Skills for Success in employment & skills training: A feminist perspective

Evidence brief

December 2022

Noémie Auclair-Ouellet
Samuel Blanchard
Lauren Brooks-Cleator
Chloe Halpenny
Sonya Howard
Lily Kaufmann
Boris Palameta

SRDC SINCE 1991 DEPUIS SRSA
INNOVATION • EXPERIMENTATION • EVALUATION

The Social Research and Demonstration Corporation (SRDC) is a non-profit research organization, created specifically to develop, field test, and rigorously evaluate new programs. SRDC's two-part mission is to help policy-makers and practitioners identify policies and programs that improve the well-being of all Canadians, with a special concern for the effects on the disadvantaged, and to raise the standards of evidence that are used in assessing these policies.

Since its establishment in December 1991, SRDC has conducted over 450 projects and studies for various federal and provincial departments, municipalities, as well as other public and non-profit organizations. SRDC has offices located in Ottawa and Vancouver, and satellite offices in Calgary, Halifax, Hamilton, London, Moncton, Montreal, Regina, St. John's, Toronto, and Winnipeg.

For more information on SRDC, contact

Social Research and Demonstration Corporation
55 Murray Street, Suite 400
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 5M3
613-237-4311 | 1-866-896-7732
info@srdc.org | www.srdc.org

Vancouver Office
890 West Pender Street, Suite 440
Vancouver, British Columbia V6C 1J9
604-601-4070

Remote offices:
Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Quebec, and Saskatchewan
1-866-896-7732

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Launched in May 2021, the Skills for Success model (see Figure 1) aims to leverage the core strengths of the original Essential Skills framework while aligning more tightly with modern labour market needs (ESDC, 2021). The new model gives prominence to core cognitive skills (Numeracy, Reading, and Writing) while expanding the scope of skills that are increasingly important in the modern job market (Digital Skills, Problem Solving). The Skills for Success model also responds to the growing recognition of the value and potential growth in socio-emotional skills across sectors. It does this by broadening the scope of those in the original framework (Communication, Collaboration) and introducing two more (Adaptability, Creativity & Innovation).

Further resources: Skills for Success

This evidence brief offers an overview of some of the key barriers, opportunities, and other considerations related to Skills for Success programming for multiply-marginalized women. For further information – including about Skills for Success training that adopts an intersectional approach – readers should consult Nguyen et al.'s (2022) *Skills for Success implementation guidance* and Palameta et al.'s (2021) *Research report to support the launch of Skills for Success*. In particular, the 2022 implementation-focused report offers greater detail on several of the topics explored here, including learning needs and promising practices for diverse learner groups.

Figure 1 Skills for Success

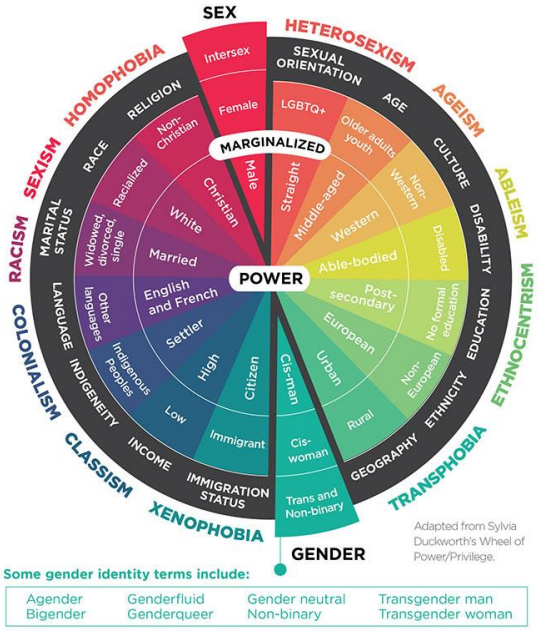
This evidence brief was drafted to inform the design and development of skills training curriculum and approaches as part of the WOMEN FIRST project, funded through Employment and Skill Development Canada's (ESDC) Women's Employment Readiness pilot program. It may also be more broadly useful for organizations, training developers, and practitioners working in

the employment and skills training sector seeking to employ an equity-driven approach to their design and delivery of Skills for Success materials. Following an overview of intersectionality as it relates to employment and skills training, we provide an overview of key skill differences between different demographic groups. This is followed by a discussion about the role of training to address systemic inequities, as well as practitioner considerations, suggestions, and examples for training development and delivery.

APPLYING AN INTERSECTIONAL LENS TO EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS TRAINING

Grounded in Black feminist thought and coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989, intersectionality is a theoretical and analytical framework that emphasizes the interacting – rather than merely additive – nature of different forms of discrimination and oppression. Intersectionality proposes that various systems of power (e.g., sexism, racism, ableism, etc.) collide to create unique and often compounding forms of exclusion and marginalization. For example, racialized women in Canada have higher rates of unemployment than both non-racialized women and racialized men; racialized *newcomer* women are even more likely to be unemployed (Hudon, 2016). Their experiences are shaped simultaneously by sexism, racism, and xenophobia to foster labour market disadvantage.

Figure 2 Identity, marginalization, and power



A person's social location is comprised of any combination of identities, including those related to gender, race, age, immigration status, Indigeneity, disability, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status, among others. For most people, some aspects of their identity are more likely to confer privilege (e.g., being white, non-disabled, and/or cisgender) and others disadvantage (e.g., being Indigenous, bisexual, and/or living in poverty). Figure 2 illustrates several variables that may make up a person's identity, along with the relative power associated with some of these dimensions (Bauer, 2021).

An intersectional approach can help us understand how someone's social location and life experiences (e.g., coping with substance use, parenting, or working multiple jobs) shape their access to resources, opportunities, and relative advantage. In other words, it emphasizes how individual experiences are systemically and structurally shaped. For example, adopting an intersectional lens for program delivering skills training to low-income, racialized, newcomer women would consider the experiences, skills gaps, needs, aspirations, and resources associated not *only* with class, race, immigrant status, or gender, but rather the distinct combination of these identities (Kezar et al., 2020). By helping us make sense of the multiplicity of peoples' identities and the ways in which they interact, an intersectional approach can support practitioners to address learners' needs in a more supportive, responsive, and holistic way.

SKILLS DIFFERENCES, DRIVERS, AND IMPLICATIONS

Note on terminology and concepts: Gender/sex

The investigation of gender differences in cognitive and socio-emotional skills is limited by the prevalence of a narrow (and often inaccurate) definition of gender. For example, many studies claim to investigate the effect of gender, but operationalize it in a way that confuses and conflates it with sex (e.g., using a gender variable with male and female as categories). Further, many studies split participants in two subgroups and do not offer the possibility to identify outside of a binary. Other studies use a third (e.g., "other") category but exclude participants who fall into this category from further analyses. For these reasons, information on gender diversity represents a significant gap in the available evidence.

Skills for Success shares many similarities with other skills measurement frameworks. While it was specifically created to reflect the realities of the Canadian job market, it is informed by the large body of literature on core cognitive skills and socio-emotional skills. Drawing on other large-scale international studies of skills measurement, this section offers an overview of skills differences that have emerged between different demographic groups, as well as potential drivers and implications.

PROGRAM FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ASSESSMENT (PISA)

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD) Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) measures 15-year-olds' ability to use their reading, mathematics and science knowledge and skills (OECD, n.d.a).

PISA studies show that socio-economically advantaged students consistently outperform disadvantaged students, a trend that has remained stable since 2009. In terms of immigration status, 2018 showed no difference in reading skills between immigrant and non-immigrant students in Canada, although one in four immigrant students reported socio-economic disadvantage. Data on disability is limited: while PISA studies exclude students with Special

Education Needs (SEN), how SEN is conceptualized differs across countries. In 2015, Canada excluded 7.5% of 15-year-old students from PISA compared to a global average of 3.7% on the basis of SEN, raising questions about results bias and the feasibility of cross-country comparison. For example, while Canada excluded students with intellectual disabilities from participating in PISA, they were included in Korea and Japan (Anders et al., 2021).

PISA studies have revealed gender differences in core cognitive skills: girls outperform boys in reading, while boys outperform girls in mathematics (OECD, 2020a). This trend appears stable and consistent across countries and over time. For example, PISA 2018 results in Canada show a 29-point gender gap in reading, similar to the international average that same year (30 points) and to the gap observed in the 2009 study (34 points) (OECD, 2019a). In mathematics, a skills gap of 5 points was found in the Canadian and international sample. Performance in science was similar for boys and girls.

Results from PISA 2018 suggest that boys:

> *"[W]ere more likely to learn about the interconnectedness of countries' economies, look for news on the Internet or watch the news together during class; [they] were also more likely to be asked by teachers to give their opinion about international news, take part in classroom discussions about world events and analyse global issues with their classmates."* (OECD, 2020b)

This contrasts with the experience of girls, who "were more likely than boys to report that they learn how to solve conflicts with their peers in the classroom, learn about different cultures and learn how people from different cultures can have different perspectives on some issues" (OECD, 2020b).

Offering different learning experiences to boys and girls has an influence over career choices, as shown by gender disparities in career aspirations for youth with similar skills levels in the same report. In many countries, youth start making educational choices that constrain their career options around the age of 15 years old – the age of participants recruited in PISA studies. Educational choices can limit experience and exposure to mathematics for girls, who tend to opt for training options and careers that require strong mathematics skills (e.g., Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics or STEM fields) less often than boys (Ferguson, 2016). For example, research from PISA studies found that while 66% of young men who perceived their mathematics skills as excellent chose a STEM program at university, this was the case for only 47% of young women with similarly-positive perceptions.

Meanwhile, the gender gaps in reading skills as measured by PISA has narrowed over time. This may be attributable to the relevance and importance across disciplines, whereas the use of mathematics skills is more constrained to some fields (Borgonovi et al., 2017). In one longitudinal follow-up study of Canadian PISA participants, a representative subsample of PISA 2000 participants was assessed again using the same questionnaire and administration

procedure in 2009 (OECD, 2012). Results showed a marked overall improvement in reading scores; while women still outperformed men at follow-up, this margin had narrowed over time due to improvements among young men who were initially in the lower-performing end of the distribution.

PROGRAMME FOR THE INTERNATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF ADULT COMPETENCIES (PIAAC)

Canada has participated in the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) (PISA's counterpart for the assessment of adult skills) since its initiation in 2011-2012 (OECD, n.d.b). The major survey used in PIAAC is the Survey of Adult Skills, which measures adults' proficiency in literacy (reading), numeracy (mathematics), and problem solving; the survey also gathers information on skill use at work and in daily life.

While we noted above that PISA has found relatively small overall skills disparities related to socio-economic status in Canada, findings from PIAAC suggest that these disparities in fact tend to widen over time (Borgonovi et al., 2017). This points to a compounding effect: differences in careers and one's subsequent socio-economic status may lead to different opportunities to maintain or improve skills, resulting in skills losses or gains over time. Further, PIAAC results both in Canada and elsewhere show that while gender differences in reading tend to resorb almost completely over time, differences in mathematics increase, with men increasingly outperforming women in this skill (OECD, 2019b; Borgonovi et al., 2017). Meanwhile, problem solving skills are similar between women and men (Ferguson, 2016).

Key takeaways

- Girls perform better than boys in reading at 15 years old, but this difference *diminishes* over time. Conversely, boys perform better than girls in mathematics at 15 years old, and this difference *increases* over time.
- While socio-economic skills disparities in Canada are relatively small at 15 years old compared with other countries, these *widen* over time.
- The narrowing and widening of skill gaps is not related to the way skills are measured, but rather to differences in opportunities to further practice and develop skills. Those opportunities are tied to career choices.
- Career choices are influenced by experiences and opportunities to develop self-efficacy. However, career experiences and opportunities are not offered equitably across various groups.

Again, it should be emphasized that career choices are strongly influenced by gendered differences in the recognition, reinforcement, and valorization of specific skills and occupational choices. Skill gaps narrow or widen as individuals gain or lose opportunities to further develop and practice skills in education, employment, or training settings. However, this does not explain why some differences are *already* present at the time students opt in or out of specific training opportunities. PISA and PIAAC studies have attempted to

explain the presence of gender and other population-based skills disparities, and have concluded that these are *not* related to the way skills are measured (e.g., test formats, question types). Instead, PISA and PIAAC studies have proposed other tentative explanations for skill gaps that are already observable at 15 years old, including differences in teachers' attitudes towards students and expectations about students' performance on the basis of various identity characteristics (e.g., gender, socio-economic status). While differences in attitudes and expectations often remain implicit, these can still influence the behaviour of teachers and the performance of students.

STUDIES AND ASSESSMENTS OF SOCIO-EMOTIONAL SKILLS

Core cognitive skills like reading and mathematics play a key role in job and employment outcomes. However, education and employment stakeholders are increasingly recognizing the importance of socio-emotional skills (sometimes referred to as "soft skills" or "non-cognitive skills"). Studies of interindividual differences in socio-emotional skills can help us further understand how identity-based stereotypes fundamentally shape how learners are treated and the opportunities available to them. Perhaps more interestingly, they also provide useful insights into how socio-emotional skills training might be leveraged to counter the influence of discriminatory norms and stereotypes in education and at work.

OECD and the Big 5

OECD has also acknowledged the importance of socio-emotional skills and adopted a framework for their measurement based on the Big 5 model (Kankaraš & Suarez-Alvarez, 2019). The Big 5 is an influential model of personality (e.g., Costa & McCrae, 1992; John et al., 2008) that describes individual differences along five dimensions: openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and emotional stability (or neuroticism). While the Big 5 has traditionally been used to describe long-lasting and mostly fixed dispositions in thinking and behaviour, recent work has described how those five dimensions can be related to differences in skill development as the result of both maturation and focused training. This is consistent with the action-oriented and growth mindset approach of Skills for Success. While these Big 5 dimensions do not map directly onto the socio-emotional Skills for Success, they are broadly aligned with Creativity & Innovation (openness), Adaptability (conscientiousness and emotional stability), Communication (extraversion), and Collaboration (agreeableness). This broad alignment allows us to draw on the substantial body of research on Big 5 dimensions and their relation to academic, work, and other life outcomes, including OECD survey data.

One pertinent study using Canadian OECD data investigated the relationship between socio-emotional skills, employment outcomes, and job performance indicators. The study combined

data from a household survey of education, employment, and skills (LISA), the OECD survey of adult skills (PIAAC), and a Big 5 questionnaire (BFI-2), all collected from the same sample of individuals (Finnie & Pullman, 2021). Overall, high levels of conscientiousness, emotional stability, and extraversion were associated with positive employment outcomes and job performance indicators. However, the effect of conscientiousness was specific to women, while the effect of emotional stability was specific to men. The effect of extraversion was specific to young adults regardless of gender. Meanwhile, higher levels of openness and agreeableness were associated with lower earnings, although openness was associated with positive job performance indicators.

Interestingly, the researchers reported that the negative association between agreeableness and earnings was slightly stronger for women than men, which was consistent with findings elsewhere. Further, Finnie and Pullman (2021) noted that previous studies have found that agreeableness is related to a lower likelihood to negotiate wages (Heineck, 2011), negatively related to traits that drive people to seek success and power (Lindley, 2018), and – among women – associated with greater domestic responsibilities (Averett et al., 2020), which each of these phenomena closely linked to employment income. Taken together, these findings suggest that women may be especially affected in the workplace as they consistently score higher on agreeableness than men (e.g., Feingold, 1994; Costa et al., 2001). For instance, studies have shown that women are less likely to negotiate wages (e.g., Babock & Laschever, 2003; Babcock et al., 2006; Small et al., 2007).

Importantly, this does not mean that agreeableness (and, more broadly, Collaboration) is only related to negative job outcomes. However, it does highlight the need to consider how outcomes associated with different skill areas may vary based on context (e.g., age, gender, types of occupations). It also raises the question of whether agreeableness and/or Collaboration may be associated with positive outcomes outside of academic and employment contexts. For example, the relationship between the Big 5 and academic and work outcomes are well-researched across a large body of work but across different samples, contexts, and outcomes. A recent quantitative synthesis of over 50 meta-analyses synthesized across these variations and concluded that each of the five dimensions have small but significant associations with performance outcomes (Zell & Lesick, 2021). In their research, Zell and Lesick (2021) note that small associations can yield practical consequences in the real world. Conscientiousness had the most robust and strongest associations with overall performance (job and academic), consistent with emerging views that conscientiousness is a uniquely important skill. Other skills (emotional stability, extraversion, agreeableness, openness), while still important, may depend more on the performance context (e.g., academic versus work, type of job). These results suggest that while the effects of conscientiousness are fairly robust and reliable, the effects of the other Big 5 skills show more variability depending on the types of outcomes.

The Behavioral, Emotional, and Social Skills Inventory (BESSI)

The Behavioral, Emotional, and Social Skills Inventory (BESSI) is a tool that assesses 32 skill facets grouped across five skills domains that share similarities with the Big 5 (self-management, social engagement, cooperation, emotional resilience, and innovation), with one additional domain representing compound skills (Soto et al., 2021; 2022).

While the BESSI is a novel instrument that has not yet been widely used in studies, the little evidence that is available has failed to independently examine gender and its potential effects (Soto et al., 2022; Lechner et al., 2022). In the original BESSI validation study, being a woman was associated with better quality of friendships, poorer relationships with both parents, higher tendency to volunteer, and poorer life satisfaction. Grade point average (GPA), academic engagement, peer acceptance, quality of romantic relationships, and level of physical exercise were not related to gender. The study also used the RIASEC model of occupational interest as one of its related measures of occupational outcome (Holland, 1997). The RIASEC describes six domains of occupational interest: realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising, and conventional. These domains have been mapped to common occupations and job-performance frameworks. In the BESSI validation study, being a woman was associated with higher levels of artistic and social interests, while being male was associated with higher levels of realistic and conventional interests. There were no associations between gender and investigative or enterprising interests. Those results broadly replicate those of other studies (Soto et al., 2022).

Most of the significant correlations and regression factors between BESSI components or facets and personality and job outcome measures remained significant after controlling for gender and grade level. However, some relationships between the aforementioned variables and BESSI components were either no longer significant after controlling for gender and grade level (e.g., GPA with innovation), or became significant after controlling for gender and grade level (e.g., artistic interests with emotional resilience). Ultimately, it is not possible to interpret whether these results are related to gender, grade level, or both. Nevertheless, the correlations of skill domains and facets with RIASEC occupational interests raise interesting questions about the interplay of interests, opportunities for skill development, skill proficiency, and employment and job performance outcomes.

Gender differences in occupational interests and self-efficacy

Studies published since the early eighties reveal gender differences in reported occupational interests and self-efficacy (Williams & Subich, 2006; Woods & Hampson, 2010). For instance, men report possessing more self-efficacy for realistic and investigative areas while women report possessing more self-efficacy for social areas. In terms of interests, women's self-reported interests tend to be stronger in the artistic, social, and conventional domains, while men's

interests are stronger in the realistic, investigative, and enterprising domains (Holland 1997; Williams & Subich, 2006).

Despite these trends, studies focused on the role of learning experiences in shaping and influencing occupational interest and self-efficacy found similar results across genders. In other words, given the same learning experiences, women and men develop similar occupational interests and levels of self-efficacy. However, studies that consider the *actual* experiences of women and men in education replicate gender differences. For example, a study investigating the learning experiences of undergraduate university students found that women reported fewer experiences in the realistic and investigative domain, and men reported fewer experiences in the social domain; the quantity of experiences was related to levels of self-efficacy in each domain (Williams & Subich, 2006). These results echo the conclusions of Borgonovi et al.'s (2017) PISA 2018 study, suggesting that occupational interest and self-efficacy may rooted in the different opportunities that women and men are afforded (rather than essential in nature).

Women's level of educational attainment and participation in the workforce has increased significantly over the last 60 years (Wright et al., 2014). However, the overrepresentation of men or women in various sectors, industries, or occupations remains ongoing (e.g., overrepresentation of men/underrepresentation of women in construction trades and vice versa in nursing). Researchers have argued that occupational gender segregation is the leading explanation for ongoing gender earnings inequalities due to women's overrepresentation in lower-paying jobs (Gauchat et al., 2012). Further, occupational segregation on the basis of gender interacts with other forms of occupational segregation in different ways. For instance, racialized women in Canada are more likely to work in male-dominated fields (e.g., manufacturing, utilities, sciences) than non-racialized women, though have lower incomes on average and are less likely to be employed in management roles (Hudon, 2016). As a result, racialized women tend to have lower earnings than both men and non-racialized women (Gauchat et al., 2012). Unemployment rates are especially for racialized newcomer women. Meanwhile, lesbian and bisexual women are more likely than their heterosexual counterparts to be employed in trades and transport jobs, which are typically higher-paying than traditionally-feminized sectors (Appiah et al., 2021).

The reduction of gender disparities in different sectors could start with encouraging exploration and learning in career areas outside of traditional gender norms:

> *"[C]hoices about vocations and careers are influenced by perceptions of self-efficacy for a particular occupation, and the subjective value that a person attaches to tasks associated with that occupation. These perceptions are developed through childhood socialization experiences, during which children absorb influences from parents, teachers, and others about gender roles, and the suitability and value of particular occupations. Culture plays an important role in setting the context for socialization influences. Societal norms and associated expectations about the suitability of jobs for men and women therefore influence the development of vocational interests*

> *as children and adolescents react to the views, values, and beliefs of the people who guide their development and social upbringing."* (Woods & Hampson, 2010, p. 5)

Such initiatives should begin early, as gender starts having a durable influence over career aspirations around the age of 6-8 years old (Spinner et al., 2021).

Personality also plays an important role in shaping occupational interests and career aspirations, such that people with similar traits tend to gravitate towards similar occupations (Williams & Subich, 2017; Tokar et al., 2022). However, considering the influence of gender-stereotyped environments and socialization pressure described above, children may "develop personality-based job interests along gender-stereotyped lines" (Williams & Subich, 2017).

One dimension of personality, openness, could affect children's tendency to be influenced by gender stereotypes and to explore and pursue interests outside of traditional gender norms. For example, one study that analyzed the relationship between childhood personality traits and occupations in adulthood found that both men and women with low childhood openness were more likely to work in occupations that adhered to traditional gender norms (e.g., IT and trades and clerical and organizational work, respectively). Meanwhile, high childhood openness was associated with more investigative and artistic occupations for both women and men; there was no general association between openness and gender (Woods & Hampson, 2010). Similarly, another study of occupational interests that considered personality, gender, and conformity to gender roles also found direct and indirect influences of gender on occupational interests and learning experiences. The authors found that individuals with lower levels of openness had higher levels of conformity to traditional gender roles, which also shaped occupational choice (Tokar et al., 2007).

Key takeaways

- There are gender differences in occupational interests and self-efficacy in youth.
- In controlled studies, similar experiences result in similar interests and levels of self-efficacy across genders. In real life, girls and boys are not offered the same experiences, which results in differences in occupational interests and levels of self-efficacy. Occupational interests and self-efficacy influence career choices and lead to the overrepresentation of women in occupations that are traditionally less valued and lower-paid. Gender norms and stereotypes may also interact with those based on other identities (e.g., race, sexuality), which can constrain or facilitate different career options.
- Experiences that challenge gender and other norms should be offered early to encourage individuals to explore different options, since the influence of gender on occupational interests starts in childhood through gendered socialization. Individuals who have high levels of openness as a personality trait tend to have interests and careers that are less constrained by gender norms.
- Recent research suggests that personality traits such as openness are closely related to socio-emotional skills, which are modifiable and can be improved through training.
- Socio-emotional skills in the Skills for Success model can be leveraged to support individuals to consider non-traditional training and career options (which may also be higher-paid).

Given the relationship between personality traits and socio-emotional skills, it is possible to think that skills training could be leveraged to challenge gender norms and encourage individuals to consider "non-traditional" training and career options. For instance, in the Skills for Success framework, skills subcomponents in the domain of Adaptability and Creativity & Innovation, which are strongly connected with openness, could be leveraged to open up additional career pathways for multiply-marginalized women.

TRAINING AS A RESPONSE TO GENDER AND OTHER INEQUITIES

For some women, employment and skills training can offer opportunities to access employment, advance in one's career, or achieve gains in other areas of one's life. In the context of Skills for Success training, several core guiding principles and promising practices can be integrated at any stage of a learner's journey to support them to obtain a high school degree, reintegrate training if they have been out of education for a while, or further progress in their career (Nguyen et al., 2022). However, training programs must be tailored to learner and labour market needs, include coherent and supportive policies to address barriers to accessibility, and provide quality work opportunities to participants. With this in mind, this section summarizes some of the key barriers to employment and skills training for women and members of other equity-deserving groups, as well as practices to begin to address these barriers via Skills for Success programming.

GENDER-BASED BARRIERS TO SKILLS TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

Individuals experience gender and other forms of structural marginalization face many systemic barriers that limit their access to and success in training and employment. Often, these barriers are compounded for those who experience multiple forms of oppression. While research on these barriers grounded in an intersectional lens remains limited, some of the key themes emerging from the available evidence are summarized below.

Stereotyping and biases

The influence of gender in shaping social roles and expectations is rooted in culture and begins in the first years of life (Woods & Hampson, 2010; Eagly et al., 2020). Individuals are exposed to and "acquire" their culture's gender stereotypes by observing people perform gendered roles. In turn, they are pressured to conform to those roles and expectations, often implicitly (Eagly et al.,

2020). Changing social roles in the second half of the 20th century have not eliminated gender stereotypes, although they have shifted to some degree. For instance, while women are still perceived as more communal (e.g., collaborative, empathetic) and men as more agentive (e.g., assertive, ambitious), both are perceived as equally competent (e.g., intelligent, logical, organized). However, due to the persistent association between agency and masculinity, men are still advantaged when it comes to occupying positions of leadership. Other studies show double standards in the perception of competence: women are expect4ed to be socially warm (i.e., nice) *and* competent, while men are *only* expected to be competent (Mayo, 2016). In some cases, this double standard turns into a trade-off for women, who are perceived as either warm *or* competent (Connor, 2017).

Gender biases in training and at work often stem from a perceived mismatch in traits associated with a specific gender and those required to perform a specific role. This is referred to as congruity theory or the lack-of-fit model:

> *"Perceived lack of fit between female stereotypical attributes and the requirements of male-typed jobs—and vice versa—leads to gender bias in competence assessments and performance expectations. As a result, individuals aspiring to occupy gender-atypical roles are seen as less competent and less likely to succeed in the role."* (Di Stasio & Larsen, 2020)

Lack-of-fit issues are self-perpetuating because they both stem from *and* reinforce gender segregation. However, the interaction of gender, race, and other identity-based stereotypes are often ignored in discussions of congruity and fit. Perceived lack-of-fit may take different forms for individuals who do not conform to stereotypes on multiple fronts (Di Stasio & Larsen, 2020). For instance, recent qualitative research about 2SLGBTQ+ employment experiences pointed to peoples' career choices, opportunities, and trajectories being intimately shaped by stereotypes related to gender, sexuality, age, race, and the interaction between these various identities (Brennan et al., 2022). Meanwhile, individuals who transcend barriers and occupy non-traditional roles often face discrimination, microaggressions, and the experience of being "the only one:" that is, the only member of a team with a given identity (Devillard et al., 2019). This experience is associated with feelings of isolation as well as a lack of role models and mentorship opportunities, with subsequent implications for career progression.

Employment and labour market contexts

As previously mentioned, Canada's persistent gender pay gap is frequently attributed to women's over- and underrepresentation in lower and higher-paying sectors, respectively (Fox & Moyser, 2018; Moyser, 2019; Gauchat et al., 2012). While there has been some improvement over time, several challenges remain.

Women are often confined to roles with "low promotability," and are underrepresented in occupations associated with leadership and influence (e.g., law, politics) and in upper management positions (Eagly et al., 2020; Devillard et al., 2019). Despite the fact that women typically score higher than men in terms of job performance, they score lower on average when it comes to promotion potential (Roth et al., 2012). This may be related to socio-emotional skills: while skills such as management and training capacity are increasingly sought after in leadership positions, traits viewed as stereotypically "feminine" (e.g., empathy) are often undervalued and seen as incompatible with effective leadership styles (Devillard et al., 2019). Other occupations reproduce gender divisions internally. For instance, women working in management are overrepresented in human resources and public relations (Eagly et al., 2020). Importantly, gender-based occupational segregation can also interact with race-based occupational segregation, resulting in exacerbated inequalities for racialized women (Gauchat et al., 2012).

Regarding training and advancement, one Statistics Canada study found that despite reporting higher levels of work ethic, women are more likely than men to disagree that their current job offers good prospects for career advancement. Women were also less likely to receive training paid for by their employer; where training does occur, they are less likely to perceive improvements related to job security or advancement as a result (Deng, 2021).

Women are overrepresented in precarious work that is lower-paid and more likely to be part-time and/or temporary. Over the course of the past 15 years, the proportion of women earning less than $15 per hour has consistently been significantly greater than men (May, 2019). Moreover, evidence points to several demographic groups being more likely to work in part-time, temporary, or otherwise precarious jobs, including women, youth, seniors, workers without post-secondary education, single parents, new immigrants, and racialized individuals (Chen & Mehdi, 2018; Mitchell & Murray, 2017). Notably, while women – especially racialized women – are more likely than men to have a university degree, they are less likely to be represented in the labour market (Hudon, 2016).

Women looking for work or holding precarious jobs face many hurdles in pursuing higher-quality employment (Bok, 2004). Welfare programs tend to adopt a "work-first" approach that may deny training opportunities for women, especially newcomer women and women of colour. Immediate workforce attachment is seen as the way to help people transition from welfare to work, often with limited support provided in order to make that transition. As summarized by Bok (2004): "Low-income women with limited education and training may be employable, however they are likely to languish in unstable, low-paid, dead-end jobs, with little job mobility and few, if any, benefits." When they are offered training, women are often referred to traditionally-feminized – and, as a result, lower-paid – fields (e.g., hospitality, childcare, cosmetology, and office work), which perpetuates occupational gender segregation and limits advancement opportunities (Bok, 2004; Shan et al., 2019). For racialized women, this can become even more complex: Kaida (2015) found that while 60% of European-born newcomer

women exited poverty after four years in Canada, this was true for only 28% and 22% of West Asian and Arab women, respectively. In summary, a focus on work (rather than *meaningful or high-quality* work and the factors to achieve this) can perpetuate systemic inequities for multiply-marginalized women: "Immediate labor-force attachment produces little or no change in the social and economic structure of the workplace or in the larger society with respect to race-ethnicity, class, and gender and provides a large pool of low-wage workers" (Bok, 2004).

Unpaid labour

Unpaid labour refers to a range of tasks that tend to go unrecognized in society and the formal labour market, including housework and caring for children, persons with disabilities, and seniors (Mitchell & Murray, 2017; Moyser & Burlock, 2018). In 2015, women in Canada spent an average of 3.9 hours per day on unpaid work compared to 2.4 hours for men (Moyser & Burlock, 2018). Where women can afford to contract unpaid care work out to hired caregivers, these are often racialized women who are undervalued and underpaid (Gladu, 2021).

Time spent on unpaid work reduces women's capacity to participate in paid work while enabling men to work longer hours, further contributing to gender-based income and wealth disparities. While the division of unpaid domestic labour has become more equitably distributed among genders over the past several decades, women's increased participation in paid work has not been matched by a proportional increase of men in unpaid work. The opportunity cost associated with greater time spent on unpaid labour can also pose a major barrier to women's participation in education and training (Canadian Women's Foundation, 2020).

Health and disability

Factors related to education, workforce participation, and income constitute important social determinants of health: in 2013-2014, Canadian women with lower educational attainment and lower income were less likely to report very good or excellent overall or mental health, or to have consulted a family doctor or dentist in the past 12 months (Bushnik, 2016). Poor health can also lead to (or result from) disability, which is more prevalent among women in Canada than men, particularly for certain types of disabilities (e.g., mental health) (Morris et al., 2018). Women with disabilities aged 25-54 are more likely to report having no degree (18.3 percent) than women without disabilities (8.3 percent); they also have lower rates of employment than non-disabled women and are more likely than disabled men to require accommodations at work (DAWN Canada, 2019). While there is a paucity of information on the experiences of racialized Canadians with disabilities, barriers to training and workplace inclusion for these individuals are well-documented (Nguyen et al., 2022).

Trauma and violence

Women, girls, Two-Spirit, trans, and non-binary individuals are uniquely at-risk of gender-based violence (GBV), particularly those who also face marginalization on the basis of disability, income, and/or race (Canadian Women's Foundation, 2022). As one form of GBV, intimate partner violence (IPV) disproportionately affects women, especially young and/or Indigenous women (Cotter, 2021a, 2021b; Savage, 2021). In addition to its physical and psychological impacts, experiences of IPV also pose consequences for employment and training. Many survivors face economic abuse and employment sabotage from perpetrators, for instance being prevented from obtaining work visas and other necessary documents to access the job market. This is further compounded by economic precarity, which may prevent an individual experiencing IPV from leaving their partner. Despite this, the potential benefits of considering gender-based violence in the context of employment services is not always considered or addressed. This could include, for example, the impacts of trauma in employment and training contexts: for example, a trauma survivor may feel uncomfortable interviewing for a position in a small office with the door closed (Tarshis et al., 2021).

Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has only exacerbated many of the barriers described so far. Job loss rates were considerably higher for women than for men in the first wave of the pandemic, with a large share of feminized work concentrated in low-waged retail and service sectors. Indeed, women are overrepresented in what were some of the hardest-hit sectors of economy, including hospitality, retail, entertainment, and the "Five Cs:" caring, clerical, catering, cashiering, and cleaning work (Saba et al., 2021; Barua, 2022; Smith-Carrier & Halpenny, 2020). Women entrepreneurs have also been particularly affected: just over 33% of majority women-owned businesses had to lay off 50% or more of their employees during the pandemic, compared to just over 27% of companies in general.

Increased childcare responsibilities, including home-schooling, also had a major impact on women's participation in employment or training throughout the pandemic. Of those who were engaged in paid work, women were more likely than men to report increased pressure at work and feelings of burnout or exhaustion. Further, among parents of young children, women were 10 percentage points more likely to report wanting to leave the workforce or downshift their careers in 2020 (McKinsey & Company, 2021).

While women's workforce participation has begun to recover, this has been slower for low-income, multiply-marginalized, and single-parenting women (Scott, 2020). Women's employment growth following the first wave of the pandemic was mostly in part-time, lower-

paid occupations, while sectors that have recovered more rapidly (e.g., technology) are often those in which women and other equity-deserving groups are underrepresented.

Lastly, economic, epidemiological, and environmental crises have a consistent and predictable effect on gender-based violence (Violence Against Women Learning Network, n.d.). In the context of COVID-19, stress arising from economic pressure and uncertainty has led to increased household conflict, while lockdowns and closures have prevented survivors of abuse (who are disproportionately women) from leaving dangerous living situations.

Summary of learning needs and barriers among equity-deserving groups: Training entry, training engagement, assessment, and learning transfer for equity-deserving groups (Nguyen et al., 2022)

- Poverty and absence of basic needs (e.g., inadequate shelter, food, clothing, etc.)
- Lack of training options close by, especially for those living in remote, rural, or northern areas, as well as on-reserve
- Safety concerns (e.g., safety concerns for Indigenous women accessing transit who are disproportionately targeted by gender-based violence)
- Competing family or other priorities
- Language barriers
- Transportation barriers (e.g., affordability of car/public transit, reliability of transit systems, etc.)
- Lack of awareness of available training
- Accessibility-related barriers for persons with disabilities, both within and outside of training environments (e.g., lack of assistive technologies to support training, training provider/employer being unaware of accommodation duties, etc.)
- Time commitment and opportunity cost of training participation
- Lack of recognition of prior experience and/or credentials (e.g., for newcomers with existing education, women with caregiving experience, etc.)
- Lack of culturally-relevant and safe training options (e.g., employment counsellors being unfamiliar with the employment needs and concerns of 2SLGBTQ+ learners)
- Internalized oppression and bias
- Technology barriers (e.g., lack of reliable internet, no access to computers to support learning, etc.)

CONSIDERATIONS AND PRACTICES FOR EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS TRAINING

In this section, we apply a feminist lens to examine practices and considerations for planning and delivering employment and skills training to learners. While further research in this area is needed, it is important to consider how providers can account for and respond to various social locations and systems of oppression to design and deliver equitable, impactful training. Ultimately, creating meaningful opportunities for employment and skills training for multiply-marginalized women "requires understanding and responding to the ways in which gender intersects with these other identities…and is key to revealing the potential impact of policy and practice" (Prendergast, 2020, p. 6).

Success factors for occupational skills programming through a gender-based and intersectional lens (Prendergast, 2020)

1. **Develop staff and partner capacity and workplace culture** through policies, workplace training and supports, and monitoring and evaluation activities.
2. **Build in funding sustainability** for organizations and trainees.
3. **Adopt a twin-track approach** by integrating gender considerations into mainstream programs as well as developing gender-specific projects to meet trainees' distinct needs.
4. **Seek to understand and align with the specific context** by examining local markets, consulting with industry and other stakeholders, engaging local communities, and considering gender and other identity-specific factors that shape trainees' experiences and opportunities during and after a program.
5. **Address barriers** to women accessing and benefitting from these programs.
6. **Support women to develop a range of skills** necessary for success, such as life skills, employability skills, business skills, and access to networks.
7. **Challenge gender stereotypes** that limit the opportunities women are provided with, including by showcasing the diversity of women's capabilities.

SELECTING TARGET SKILLS FOR TRAINING

The Skills for Success framework includes core cognitive skills (Reading, Writing, Numeracy), skills to succeed in the 21st century workplace (Problem Solving, Digital), and socio-emotional skills (Collaboration, Communication, Adaptability, Creativity & Innovation). While each of these skills offers distinct benefits both within and outside of employment, improvements in certain

specific skill areas may be particularly effective at mitigating some of barriers that multiply-marginalized women face in employment, education, and training.

As explained above, important determinants of occupational choices and preferences that were once thought to be fixed personality traits are now understood as modifiable skills. Following this, Skills for Success adopts an action-oriented and growth mindset framework to skills development (Palameta et al., 2021). Skills are conceptualized and described using "I can" rather than "I am" language" (e.g., "I can communicate effectively" vs. "I am a great communicator") and are seen as something people can continue to learn and improve on throughout their life.

One important structural factor shaping gender-based labour market inequities is occupational segregation, and women's underrepresentation in traditionally-masculine roles and sectors. Research on socio-emotional skills and occupational self-efficacy points the potential for programming focused on Adaptability and Creativity & Innovation within the Skills for Success framework in supporting women to consider alternative and "non-traditional" career options. Adaptability sub-components related to setting and adjusting goals can help learners consider new career trajectories. Meanwhile, Creativity & Innovation sub-components related to imagining different possibilities, challenging norms and preconceptions, and deviating from existing processes and approaches can further support this.

Due to career streaming that happens early on in education, women may not have been given the same opportunities to develop and hone their Numeracy and Digital skills. Young women are less likely to continue training in STEM fields, even when they are performing well in science and mathematics. However, growing sectors such as technology (e.g., artificial intelligence, machine learning, data science, etc.), construction, tourism, and manufacturing demand high levels of Numeracy and Digital skills (Nguyen et al., 2022). Further, the pace of automation and digitization of job tasks continues to increase, with more and more workers being expected to use a variety of digital tools and interfaces to perform everyday job tasks.

For individuals who are further removed from the job market, Reading and Writing (or literacy more broadly) constitute a solid basis to achieve important milestones of training and education and access further learning. Having a high school degree or GED still constitutes an important entry point to the labour market. Also, due to the increase in use of digital tools and communications (e.g., emails, text messages), Reading and Writing are more essential than ever in a large variety of sectors and occupations.

Skills for Success are aimed at people working at all levels of an organization, including supervisors and managers. While it is important to support job seekers and employees to develop their skills, it is also important to ensure those in positions of authority are equipped to support their employees' skills development, and even challenge existing systems and processes that disadvantage women and other equity-deserving populations (Wittenberg-Cox, 2014). For

example, training focused on Adaptability and Creativity & Innovation may be able to support supervisors, managers, and employers be agents of change for their organization.

KEY PRINCIPLES FOR TRAINING DELIVERY

The available evidence points to a number of guiding principles to support organizations to design and implement more effective and impactful skills training programs. A short list with brief summaries is provided below; Nguyen et al., 2022 for a more exhaustive overview.

- **Coherent and supportive policies:** Skills training programs benefit from supportive policies and regulations that affecting the societal and structural level. For example, stable and reliable funding, leadership committed to equity and inclusion, and policies that promote collaboration between different systems and service providers can all support skills training providers to achieve their missions (Braundy, 2020; Bok, 2004).

- **Coordination between trainings and training providers:** Ideally, training organizations should constitute a "one-stop shop" where learners can access a variety of services and training options that meet their diverse learning needs (Bok, 2004). To make sure that needs are correctly identified and that progress is tracked, organizations can complete intake assessments and periodic evaluation along the learning journey. Recognizing that organizations may have different missions and areas of expertise, leveraging complementarity and synergy is key to meeting diverse needs and ensuring continuity in service provision (Shan et al., 2020). Thinking to some of the barriers mentioned previously, a literacy training provider partnering with a provider focused on supporting survivors of gender-based violence may be one pertinent example here.

- **Wraparound supports:** People engaged in training have multiple life responsibilities and competing priorities. Wraparound supports help learners manage life responsibilities so that they can fully dedicate their time and energy to training (see the other evidence brief developed for the WOMEN FIRST project for more details).

- **Contextualized skills training and job search training:** Programs that adopt a mixed approach to skills training achieve better short-term and long-term employment outcomes (Bok, 2004). Training should be contextualized to the realities of the job market instead of being purely "academic." At the same time, training should seek to expand the breadth and depth of skills to open more diverse career pathways for learners, as well as more opportunities for advancement. For example, job search training might support women learners to explicitly seek outside of traditionally-feminized sectors, or help grow learners' confidence to apply for promising roles even without possessing all characteristics listed on the job posting.

- **Gender-based and intersectional lens:** Training can be an effective way to promote gender equity and challenge gender-based and other systems of oppression. Recognizing that training organizations often have existing partnerships with employers or industries more broadly, they may choose to adopt an employer-focused approach by working with companies to offer more diverse, safe, inclusive, and high-quality job opportunities that would better support learners (Shan et al., 2020).

EXAMPLES AND PROMISING PRACTICES

A few examples of programs that draw on skills training to support labour market inclusion and outcomes for women are described below. For further examples, refer to the aforementioned report on Skills for Success implementation (Nguyen et al., 2022)

Women Unlimited offers the **Career Exploration Program,** a free, 14-week program that supports women to explore careers in the trades or technology. The program covers training in Numeracy, workplace readiness, and occupational safety, the lattermost leading to certification. To make trades more welcoming to members of equity-deserving groups, Builders Code BC offers a **Culture Training for Site Managers, Forepersons, Union Business Managers, and Tradespeople**. This gamified course is available through a phone application and supports the development of a better workplace culture in the trades.

Several organizations provide Digital skills training specifically aimed at women. As one example, the Toronto-based organization **Ladies Learning Code** led a pilot project that aimed to make Digital skills training more accessible for newcomer women. Program participants reported several promising outcomes, including greater confidence with technology, a better understanding of the coding tool or language they were learning, an interest in pursuing further learning, and a better connection to their local community.

Other programs provide foundational skills training as well as hands-on training (Shan et al., 2020). For instance, in the **Entry to Hospitality Careers for Women** program, women were accompanied by their ESL instructor to their hands-on training session so they could benefit from the support and the trusting relationship they had already developed with this instructor in a new context. The accompanying ESL instructor took notes, explained any new key terms to learners, and offered advice to the hands-on training instructor to support learning, among other forms of support.

Devillard et al.'s (2019) ***Women matter: The present and future of women at work in Canada*** report lists several examples of programs that have been effective in supporting women in the labour market. Among other themes, the report explores how organizations set targets, track progress, and hold leadership accountable; strategies to support women's leadership development (e.g., mentorship and social capital initiatives); the role of diversity-enabling infrastructure (e.g., flexible working arrangements, generous benefit packages); strategies to address bias in hiring and promotion; approaches to fostering inclusive workplace culture (e.g., training, employee-led initiatives); initiatives to spread awareness about up-and-coming and in-demand sectors; and examples of programs for reskilling, transitioning to new sectors, and inclusive recruitment. It also offers a number of in-depth case studies of companies that have implemented these practices in their operations.

In practice: Prior Life Experience Skills Portfolio

Learners often bring transferable skills gained in other contexts to employment and skills training, for instance from community relationships, volunteering, or caring or domestic labour. The below steps outline a potential approach for implementing this in employment and skills training via the Prior Life Experience Skills Portfolio. While tailored to Indigenous learners, practitioners may wish to consider how this model might be adapted and implemented for learners from various equity-deserving backgrounds, including multiply-marginalized women. In practice, practitioners have found this to be a more open and productive way to engage in discussions about skills, as well as an effective strategy to promote learners' agencies via a strength-based approach to training.

1. **Identify cultural activities, practices or community events the learner has taken part in, or any culturally-based activities the learner enjoyed.** This could include skills, knowledge, or experience volunteering with Indigenous-led organizations, being on the land, or planning and leading ceremonies, among other activities. Learners should be encouraged to only share examples they are comfortable with.

2. **Describe the detailed actions the learner took throughout that cultural activity**. For each activity shared, practitioners will work with learners to discuss or demonstrate the specific actions, materials, documents, or methods that were involved in that (e.g., designing, planning, measuring, and making traditional crafts, etc.).

3. **In discussion with the learner, program staff describe the Skills for Success and provide some examples of how each might be used in daily life.** Practitioners may wish to speak both the main skills and more specific subcomponents.

4. **Identify the Essential Skills demonstrated throughout the cultural activity.** For each activity shared, practitioners will work with learners to identify which Skills for Success were used, how, and the ways in which these skills connect to and reinforce each other. Depending on the learner's preference, this could be via conversation or in a written format.

5. **Consolidate all discussion, notes and materials into an appropriate portfolio format.** While not part of the learner's official assessment, a portfolio can support both learners and staff to tangibly see the learner's current strengths and areas for improvement when it comes to Skills for Success.

CONCLUSION

This evidence brief offered an overview of Skills for Success and considerations for developing and delivering training that promotes access, engagement, and success in employment and skills training, particularly among multiply-marginalized women. Alongside other structural changes and programming considerations, Skills for Success offers clear opportunities to provide training that meets the demands of the modern labour market while concreting addressing barriers to equity and inclusion. The considerations and practices presented here highlight a few of the major barriers faced by women facing multiple forms of exclusion and discrimination when it comes to pursuing and succeeding in training, as well as principles and practices that may help address these challenges. Moreover, we sought to challenge the notion of skills gaps as being intrinsic to individuals: rather, gender-based and other forms of skills disparities often result from systemic inequities; this points to the need to address those inequities occurring outside the skills ecosystem while also ensuring training is responsive to this reality.

We hope that the evidence provided here will support partners in the WOMEN FIRST project to design and deliver Skills for Success training as part of their programs, either by validating what they already know or offering additional insights in this area. Importantly, while the findings shared here are grounded in the existing literature, there remain considerable gaps in skills research in this area that adopts an explicitly-intersectional lens, particularly given the novelty of the Skills for Success framework. With that in mind, we hope that the findings from this project can generate evidence on the types of content and delivery approach for Skills for Success that best support multiply-marginalized women engaged in this training.

WORKS CITED

Appiah, A., Brennan, K., Halpenny, C., Pakula, B., & Waite, S. (2021). *Building the evidence base about economic, health, and social inequities faced by LGBTQ2S+ individuals in Canada: Phase 2 Final Report.* Social Research and Demonstration Corporation. https://www.srdc.org/media/553177/wage-phase-2-final-report.pdf

Anders, J., Has, S., Jerrim, J., Shure, N., & Zieger, L. (2021). Is Canada really an education superpower? The impact of non-participation on results from PISA 2015. *Educ Asse Eval Acc 33*, 229–249. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11092-020-09329-5

Averett, S. L., Bansak, C., & Smith, J. K. (2021). Behind every high earning man is a conscientious woman: The impact of spousal personality on earnings and marriage. *Journal of Family and Economic Issues, 42,* 29-46.

Babcock, L., & Laschever, S. (2003). *Women don't ask: Negotiation and the gender divide.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Babcock, L., Gelfand, M., Small, D., & Stayn, H. (2006). Gender differences in the propensity to initiate negotiations. In D. D. Crèmer, M. Zeelenberg, & J. K., Murnighan (Eds.), *Social psychology and economics* (pp. 239-259). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Barua, A. (2022). *Gender equality, dealt a blow by COVID-19, still has much ground to cover: At the brink of squandering past gains.* Deloitte Insights. https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/economy/impact-of-covid-on-women.html

Bauer, G. (2021). *Meet the Method series: Quantitative intersectional study design and primary data collection.* Canadian Institutes of Health Research. https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/52352.html

Bok, M. (2004). Education and Training for Low-Income Women: An Elusive Goal. *Affilia, 19(1)*, 39-52.

Borgonovi, F., Pokropek, A., Keslair, F., Gauly, B., & Paccagnella, M. (2017). *Youth in Transition: How Do Some of The Cohorts Participating in PISA Fare in PIAAC?* OECD Education Working Papers No. 155, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/51479ec2-en

Braundy, M. (2017). *Lessons Learned and Best Practices – Increasing the Successful Participation Of Women in Apprenticeship & Skilled Technical Jobs. Labour Market Integration*. Employment, Workforce Development and Labour Canada.

Brennan, K., Halpenny, C., & Pakula, B. (2022). *LGBTQ2S+ voices in employment: Labour market experiences of sexual and gender minorities in Canada.* Social Research and Demonstration Corporation. https://www.srdc.org/media/1672993/wage-phase-3-final-report.pdf

Bushnik, T. (2016). *The health of girls and women in Canada.* Statistics Canada. https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-503-x/2015001/article/14324-eng.htm

Canadian Women's Foundation. (2020). *Until all of us have made it: Gender equality and access in our own words.* https://canadianwomen.org/until-all-of-us/#:~:text=UNTIL%20ALL%20OF%20US%20HAVE,Foundation%20commissioned%20in%20early%202020.

Canadian Women's Foundation. (2022). *The Facts about Gender-Based Violence.* https://canadianwomen.org/the-facts/gender-based-violence/

Chen, W.-H., & Mehdi, T. (2018). *Assessing Job Quality in Canada: A Multidimensional Approach. Statistics Canada.* https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11f0019m/11f0019m2018412-eng.htm

Connor, R. A. (2017). *Warmth and competence: A feminist look at power and negotiation*. In APA Handbook of the Psychology of Women. Editors: C. B. Travis & J. W. White. APA.

Costa, P. T., & McCrae, R. R. (1992). *Revised NEO Personality Inventory (NEO PI-R) and NEO Five-Factor Inventory (NEO-FFI) professional manual.* Psychological Assessment Resources.

Costa, P. T. Jr., Terracciano, A., and McCrae, R. R. (2001). Gender differences in personality traits across cultures: Robust and surprising findings. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 81,* 322-331.

Cotter, A. (2021a). *Intimate partner violence in Canada, 2018: An overview*. Canadian Centre for Justice and Community Safety Statistics. https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2021001/article/00003-eng.htm

Cotter, A. (2021b). *Intimate partner violence: Experiences of visible minority women in Canada, 2018.* Canadian Centre for Justice and Community Safety Statistics. https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2021001/article/00008-eng.htm

Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: a Black feminist critique of anti-discrimination doctrine, feminist theory and anti-racist politics. *University of Chicago Legal Forum, 1989(1)*, pp.139-167.

DAWN – DisAbled Women's Network of Canada. (2019). *More than a footnote: A Research Report on Women and Girls with Disabilities in Canada.* https://www.dawncanada.net/news/mtafreport/

Deng, Z. (2021). *Gender-related differences in the career advancement of women in Canada.* Statistics Canada. https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/36-28-0001/2021009/article/00002-eng.htm

Devillard, S., Bonin, G., Madgavkar, A., Krishnan, M., Pan, T., Zhang, H., & Ng M. (2019). *Women Matter: The present and future of women at work in Canada.* McKinsey & Company.

Di Stasio, V., & Larsen, E. N. (2020). The Racialized and Gendered Workplace: Applying an Intersectional Lens to a Field Experiment on Hiring Discrimination in Five European Labor Markets. *Social Psychology Quarterly, 83(3)*, 229-250. https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0190272520902994

Eagly, A. H., Nater, C., Miller, D. I., Kaufmann, M., & Sczesny, S. (2020). Gender stereotypes have changed: A cross-temporal meta-analysis of US public opinion polls from 1946 to 2018. *American Psychologist, 75(3)*, 301-315.

Employment and Social Development Canada. (2021). *Learn about the Skills.* Government of Canada. https://www.canada.ca/en/services/jobs/training/initiatives/skills-success/understanding-individuals.html

Feingold, A. (1994). Gender differences in personality: A meta-analysis. *Psychological Bulletin, 116,* 429-456.

Ferguson, S. J. (2016). *Women and Education: Qualifications, Skills and Technology.* Statistics Canada. https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-503-x/2015001/article/14640-eng.htm

Fox, D. & Moyser, M. (2018). *Women in Canada: A Gender-based Statistical Report. The Economic Well-Being of Women in Canada.* Statistics Canada. https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-503-x/2015001/article/54930-eng.htm

Finnie, R., & Pullman, A. (2021). *Non-cognitive skills and labour market outcomes in Canada: New evidence using the BFI.* Social Research and Demonstration Corporation. https://www.srdc.org/media/553155/epri-full-report.pdf

Gauchat, G., Kelly, M., & Wallace, M. (2012). Occupational gender segregation, globalization, and gender earnings inequality in US metropolitan areas. *Gender & Society, 26(5)*, 718-747. https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243212453647

Gladu, M. (2021). *Women's Unpaid Work in Canada. Report of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women.* Government of Canada. https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2021/parl/xc71-1/XC71-1-1-432-8-eng.pdf

Heineck, G. (2011). Does it pay to be nice? Personality and earnings in the UK. *Industrial and Labour Relations Review, 64*(5), 1020-1038.

Holland, J. L. (1997). *Making vocational choices: A theory of vocational personalities and work environments (3rd ed.)*. Psychological Assessment Resources.

Hudon, T. (2016). *Visible minority women.* Statistics Canada. https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-503-x/2015001/article/14315-eng.htm

John, O. P., Naumann, L. P., & Soto, C. J. (2008). Paradigm shift to the integrative big-five trait taxonomy: History, measurement, and conceptual issues. In O. P. John, R. W. Robins, & L. A. Pervin (Eds.), *Handbook of personality: Theory and research (*3rd ed., pp. 114-158). Guildford Press.

Kaida, L. (2015). Ethnic variations in immigrant poverty exit and female employment: The missing link. *Demography, 52(2)*, 485-511. https://macsphere.mcmaster.ca/bitstream/11375/20747/1/kaida_text.pdf

Kankaraš, M., & Suarez-Alvarez, J. (2019). *Assessment framework of the OECD Study on Social and Emotional Skills.* OECD Education Working Papers, No. 207. https://doi.org/10.1787/5007adef-en

Kezar, A., Kitchen, J., Estes, H, Hallett, R. & Perez, R. (2020). Tailoring programs to best support low-income, first-generation, and racially minoritized college student success. *Journal of College Student Retention*. https://doi.org/10.1177/1521025120971580

Lechner, C., Knopf, T., Napolitano, C., Rammstedt, B., Roberts, B., Soto, C. J., & Spengler, M. (2022). *The Behavioral, Emotional, and Social Skills Inventory (BESSI): A German Adaptation and Further Validation.* https://psyarxiv.com/r7pyj/download?format=pdf

Lindley, J. K. (2018). Are there unexplained financial rewards for the snakes in suits? A labour market analysis of the Dark Triad of personality. *British Journal of Industrial Relations, 56*(4), 770-797.

May, B. (2019). *Precarious work: Understanding the changing nature of work in Canada*. *Report of the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities.* Government of Canada.

https://www.ourcommons.ca/Content/Committee/421/HUMA/Reports/RP10553151/humarp19/humarp19-e.pdf

Mayo, M. (2016). *To Seem Confident, Women Have to Be Seen as Warm.* Harvard Business Review. https://hbr.org/2016/07/to-seem-confident-women-have-to-be-seen-as-warm

McKinsey & Company (2021). *Seven charts that show COVID-19's impact on women's employment*. https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/diversity-and-inclusion/seven-charts-that-show-covid-19s-impact-on-womens-employment

Mitchell, C. M., & Murray, J. C. (2017). *Chapter 4: Vulnerable workers in precarious jobs*. In The changing workplaces review: An agenda for workplace rights – Final Report. Government of Ontario. https://files.ontario.ca/books/mol_changing_workplace_report_eng_2_0.pdf

Morris, S., Fawcett, G., Brisebois, L., & Hughes, J. (2018). *Canadian Survey on Disability Reports: A demographic, employment and income profile of Canadians with disabilities aged 15 years and over, 2017.* Statistics Canada. https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-654-x/89-654-x2018002-eng.htm

Moyser, M. (2019). *Measuring and Analyzing the Gender Pay Gap: A Conceptual and Methodological Overview*. Statistics Canada. https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/45-20-0002/452000022019001-eng.htm

Moyser, M. & Burlock, A. (2018). *Time use: Total work burden, unpaid work, and leisure.* Statistics Canada. https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/pub/89-503-x/2015001/article/54931-eng.pdf?st=xHGJKgSL

Nguyen, C., Auclair-Ouellet, N., Kaufmann, L., Pullman, A., & Palameta, B. (2022). *Skills for Success implementation guidance: Final report.* Social Research and Demonstration Corporation. https://www.srdc.org/media/1945054/skills-for-success-implementation-guidance-final-report.pdf

OECD. (2012). *PISA: Learning beyond fifteen – Ten years after PISA.* OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264172104-en

OECD. (2019a). *Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) – Results from PISA 2018: Country Note – Canada*. OECD Publishing, Paris. https://www.oecd.org/pisa/publications/PISA2018_CN_CAN.pdf

OECD. (2019b). *Skills Matter: Additional Results from the Survey of Adult Skills.* OECD Skills Studies, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/1f029d8f-en

OECD. (2020a). *Girls' and boys' performance in PISA*. PISA 2018 Results (Volume II) – Where all students can succeed. OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/b5fd1b8f-en

OECD. (2020b). *Big gender gap in students' attitudes and engagement in global and multicultural issues, finds new OECD PISA report.* OECD Newsroom. https://www.oecd.org/newsroom/big-gender-gap-in-students-attitudes-and-engagement-in-global-and-multicultural-issues-finds-new-oecd-pisa-report.htm

OECD. (n.d.a). *PISA – Programme for International Student Assessment.* https://www.oecd.org/pisa/

OECD. (n.d.b). *OECD Skills Survey – Survey of Adult Skills.* https://www.oecd.org/skills/piaac/

Palameta, B., Nguyen C., Lee, W., Que, H., & Gyarmati, D. (2021). *Research report to support the launch of Skills for Success: Structure, evidence, and recommendations: Final report.* Social Research and Demonstration Corporation. https://www.srdc.org/media/553148/sfs-srdc-final-report-en.pdf

Prendergast, Y. (2020). *Developing skills programming through a gender lens: Executive summary, case studies and tools*. British Council. https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/developing_skills_programming_through_a_gender_lens.pdf

Roth, P. L., Purvis, K. L., & Bobko, P. (2012). A meta-analysis of gender group differences for measures of job performance in field studies. *Journal of Management, 38(2)*, 719-739. https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.905.6474&rep=rep1&type=pdf

Saba, T., Blanchette, S., & Kronfli, C. (2021). *Supporting Entrepreneurship and SMEs: A Post-Pandemic Skills and Training Agenda.* Public Policy Forum. https://ppforum.ca/publications/supporting-entrepreneurs-and-smes/

Savage, L. (2021). *Intimate partner violence: Experiences of young women in Canada, 2018.* Canadian Centre for Justice and Community Safety Statistics https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2021001/article/00009-eng.htm

Scott, K. (2020). *Left behind: Two decades of economic progress for single mothers at risk of being wiped out.* Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives – The Monitor. https://monitormag.ca/articles/left-behind-two-decades-of-economic-progress-for-single-mothers-at-risk-of-being-wiped-out

Shan, H., Peikazadi, N., Rahemtulla, Z., Wilbur, A., Sawkins, T., & Goossen, R. (2020). Entry to hospitality careers for women and beyond: Immigrant training and feminist pedagogies and practices. *Studies in the Education of Adults, 52(1)*, 67-87.

Small, D. A.., Gelfand, M., Babcock, L., & Gettman, H. (2007). Who goes to the bargaining table? The influence of gender and framing on the initiation of negotiation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 93*(4), 600-613.

Smith-Carrier, T. & Halpenny, C. (2020). *Basic Income: Making the Case for Women & Gender Equity*. https://www.ourcommons.ca/Content/Committee/432/FEWO/Brief/BR10938265/br-external/Jointly1-e.pdf

Soto, C. J., & John, O. P. (2017). The next Big Five Inventory (BFI-2): Developing and assessing a hierarchical model with 15 facets to enhance bandwidth, fidelity, and predictive power. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 113(1)*, 117-143. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/pspp0000096

Soto, C. J., Napolitano, C. M., & Roberts, B. W. (2021). Taking skills seriously: Toward an integrative model and agenda for social, emotional, and behavioral skills. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 30(1)*, 26-33. https://doi.org/10.1177/0963721420978613

Soto, C. J., Napolitano, C. M., Sewell, M. N., Yoon, H. J., & Roberts, B. W. (2022). An Integrative Framework for Conceptualizing and Assessing Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Skills: The BESSI. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. Advance online publication. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/pspp0000401

Spinner, L., Tenenbaum, H. R., Cameron, L., & Wallinheimo, A. S. (2021). A school-based intervention to reduce gender-stereotyping. *School Psychology International, 42(4)*, 422-449. https://doi.org/10.1177/01430343211009944

Statistics Canada (2018). *Immigrant status and period of immigration for persons with and without disabilities aged 15 years and over, by sex, Canada*. https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/cv.action?pid=1310038101

Tarshis, S., Alaggia, R., & Logie, C. H. (2022). Intersectional and trauma-informed approaches to employment services: insights from intimate partner violence (IPV) service providers. *Violence Against Women, 28(2)*, 617-640.

Tokar, D. M., Thompson, M. N., Plaufcan, M. R., & Williams, C. M. (2007). Precursors of learning experiences in social cognitive career theory. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 71(3)*, 319-339. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2007.08.002

Violence Against Women Learning Network (n.d.). *COVID-19 & Gender-based Violence in Canada: Key Issues and Recommendations.* The Centre for Research & Education on Violence against Women & Children – Western. https://www.vawlearningnetwork.ca/our-work/backgrounders/covid19gbvcanada/covid19__genderbased_violence_in_canada_key_issues_and_recommendations.html

Williams, C. M., & Subich, L. M. (2006). The gendered nature of career related learning experiences: A social cognitive career theory perspective. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 69(2)*, 262-275.

Wittenberg- Cox, A. (2014). *Stop "fixing" women and start fixing managers.* Harvard Business Review. https://hbr.org/2014/02/stop-fixing-women-and-start-fixing-managers

Woods, S. A., & Hampson, S. E. (2010). Predicting adult occupational environments from gender and childhood personality traits. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 95(6)*, 1045-1057. https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2964386/

Wright, D. B., Eaton, A. A., & Skagerberg, E. (2015). Occupational segregation and psychological gender differences: How empathizing and systemizing help explain the distribution of men and women into (some) occupations. *Journal of Research in Personality, 54*, 30-39. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrp.2014.06.004

Zell, E., & Lesick, T. L. (2021). Big five personality traits and performance: A quantitative synthesis of 50+ meta-analyses. *Journal of Personality*, 1-15. https://doi.org/10.1111/jopy.12683

OTTAWA • VANCOUVER • CALGARY • HALIFAX • HAMILTON • LONDON

MONCTON • MONTREAL • REGINA • ST. JOHN'S • TORONTO • WINNIPEG

www.srdc.org • 1 866 896 7732 • info@srdc.org

SRDC SINCE 1991 DEPUIS SRSA

INNOVATION • EXPERIMENTATION • EVALUATION