



BGMO SKILLED TRADES COUNCIL CAF REPORT

The Canadian Apprenticeship Forum (CAF) held its conference in beautiful Halifax, Nova Scotia. It ran from Sunday May 29th – Tuesday May 31st. *“This biennial event brings together members from every corner of Canada’s apprenticeship community to highlight promising practices and innovative solutions in apprenticeship training.”*

The theme for this year’s conference was **RECOVERY – RESILIENCE – READINESS**. In attendance were John Breslin, Director, National Skilled Trades Department with Dave Tesolin & Ken Anderson from the National Skilled Trades Council, Chris Cioffi from the London Area Skilled Trades Council and myself representing the Brampton, Georgetown, Milton & Oakville (BGMO) Area Skilled Trades Council. The National Skilled Trades Council (NSTC) is a “Champion Sponsor” for the conference.

DAY ONE

- The conference was opened with an “Acknowledgement Of The Land” by Jude Gerrard of the Millbrook First Nation. He also gave the audience an insightful report on the current state of the First Nations peoples issues and concerns. They included the need for apprenticeships to be inclusive and diverse. He was gladdened to see how the CAF helps to eliminate gaps that exist in native communities when it comes to apprenticeships. France Daviault, Executive Director of CAF welcomed the attendees and gave a brief history of CAF and presented the schedule for the conferences.
- Plenary One & Interactive Session: Stories Of Apprentice Success – Michelle Sault, facilitator. This consisted of a panel of seven current and graduated apprentices from all sectors. These people shared some of their experiences as they pertained to their “Apprenticeship Journey”.

Delaney Krieger, an apprentice Drywaller, said that the *“whole idea of apprenticeships need to be more accessible and need to encourage more women in trades.”* Clarence Synard, Nova Scotia Training Council, highlighted the training gaps that exist in marginalized groups and the efforts to help close these gaps. We then had the pleasure of listening to Andrew George, the first Indigenous Red Seal Chef in Canada. He related to the audience that in 1984 he was laughed at in his own community for even thinking about an apprenticeship. He persevered and was successful. He gave two strong pieces of advice for people interested in a trades career: *1) Invest in yourself & 2) Understand the apprenticeship process.* The final speaker of the plenary was Shylah Nokusis, Heavy Equipment Operator, share some of the challenges of being an indigenous woman in trades. They included childcare issues as she was a single mother and the schedules of her workplace, and the childcare centre did not align.

Trent Soholt, Executive Director – Nova Scotia Construction Sector, stressed the importance of reaching students at an earlier age; grades seven or eight. We need to sell the benefits of a career in the trades. Do not be shy on letting them know the wages and benefits. He showed the progression of how trades have been identified: **Tradesman > Tradesperson > Tradesprofessional**. He also gave a brief introduction to the “Mobile Training Trailer”, there will be a more in-depth presentation of this extremely worthwhile endeavour later in this report.



DAY TWO

- The keynote speaker for today was Dr. Robyne Hanley-Dafoe. She gave an extremely insightful explanation of the “Principles Of Psychological Safety”. This is a new concept that many workplaces are starting to explore. It introduced some tools and approaches that would be useful for mentors to use with their apprentices. Some of the tools that she suggested were:
 - Be accountable & Follow through,
 - Be transparent,
 - Foster community,
 - Feedback culture & e) Have the courage to intervene.
 She suggested the “Three Step Process”:
 1. ACKNOWLEDGE *“this is hard, wrong, difficult, etc”*
 2. VALIDATE *“this is upsetting, frustrating, concerning, etc.”*
 3. OFFERS *“tangible things that you can do right now, within the scope of your role as a leader”*

Dr. Hanley-Dafoe’s basic message was “Connect before you Correct”. Basically, it means respond to the issue; rather than react to it. It really is all about the next generation.

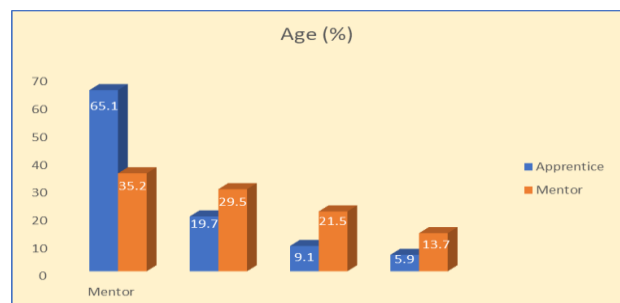
- Plenary Two & Interactive Session: Building It Green - Mike Gordon, Director for Canadian Training with UA Canada (UA Canada is the United Association of Pipeworkers). This plenary was an introduction to “Building It Green”.

Mr. Gordon showed the roles that trades play in providing “Net Zero” practices on all construction sites. He highlighted the fact that the younger generation are fully committed to caring about the environment through all phases of construction. Brother Breslin asked Mr. Gordon, “How the important core value of trades can still play a part in these forward-thinking initiatives. The transfer of knowledge is key. Especially when the average age of a tradesperson is 60 years of age; the average apprentice is 28. He then reiterated that auto investment can still be green and part of our core values”. Mr. Gordon wholehearted agreed that the Net Zero approach must include proper red seal trades, extensive health & safety training and the portability of trades among other aspects of our core values.

- Concurrent Session – The Impact Of Mentorship – Bill Ferreira, Kyle Downie & Michael Dowie.

They reported out on a study that they had conducted Over the past couple of years. *The project involved 23 Companies, over 29 sites with 1,400 participants.* It included a variety of trades, mentors and apprentices. Covid had hit shortly after the project got rolling. Some sites were person to person while others needed to consist of a hybrid of person to person and on-line learning. The general theme is a . . . *“Supportive vs Corrective”* style of learning. Their program is structured training for mentors and apprentices. It incorporates the essential skills required to be a successful tradesperson. Almost all the companies showed an improvement in productivity, quality, health & safety and retention. They concluded that the cost/benefit analysis was 2:1. The typical mentee was a 1st -3rd year apprentice and the average of the mentor was 50.

Mentoring Principles		Apprentice Principles	
Step 1	Identify the Point of the Skill	Step 1	Effective Communication
Step 2	Link the Skills	Step 2	Active Listening
Step 3	Demonstrate the Skill	Step 3	Receiving Feedback
Step 4	Provide Opportunity for Practice	Step 4	Asking Questions
Step 5	Give Feedback	Step 5	Proactive Learning
Step 6	Assess Progress	Step 6	Setting Goals





DAY TWO (cont'd)

- The keynote speaker for the afternoon was The Hon. Carla Qualtrough MP, the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development & Disability Inclusion. She reported out on the many economic challenges that face the country since Covid and the war in Ukraine.

Government & CAF studies show that 700,000 trades will be eligible to retire by 2028. With only 1 high school student in 16 entering trades; will certainly impact the current labour shortage. The average age of an apprentice is 28 years old. She stressed the importance of a strong, capable workforce through all sectors in all trades. Canadians need to know about all the advantages that a skilled trades career has to offer.

Her government recognizes the need to create opportunities for students to enter trades. The government has allocated \$274m to many projects to help bolster the current 23,000 apprentices (including \$47m for apprentice grants). This includes 4,000 red seal apprentices in manufacturing and construction. They also have emphasis inclusion incentives for under-represented groups.

- Plenary Three: “A Rising Tide: Women In Apprenticeship & Trades Training”

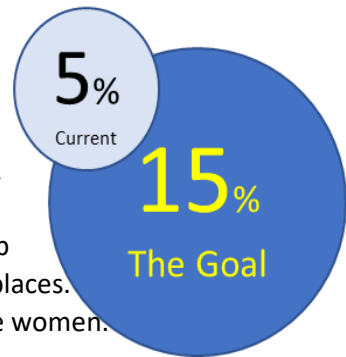
This plenary challenged us to have a close work at the issues facing women in trades. Women are under-represented in trades (only making up 5%). The challenge is more than just hiring more women; we need to see the roadblocks and help close the gap. More women mentors would help spread the knowledge and set the standards of what women should expect in the workplace. The goal is to increase the number of women to 15% (and more).

Safety is key and it is much more than ensuring proper PPE and tools for women. *The workplace cannot not be a toxic environment for women.* Where needed, the employees need to reassess their biases. This would rely on the “buy-in” from leadership (both management and union). The retention rate for women is far lower in toxic workplaces. It is up to all employees to help create a safe and healthy work environment, not just the women.

Building a strong ally network will certainly help to help change the culture.

The inclusion of women in trades would have a substantial impact on filling the labour shortage from coast to coast to coast. We need to do a better job of exposing trades to young women and girls in school. We need to package the information in such a way that it does not make the women or girls feel excluded. This can also apply to breaking down any cultural barriers (i.e. some parents) and challenge the status quo. We can encourage real expectations, there is no need to be perfect. *Let them know that it is okay to fail; we learn more from our mistakes than we do from our successes.*

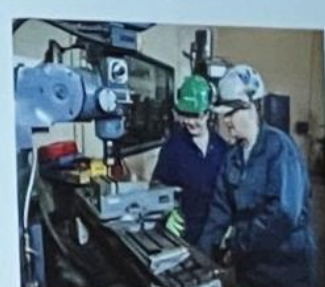
The trainers need to be prepared on all the up-to-date methods and issues. Things like 87% of single parent families are women. This leads to special transportation requirements and challenges. Some of these include getting their children to daycare or school and then be able to get to work.



Hire Women Apprentices



Provide Workplace Education



Make Your Worksites Safe



DAY TWO (cont'd)

➤ Technical Tour: Nova Scotia Construction Sector Council (NSCSC) – Trades Exhibition Hall & Mobile Construction Experience. We visited this unique hall and were extremely impressed. *The hall is a state-of-the-art venue that offers students, job seekers, employment counsellors, teachers, community groups and the general public an opportunity to experience construction trades occupations in a tangible way.*

Developed in partnership with industry and the Province Of Nova Scotia, the hall features 14 interactive booths where visitors can learn about construction careers by participating in a variety of hands-on demonstrations with industry professionals.

The Booths
Boilermaker
Bricklayer
Carpenter/Millwright
Electrician
Elevator Constructor
Finishing Trades
Insulator
Ironworker
Labourer
Management
Non-Destructive Testing
Operating Engineer
Pipe Trades
Sheet Metal Worker



* (please note gloves are not required as this is a virtual welder – you can see the arc on the screen; it is very realistic)

In addition to the “bricks & mortar” exhibition hall; NSCSC also has a unique Mobile Construction Experience (MCE). This truly is a one-of-a-kind awareness interaction. The MCE is a 53’ custom trailer, built to showcase Industrial-Commercial-Institutional (ICI) construction sector trades careers. Again, hands-on activities are guided by industry professionals at each of the booths. It is the same 14 trades that are in the hall. It is worth noting that there is no cost to the visitors to the hall or for having the MCE come to your location.



The many advantages of these unique experiences are clear. Our friends in Nova Scotia have a program that they can be very proud of. All the delegates from the Skilled Trades Council were very impressed. The trades that are in each of the booths volunteer their time to help ensure the best experience for the visitors. The majority are retired trades who are “giving back”. *It would be our recommendation to investigate the feasibility of initiating a similar program for the youth in Ontario.*

The MCE:
Provides youth with experiential career exploration opportunities in the ICI sector.
Increases youth engagement in rural Nova Scotia.
Supports youth in making informed educational and career decisions.

MCE Visits Include:
A safety orientation with NSCSC staff and trades professionals.
Timed rotations at each of the interactive booths, with trades professionals present.
An opportunity to provide feedback on the experience.

Participants Should Know:
The MCE is an outdoor experience, please dress accordingly.
PPE such as: hard hats, safety glasses and cut-resistant gloves are provided to participants.
Supervision is required at 1:15 adult to youth ratios.

DAY THREE

➤ Honourable Jill Balsler – Minister Of Labour, Skills & Immigration was the morning keynote speaker. She highlighted the need to attract apprentices from all walks of life. She stated the importance of attracting under-represented groups. All these components make for a stronger, robust apprenticeship program.



Day Three (Cont'd)

➤ France Daviault went into greater detail regarding the \$47m for apprentice grants that was announced by Minister Qualtrough. *The \$47m dollars would give employers grants of \$5,000.00 per apprentice (\$10,000.00 for apprentices from under-represented groups).* The intent of these grants are to encourage employers to hire apprentices. However, there was not a lot of clarity on holding the employers to retain the apprentices. We would like to see the checks and balances in the system; to make it a success for both the apprentice and the employer. She also explained the national leadership training and development program for women in trades; essentially it is a road map for SWIT (Supporting Women In Trades). Again, this is a national strategy. The SWIT Conference was held in St. John's, Newfoundland just after the CAF conference. She reiterated that the retention of apprentices is just as important as recruiting them.

➤ Plenary Four: "Building Inclusive Learning Workplace Culture". This plenary showed us some the steps that have been taken to build an inclusive culture. Donna Carsten, Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency (NSAA), facilitated the plenary. She explained the strong relationship between both types of safety. *The safety on the worksite and safety from a newcomer's point of view.*

A brother from Nigeria shared his experiences as a new immigrant to Canada and entering an apprenticeship. The Immigration Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS) worked hand in hand with the NSAA. They provided him with many levels of support. The support and training of new apprentices are their primary focus. He said that his co-workers could not be more friendly or helpful; but he still needed some help. Things like safety from a newcomer's point of view. He praised the support that he received from his union. He liked the respect that he received both in the classroom and on the worksite. He suggested a bit more of attention be made to reach out to newcomers who may not be aware of the advantages of a career in skilled trades.

➤ Concurrent Session: "Informing Inclusivity in Male Dominated Apprenticeship Classrooms". Lisa Weatherby, McPhail School of Energy, SAIT. Lisa shared with us best practices from doctoral research (Women In Trades Training) about the inclusion of women in male dominated apprentice classrooms.

She explained the theory of "Post Structural Feminism"- the specific processes whereby individuals are made into gendered subjects. The first barrier that needs to be removed; is the "thick-skinned" mentality that things do not need to change. She then related some of the items that even well-intentioned males might not recognize; like the special sizing requirements of PPE for women. There was an example of special start times and transportation needs of a male worker who had a DUI offence; but no such options were offered to a woman who had childcare issues. Men do not realize that women are gendered in the environment where the occupation is masculine. This puts a cognitive stress load on the female students.

Usually, the faculty comes from the same environment that exists on the shop floor. This can lead to "microaggression" or subtle sexism. There is a strong need for a balance between support and condescension. One solution to this problem would be to have more women instructors and mentors. An inclusive classroom can shift to the shop floor being more inclusive. She was impressed with the number of males that attended this session and challenged us all to . . .



Influence the influencers!



Day Three (Cont'd)

- Concurrent Session: “Increasing Apprentice Completion Rates: Lessons Learned from the Construction Apprenticeship Support Program” – Beth Lacher, Program Manager Sault Ste Marie Community Career Centre (SSMCC).

The Apprenticeship Support Program supports local job seekers and apprentices to begin and/or successfully complete an apprenticeship in the skilled trades. It provides access to vocational aptitude pre-assessments, in-demand trade apprenticeship market information, and information on apprenticeship pathways and completion strategies. The Apprenticeship Support Program delivers individualized wrap-around supports such as mental health supports, guidance on managing a successful skilled trades career and exam preparation. It also gives local skilled trades employers, apprentice sponsors and journeypersons the information, tools and strategies needed to successfully train apprentices.

APPRENTICESHIP SUPPORT PROGRAM INCLUDES:

- Access to apprenticeship info sessions, professional development & exam preparation workshops.
- Access to an apprenticeship resource lending library.
- Access to peer mentors and mental health supports.

- Plenary Five: “Truth & Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Call To Action # 92 – Industry’s Responsibility to Make Space for Indigenous Participation.” Michelle Francis Denny, Director of Atlantic Indigenous Economic Development Integrated Research Program, Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nations Chiefs Secretariat.

Ms. Denny explained how the prospect of apprenticeships and trades training is so important, that it is included in the TRC. All projects on tribal lands and non-ceded lands must include indigenous partners. She cited an example of Trades Newfoundland & Labrador; where the hiring and retention of indigenous trades and apprentices were part of the agreement signed by all stakeholders. In Nova Scotia there is an indigenous peoples apprenticeship committee in the Nova Scotian government. These are two small steps that will help to improve the quality of life for aboriginal communities.

By recognizing the rights of indigenous people, building long term relationships and recognizing the value and importance of their input; things are starting to improve and must continue to do so. She gave some further examples of good strategies. The first one being to ask the community for their input and suggestions; shared values are important. Make space for indigenous people in the workforce. Employment targets need to be established and met. Increase the opportunities for indigenous businesses to be part of the procurement process. Help them with more exposure and marketing plans.



Truth and Reconciliation
Commission of Canada

92. Business and Reconciliation

We call upon the corporate sector in Canada to adopt the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a reconciliation framework and to apply its principles, norms, and standards to corporate policy and core operational activities involving Indigenous peoples and their lands and resources. This would include, but not be limited to, the following:

- 1. Commit to meaningful consultation, building respectful relationships, and obtaining the free, prior, and informed consent of Indigenous peoples before proceeding with economic development projects;*
- 2. Ensure that Aboriginal peoples have equitable access to jobs, training, and education opportunities in the corporate sector, and that Aboriginal communities gain long-term sustainable benefits from economic development projects;*
- 3. Provide education for management and staff on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal–Crown relations. This will require skills based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.*



BGMO SKILLED TRADES COUNCIL CAF REPORT (cont'd)

Day Three (Cont'd)

➤ Closing Session: The closing keynote speaker was Ilona Dougherty from “Wired For Innovation”, gave the forum unique insights into tapping the potential of young workers.

Ms. Dougherty reminded us of the unique abilities that young people have; things like being “tech savvy” and tend to collaborate more with one another. The traditional business model incorporates the separation of youth from the adult world. This leads to lower salaries and limited experience. Apprenticeships break that cycle and are a key element in re-integrating the worlds of young people with older adults and re-centering contributions from everyone.

These relationships are central to the learning process with meaningful activities. *The inter-generational nature of an apprenticeship involves working collaboratively.* It encourages participation and then includes the apprentice in the decision-making process; allowing them to co-lead.

➤ France Daviault then closed the conference with her closing remarks and thanked the attendees, guest speakers, instructors and panelists.

➤ Summary:

The CAF was an extremely informative conference. We were impressed with:

- *The concentrated efforts to work more collaboratively with indigenous people by gaining a better understanding of their issues.*
- *Encouraging more engagement with marginalized members of society so that they can make informed decisions on a career in skilled trades. We will certainly focus on what our union can do to help reach these people.*
- *The progressiveness of health & safety including mental health and being more comfortable about talking about it.*
- *How we need to adapt PPE to help with the special nature of women’s needs. The need to reach out and help women understand and want to be part of skilled trades.*
- *Reaching out to young people in schools and at earlier grades to help them to understand their options.*
- *The emphasis on our industries being more environmentally friendly and how trades core values remain a key part of the green initiative.*
- *We saw how mentorship is an extremely valuable component of the apprenticeship process.*
- *How we can build inclusive learning cultures in our workplaces. Including understanding the issues faced by women in a predominately male environment.*
- *The many different avenues for apprentice support within the various communities.*
- *The trades exhibit hall and mobile learning centre in Nova Scotia.*
- *Government grants for apprentices. As much as the money is certainly needed, we need to see more checks and balances (especially for retention).*
- *Recognizing the value of the younger workers and the roles that they will play in all our futures.*
- *430 attendees – the vast majority were Training Delivery Agents (teachers, professors, instructors, etc.), consultants, trades trainers, trades councils but very few employers. The Unifor team continually reiterated this concern to the executives of the CAF, joint councils and basically everyone that we interacted with.*

This report is respectfully submitted by,

Mark McGregor,
BGMO Sub-Council