ISS Canada's Second Annual Panel Breakfast – The Right to Know: Search for Origins in Intercountry Adoption.

ISS Canada.

Do you want to know more about ISS Canada and their work?

ISS Canada is a nonprofit organization who for over 40 years have mobilized international networks to protect and reunite children, individuals and families separated by borders.

ISS Canada assists provincial governments, social service agencies and private organizations throughout Canada in their work to resolve internationally focused individual and family problems.

Check their website here.

Search for Origins across the ISS Network

Supporting identity rights and search for origins processes is an important part of the ISS network's work with adoptees and families across borders. ISS Canada's recent panel breakfast offered an opportunity to explore these issues, highlighting the need for adoptee-centred practices, cross-border cooperation and sensitive support throughout each person's search.

The ISS General Secretariat warmly welcomes and celebrates ISS Canada's initiative to advance dialogue on identity rights and search for origins. We were pleased that one of our volunteer colleagues could support in moderating one of the panels, reinforcing the connections that sustain our network's work across borders. This is also an opportunity to recognise our volunteers' valuable contributions to supporting adoptees and families and strengthening child protection and adoption systems.

ISS Canada's Panel Breakfast: The Right to Know

On September 18, 2026, ISS Canada held its **second annual panel breakfast**. Executive Director Sylvie Lapointe welcomed attendees with a brief history of ISS Canada and framed the purpose of the discussion: "Today, we focus on what a search for roots means, why it matters, what is being done to develop best practices for everyone involved, and how we can support people as they search for their origins."



Lynelle Long, an adoptee and advocate for adoptee rights, joined the event through a prerecorded video message. She shared her personal journey and offered advice to others searching for their origins, emphasizing that reconnecting with biological relatives is not the only way to find meaning in that process. Her reflections set a thoughtful tone for the panel discussion.

The three panellists brought complementary perspectives to a candid conversation about access, identity, search, and reunion. Dr. Anne-Marie Piché is a professor whose research and clinical practice covers issues of importance to adoptees. Joanne Bryaniarska is a genetic genealogist specializing in DNA analysis and who supports adoptees in their search for origins. Ekaterina Souslova is a Senior Advisor with the Canadian Federal Authority for Intercountry Adoption.



The panel tackled challenging questions, including:

- What obstacles do adoptees encounter when searching for their origins?
- How can DNA testing help—or complicate—the search for roots?
- What would a truly adoptee-centred system of access, search, and reunion look like, and what needs to change to make it possible?

The diversity of the audience was a particular source of pride. Adoptees, scholars, researchers, adoptive parents, embassy representatives, board members, federal employees, and child protection professionals listened closely and contributed to a shared understanding of the complexities of searching for origins. Their engagement underscored the importance of keeping adoptee voices at the centre of this work.

