant...? That's not a problem with everybody else in STEM.

The reverse is the case in nursing. I have a son and a daughter, so it's important that I empower my daughter. As it is, I teach my son to be a feminist and respect women. We want men to be caring. We want men to be compassionate. I'm also a survivor of domestic violence. As a single parent, I had to take my kids when my husband threatened to kill me, so I also realize that we need men to learn how to respect strong women. We need to have more men in nursing, and it's the opposite problem. It's not because we need to fix them. We need to change a culture that says, “This is not what boys do.” Again, by six, boys start to stop playing with dolls because they get messages.

Creating opportunities for women to gain access to full-time employment means removing the barriers and the systemic discrimination that we recognize already for other groups, such as people with disabilities. We know that we can't have two places for people of colour and white people. We recognize those things.

● (1130)

**The Vice-Chair (Ms. Pam Damoff):** That's your time. Thank you very much.

We have Ms. Nassif for our last seven minutes.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Eva Nassif (Vimy, Lib.):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

[*English*]

I will share my time with my colleague Emmanuella.

Thank you to Ms. Coe for your presentation on this important topic.

[*Translation*]

Taking a quick look at the hEr VOLUTION website, I noticed that the organization's board, advisory committee, and youth committee are all made up exclusively of women.

Does that stem from the fact that women are able to easily understand what women go through and can serve as mentors to women in society, helping to build strategies to reach out to and work with these women? Conversely, are men simply not interested in being involved?

[*English*]

**Prof. Imogen Coe:** That's a really good question, and I know hEr VOLUTION quite well. The intent is absolutely wonderful and very strong. I tell young women that you need to build your network, you need networks of strong, supportive women who can help you achieve your goals. But until we engage men in part of the conversation, until we have men come in and participate and we do that intentionally, we're not going to see cultural change.

Her Volution is, itself, evolving as an organization, and I think it's doing it really well. I think we will see that happen, but I always encourage. It's essential that we engage men in the conversation around gender equity. Michael Kaufman, who runs the White Ribbon campaign in Toronto, does a fantastic talk on toxic masculinity and why gender equity is good for men. I think we'll see change with Her Volution, but I recommend that we engage men, allies, champions. Everybody needs to be involved in this conversation.

● (1135)

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Eva Nassif:** During the first part of this parliamentary session, the committee studied violence against young women and girls. One of the issues the study focused on was the engagement of men and boys.

Do you have the same problem? In other words, does the lack of involvement by men and boys represent a challenge?

[*English*]

**Prof. Imogen Coe:** In Canada it's a huge challenge. We still have a culture, particularly in the university system, that is somewhat antiquated. When I look to my colleagues in Australia and the U.K., I see very engaged, very active male leaders in all sorts of professions and sectors who will step up and speak to these issues.

Australia has a great organization called Male Champions of Change. It's men, leaders of all the industries—mining, banks, Qantas—who say, “We get gender equity and we are going to meet four times a year”. They release reports. They just released a report on gender equity in STEM. They have come together as male leaders to say, “We are going to speak to this. We're going to promote it.” We don't have anything like that in Canada.

The presidents of the universities just finally came out with a statement. It was okay. It wasn't nearly as bold as it should have been, so that's an area where we have a lot of catching up to do in Canada. We really need to see men have courage because there's a lot of backlash. I've received a lot of backlash, and men who stand up and speak to this issue receive a lot of backlash. We have to move beyond that. We have to engage men in the conversation.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Eva Nassif:** Yes, I know you mentioned that, but do you have other strategies you could propose to get men and boys more involved?

[*English*]

**Prof. Imogen Coe:** We have to actively invite them. We have to find allies who will speak to them. I ask my colleagues, and they tell me, “No, I'm a white male. I'm the last person anyone wants to hear from.” I say, “No, actually, you need to stand up because men listen to men.” We have to have male leaders. The university presidents are a good group that could stand up and speak to these issues very boldly. In all of our events, anything that's funded federally should require gender equity. You could have everybody sign a charter or commit to something as we're going to see with the gender summit next week in Montreal.

Depending on your sector or area, there will be something that men in that sector, area, business, or industry can do. Look to leading practices in other parts of the world as to what people do. I would love to see a Male Champions of Change organization start in Canada. If Australia can do it—macho culture, resource extraction industry, big country, small population—surely.... Where are the bank leaders? Where are the mining leaders? Where are the leaders?

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Eva Nassif:** Do you think immigrant women or those who did their STEM—science, technology, engineering, or mathematics—training abroad have a harder time finding jobs than their male counterparts?

[*English*]

**Prof. Imogen Coe:** It's a really interesting question. I deal with a huge population of immigrants. I'm an immigrant. I don't look like what people think an immigrant is. Some of them are coming from places where the expectation of daughters is that they're going to be an engineer, the expectation of daughters is that they're going to be a pharmacist, so they often are very successful. If you look at graduation at Ryerson from engineering, you see there are a lot of young women from the Middle East or southeast Asia who are graduating because it's an expectation there.

It's less the gender or the place from where they have come and more the socio-economic sector. If you're a wealthy immigrant from a particular area, you're going to do well. You have a good education, and there's an expectation that as a young woman, you're going to be an engineer. But if you're from a lower socio-economic group from a particular area, you won't have had access to education.

● (1140)

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Eva Nassif:** How much time do I have left?

[*English*]

**The Vice-Chair (Ms. Pam Damoff):** That's your time, Eva.

We're now going to move to Ms. Harder for five minutes.

**Ms. Rachael Harder (Lethbridge, CPC):** My first question here is with regard to shifting culture, and I think you're certainly bringing up a good point in terms of shifting culture. I like that you're approaching the fact that men have as much need to be engaged as of course women do. In fact, I would say men even have more of a role to play, perhaps, in terms of allowing the door to be open towards women and treating them fairly, equally, and equitably within STEM.

In terms of shifting culture, you're talking about the possibility of putting legislation in place and attaching money to it to see a policy shift. I can see some point to that, but I guess what I'm wondering, though, is at the end of the day, culture is largely a mindset. I believe that's the way that we're using that word in this context. If we're talking about a mindset, often in teaching, rubrics are used so that a concrete set of data are looked at in terms of grading or marking so that it's fair. Now, if we were to create a rubric to know how we're going to shift culture, if we were to put factors in place that we wanted to see changed or implemented in order to shift culture in this direction, what would those be? What would we be measuring?

**Prof. Imogen Coe:** That's exactly what SEA change or Athena SWAN does, at least in the university system, and you can move it into other sectors as well. There's another thing in the U.K. called the WISE campaign, which brings education and industry and business together to create this very diverse pipeline into the STEM workforce.

If you look at SEA change or Athena SWAN, you see the rubrics are developed by each institution or each division that is seeking cultural change. It requires a collector, let's say, a faculty of engineering.... Let's say a faculty of science because otherwise the engineers will get offended because they're both science.

The faculty of science has to reflect back on itself and say we only have 15% women in this faculty. Why is that? Where are they? Why is that happening? Is it because when we look at our pools of applicants for positions, there are no women in them? Okay, we're going to address that. How are we going to address that? Then there's going to be a plan. It could be that we have 50% women in our pools of applicants but we're only hiring men. Okay, we have another issue there, whether that's a hiring committee...or it could be that we hire women and they leave after two years. There's another issue there.

The SEA change or Athena SWAN program—it's called SAGE in Australia—requires a division or a unit to reflect back on itself and collect its own set of metrics, and then say we're going to change that. We only have 15%. In three years we're going to go to 30%. How are we going to do that? First of all, we're going to make sure we have a much richer pool. How are we going to do that? We're going to target these places, then we're going to make sure that our hiring committees really understand deeply what equity and diversity means, and then we're going to train them and not just send them to do an online module. We're going to really train them. We're going to give them cultural competencies and we're also going to put in a series of processes and policies to make sure that we don't lose women within their first three years, or whatever.

That could be like what I've done at Ryerson, which are programs that help support faculty and work-life balance. It could also be things like not having departmental meetings at four o'clock on a Thursday afternoon because people have to go to pick up kids. Every group has to reflect back. This is why it puts the responsibility back on us, not on women. If you're one of the 15% and you got hired, now you have to just tough it out even though there are all these other factors.

The university must reflect back and then develop its own rubric. That's going to be different for different places, which is why the responsibility comes back to you. But if the university can come back in three years and say, “Look, we went from 15% to 30%” and then a national organization says, “Wow, okay you get a silver award”, then Ryerson University gets a silver and University of Toronto says, “Damn it, we're going to get gold because we can't let the people down the road have....” Then it spreads.

But it's very difficult, and this is why many programs fail. It's very difficult to have a national set of rubrics.

● (1145)

**Ms. Rachael Harder:** Thank you.

I have another question for you, and I've heard this from a number of women I've talked to from different fields, but particularly with regard to the STEM and any of the fields you might call non-traditional for women. We talk about equal numbers of men and women entering into these fields, and we say that will result in equity or fairness. That's how we use the definition of fairness. It means 50% women, 50% men.

I actually have a lot of women coming to me and saying that's not necessarily true. Perhaps only 30% of women are interested in entering this field, and more men are interested in that field. Is it not a woman's choice to determine what field she's interested in? Why should there be 50% necessarily interested in this or that field? I've had women tell me they feel as though they are being forced or rushed into some of these fields that they don't necessarily want to be considered for.

**The Vice-Chair (Ms. Pam Damoff):** Rachael, your time is up. You'll have to hold your answer for that.

We're moving to Ms. Jordan for five minutes.

**Mrs. Bernadette Jordan (South Shore—St. Margarets, Lib.):** Thank you, Dr. Coe, for your fascinating presentation.

I'm going to refer back to last week's testimony. We heard from Dr. Armstrong with the Canadian Association of University Teachers, who was talking specifically about women in academia. I'd like your take on a couple of the challenges she brought forward. One of the things she said was that more stable funding to universities will help women who are traditionally in casual positions, because there isn't....

Do you see more stable funding being targeted funding, or is that something you don't agree with?

**Prof. Imogen Coe:** I'm not quite sure what more stable funding means, because universities are funded under the provinces.

**Mrs. Bernadette Jordan:** Increases in funding...?

**Prof. Imogen Coe:** Certainly, going back to the fundamental science review, we need increases in research funding and a long hard look at how that funding is being allocated. We know there's gender bias. CIHR and NSERC are getting a handle on that, and they're doing a reasonable job, but the rates of funding are so low that it's a very precarious environment for research funding. The universities are funded through grants from the provinces and tuition fees. How they use those funds is going to vary among different universities.

The universities have been around for a thousand years. They're like the church. They're both resistant and resilient. They're very resistant to change, and they're resilient, which is why they've been around for a long time. There are systems and policies in there that really need to be changed, updated, and brought into an era that is supportive of human rights and not particularly.... It's not just science. Disciplines like economics and philosophy are very male-dominated.

It's a combination of the funding and the cultural change. You can tie the two together.

**Mrs. Bernadette Jordan:** The other point she made that I thought was quite interesting was that there's been a movement to fund research for women in STEM. Her comments were that, traditionally, women research in what she called the “softer sciences”, social sciences. Would it not be more beneficial to put the money where the women are than to put it where we want them to go?

**Prof. Imogen Coe:** It comes back to this. We're not talking about putting women where they don't want to go. We're talking about getting rid of the barriers. It's like we're trying to make people who use wheelchairs walk up steps. We're trying to take out barriers to allow everybody the opportunity to participate. Seriously, it's about having all of the talent at the table.

We need to fund everybody where they are now, and maybe in those disciplines—I don't know which ones—where there are more women, such as nursing, we need to be looking at the barriers to full participation by men in those pathways, because there are barriers. We know there are some really serious barriers to full participation for women and under-represented groups, and LGBTQ, and for certain our first nations, in terms of participation in STEM pathways.

Maybe we need to be putting money into a very explicit attempt to identify and remove those barriers, and then once we can be sure all those barriers are gone, let's have a look and see who's participating. It will be up and down, whatever, but first of all, it's an economic imperative that we want all of the talent at the table. We're stupid as a nation if we don't get that, so we'd better get all of the barriers out of the way.

There's a young woman I ran into at Waterloo who is from the Institute for Quantum Computing, a post-doctoral fellow, a really, really smart, highly trained young woman working in quantum computing, the field of the future. She's leaving it because she's had enough of the harassment. She's leaving it. That's intellectual capacity leaving. That's crazy.

It's about having all the talent at the table, and I think it's a reasonable expectation that any human endeavour is going to have, more or less, a participation rate that looks like humanity. If we don't have a participation rate that more or less looks like humanity, for whatever we're looking at in a particular location, then we have a problem.

Research funding needs more support in Canada. There's no doubt about that and that's going to help everybody, but it needs to be done in a way that's equitable and that promotes and embraces diversity explicitly and intentionally.

● (1150)

**The Vice-Chair (Ms. Pam Damoff):** That's your time.

We probably have time for three minutes, if you have questions on the Conservative side.

**Ms. Rachael Harder:** I do.

I'm interested in this word “fair”. We often use it.

**Prof. Imogen Coe:** Sorry...?

**Ms. Rachael Harder:** You used the word “fair” in your presentation. You said we want things to be fair.

I looked it up, and here's what it said. It is defined as being in accordance with the rules or standards, legitimate. That's one. It also means without cheating or trying to achieve unjust advantage, so if we're using the word “fair”.... I believe we should have a fair or just world, and that's what we should be striving toward.

If we have a field to which 100 men apply and 25 women apply, but we have to receive the same number of men and women in order to be fair, and if, let's say, in this field, from the 100 male applications and the 25 female applications, we are going to receive 50, that means that all 25 women will be received, and 25 men out of the 100 men will be received.

Is that fair?

**Prof. Imogen Coe:** With all due respect, that's a ridiculous question.

**Ms. Rachael Harder:** But those are quotas, and that is what you defined as fair.

**Prof. Imogen Coe:** We can argue semantics if you want, but—

**Ms. Rachael Harder:** My question is simple. Is it fair?

**Prof. Imogen Coe:** What is the nature of the program that you're talking about? What is the nature of the—

**Ms. Rachael Harder:** You don't have to understand the nature of the program.

**Prof. Imogen Coe:** Yes, you do. Of course you do. Everything has a context around it. Everything is context-dependent.

**Ms. Rachael Harder:** The fairness will depend on the context...?

**Prof. Imogen Coe:** Nothing happens in a vacuum. We're not living in a vacuum.

**Ms. Rachael Harder:** Okay, so you're saying that fairness then is determined by the context.

**Prof. Imogen Coe:** I believe that equal access to opportunity is a human rights issue, and I believe that we do not have equal access to opportunity, at least in the STEM pathways, and that we need to be seeking that because that is fair. We need to be giving people access to achieve their full potential. How we do that and the mechanisms whereby we do that are going to vary, and they may involve quotas, but those are going to be dependent on the nature and the context of that particular topic that we're looking at.

**Ms. Rachael Harder:** It's subjective fairness.

Thank you.

**The Vice-Chair (Ms. Pam Damoff):** Thank you very much for your testimony, Dr. Coe. It was very helpful to our study.

With that, we're going to suspend until noon, when we have our next panel of witnesses.

● (1150)

(Pause)

● (1200)

**The Chair (Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC)):** We're going to reconvene the meeting.

I am happy to welcome, from the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce via video conference from Toronto, Andrea Nalyzyty. She is in charge of governance and government relations, and she will have 10 minutes to speak.

Following that, we're going to hear from the West Coast Women's Legal Education and Action Fund, also by video conference, with Kasari Govender, executive director, and Zahra Jimale, director of law reform.

We're going to start with Andrea for 10 minutes.

**Ms. Andrea Nalyzyty (Vice-President, Governance and Government Relations, Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce):** Thank you, Madam Chair and members of the committee, for giving me the opportunity to speak to you today. I'm sorry I couldn't be there in person.

My name is Andrea Nalyzyty. I'm vice-president and associate general counsel, governance and government relations, at CIBC. My team and I are responsible for global regulatory affairs and government relations in all jurisdictions in which CIBC operates.

I began my career as a real estate lawyer in private practice and transitioned to financial services in the mid-1990s. Since 2000 I have worked at CIBC in a series of senior positions that have been both challenging and rewarding. After having led a skilled team of lawyers who supported personal, small business, and commercial banking, I moved to human resources. There I was responsible for employee and labour relations and all risk and control matters for CIBC HR globally. While in HR, I also took over management of our vendor contracts. A few short years later, I became our bank's chief procurement officer.

I suppose this all goes to show that you really do have to be careful when you have suggestions on how another team can enhance their performance and better serve their clients. You may just end up running that team.

I'm really proud of the career I've had so far. I know, if I'm here speaking to you, that it's partly because some things have changed in the business world, but it is also evident to me that certain things have not changed and that much more work needs to be done. While I think it is fair to say that we've made positive progress in curbing certain more overt forms of gender discrimination, there is still a lot of work to be done to challenge more unconscious forms of gender bias that impact women's participation in the workforce. I mean this not as a comment directed solely toward corporate Canada, but much more broadly throughout the Canadian economy.

Unconscious bias comes in so many forms, such as simply not considering a woman when it comes to filling certain kinds of positions. It can also mean something more systematic, such as enacting policies that unconsciously discriminate against pregnancy, or that fail to ensure flexible working arrangements for employees, primarily mothers, with children and extra family commitments. Let me be clear that I don't think these biases are most often rooted in malice. Rather, it's a lack of understanding of how certain policies impact women in the workplace. I think that is exactly why we need to talk about them more and actively design policies to guard against them.

At CIBC we have a robust gender diversity and inclusion strategy that has been in place since 2014. To support our strategy, a gender diversity and inclusion executive action committee was established, comprised of senior leaders across the organization. We focus on improving gender balance at leadership levels and on fostering an inclusive organization. Our strategy is aimed at breaking down unconscious stereotypes and biases. It is based on a few key premises—simply and most straightforwardly, that it's the right thing to do, that gender diversity is good for business, and that it helps us gain better insights into our clients' thinking and needs. It accurately reflects the world in which we operate. Research tells us that companies with more women in senior leadership positions perform better financially than those with fewer or no women in senior leadership positions.

Our programs, and I will only highlight two, have actively focused on unconscious biases and stereotypes. In partnership with Catalyst, we have posted the first “men advocating real change” program in Canada. Leaders and clients participated in a one and a half day workshop on how to better champion inclusion and achieve better gender balance at leadership levels in the organization. Three more sessions are planned before the end of 2017.

We have also provided “disrupting unconscious bias” training for leaders to influence mindsets and become more aware of and disrupt unconscious biases, supporting our leaders to leverage difference and develop and advance a diverse talent pipeline.

With respect to pay equity, CIBC complies with all federal and provincial requirements. We leverage compensation policies and programs that are bias-free. These policies and programs reflect our ongoing commitment to be proactive in providing equal opportunity wages to our employees. To help women balance work and family life, we leverage flexible work options through our CIBC@work program, including options to work from home where it makes business sense and is agreed upon by manager and employee. We have developed and strongly support progressive and leading leave policies.

● (1205)

Sponsorship and mentorship, which we know are two very different things, are key components of women's success in the workplace. Research shows that sponsorship is critical to professional advancement and that women are 46% less likely to have a sponsor than men.

To support women in developing sponsorship and mentorship relationships across the organization and at all levels, we created the CIBC women's network. This network delivers a variety of professional programming across the country, including networking events, speed-networking lunches, and career panels featuring various female executives and senior leaders across the organization. This network also organizes speakers' series featuring topics relevant to professional development and facilitates peer-mentoring circles.

Advancing gender diversity requires leadership, vision, and commitment. At CIBC that leadership is provided by Victor Dodig, our president and CEO. He is a strong and vocal supporter of the advancement of capable women on boards and in executive roles, and plays an active role in the business community as the chair of Catalyst Canada, an organization that works to accelerate progress for women through workplace inclusion. We have made some significant advancements. Within CIBC 41% of our board members are women, up from 31% in 2014; 30% of our executive team are women, an increase from 24% in 2014; and gender representation goals are included in our senior leaders' performance scorecards.

I do work for a bank after all, so let me close by speaking on why gender diversity is also good for business.

First, it is a demonstrable fact that organizations with more women in management and senior leadership positions are tied to stronger financial performance, including higher ROE dividend payout ratios and valuations. Companies with diverse workforces benefit from higher returns, increased innovation, and higher employee satisfaction. Gender diversity more accurately reflects the world in which we live. When you embrace gender diversity, you gain insight into your clients' thinking, you build better relationships, you have the best team, and you build a better company. When our team members realize their full potential, we benefit from increased innovation, productivity, and engagement, resulting in better economic outcomes.

On that, Madam Chair, I would like to thank the committee for engaging in this study and I welcome your questions.

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

We're going to move now to the West Coast Women's Legal Education and Action Fund, with Kasari Govender and Zahra Jimale.

**Ms. Kasari Govender (Executive Director, West Coast Women's Legal Education and Action Fund):** Thank you for having us here today. We're very pleased to be part of this study and to have the chance to make our submissions to you.

I'll start by telling you a bit about West Coast LEAF. Then I'm going to delve into talking about the impact of access to justice and legal aid on women's economic insecurity. Then my colleague Zahra will talk to you a little bit about child care and also about pay equity. That's how we're going to split it up today.

West Coast LEAF is a women's organization. Our mandate is to end discrimination against women in B.C. through systemic legal work, including litigation, law reform, and public legal education. We have worked extensively in the areas of access to justice and child care—as I mentioned, two of the issues we're going to talk about today—including writing a number of significant research and law reform reports. We'll be addressing both of these issues today.

The systemic problems underlying women's economic inequality include the legacy of colonialism, xenophobia, and institutionalized patriarchy—some pretty big ideas. Part of this picture is the massive problem of violence against women and the impact that family violence in particular has on women's economic security. Of course, not all poverty or economic inequality stems from violence against women, but it is a key element of the causal analysis and recognizing all of these causes will help us craft solutions that work.

At this point in your study, you've heard a lot about the problems facing women in Canada in respect to economic insecurity. In our time here today, we want to focus on some of the solutions, actions that we believe Canada should be implementing today.

You've heard so many submissions that I didn't have a chance to review all of them, but from our quick review I don't think you've heard a lot about access to justice and its impact upon economic inequality. In B.C. there is a crisis in access to justice. We're not the only province facing this, but this is where we're located, so I want to tell you a little bit about the problems here.

Legal aid was gutted in B.C. in 2002, and family law in particular by 60%. Family law is highly restricted by a few different areas, but it really is only present when you are very low income, and for very few hours, to help you get a protection order when there's violence in the relationship. Those are essentially the criteria that are applied.

Why is family law legal aid important for women's economic security? Women leaving relationships without legal assistance will often sacrifice economic legal entitlements for the sake of holding on to custody and to keep themselves and their children safe in situations of violence.

Studies suggest that women's median income for the year of their separation or divorce drops by about 30%, whereas men's median income decreases by only about 6%. Studies also show that eventually men's income recovers and women's doesn't. Divorce itself is expensive. A two-day divorce trial will cost around $20,000. It is also expensive to be the parent primarily responsible for raising children, and we know women are still in that role, and to be the parent statistically making less money because of pay inequality.

All these factors together mean that having a lawyer when you're leaving a relationship will help your economic situation and will ultimately increase economic equality in the country.

This problem of access to justice—to civil justice in particular—in Canada and its impact upon women has risen to the level of international concern. CEDAW, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, had concluding observations on Canada that came down in late 2016. They specifically recommended earmarking funds in the Canada social transfers for civil legal aid to ensure that women have access to justice in all jurisdictions, particularly focused on women victims of violence, indigenous women, and women with disabilities.

The CEDAW committee also is specifically concerned about the income test thresholds in family law, which exclude many low-income women from access to justice. We say that this further impacts their ability to be financially independent. By way of example, a woman in B.C. applying as a single woman, if she works full time on minimum wage, doesn't qualify for legal aid, so there's a huge gap between women who qualify for legal aid and women who can actually afford to get access to counsel on their own.

We echo the CEDAW committee's urging that the federal government earmark specific funds for civil legal aid in order to promote rule of law and women's safety.

● (1210)

We also want to add that the federal government has another role in ensuring women have access to justice post-relationship in order to promote gender-based income equality, which is through determinations of child support. We are urging the federal government to streamline the process for applying for child support in order to, hopefully, provide opportunities for women to not have to pay for counsel and to not have to go through the justice system in order to secure child support, which will ultimately decrease their legal costs and increase their income by ensuring they get access to child support when they're the only ones taking care of the children.

We are suggesting that the federal government do a consultation to figure out a better system, perhaps an administrative legal system that would impact on reducing the toll on the court system, and as I said, the need to pay for counsel.

I'm going to pass it over now to my colleague, Zahra Jimale.

**Ms. Zahra Jimale (Director of Law Reform, West Coast Women's Legal Education and Action Fund):** Thank you.

I'll be speaking to pay equity and child care. I'll start with child care.

Economic security and a poverty reduction strategy must address the adverse lifelong impacts of the disproportionate unpaid caregiving performed by women in Canada.

In 2016, West Coast LEAF did a research project looking at the impact of child care on a diverse group of women in B.C. In the resulting public report, titled “High Stakes: The impacts of child care on the human rights of women and children”, we documented the extent to which unpaid caregiving responsibilities disproportionately fall on women, and the corresponding impact on their economic security, whether they are parenting with a partner or parenting alone. In particular, when combined with the wage gap, women often become financially dependent on their partner and are at risk of deep poverty when relationships come to an end.

Lack of accessible child care creates some very practical and immediate obstacles for a woman who, as a result of relationship breakdown—or any other reason, really—must return to work or increase her hours of work while continuing to be the primary caregiver for her children. We want to see $10-a-day child care implemented in B.C., with immediate subsidies to be administered through the existing operating grant structure.

We ask that federal funding to provinces be made subject to conditions as to how it should be spent, conditions that address and prioritize the following specific concerns: prioritized access to free child care for women fleeing violence, women who need support to parent, and children awaiting kinship care placements; flexible child care services that provide a range of child care programs that accommodate work schedules outside of the usual Monday to Friday and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. workweek; availability of childcare services and supports to all regardless of immigration status, particularly women who are fleeing violence; child care services and support that are separate from the child care protection system to ensure that women do not fear asking for assistance; availability of culturally appropriate child care for indigenous children; and fully accessible child care services for children with disabilities.

We also call on the government to enact proactive pay equity legislation.

To address economic security in a meaningful way, it is time to enact proactive federal pay equity legislation. The current complaint-based model is not effective. It does not guarantee the right to equal pay for work of equal value, a human right recognized by our government and by the international community. The wage gap is a significant barrier to economic security for women at any age, and it has both short-term and long-term consequences. The disproportionate exposure of women to poverty and associated adverse impacts, including the inability to access justice and leave abusive relationships due to lack of financial means, must be considered when discussing economic security for women.

It is time for action. The pay equity discussion has been ongoing since the 1950s. Despite the fact that it has been recognized as a human right, we still do not have federal proactive pay equity legislation in Canada.

● (1215)

**The Chair:** I'll remind you that you have one minute left.

Carry on.

**Ms. Zahra Jimale:** We echo the recommendations made by the pay equity task force in 2004 and call on the government to enact pay equity legislation. Such legislation would place the onus on employers to ensure pay equity, rather than placing it on individuals and unions to bring forward a complaint and spend their limited resources to pursue lengthy litigation.

**Ms. Kasari Govender:** Thank you very much for your time here today.

**The Chair:** That was wonderful. Thank you very much.

We're going to get started with our rounds of questioning. I'm going to advise you that I will give everybody a one-minute warning as they're going through their questioning, just for timing.

We're going to pass it on to Sean Fraser for seven minutes.

**Mr. Sean Fraser (Central Nova, Lib.):** That's perfect. Thank you so much.

I'll have a few questions for both groups of witnesses here, so to the extent that you can keep your answers concise, it would be greatly appreciated.

Beginning with the CIBC, you started to mention near the end of your remarks that there has been improved performance, essentially, when there's enhanced gender equity. You mentioned as well that CIBC has seen an increase from 31% to 41%, I believe, in fairly recent history, in terms of women at the board level. Did CIBC experience that same return on investment, so to speak, when they actually took the steps to increase the number of women represented at the decision-making level?

**Ms. Andrea Nalyzyty:** Yes, that has occurred, and we're very pleased with the results. We're continuing to encourage further advancement of women, so we're not sitting on our laurels or the successes of the past. We will continue to strive for equal representation of women at the executive levels.

**Mr. Sean Fraser:** In terms of how CIBC has achieved this enhancement in the representation of women, or removing it from the context of CIBC, how can the federal government encourage more companies to similarly increase the representation of women? We've had a lot of discussions about a comply or explain model, and a lot of discussions about a quota system.

In your view, what has allowed CIBC to experience the success that you've outlined in your remarks?

● (1220)

**Ms. Andrea Nalyzyty:** A few things have been important. One is the leadership of Victor Dodig and his support of the advancement of capable women within the organization.

We've also provided tools to help women succeed within the organization. I mentioned the CIBC@work model that allows for more flexible arrangements. Those arrangements aren't exclusively used or leveraged by women. They're leveraged by men with similar types of commitments, whether elder care, child care, or other commitments. We're just making it easier for our employees to be successful and to better contribute at work.

**Mr. Sean Fraser:** On the issue of leadership, you actually discussed very succinctly the importance of sponsorship over the course of a person's career, and that men are far more likely to have a sponsor to help them climb the ranks, so to speak.

I couldn't agree more that this is essential, not just for women but for anyone to succeed in his or her career. What recommendations could this committee make to the federal government that would encourage a greater level of sponsorship of women by men in power today? Essentially, how can the government encourage this kind of sponsorship in the private sector?

**Ms. Andrea Nalyzyty:** I think part of it is to show the successes of what happens when that sponsorship occurs. I don't think it's only men sponsoring women. It's women sponsoring men—

**Mr. Sean Fraser:** Absolutely.

**Ms. Andrea Nalyzyty:** —men sponsoring women. It's vice versa.

It's funny. I never really knew the difference between sponsorship and mentorship until a few years ago. I had a lot of mentors. To me, a mentor is somebody who provides you with advice on the sidelines, but doesn't have a vested interest in helping you in whatever you want to achieve.

A few years ago, I got a sponsor and it happened inadvertently. Somebody offered to sponsor me, and as I said, I didn't know the difference between sponsorship and mentorship. It was so different, what they were prepared to do and the commitment they were prepared to make to me, that I now have three sponsors. I actively sought them out and sought their guidance and their support.

You're not going to legislate people sponsoring other people, but I think if you show the successes, that leads to more sponsorship relationships being developed.

**Mr. Sean Fraser:** Wonderful.

I'd like to change gears and ask Ms. Govender some of the access to justice questions I have.

You discussed the gap between people who qualify for legal aid, living in really extreme poverty, and people who can't afford counsel. I know in budget 2016 there was about $88 million dedicated toward criminal legal aid, but on the civil side—this is something I've seen in my previous career—I know that in Alberta, if people qualify for assistance for the severely handicapped, they make too much to qualify for legal aid in that province, or at least they did a couple of years ago.

Have you identified the magnitude of the gap, the funding that would be required to really expand coverage to people who can't afford it?

**Ms. Kasari Govender:** That's a good question. We haven't done that economic analysis. In terms of the advocacy, there's certainly a lot of advocacy happening in this province around access to justice, and there is some variance in answering that question. The one organization that has put forward a concrete number is the B.C. branch of the Canadian Bar Association. I don't think it was this latest provincial election—I believe it was the one before—but it's within the last five years that they put together a plan where they did actually quantify it. It was not quite returning to the levels of 2002, which I believe is when the cuts were made, but it was fairly close, adjusting for inflation, of course.

**Mr. Sean Fraser:** Sorry, do you mind if I jump in? I have just about a minute and a half left.

One of the things that I think we can promote to help close this gap that shouldn't be too expensive is really embracing the notion of corporate social responsibility. I know there are certain pilot programs in different cities—really where there are a lot of big firms—that allow them to contribute pro bono hours towards billable targets, for example.

Do you think this is a helpful way to provide pro bono legal services to people in need? If so, what at the federal level can we do to encourage people with the human resources and expertise to essentially donate their time to people in need?

**Ms. Kasari Govender:** I would urge the federal government to focus on legal aid as opposed to pro bono. I say that with no disregard for pro bono. It's actually a really important part of the access to justice picture, but I think we have a very robust pro bono culture in the bar in Canada. There is more that can be done, but I don't think that's where the problem lies. The problem lies—

● (1225)

**Mr. Sean Fraser:** Thank you very much. I have one more quick question.

I'm just curious about your view of the reinstatement of the court challenges program. Is this going to help groups like yours and other access to justice organizations across the country conduct systemic litigation that will improve gender equality in Canada?

**Ms. Kasari Govender:** Absolutely. We are very pleased at the renewal of the court challenges program. It is, as you know, focused on systemic change, so it doesn't address directly these issues of change on the ground. West Coast LEAF is bringing litigation against the provincial government right now on systemic change on exactly this issue, and it will help us do that.

**Mr. Sean Fraser:** Thank you. That's my time.

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

We're going to now move on to Martin Shields for his seven minutes.

**Mr. Martin Shields:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Let's move first to the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce.

It's interesting, the definition you were using with sponsorship and mentorship. One of the careers I had was I was a principal for many years and interviewed many possible vice-principals. One of my critical questions was, “Do you want to be a principal?” This was not gender-specific, but if they didn't want to be a principal, I didn't want them as a vice-principal because—and I told them plainly—“I want you to be a principal, that's why you're here.” I understand your definition between a sponsorship and a mentorship, because if you don't clearly define that role, then it gets the sideline advice on the side.

Could you give me another example of mentorship that was successful in your organization?

**Ms. Andrea Nalyzyty:** We have numerous programs where we have more senior women mentor women just starting their career. I currently mentor about 10 women at much more junior levels who have no interest in being at my career line or taking the career path that I've taken but want to know how to deal with specific situations they encounter in the workplace and are looking for a sounding board as to how to handle a difficult situation, how to have a difficult conversation, and how to make a presentation better. It runs the whole gamut of questions they have.

We strongly encourage senior women to take on that mentorship role—and men as well—to provide guidance to those coming up the ranks.

**Mr. Martin Shields:** Can men be successful with women as mentors?

**Ms. Andrea Nalyzyty:** I believe so, yes, and I've seen it in action.

**Mr. Martin Shields:** Okay. Thank you.

One of the other things you talked about is the multi-ethnic part of banking that you try to work at. One of the things in the community that I am from is that we have a very diverse community, probably one of the most diverse in Canada. I found the banks responded to that first in the sense that immediately you saw front-line staff from different ethnicities, and you saw them moving into management positions very quickly.

The one really interesting thing I saw was that in our health system we were having real problems in our ERs with the different languages. I went into a bank and I saw people of different ethnicities being taken back to talk on a phone. The bank had established a network in which they could get 200 languages online within two minutes. The private sector, your banking industry, did that quicker.

Do you have examples of where your banking industry has moved to do things like that?

**Ms. Andrea Nalyzyty:** Yes, not only with respect to gender issues, but all kinds of diversity issues and bringing products and services to clients in the way that they want them to be delivered and in what they want those products to deliver.

There are several examples of that. We obviously have branches. We have over a thousand branches across the country, or banking centres, but not everybody wants to bank with us that way. We make our services available through various channels—digital channels, telephone banking channels, mobile banking channels—and what we try to do is listen to our clients and bring them what they need. We also have a newcomer offer that we have developed to meet the unique needs of newcomers, and we have various employees supporting those offers.

**Mr. Martin Shields:** Thank you.

Moving to West Coast LEAF, you made a comment about looking for a system that would take it out of the legal system. Do you have examples anywhere of other countries that have done this?

**Ms. Zahra Jimale:** Through justice, or...?

**Ms. Kasari Govender:** I think he's referring to child support.

● (1230)

**Ms. Zahra Jimale:** I don't, off the top of my head, have examples. I could certainly find some and get back to you on that, but I don't have examples.

I want to be clear that it doesn't obviate the need for legal aid, but it's one element that we can see where the system really doesn't work in a lot of different ways. Because child care is an entitlement, it really isn't something that needs to be litigated. There are lots of issues that might need to be litigated; child support isn't one of them.

What we're suggesting for the federal government is a way to streamline that, not to create more administrative hurdles but to create a system that makes it easier, more accessible to get that order in place and start getting that money flowing towards the needs of children and ensuring that women aren't further impoverished by having to disproportionately support their children financially.

**Mr. Martin Shields:** What you're saying is that there are fairly clear standards and precedents set under child support, so you're looking for another mechanism to get it implemented.

**Ms. Kasari Govender:** That's right.

**Mr. Martin Shields:** Yes, but you don't have another example of one, and you think we need to move to something different.

Getting those examples would be very important in the sense of finding what works somewhere else or whether you're developing something totally new.

**Ms. Kasari Govender:** That's why we are suggesting that the federal government engage in a consultation on this. It's not something that's been deeply discussed and it's a fairly new.... Actually, when we worked through this for this presentation, it's not something that we've done a lot of talking about. That's why I didn't come to you saying, "Here is exactly what we think you should do." What we think you should do is engage in a consultation process across the country to design a new process.

I think there has been "in the works" talk about looking at child support again anyway, so we think this would be an opportunity to not just look at the child care table and how the law might work differently, but how the actual system might work differently as well.

**Mr. Martin Shields:** When you talk about consultation, it's really important that you have some of those ideas available. If you're looking at us to pull magic things out of the bag.... It's the consultation. If you have those ideas, if you have those systems, if you have ways that could help that system change...and I understand the legal system and what it needs, but you're talking about moving to something else.

I think having that ground work done, if you want a federal government to move that, that's the kind of research you should do and have it ready to go in the sense of not just telling us.... If you have done that research, that would be something I think you should work on.

**Ms. Kasari Govender:** Thank you for that. We have both got our work cut out for us and we will definitely add that to our list in terms of further advocacy that we do on this issue.

**Mr. Martin Shields:** Thank you.

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

We're going to now pass on to Sheila Malcolmson for seven minutes.

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson:** Thank you, Chair.

Thank you to all three witnesses.

West Coast LEAF representatives, thank you very much for your "High Stakes" report from July last year. I really appreciate the way you've interwoven a lot of the issues that this committee has been studying for some time now.

We have heard from witnesses who say that because of the lack of pay equity legislation they earned less than their husbands, so when they couldn't find affordable child care it was the woman who dropped out of the workplace. Then there is the unpaid care associated with that, and lost earnings. When she moves back into the workplace, the work tends to be part-time and precarious, without the social safety net and unemployment insurance and pension associated with it. Then, if there is domestic violence, divorce, or separation, she is that much more vulnerable.

We heard heartbreaking testimony about women who made the very difficult decision to put themselves and their children into poverty in order to leave an unsafe relationship. Then, at retirement, to the extent that they do retire, without those financial savings, an appalling number of women in Canada disproportionately live in poverty. In my own riding, 50% of the women at a homeless shelter for women are now over the age of 50. They're professional women who worked their whole lives.

I really appreciate your report weaving these pieces together. If you haven't shared it already with the committee, would you be able to file it through the clerk because it has a lot of the issues we've been touching on?

Is that all right, Chair?

**The Chair:** Yes. I agree that should be fine.

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson:** I note that your report on child care flags that Canada's investments in early childhood education and child care are low compared to other comparable countries. I also note in particular your link to the domestic violence impact, and how that can particularly put women into financial peril.

Do I remember correctly that you had recommended that provincial or federal programs for child care would prioritize child care spaces for victims of domestic violence?

● (1235)

**Ms. Zahra Jimale:** Yes, that's right. That's one of the recommendations we're making, that free child care be available for women fleeing violence and women in need of assistance with parenting—for example, when they're involved or engaged with, or about to be engaged with, the child protection system—so that children are not being removed as a result of mothers not being able to find appropriate child care services.

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson:** Thank you. That's something for us to take up, for sure.

We also heard quite a bit of testimony around the importance of domestic violence leave. Women may need a couple of extra days, sometimes maybe only five days, to resettle their families. In some cases, their workplace is the most stable environment for them, and they want to get back to work but they might need some extra time to find new accommodations.

Is that also one of your recommendations, that this is something the federal government could take up and show leadership on as it starts to fan out across some of the different provinces in Canada?

**Ms. Kasari Govender:** Absolutely. We originally had built in a piece about that and pulled it out because of time. That is absolutely something we are advocating for. As you know, there's kind of a range, around five or 10 days, that has been developed across the different provinces.

What we hear anecdotally over and over again is that when women leave violent relationships and they're in transition homes, they're dealing with so many different pieces of their lives at the same moment. They're dealing with housing. They're dealing with their medical issues, the physical and psychological impacts of leaving a violent relationship. They are dealing with their legal issues, the relationship falling apart, child support, and so on. They're having to take their children with them through all of these meetings with lawyers and doctors, because the transition homes are not in a position to provide child care.

Domestic violence leave factors into that. They're dealing with having to work at the same time, or they're trying to get leave or get on social assistance. You can imagine all these things happening at the same time. One piece the federal government can step in on is on giving them leave from work. Another piece is providing legal assistance. Another piece is providing child care. All of that means that women are in a much better place to get their lives back on track and to keep themselves and their children safe.

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson:** In the time remaining, could you re-emphasize for us the importance of that domestic violence leave provision as something that can build women's economic security, ultimately?

**Ms. Kasari Govender:** Ultimately, if a woman is dealing with all of those different pieces at the same time, probably all aspects will be suffering. She'll be struggling to find housing. She'll be struggling to keep her job. If she's taking time off from work and that isn't built into leave, then she is often having to miss her employment. What that means, of course, is that she may be fired, or she may be taking unpaid leave in order to flee.

All of these are pieces of the same puzzle in terms of building up her economic security. The better place she's in to get her life back on track—to get housing, to get a regular income—the better place she's in to stay safe. If she's dealing with that as a working woman, she will either be forced out of her employment or she will have to take unpaid absences, neither of which contribute, of course, to her economic security.

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson:** In your work, is it fair to say that this link between domestic violence and the economic vulnerability of women is amplified when you are looking at women living with disabilities, senior women, and other marginalized populations?

**Ms. Kasari Govender:** There's simply no question about it. Again, think about all these obstacles in her way as she leaves the relationship. Where there are additional obstacles, where she has accessibility challenges, where she is trying to find a transition home that might take her—one that's accessible, for example—or where she is deaf or hard of hearing, accessing all of these services takes quite a bit of additional time. For example, in legal aid she only gets 25 or 35 hours. In B.C. and some other legal aid regimes they are limited on hours. That doesn't change if you need a translator for a different language or if you need a translator for sign language, but that means you actually get half the time, because everything is being said twice.

Some of these sound like small details, but they have a pretty profound impact on women's lives. We are often in the position that so many of our issues are tied back to enabling women to have the choice to leave violent relationships. There are all kinds of legal regimes and policies and practices of government that get in the way of a woman's ability to leave. That's where we think the federal government has a real role—both in creating those provisions where they have jurisdiction and in being a leader for provinces, helping with the path.

● (1240)

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

We'll now move on to Pam Damoff for seven minutes.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** Thank you very much, Chair.

My first question is for CIBC. Our previous witness, Dr. Coe, mentioned men advocating real change in Australia and said she didn't understand why we didn't have it in a country like Canada, and then you brought it up. Could you tell us a bit more about what happened at that event and tell us whether there are plans to expand it and build a profile of it here in Canada?

Also, is there a role that the federal government can play in assisting with it?

**Ms. Andrea Nalyzyty:** It was an amazing program. We've had one session so far. It lasted for a day and a half. We brought together very senior leaders from across the organization and some clients. That was different for us, because we brought some of our major clients into the session as well. It was a real opportunity to consider what is meant by gender bias and what you have experienced or haven't experienced that others have to deal with.

One question was, have you ever felt sexually harassed in the workplace? Many men said no, and most of the women raised their hands. There was an exchange of information wherein the men were shocked that the women, whom they work with every day, had experienced something like this at some time in their working career. It's an opportunity to see what others experience.

We're going to have three more sessions by the end of this year. Catalyst Canada is a big supporter of men advocating real change, and there's a real opportunity to leverage it in other workplaces. It doesn't have to be in private sector workplaces. It could be done in a community as well.

I'd be happy to get and to provide to you more information on the way the program can be leveraged.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** That would be great.

Catalyst is a fantastic organization. I've had a number of conversations with them, and they've also appeared at our committee. One conversation I had with them was around women on boards. You mentioned that you had done some work with them as well.

Companies in the banking sector have traditionally done far better than other TSX-listed companies in having representation on boards. Certain sectors—the auto industry is another one—have done better than average.

Having said that, according to the comply or explain program about 45% of public companies still have absolutely no women on their boards. It boggles my mind that they couldn't find at least one woman to sit on their board.

I wonder whether you want to comment or provide some thoughts on how best to solve that issue, and also whether you think it's time for quotas. When I've spoken with Catalyst, they've said that where success has occurred, it has come in countries that have brought in actual quotas for boards. Could you provide us your thoughts on that?

**Ms. Andrea Nalyzyty:** I think one of the best ways to encourage increased representation of women on boards is, first of all, to give women an opportunity to sit on boards. I would suggest that this starts at the not-for-profit level, where there's a real opportunity to develop some board experience. That's point number one.

Point number two is that through showing the successes that various private sector industries or companies have when they have more women represented on the board—the different perspective that's brought to the decision-making process—those successes will lead to enhanced representation by women.

I will have to get back to you on what CIBC's position is on quotas, because I'm not authorized to speak to that.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** That's fine.

My next question is for our other witnesses, West Coast LEAF. You mentioned that Canada's federal government contribution to child care is low compared with that of other countries. This government is investing $7.5 billion over the next 11 years, and it's the first time in 10 years that the federal government has actually engaged with the provinces on child care.

In my riding, I made an announcement with the provincial minister for early education and child care. Ontario has increased the number of spaces by 32%. We are providing, as I mentioned, $7.5 billion for high-quality, affordable child care.

There is certainly, then, a lot of movement and commitment by this government to invest in child care. I'm just wondering about the figures you have about our participation. Are those current figures that take into account this investment, or are they older figures?

● (1245)

**Ms. Zahra Jimale:** Those are the figures from the report. The report was produced in July 2016, I believe, but I actually can't say right now.

**Ms. Kasari Govender:** From my memory of when the report was produced, it was in a state of flux. Some announcements had been made. The provincial government had received the money and it was unclear exactly what was going to happen to it provincially. That's why today we were really focused on attaching strings to the money you're giving to the provincial government. It needs to be spent not just on improving child care in general but actually, as you say, creating more child care spaces, targeting them at those most in need, and ensuring they are available for low-income and middle-class people in particular.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** Part of that money included looking at the data to get some statistics on where the money is going and what the need is. Because the agreement was only signed on June 12 between the feds and the provinces, I suspect it doesn't include a lot of—

**Ms. Kasari Govender:** That's right. I don't know that we have the international comparison since that, but what I can say is that we met with the provincial minister responsible for child care in B.C., and those decisions are still very much in flux about what that's going to look like.

We have some commitments from the B.C. government. You may know that there's sort of an unstable situation here, and that child care is a pretty central piece of what this new provincial government has promised to do. Again, we have some concerns about what that will look like. I'm not saying it's not going to look good, but we really want to be focused on the priority areas that we've mentioned here, and there has been no commitment.

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

We're now going to start the second round, with Rachael Harder for five minutes.

**Ms. Rachael Harder:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I'm going to go to Andrea from CIBC. My questions are mainly for you. First off, I'm needing you to clarify a bit here with regard to the difference between sponsorship and mentorship. I know you've referred to it a little, but could you give me a clear delineation between those terms?

**Ms. Andrea Nalyzyty:** The biggest distinction is that your sponsor has put skin in the game in helping you advance your career. A mentor is somebody who can, frankly, sometimes put skin in the game, but primarily guides you from the sidelines and provides advice, versus somebody who is willing to stick their neck out for you.

**Ms. Rachael Harder:** Thank you. I appreciate that.

**Ms. Andrea Nalyzyty:** Frankly, I wish I had gotten a sponsor earlier in my career. That's what I encourage everybody to do—women or men—if they're starting in the organization or starting their careers now. It's very valuable.

**Ms. Rachael Harder:** Is that something CIBC have made a part of their policy and regular way of doing things? Do they have a program, so to speak, for sponsorship and mentorship, or are they just encouraged by word of mouth that this is something you should explore and pursue? How does that work?

**Ms. Andrea Nalyzyty:** It initially started as a word-of-mouth exercise, but we have developed various networks across the organization in which we strongly encourage people to get involved, either as a mentor, a sponsor, or somebody who is being mentored or sponsored, and we try to show the value of those relationships. We highlight the value of having a mentor or sponsor, or being a mentor or sponsor, and then we encourage other people to join the network as well.

**Ms. Rachael Harder:** Awesome. Thank you.

One of the things you mentioned early on is how CIBC put an analysis in place in order to raise awareness with regard to gender bias and where it was taking place, maybe without even knowing it, whether that was on a policy level or just on a treatment-interaction level, etc.

You mentioned that CIBC wanted to take steps to identify and then address these areas. What motivated that? Was that government policy, was it something internally, or was it client-based? What motivated you to make that change within your institution?

● (1250)

**Ms. Andrea Nalyzyty:** The primary driver was that it was the right thing to do. We were hearing what was happening in the community and in society generally. We heard what was happening within our organization, and we thought this was a great opportunity to tackle the issue. Overt discrimination is rare, I would suggest. Most people don't engage in those types of activities. It's the unconscious bias that holds people back, and that's what we wanted to tackle.

**Ms. Rachael Harder:** Why was that important to you?

**Ms. Andrea Nalyzyty:** Do you mean to CIBC as a whole?

**Ms. Rachael Harder:** Yes.

**Ms. Andrea Nalyzyty:** It was important to ensure that we could encourage advancement of strong employees, going forward, and that they weren't being held back by any unconscious biases. We wanted to give people the full opportunity to succeed in their careers.

**Ms. Rachael Harder:** That's awesome.

One thing you mentioned as well is that you've noticed that gender diversity is really good for business, and you offered a few reasons. You mentioned increased creativity, innovation, productivity—increased revenue, even. Your finances are stronger because of it.

That feels like a carrot approach to me. It feels like a very client-centric, business-centric approach, saying that you know that bringing women to the table is going to be good for business, that it's going to help you serve your clients better, and that at the end of the day everyone is going to benefit because of this decision.

Do you want to comment on that?

**Ms. Andrea Nalyzyty:** The client-centric focus is one of our main values and main focuses. Yes, we did hear from clients that this is important, but we heard it from our employees as well. We take our employee survey process very seriously. We do pulse checks and an annual survey. We've noticed that the more we focus on dealing with unconscious bias and on promoting the right people and giving them the tools they need to succeed, the happier our workforce and the better we are at servicing our clients. It is a win-win situation.

**Ms. Rachael Harder:** That's awesome.

Thank you so much for your time.

**The Chair:** We're going to move on for five minutes with Emmanuella Lambropoulos.

**Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos (Saint-Laurent, Lib.):** Thank you for being with us today.

My question is going to be aimed at CIBC as well.

You seem to be doing a great job of encouraging and promoting women to take on higher positions, and you have made the workplace a lot fairer for them, which is encouraging for them. It makes them take that leap forward.

Do you find that you have an equal number of women and men applying for these higher-level positions?

**Ms. Andrea Nalyzyty:** Definitely there's a broad range of candidates, whether they're external or internal candidates. We try to fill as many positions as possible with internal candidates. I'm currently hiring a few people to join my team, and the diverse range of candidates and the very fair representation between men and women among the applicants is amazing.

**Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos:** They're taking the decision to apply for these positions, then, and they're taking the initiative.

**Ms. Andrea Nalyzyty:** We sometimes tap people on the shoulder as well. I think that's important also. It's part of the sponsorship aspect. Sometimes there is a right person for the role, but they haven't self-identified that they may be the right person or don't think they have the exact skill set to meet the needs of the role. We try to help those people, to encourage them to come forward and apply for those roles and get the learning on the job.

**Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos:** Generally speaking, do you find that the people you have to tap and push a bit harder are women?

**Ms. Andrea Nalyzyty:** In my own personal experience, yes.

**Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos:** Okay.

**Ms. Andrea Nalyzyty:** But once you tap them, it's amazing what you get from providing that extra support and extra effort—and that extra encouragement. Sometimes you just need reassurance that you can do the role.

**Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos:** I know that you have many tools in place to help women stay in these positions and to make it easier for them to balance work and life. Do you find that women stay in these positions longer? What are the results of the programs you've put in place?

**Ms. Andrea Nalyzyty:** Yes, they do stay longer. I would have to get back to you and consult with my team as to what the exact figures are, but our retention rates are very strong and our "return from maternity leave" rates are very strong. We have many people with careers at CIBC who then retire from the CIBC, having been here for their whole working life.

● (1255)

**Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos:** What would you say is the biggest factor in getting women to take a step forward and to ask for a particular position or for a raise? If you were to give pointers to another business, what would you say would help these women to come forward?

I find that often this is an issue. We create our own barriers because of gender stereotypes and the way we've been raised. How can we overcome that problem?

**Ms. Andrea Nalyzyty:** I think it's through being willing to take a chance. That's what I've been willing to do within my career. I had enough confidence in myself that I could move on to the next role and succeed in and learn something in that role. Even if I wasn't fully qualified when I went into the role or knew everything you needed to know, I could learn it very quickly. That's what I try to encourage other people to do.

We look for a basic skill set. When I was in the legal department, we would note that, yes, you have the law degree, yes, you have this experience in legal work, but then we're looking for that little extra. That's what we encourage people to highlight and show in the interview process, or sometimes when they're sponsored into a role.

**Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** You have one minute left. Go ahead.

**Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos:** All right. What exactly do you include in your flex policy? You said they can work from home. What other options are there for this flex policy to make it easier for them?

**Ms. Andrea Nalyzyty:** Working from home, or working remotely is one thing, but it's allowing flexibility in the hours they work, provided the role allows for that flexibility and provided the manager and the employee can agree on those terms.

We look at each employee as a person and look at what they need to succeed in the role, certain things you have to deliver in the role. Sometimes they have to be within a certain time frame, but it's how we support you in achieving what you need to do in the role, so it's more a customized approach.

**Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos:** Is it for both women and men?

**Ms. Andrea Nalyzyty:** It's very much a manager-employee conversation, with the support of HR and the tools we've developed.

**Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos:** Okay.

**The Chair:** That's excellent. Thank you very much.

That will end today's session.

I would like to thank the witnesses for joining us today: Andrea Nalyzyty, vice-president, governance and government relations, for the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, and from West Coast Women's Legal Education and Action Fund, Kasari Govender and Zahra Jimale.

The committee is adjourned.