

# CATHII Info



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CONTRE LA TRAITE HUMAINE INTERNE ET  
INTERNATIONALE

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## A Word from the Coordinator

In this spring edition of CATHII Info, the participants in the CATHII-University at the UN Project will share this training experience on trafficking with the CATHII and their participation in the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW66).

But first, we will tell you about CATHII and our ongoing advocacy since June 2021.

On April 25, the regular meeting of CATHII members took place. On this occasion, I shared my important news with the members: I will be leaving the coordination of the CATHII at the end of June. I reiterated to the members my attachment to the CATHII and how inspiring all the members are through their faithful commitment to fight for dignity and against trafficking in all its forms.

Over the last four years, I could not have hoped to contribute more to a mission that aligns with my values of fairness and respect for the dignity of each person. I was truly happy in this mission! I have tried to give my best to promote progress in the support and access to services for victims and survivors, a central concern for the Comité d'Action Contre la Traite Humaine Interne et Internationale. I am proud to have influenced the CATHII's recent shift to support victims of forced labour. These situations especially affect domestic workers and temporary migrant workers.

I will definitely have to deal with sadness in the coming months, but I have a lot of trust in the continuation of the CATHII's important mission with its convinced, active and tenacious members...

Looking forward to meeting you again,

**France Laforge, Coordinator of CATHII**



## **The Need for an Anti-Trafficking Provincial Plan: A CATHII Campaign!**

In the fall of 2021, the CATHII launched a signature campaign to request an anti-trafficking provincial plan. Over 1,000 signatures were collected thanks to the members' commitment! On the occasion of the 12 Days of Action Against Violence on Women from November 25 to December 6, the Quebec Committee on Women and Development of the AQOCI (Quebec Association of Organizations for International Cooperation) included the CATHII campaign in the mobilization tools on social media.



Our main concerns and suggestions regarding human trafficking in Quebec are:

- The need for an anti-trafficking provincial plan that covers all forms of human trafficking (sexual exploitation, forced labour, forced marriage, etc.) with a focus on vulnerable populations. This provincial plan must be developed with non-governmental organizations committed to fight human trafficking and include the input of survivors.
- Significant financial support for the mission of organizations that welcome and support victims and survivors of trafficking in the aftermath until empowerment.
- A public awareness campaign conducted over several years on all forms of human trafficking, together with organizations and survivors of trafficking.
- A provincial anti-trafficking office or provincial body with the mandate to:
  1. document the various forms of trafficking to better identify the outlines in Quebec and the best ways to fight them;
  2. offer a 24/7 information and referral line in multiple languages including Indigenous languages;
  3. include online training tools developed with anti-trafficking Quebec organizations and survivors;
  4. include a regularly updated list of resources.

Our campaign is directed at both the government and official opposition parties. It continues as human trafficking is still present in Quebec.

**Renaude Grégoire, Advocacy Agent of CATHII**

## Contextualizing the *CATHII-University at the UN Project*

This year once again, the CATHII, a pioneer organization on matters of human trafficking in Quebec and Canada, continued to transmit its discoveries and knowledge on the issue of human trafficking to the next generations. This transmission made it possible to reach nearly twenty students from three different universities, namely Université de Montréal, Université de Laval and McGill University, and from wide-ranging fields of study: psychology, criminology, public affairs and international relations, social work, and political science.

The purpose was to present the context that led to the creation of the CATHII, its advocacy actions with local and international allies such as the Coalition Québécoise Contre la Traite Humaine, Talitha Kum Networks and UNANIMA International. Furthermore, instructors from academic and community backgrounds proposed elements of understanding aimed at considering the structural and systemic effects as well as the various actions and mechanisms implemented at the institutional and community level. Following this knowledge sharing, the students virtually participated in the 66<sup>th</sup> UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) that was held from March 14 to 25, 2022.

Therefore, in this CATHII Info, you will get to read four collective texts by fifteen of the students based on what they have learned. Furthermore, three of the students provided video testimonies that will be made available on our website.

Happy reading and viewing!



## **Mélie, Amina, Anne-Laurence and Violette**

Human trafficking does not discriminate between its victims. Indeed, many situations lead to the exploitation of individuals, each one more different than the next. Whether it be forced marriage or forced labour, through fraudulent adoption or organ trafficking, it is important to distinguish between the different forms of trafficking. This is a large-scale clandestine crime whose “dark figure” is frightening. Atrocities that are often believed to be distant from North America, yet, also take place within the same continent. As a matter of fact, in most human trafficking cases, the victim comes from the same country as the abuser. In some cases, the victim’s abuser is part of his/her close social circle.

Given the specific characteristics of human trafficking as mentioned above, the individualization of intervention approaches seems to be crucial. For a student in cybercrime, sensitive to the new techniques used by traffickers on the lookout for technological advances, a more proactive intervention and prevention approach should be adopted on various networks and social media. According to future criminologists and psychologists, it is essential to integrate intervention that is sensitive to the personal context of the victim and adapted to his/her progress. By participating in CSW66, we learned about the importance of promoting the empowerment of victims of this violence by providing them with resources while respecting their choice to use them or not.

Individualized practices and that are closer to the victims: it seems obvious but remains too often overlooked in the field. Indeed, helping survivors requires multiple resources to be able to reach them on the spot and treat the physical, psychological and social consequences inherent to this type of victimization. As human trafficking is part of a continuum of violence against minorities, women and children, it is crucial that these already vulnerable populations be all the more protected from trafficking networks. Victims remain too often far from “decision-making areas,” even if they should be among the voices heard first and foremost.

**Mélie Laurent, Criminology – Université de Montréal**  
**Amina Arab, Cyber Investigation – Polytechnique Montréal**  
**Anne-Laurence Savoie, Psychology – Université de Montréal**  
**Violette Prignac, Criminology – Université de Montréal**



## **Hanieh, Amanda, Katy and Matea**

Participating in the UN training of the CATHII project was truly an enriching experience, broadening our definition of human trafficking from being more specific to an area or gender to one that encompasses a wider range of vulnerable individuals. Each one of us found this training worthwhile for our academic training.

Multiple students reported that they would use their training to direct those in need, especially Hanieh, who is a clinical social worker and an immigrant. Amanda stated that she might use the historical information about sex work criminalization to write a paper. Although Katy will not directly use this training in her work, her goal is to share this acquired knowledge, and given her interest in international relations, she found the trainings to be very informative. Furthermore, she is considering how her future position with the government might be influenced by this training. Matea also agreed that the CATHII offered a dignified and professional training to inform and guide the people present in order to provide a future free of human trafficking in all areas.

Participating in the 66<sup>th</sup> Commission on the Status of Women sessions allowed for a deeper understanding of all the terms used in trafficking, but more importantly, a global understanding of trafficking. Some of us actually understood how the UN entity works and that it is not the only body that deals with an issue such as trafficking. All countries have to get involved in order to ensure the safety of the population. Furthermore, as mentioned, during the CSW training, we understood how several players are called to collaborate to fight human trafficking.

**Hanieh Shahmohammadian, Social Work – Clinical – McGill University**

**Amanda Keller, Social Work – Researcher – McGill University**

**Katy Faye, Public Affairs – International Public Management – Université Laval**

**Matea Marjanovic – Political Science – Université Laval**





## **Nakia, Sofia and Léa**

The CATHII organization aims to raise awareness of human trafficking around the world, but primarily in Canada. Participating in this project allowed us to realize the extent and seriousness of this issue that we thought was far from home. In fact, human trafficking is the second most lucrative form of trafficking in the world and claims millions of victims worldwide each year, one third of whom are children. Trafficking takes on a wide variety of forms and today, it is becoming increasingly diversified and constitutes a serious crime that violates fundamental human rights. Unfortunately, this phenomenon is increasingly affecting our country. Human trafficking takes place in Canada for purposes of sexual exploitation, forced labour and organ harvesting. This project with the CATHII allowed us to see and better understand the issues related to human trafficking at the local, national and international level. We had the opportunity to discuss with people actively involved in the fight against human trafficking. Through the discussions, they shared new knowledge on the subject leading us to revise our definition of human trafficking as well as our view of it.

Participating in the CATHII allowed us to see beyond what we thought we knew about human trafficking and the preconceived idea that we may have about trafficking at the international level. It taught us about the different types of trafficking as well as the different strategies used by the heads of exploitation so that we can then, in turn, pass on this knowledge to others. Having always been passionate and intrigued by this phenomenon, our interest is constantly growing as we learn about it through various media and now, through the CATHII. Hoping to pursue a career in security and police services, human trafficking is a problematic phenomenon that requires a closer analysis of its various means and forms in order to then be able to prevent and suppress this crime. The last months spent with the CATHII team will definitely be useful to us in our future careers as well as in daily life. It is now our turn to raise awareness and inform other women, men and children about what human trafficking is and what is at stake.

**Nakia Nault, Security and Police Studies – Université de Montréal**

**Sofia Ranke Farro, Security and Police Studies – Université de Montréal**

**Léa Guèvremont, Security and Police Studies – Université de Montréal**



## **Kéria, Kaite, Cassandre and Sarah**

We are four students, including two in security and police studies, one in criminology and one in international relations. We had the pleasure of participating in this training on human trafficking presented by the CATHII. Our goals commonly converged on internal and international security, as well as on the various procedures implemented at the international level to fight this extremely lucrative trafficking market. This training also allowed us to acquire many personal acquaintances relevant to our university and professional paths. We also had the honour of being part of the 66<sup>th</sup> Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in collaboration with the UN, which included several experts on this subject. The CATHII conferences were useful and relevant in that they gave us the basics required to understand the CSW66 conferences that often looked in depth at a particular aspect of trafficking.

At the end of the training, our knowledge broadened: we listened to podcasts about countries where human trafficking started and studied international treaties on the subject such as the PALERMO Treaty and Protocol. Then, we noticed that these do not carry an obligation regarding the clauses of the treaties. We also studied trafficking from the perspective of the Nordic Model in terms of prostitution. As the organization CLES (Concertation des Luttes contre l'Exploitation Sexuelle) taught us, the Nordic Model is “an approach that criminalizes the purchase of sexual services and pimping but decriminalizes prostitutes.”

Several things surprised us, especially the different forms of human trafficking. In particular, forced child labour and organ trafficking. We were also surprised by the undiscovered presence of trafficking in Quebec, especially in the agricultural sector when foreign workers are hired. Surprisingly, this crime is also very difficult to discern and governments provide few resources to help those at risk of trafficking.

It is appropriate to add that increased awareness of this subject is of great importance for the prevention, identification and perception of human trafficking. The CATHII has largely accomplished its mission by initiating this training and sharing its knowledge and abilities.

With that, we would like to sincerely thank the CATHII for this wonderful opportunity!

Sincerely,

**Kéria Faragalla, Security and Police Studies – Université de Montréal**  
**Kaite Vinet, Public Affairs and International Relations – Université Laval**  
**Cassandre Couprie, Security and Police Studies – Université de Montréal**  
**Sarah Plourde, Criminology – Université de Montréal**



## THANK YOU!

We thank Jill Hanley, researcher and professor at the School of Social Work at McGill University, Renaude Grégoire, regular of United Nations sessions, France Laforge, coordinator of CATHII and Jennie-Laure Sully of CLES for the high-quality training.



Also, a big THANK YOU to all the students for your active and dynamic participation in the project. We are convinced that your future careers will be steeped with your sensitivity to victims of trafficking, this invisible and complex modern slavery of sexual exploitation, forced labour, organ sales and internet-based abuse...

The CATHII is thrilled to continue this transmission into the next year. Hopefully, we will meet again!

**Trio of organizers: Élodie Ekobena, Lise Gagnon and Kavitha Culasingam**



During the last four years, we have discovered in France Laforge, a kind-hearted, determined woman who is concerned about quality work. As she says so well: “She has the CATHII tattooed on her heart.” As members, we will remember France’s commitment and dedication.

These years were quite busy in all of the CATHII files, but also with the move of our offices and especially the pandemic.

From all of us, thank you, France... The board of directors wishes you a lot happiness, peace and rejuvenation.

**Francine Cabana, IsaBelle Couillard,  
Sylvie Gagné, Lise Gagnon, Nancy Roberge**



[www.cathii.org](http://www.cathii.org)