



International Seminar on the Search for Origins

Montreal
May 27, 28 and 29, 2019

Participant notebook

PROGRAM – MAY 27 2019

8:00 a.m.	ARRIVAL OF PARTICIPANTS
9:00 a.m.	WELCOMING REMARKS
9:30 a.m.	ENTIRE GROUP: Adoption trends and research into family origins across time from a Québec perspective Luce de Bellefeuille
10:15 a.m.	COFFEE BREAK
10:30 a.m.	ENTIRE GROUP: Adoption trends and research into family origins across time from a global perspective Laura Martinez Jeannette Wollenstein
12:00 p.m.	LUNCH
1:15 p.m.	ACTIVITIES IN SUB-GROUPS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The psychological issues related to the reunion Lucie Bourdeau • Steps in the process of researching family origins Ina Dulanjani Dygaard Adelkys Bauza Érika Joanna Martinez • Adoption and search of origins: going beyond the paper trail (english only) Maria Klironomos Nathalie Quevillon Lucia Skorusova • De l'adoption à la recherche des origines : l'importance de constituer des bon dossiers (french only) Marie-Lyne Bergeron Marie-Michèle Petit Sékou Konate
3:15 p.m.	COFFEE BREAK
3:30 p.m.	PLENARY SESSION: Short presentation of activities and comments on perspective
4 p.m.	Testimonials by adoptive parents followed by a discussion Diane Leduc Dubois
6 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.	Documentary directed by Micheline Léonard Welcoming land 30 years later

PROGRAM – MAY 28 2019

8:00 a.m.	ARRIVAL OF PARTICIPANTS
9:00 a.m.	Converging and diverging perspectives on identity: psychological, anthropological, social, etc. Françoise-Romaine Ouellette Adam Pertman Richard Lee
10:15 a.m.	COFFEE BREAK
10:30 a.m.	THE NOTION OF IDENTITY AT THE HEART OF RESEARCH INTO FAMILY ORIGINS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflict between loyalty and indebtedness for people with dual filiations • Role of culture in establishing identity Lucie Bourdeau Sylvie Ngeudam-Deumeni
12:00 p.m.	LUNCH
1:15 p.m.	ACTIVITIES IN SUB-GROUPS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support and assistance before, during and after reunions Sylvie Samson Johanne Lemieux Maïly Daigle • Representatives from countries of origin and host countries discuss their participation in research into family origins Adelkys Bauza Érika Joanna Martinez Kim Anh Pham Thi Denis Barbet • Importance of the medical aspect for an adopted person: summary of family and medical antecedents and administration of a health questionnaire Isabelle Paré Sandra Caron • Impact of an irregular adoption file for an adopted person researching his or her family origins Béatrice Bertrand Ariane Van den Berghe Patricia Carey Laura Martinez-Mora
3:15 p.m.	COFFEE BREAK
3:30 p.m.	PLENARY SESSION: short presentation of activities and comments on perspective
4:00 p.m.	Testimonials by adopted persons Esteban Orlando Fleurant
5:30 p.m.- 7:00 p.m.	Wine and cheese networking

PROGRAM – MAY 29 2019

8:00 a.m.	ARRIVAL OF PARTICIPANTS
9:00 a.m.	Research into family origins and reunions in the digital era: advances and concerns (social media, DNA testing, accessibility or confidentiality of information and the associated ethical issues) Adam Pertman Richard Lee
10:15 a.m.	COFFEE BREAK
10:30 a.m.	Research into family origins and reunions in the digital era: notion of borders and issues of inter-country cooperation Hugues Létourneau Jeannette Wöllestein
12:00 p.m.	LUNCH
1:15 p.m.	ACTIVITIES IN SUB-GROUPS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeking, locating and approaching the persons involved Cathy Gagnon Maria Klironomos Sylvie Lapointe • The role of associations Caroline Fortin Maritza Bossé-Pelchat Maily Daigle Anne-Marie Morel • Journeys to countries of origin: some examples Satake Prapimdao Ting Yen-Chi Julie Wang
3:15 p.m.	COFFEE BREAK
3:30 p.m.	PLENARY SESSION: short presentation of activities and comments on perspective
4:00 p.m.	Testimonials (by intermediaries, if necessary) by parents who placed their child for adoption Marie-Andrée Poirier
5:00 p.m.	CLOSING WORDS

PRESENTATIONS

ADOPTION TRENDS AND RESEARCH INTO FAMILY ORIGINS ACROSS TIME FROM A QUÉBEC PERSPECTIVE

The conference examines the topic of adoption from a historical and sociological standpoint. It considers the importance of secrecy, birth outside marriage, the social context of the time, the number of children abandoned and so on. Topics including the Hague Convention and the transition to international adoption will also be addressed, along with family origin searches and their specific features in Québec, now and looking towards the future.

ADOPTION TRENDS AND RESEARCH INTO FAMILY ORIGINS ACROSS TIME FROM A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

From international adoption to the search for family origins: A historical and international perspective, by Laura Martinez-Mora

A historical and sociological overview of adoption and the impact of the Convention on the Rights of the Child/Hague Convention, along with a reflection on the future of international family origin searches.

Access to information on family origins: An overview of the legal and practical aspects, by Jeannette Wöllenstein

This presentation will report on the findings of an international survey carried out by International Social Services (ISS/IRC) on the legal and practical developments of family origin searches.

ACTIVITIES IN SUB-GROUPS:

1. The psychological issues related to the reunion

For people who were adopted, being reunited with their birth family is often depicted as a long-awaited, happy event. However, the process can also open the door to a number of psychological issues. This presentation summarizes the issues that an adopted person and birth mother will encounter to different degrees as they attempt to resolve and integrate their adoption story.

2. Steps in the process of researching family origins

An overview of the services available to people seeking family and medical antecedents and international reunions. The presenters will share and talk about the practices of their respective countries, focusing on the following elements in particular:

- The legal basis of the family origin search and the notion of confidentiality as it applies to information in adoption records
- The trajectory of an application
- The importance of international collaboration

3. Adoption and search of origins: going beyond the paper trail. (De l'adoption à la recherche des origines: l'importance de constituer des bon dossiers)

The workshop will consider the direct connection between adoption records and family origin searches. Three panelists will present the challenges they face when compiling and keeping adoption records, and in family origin searches. Participants will be asked to write a brief summary of family and medical antecedents based on information given to them, and will have an opportunity to talk to the panelists and learn how to obtain better results.

CONVERGING AND DIVERGING PERSPECTIVES ON IDENTITY: PSYCHOLOGICAL, ANTHROPOLOGICAL, SOCIAL, ETC.

Formal identity and sense of self- identity: the international adoption complexity, by Françoise-Romaine Ouellette

The process of identity formation always implies, for all of us, a dynamic tension between the formal identification by the State (filiation, name, nationality...) and the subjective sense of self. This presentation will first briefly explain how plenary adoption modifies the adoptee's civil identity. It will underline how intercountry adoption has profoundly challenged this model of closed adoption (because of international laws and conventions, because of immigration laws etc.). It will conclude with the personal experiences of the international adoptees who sometime have to deal with important contradictions between their identity papers, with what they have been told about their origins and what they end up discovering when they search for the original family. The following question will be address: as plenary adoption never leaves any space for continuity of original family ties, is it always in the best interest of the adopted child?

The transnational adoption paradox: Thinking about family as a normative experience, by Dr. Richard Lee

The transnational adoption paradox involves the simultaneous loss of birth culture heritage and biological family connections and the assimilation into a new family and culture. Negotiating this paradox is a normative experience for internationally adopted youth and young adults that involves thinking about birth/biological family. In this presentation, Dr. Lee will discuss how the wondering and yearning for birth/biological family information contributes to a sense of identity and well-being.

Rethinking Adoption in the 21st Century, by Adam Pertman

This presentation will examine the fundamental shifts that have taken place in the process and everyone involved in it today; then – with the role of identity as a primary focus – will offer a research-based vision of what can be done to genuinely help children and families into the future. The bottom line of the address is the critical importance of moving law, policy and practice beyond the historical goal of “child placement” to a new paradigm that focuses on enabling children and families to succeed.

CONFLICT BETWEEN LOYALTY AND INDEBTEDNESS FOR PEOPLE WITH DUAL FILIATIONS, ROLE OF CULTURE IN ESTABLISHING IDENTITY

Cultural envelope and identity in adopted persons, by Sylvie Nguedam Deumeni

In most western countries, legal adoption is a complete process, in that original filiation is entirely replaced by adoptive filiation. However, adoption does not block out the biological, national, ethnic or cultural origins of the adopted person, or the need for those origins to be acknowledged as the person builds his or her identity.

This presentation begins with the notion of boundaries and the validity of cultural references, and goes on to question the paradox of full adoption and the tensions it generates when building a sense of belonging.

It then shows how identity can be subjective for adopted people, due to the broader meaning of origin and culture in a process of appropriation, historicization and individualization that goes beyond biological heritage.

Conflicts of loyalty, by Lucie Bourdeau

Ms. Bourdeau will consider the question of conflicts of loyalty and their impacts both before and after the reunion with the birth family. Potential solutions will be proposed to resolve conflicts of loyalty.

ACTIVITIES IN SUB-GROUPS:

1. Support and assistance before, during and after reunions

Working from a developmental (child/adolescent/adult/senior) and systemic (adopted person/biological parent) perspective, participants will learn about the specific support-related challenges that arise throughout the search and reunion process, and the different tools and methods available for each stage and situation.

2. Representatives from countries of origin and host countries discuss their participation in research into family origins

The success of international adoption family origin searches and reunions depends on collaboration from the authorities and other stakeholders involved with the applicants. In the last few years, some receiving countries and countries of origin have understood the importance of this fundamental right and have introduced mechanisms that allow for cooperation in the process.

Participants will have the opportunity to talk about their experience.

3. Importance of the medical aspect for an adopted person: summary of family and medical antecedents and administration of a health questionnaire

The panel members will give a brief historical summary of the era when the children were born (broadly speaking, between the 1920s and the 1970s). They will then talk about the medical information contained in the records (depending on the years or the specific nature of the records) and will ask the following questions: Why do adoptees wish to know more about their medical history? What can they do to obtain more information about medical issues?

The panel members will also examine the legal aspect of the stakeholders' work, as well as current information-gathering practices.

4. Impact of an irregular adoption file for an adopted person researching his or her family origins

What happens when someone begins the process of searching for his or her family origins, but the adoption record is incomplete? Why might this be so? Was it a private adoption? Was the procedure unofficial? Can the missing information be found? How should the adoptee be informed of this situation? The panel members, using examples from Belgium and Ireland in particular, will describe some of the practices developed to address situations such as these.

RESEARCH INTO FAMILY ORIGINS AND REUNIONS IN THE DIGITAL ERA: ADVANCES AND CONCERNS (SOCIAL MEDIA, DNA TESTING, ACCESSIBILITY OR CONFIDENTIALITY OF INFORMATION AND THE ASSOCIATED ETHICAL ISSUES)

Wild, Wild Web: The Historic Impact on Adoption of the Internet, Social Media and DNA, by Adam Pertman

Social media and other elements of the Internet – supercharged by DNA testing – are instigating life-altering changes in every aspect of adoption, including accelerating the search for origins to an extent never before imagined. Many of these historic shifts are unpredictable and poorly understood. They include not only issues relating to search and reunion, but also challenges and opportunities for child-placement, counseling, outreach and other professional practices, as well as complications for the ability of courts, agencies and parents to determine the nature of contact between minor children and members of their families of origin. In short, for good and for ill, the rules of adoption are being rewritten.

Searching for family: Psychological and bioethical considerations, by Dr. Richard Lee

Dr. Lee will adopt a critical adoption framework to examine the post-adoption experiences of youth and young adults who were adopted transracially and transnationally from South Korea into White families in the United States. He will specifically interrogate the history of international adoption as a closed adoption process that privileges adoptive parents over the human rights of birth/biological families and adopted children. Then, he will focus on the ways in which adopted individuals and adoptive parents are challenging the remnants of a closed adoption mentality by using new technologies to address questions about birth/biological family.

RESEARCH INTO FAMILY ORIGINS AND REUNIONS IN THE DIGITAL ERA: NOTION OF BORDERS AND ISSUES OF INTER-COUNTRY COOPERATION

Technological progress and family origin searches: Advantages, risks and possible answers, by Jeannette Wöllenstein

Ms. Wöllenstein will present the findings from a survey by International Social Services (ISS/IRC), specifically concerning the use of technological progress in family origin searches.

Walking the line of confidentiality and accessibility: the ethical challenges involved in the search of origins, by Hugues Létourneau

The saying "We cannot do indirectly what cannot be done directly" applies less and less to the search for an adoptee's family origins. This somewhat unofficial state of affairs is due among other things to the development of human genome science and the creation of databases and digital media. As a result, adoptees tend to seek confirmation of what they have discovered, rather than using the available professional resources to perform the search in the first place. Why ask, if they already know? Must caseworkers now deal with nonsensical requirements concerning confidentiality and their own role? If adoptees already know everything, what is the point? Can ethics be useful to seek meaning in an increasingly complex world paved with uncertainty and questions? And if so, what, exactly, do we mean by ethics? With whom must ethics be shared and applied?

ACTIVITIES IN SUB-GROUPS:

1. Seeking, locating and approaching the persons involved

The panel will present the strategies and tools used to search for and locate a person who was the object of an application for information. It will also address the subject of contact information – in other words, how the person is approached once he or she has been located using clinical intervention principles, and told that he or she is being sought by a domestic or international adoptee.

2. The role of associations

Four associations working with adoptees and adoptive families will describe the needs they address and the services they provide to their respective clients.

3. Journeys to countries of origin: some examples

The three panelists will talk generally about what a trip back to their respective countries of origin means to them: their aims and expectations, and the preparations needed in the host country. What can be done to prepare an adult or child adoptee before a trip to his or her country of origin, or before a reunion with the birth family?

Ms. Yen-Chi will explain the services available in Taiwan, the impacts of these trips on the people concerned, and what has been learned as a result.

SPEAKERS

Sandra Caron holds a bachelor's degree in nursing science from Université Laval (2003) and practices at the CHU Sainte-Justine. In 2004, she was appointed to the position of nurse clinician at the Clinique d'adoption et de santé internationale and works with children adopted abroad or in Canada, children in foster care, and migrant families. Her fields of interest and expertise are children's development, affection, the parent-child relationship, and infectious diseases, especially tuberculosis, and vaccination.

Sylvie Samson holds a degree in social service from the Université de Sherbrooke (1994). For nearly 15 years, she has had the privilege of guiding hundreds of families formed through adoption by offering pre- and post-adoption services. She has developed her expertise in the health and social services network. She recently began to exercise her profession in private practice. In this exciting field, teaching and knowledge sharing are central to her practice.

Lucia Skorušová holds a master's degree in law and legal science from Masaryk University in Brno in the Czech Republic. She is interested, in particular, in the subject of alternative families and is pursuing postgraduate doctoral studies in the department of private law and civil procedure in the law faculty of Palacký University in Olomouc in the Czech Republic. She is currently practising law in the international adoption department of the Office for International Legal Protection of Children, the Central Authority of the Czech Republic.

Nathalie Quevillon holds a college diploma in marketing. She has been a member of the Board of Directors of Enfants d'Orient et d'Occident since 2004 and is the mother of two sons adopted in Thailand. In addition to her voluntary activities with Enfants d'Orient et d'Occident, she serves as the coordinator and head of adoption projects for Madagascar and Thailand. She is actively involved in a number of provincial international adoption committees.

Sylvie J. Lapointe, MSS, TSI, is a graduate of the University of Ottawa. She is the service director at International Social Service Canada and has worked for the organization for nearly 18 years. She is also a member of the professional advisory committee of the SSI International Network. Her work focuses on international adoption, child protection and kinship care between countries.

Ling Wang, is a physician. She serves as a representative of the China Oriental Dream adoption agency, authorized by the Chinese government, founded in 1996. Over the years, she has guided more than 2000 families in the adoption process in China. She oversees the organization of the adoption trip. She supports the individuals adopted and their families at the time of adoption and also during the return to the country of origin.

Marie-Lyne Bergeron holds a master's degree in psychoeducation from the Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières and a bachelor's degree in psychology and law. She is specifically interested in child protection and international adoption. She has taught special education at the CEGEP level in recent years. Since 2014, she has worked for the Secrétariat à l'adoption internationale and is currently a consultant in the realm of origins searches.

Isabelle Paré is a social service worker at the CIUSSS de la Capitale-Nationale in adoption-reunion services. She has more than 26 years of expertise in the realm of reunion. She initially worked as a researcher and was assigned the entire array of activities pertaining to the preparation of and search for the sociobiological history of adoptees or biological parents.

Richard M. Lee, is the Distinguished McKnight University Professor in the Department of Psychology at the University of Minnesota. He is the Editor-in-Chief for Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology, an elected fellow in Divisions 17 and 45 of the American Psychological Association, and a past president of the Asian American Psychological Association. Since 2000, Dr. Lee has been conducting empirical research on the transracial and transnational experiences of children, youth, and young adults who were adopted internationally as infants from South Korea to White parents in the United States. He has published over 125 journal articles and book chapters and his adoption research has been funded by the U.S. National Institutes of Health and National Science Foundation. Dr. Lee is currently conducting a 12-year follow-up study on families in which the Korean adoptees are now young adults. His recent research examines the diaspora experiences of Korean adoptees, including identity development, birth family thoughts, and the use of direct-to-consumer genetic testing to find biological family information.

Erika Joanna Martínez Pérez holds a master's degree in clinical psychology from Konrad Lorenz University. She specializes in the assessment and clinical treatment of emotional maladjustment and affective disorders. She is the psychologist responsible for post-adoption follow-up among adoptive families in the regional office of the Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar (ICBF) in Bogota. She has also worked in the program for children with special needs. She subsequently served as program coordinator for the NGO Kidsave International. She is currently working as a psychologist on the origins searches team of the national office of the ICBF.

Françoise-Romaine Ouellette Ph.D., is an anthropologist and honorary professor at the Institut national de la recherche scientifique (INRS), Centre Urbanisation Culture Société, who focuses on the transformation of the family and changes in adoption practices. Since 1990, she has directed a number of research projects and published articles and scientific works on international adoption, the adoption of children in placements, and intrafamily adoption. Through her critical analysis of certain uses of full adoption, she has contributed to debate that has led to the recent reform of Québec adoption law.

Yenchi Ting holds a master's degree in social work. In the course of her 30 years as a social worker she has worked with various clienteles in the realms of psychiatry, conjugal violence and child protection. Since 2013, she has coordinated adoption services and residential programs for children, adolescents and pregnant women in the Cathwel Service (the competent authority in Taiwan).

Caroline Fortin has received clerical training and training in active listening and helping relationships. She is the President and Provincial Coordinator of Mouvement Retrouvailles and has worked for the organization since 1996. She is an adoptee who learned about Mouvement Retrouvailles through a personal initiative. The experience engendered a need to help other individuals in their approaches. The right to identity has become her main concern. She is also the author of a collection of testimonials on adoption entitled *Lueurs originelles*.

Nadia Quévillon holds a bachelor's degree in psychology from the Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières and a master's degree in social service from the Université de Sherbrooke. For the past 20 years, she has worked as a social worker at the CIUSSS de l'Estrie, including 10 years in the Direction de la protection de la jeunesse in the reporting-evaluation service and 10 years devoted to adoption and research into sociobiological history and reunions. For the past seven years she has trained future social workers as a practitioner trainer in the Département du service social at the Université de Sherbrooke.

Adelkys Bauza graduated in psychology from the Universidad de Oriente in Cuba. She currently works as a consultant in origins searches at the Secrétariat à l'adoption internationale. Formerly a university professor in Cuba, she has worked in community settings in Québec, and as a volunteer co-therapist at the Clinique de psychiatrie transculturelle in Montréal. She has also given talks on mental health, in the context of immigration, in Québec community organizations.

Kenia Lora Abreu has studied social communications and public administration. With 16 years of experience in public administration, she has reached senior management levels. Her knowledge and experience encompass interinstitutional coordination, strategic and political communications, planning and supervision. She also possesses experience in the private sector and in civil society organizations at home and abroad. She became a member of the Board of Directors of Banco de Reservas in 2014. Since May 2018, she has served as Executive Chair of the Conseil national de l'enfance et de l'adolescence (CONANI).

Johanne Lemieux is a social worker and psychotherapist. For over 23 years she has been recognized both in Québec and in Europe as a specialist in the realm of adopted children and their families. She divides her time between psychosocial intervention and psychotherapeutic intervention at the Bureau de consultation en adoption de Québec, which she founded in 1996, and other professional activities as a speaker, trainer, author and clinical consultant in numerous private, non-profit and government organizations through Le Monde est ailleurs.

Jeannette Wöllenstein holds a master's degree in French and German law and is studying children's rights at the University of Geneva. She has worked for the Embassy of Costa Rica in France and served as a volunteer with UNICEF, the Geneva Red Cross and a children's centre in Ecuador. She joined the International Social Service (ISS) nearly five years ago, where she is responsible for children's rights at the Centre International de Référence pour les droits des enfants privés de famille (SSI/CIR).

Laura Martinez is a jurist by training (University of Valencia, Spain) and holds a master's degree in international law from the University of London (UK) and a diploma in child protection from Diego Portales University in Chile. She is the Principal Legal Officer in the Permanent Bureau of the Hague Conference on Private International Law (HCCH, The Netherlands). She is responsible for follow-up to the May 29, 1993 Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption and the filiation/surrogacy project. In the past, she worked for the International Social Service in Geneva and with UNICEF in Chile, at the European Commission in Brussels, and the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, in the realm of childhood.

Luce de Bellefeuille is a social psychologist by training. She worked for 30 years as a manager in public organizations, above all in the Québec health and social services network. She headed the Secrétariat à l'adoption internationale (SAI) for 13 years. Following the publication of a book devoted to her experience at the SAI, she joined a group of international experts that works under the aegis of the International Social Service to elaborate regulations governing surrogacy in a cross-border context.

Lucie Bourdeau is a psychologist, art therapist, author and speaker. She is an adoptee and adoptive mother and has naturally devoted herself extensively to the clientele of the adoption community, especially from the standpoint of reunions. For example, she has worked in reunion services at the CISSS de l'Outaouais. In 2014, her desire to inform and share her knowledge led to her writing *Les retrouvailles en adoption, une quête de soi*, a handbook on reunions relating to adoption that is available in bookstores and online.

Doris Low trained as a social worker and has been working for more than 30 years in the field of child protection, including more than 10 years of experience in the realm of adoption. She now heads the adoption and reunion services program at the CIUSSS de l'Ouest de l'Île.

Marie-Michèle Petit is the coordinator of Société Formons une Famille, a certified agency. She is also an adoptive mother. Before working in the realm of adoption, she occupied various positions in a media organization for 11 years.

Maïly Daigle obtained a master's degree in psychoeducation from the Université du Québec en Outaouais (UQO) in 2009. She is pursuing doctoral studies in clinical psychology at the UQO. Her doctoral dissertation focuses on the implications and impact of abandonment and adoption among adults. For the past 10 years, she has worked with adults, adolescents and children in community, hospital and private environments. For the past two years, she has also served as a director at L'Hybridé, a non-profit organization that supports adult adoptees.

Béatrice Bertrand has worked since 2004 as a jurist and executive assistant in the Direction de l'Adoption – Autorité centrale communautaire (ACC), the competent authority in French-speaking Belgium for all questions concerning national, international, non-familial and in-family adoption. She previously worked for 15 years in the legal service of the Ministère de la Communauté française and for five years served as a legal advisor to the Minister responsible, in particular, for adoption. She participated in this capacity in the implementation of the reform of adoption law in Belgium.

Patricia Carey has been the Chief Executive Officer at the Adoption Authority of Ireland since 2014. She previously worked as the director of a charitable organization and as a school inspector. She is the volunteer director of the Irish program to compensate the victims of institutional abuse. She also works as a volunteer advisor in strategy and planning with non-profit organizations.

Ina Dulanjani Dygaard is the Chair of the Board of Directors of Adoption & Society, the only family organization in Denmark devoted to adoptees and their families. She was adopted from Sri Lanka shortly after her birth and returned there in 2013, where she was reunited with her birth mother. She also served as coordinator of post-adoption services at Danish International Adoption (DIA).

Hugues Létourneau is a lawyer and has been a member of the Barreau du Québec since 1977. He has devoted his professional life to the cause of children and practised for more than 35 years in the legal department of a child protection agency. He has served on committees devoted to the family, abandonment, adoption and ethics. He specialized in bioethics and wrote a brief entitled "Exigences dialogiques et enjeux éthiques du travail en collaboration auprès des enfants présentant des troubles sévères de l'attachement."

Alexandrine Ubiera-Joncas graduated in communications (human relations) and has specialized in intercultural communications and intervention in the school, government and community sectors over the past 20 years. She is the Intercultural Relations Project Manager at the Institut Pacifique, co-founder of the Regroupement des adoptés à l'international sans frontière and Director of Development at RAIS - Ressources adoption. She is adopted. An educator through and through, the transfer of knowledge has always figured prominently in her working life, as her experience in the development of educational programs and regular teaching, francization and adult training activities attest.

Sophie Therrien graduated in anthropology. She first worked as a community caseworker, organizer and trainer before moving to Niger and then Honduras, where she worked in international cooperation. She worked as a consultant in intercultural relations, then joined the Ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion, where she occupied various positions, including one year as a cooperation and public affairs advisor in the Québec General Delegation in Mexico. She is now an international adoption advisor at the SAI.

Adam Pertman, a leading U.S. expert on adoption and child welfare, is the President of the National Center on Adoption and Permanency. He has headed the Donaldson Adoption Institute and served as Associate Editor of the scholarly journal *Adoption Quarterly*. He is a widely published author of research, scholarly articles, media commentaries and books, including *Adoption Nation* (reviewed as "the most important book ever written on the subject"). He was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize for his writing about adoption when he was a journalist at the *Boston Globe*. He gives keynotes, trainings, and other presentations at the international level. The research he has instigated and participated in, along with his writing, testimony and advocacy have been used to improve practice, shape legislation and policy, and educate professionals, students, the media and the public. His commentaries and interviews appear in media worldwide, and he has received numerous honors for his work.

Maria Klironomos holds an undergraduate degree in psychology (BA, McGill University), in social work (BSW, University of Victoria), and a master's degree in educational psychology (McGill University). She has worked for Les Centres de la jeunesse et de la famille Batshaw (CIUSSS-Ouest-de-l'Île-de-Montréal) since 2008, most notably in search and reunion services. Since February 2019, she has served as an origins search consultant at the Secrétariat à l'adoption internationale.

Cathy Gagnon holds a bachelor's degree in social service. For 6 years she worked as a social worker in the context of the Youth Protection Act and for 11 years in the context of the Youth Criminal Justice Act. She has worked at the Centre jeunesse de Québec (CIUSSSCN) since 1999 and is currently a researcher on the adoption/reunion services team.

Pham Thi Kim Anh holds a master's degree in international trade and a doctorate in private international law. Her thesis focused on L'amélioration du droit vietnamien de l'adoption internationale – les questions de théorie et de pratique. In 2010, she participated in the drafting of Vietnamese legislation on adoptions, Order No. 19/2011/ND-CP of the Vietnamese Government concerning the administration of the adoption legislation, and Order No. 24 /2019/ND-CP on the amendment of and additions to Order No. 19/2011/ND-CP. She is the Assistant Director in the Département de l'adoption relevant de l'autorité centrale in the Ministère vietnamien de la justice, where she is responsible for legislation and national adoption. She also teaches law at the University of Hanoi.

Denis Barbet has been a career diplomat in the Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires étrangères since 1987. He has occupied several positions in Paris and abroad. Since November 2017, he has served as the head of the Mission de l'adoption internationale, autorité centrale française en matière d'adoption internationale.

Maritza Bossé-Pelchat holds a bachelor's degree in communications from the Université du Québec à Montréal and subsequently trained in intervention and mental health at the Université de Montréal. She worked for several years as a caseworker at the Centre jeunesse de Montréal (CIUSSS) then focused on community work and devoted herself to combating school dropout. For three years, she sat on the Board of Directors of the Regroupement des adopté(es) à l'international sans frontières. In addition to her career as a caseworker and author-composer-performer, she has participated in the organization and coordination of fundraising events for various organizations.

Sekou Konate holds a master's degree in psychopedagogy and is an educator-researcher-evaluator. He is currently Directeur National de la Protection de l'Enfance in Guinea and President of the Commission de l'adoption internationale, designated as the central authority in Guinea. He has occupied various positions, including the chairmanship of the Comité de Pilotage du Réseau Afrique de l'Ouest pour la Protection de l'Enfance de la Communauté Économique des États de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (CEDEAO) and the general management of the Bureau de Stratégie et de Développement (BSD) in the minister's office. He has also assumed various positions in the realm of childhood (research officer, section manager, head of the follow-up-evaluation division). He also taught child and adolescent psychology for 10 years at the École normale d'instituteurs in Conakry.

Diane Leduc Dubois holds a master's degree in health services administration. She worked for over 30 years in the health and social services network and subsequently served as a consultant in the business that she founded. The mother of three children, two of them adopted, she has served as a volunteer on the Board of Directors of Enfants d'Orient et d'Occident, in particular for over 10 years as president. In this capacity, she carried out several missions to maintain good relations and the development of countries on behalf of the organization.

Anne-Marie Morel is a volunteer with the Fédération des parents adoptants du Québec (FPAQ), which she has chaired since 2015. She is the mother of two children, one of them adopted. She works as a nutritionist and public policy advisor with the Coalition québécoise sur la problématique du poids, a project sponsored by the Association pour la santé publique du Québec.

Sylvie Nguedam holds a doctorate in sociology and is a research and teaching assistant at Université Laval. Her research interests focus on identity building and the empowerment and individualization process in the quest for self-knowledge. From 2012 to 2017, she worked for the United Nations in numerous African countries on the process of rebuilding identity in dominated or exploited groups whose identity has been destabilized following historic events that targeted their cultural assimilation. Since 2018 she has worked as an international adoption advisor at the Secrétariat à l'adoption internationale (SAI).

Patricia Germain holds a master's degree in nursing science and a doctorate in applied human sciences from the Université de Montréal. She has been a professor in the Département des sciences infirmières at the Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières (UQTR) since December 2006. She is interested in childhood and the family, which she examines through an intercultural approach. Her research focuses on children's development, international adoption, care for immigrant families, and intercultural facets of health. She has 10 years of experience as a paediatric nurse at the Hôpital Sainte-Justine. She has also participated in humanitarian missions in orphanages in China, Vietnam and Haiti.

Louise Gagnon is a lawyer by training. She has practised for many years in the realm of family law, youth protection and refugee rights. She has also practised in legal aid services and with respect to government childcare services. For the past seven years, she has served as a law research officer at the Secrétariat à l'adoption internationale (SAI).

Anne-Marie Piché holds a bachelor's degree and a master's degree in social service from Université Laval and a doctorate in social service from McGill University. Since 2010, she has been a professor at the École de travail social at the Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM). In 2001, she participated in the establishment of the first public pre- and post-international adoption services in the CLSCs (Lac-Saint-Louis) in her capacity as a social worker. Her current research focuses on the development and empowerment of local adoption systems in developing countries in South America with the transformation of the social phenomenon of international adoption. She teaches methodology related to individual, family and group intervention and intervention in the context of international adoption and child protection at the undergraduate and graduate levels at the École de travail social (UQAM).

Marie-Andrée Poirier is an Associate Professor at the École de service social at the Université de Montréal. From 2010 to 2013, she headed the Groupe de recherche et d'action sur la victimisation des enfants (GRAVE). She now heads a team devoted to the placement and adoption of children. She was the principal investigator of the evaluation of the Looking After Children approach in Québec.

Prapimdao Satake holds a bachelor's degree in education and a master's degree in social work. From 1985 to 1992, she occupied various positions in the Ministère du travail et du bien-être social, mainly in the realm of child protection. After living for seven years in Japan, she joined the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security in Thailand, where she has served, by way of an example, as Director of the Central Authority. She is now the Director of the Child Adoption Center in Thailand.

Esteban-Orlando has been working in the arts world for more than 15 years, and in 2009 created his own audiovisual production box. He has significant experience in organizing and coordinating events. From 2015 to 2018, he was co-director of the Regroupement des adopté-es à l'international sans frontières (RAIS). For more than 10 years, he has been assisting and supporting adoptees wishing to reunite with their birth families.

Ariane Van den Berghe, studied law at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven. She specialized in international and humanitarian law. Following her studies, she remained at the faculty of law for two years, where she conducted research in comparative law. She then worked as a lawyer for the Flemish government. In this capacity, she has been involved in the development of policies and regulations relating to preventative family support, foster care and the prevention of child abuse. Since 2012, she has headed the Flemish adoption center (central authority under the Hague Convention).