

July 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020

Mr. Sean Casey, MP Charlottetown, Chair  
Ms. Stephanie Kusie, MP Calgary Midnapore, Co-Chair  
Ms. Louise Chabot, MP Thérèse-De Blainville, Co-Chair

Standing Committee on Human Resources,  
Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons  
with Disabilities (HUMA)

Dear Mr. Casey, Ms. Kusie and Ms. Chabot,

**RE: Canadian Mentoring Partnership Submission to the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities (HUMA)**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this submission on behalf of the [Canadian Mentoring Partnership](#) (CMP). We are writing today to request an opportunity to appear before your committee and to update you on our work and response to the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The CMP is a coalition of organizations that provide youth mentoring. Our goal is to build sector capacity to expand access to mentoring across Canada. Our work is focused in four areas: research, technology, public education and development of regional networks. CMP was launched in 2019 by Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada, the Alberta Mentoring Partnership and the Ontario Mentoring Coalition.

During this period of unprecedented health and economic uncertainty, we have pivoted our work to respond to immediate and emerging needs among Canadian youth and the youth-serving organizations that support them. As a virtual team, with staff already working remotely across Canada, we were already well positioned to work digitally when the country went into isolation.

We know that to access employment opportunities in the post-pandemic economy, Canadian youth will have an even greater need to connect with mentors who can help them engage with prospective employers and the Canadian labour market. According to industry employment data shared by ESDC (May 2020), across all sectors, youth are seeing lower wages, are disproportionately affected by layoffs, and are seeing reduced access to new employment opportunities that can be a crucial foothold to future success. Compounding youth unemployment, our partners are reporting increased challenges related to mental health, anxiety and alienation. Through quality mentoring opportunities, youth will develop an understanding of the practical job skills required to meet labour market demands and learn how to access opportunities aligned to their academic, career and life goals.

Our work includes:

- **Engaging mentoring leaders across Canada through virtual conversations about Building a Mentoring Movement in Canada.** In March and April, we hosted a series of 5 webinars, including [Building a Mentoring Movement in Canada](#), [Virtual Mentoring Tools](#), [Growing the Evidence base for Quality Mentoring](#), [Designing a National Collaborative](#), and [Growing the number of mentors across Canada](#). This enabled us to

engage hundreds of leaders in building a collective impact strategy. We continue to engage leaders from across Canada in virtual conversations about technology, research, partnerships, and communication.

- **Working with volunteers and service providers to help them better engage and work virtually.** Together, we are working with leaders in the field from across Canada on the planning, development, and deployment of a **virtual mentoring platform** that would be freely available, bilingual, mobile, and secure. We anticipate that this service delivery platform could also be scaled across the human services sector (e.g. employment, education, health care, etc.). We estimate launching the platform in August 2020 after a pilot phase in July 2020. We are in key conversations with leaders in the field to adapt, scale, and translate resources and training to **support quality mentoring initiatives for schools, service providers, agencies, and informal mentoring relationships.** We are navigating permissions, attribution, and translation. **The co-creation of an online, bilingual Canadian mentoring resource collection** will help address service gaps, increase quality mentoring relationships and ensure our service providers are able to reach youth where they are at.
- **Responding to the socio-emotional/psychosocial impact/mental health impacts of COVID 19 on Canadian youth** by sharing and adapting bilingual tools and resources from the sector. These include best practices from across Canada and around the world.
- **Partnering with Canadian corporations to expand our [Power of Mentoring Campaign](#).** The Power of Mentoring Campaign is a series of **virtual networking and skill-building experiences designed to support youth ages 18-24.** Hosted in partnership with employee volunteers from corporations and the private sector, the events are focused on expanding networks, enhancing employment skills and increasing access to job opportunities. The first four virtual events were jointly hosted with Deloitte (May 14<sup>th</sup>), [Canadian Council for Youth Prosperity](#) (May 18<sup>th</sup>), European Center for Evidence-Based Mentoring (June 3), and Toronto Pearson Int'l Airport (June 9<sup>th</sup>). We are scheduling at least 11 additional events with other employers (including RBC and Starbucks) and youth-serving organizations in the coming months. We have also invited all MPs to co-host a virtual Power of Mentoring event in their riding. HUMA Vice-Chair Stephanie Kusie will host an event in the fall.
- **Support of the Safe Kids Initiative co-led by the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF/FCE), Canadian Women's Foundation and Women, and Gender Equality Canada.** This initiative has been endorsed by Minister Maryam Monsef and Minister Ahmed Hussen. As a virtual organization with a national network of youth-serving organizations and a robust online platform in development, we are well placed to support the initiative's priority of addressing connectivity needs and coordinating various ways to connect vulnerable children and youth to available social support mechanisms.

Our work is being guided by new research we are leading that seeks input for youth, mentors, service providers, community organizations, and the research, youth development, government, philanthropic and corporate sectors.

- The [National Youth Survey on The State of Mentoring](#), launched in early March, is **allowing us to better understand the mentoring experiences of young Canadians and help inform service providers how to better serve youth, in particular NEET, Indigenous, rural and remote and underserved youth.** This is the first study of its kind in Canada, and the results will be critical to informing youth serving organizations as

they adjust to post-pandemic challenges. The results of this study will be available in late August 2020 and we would like to share them with the HUMA Standing Committee.

- The [Canadian Survey of Youth Development and Mentoring Organizations Survey](#), launched in Spring 2020, **will help us understand the prevalence, practices and scope of mentoring programs in Canada.** This work is being complemented by discussions with representatives from community organizations and the research, youth development, government, philanthropic and corporate sectors.
- **Raising the Profile of Mentoring, launching in Fall 2020**, will increase our understanding of mentor recruitment, a critical component for mentoring programs. Through a survey and focus groups, **this new study will seek to better understand Canadians' ability to become mentors to the youth in their communities.** The goals of this study are to understand adults' motivations, barriers, and willingness to mentor young people outside their families -- critical information during the pandemic and post-pandemic periods when we anticipate an increased need for mentors.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this update. We look forward to appearing before the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities to discuss how we can collectively adapt through, and post Covid-19, in order to better support youth employment, mentoring and skill development in Canada.

Sincerely,



Stacey Dakin  
Managing Director  
Canadian Mentoring Partnership