



BRAVE Education Foundation -
Fondation pour l'éducation BRAVE
300, 1550 5 Street SW
Calgary AB T2R 1K3
www.braveeducation.org

BRIEF SUBMISSION TO THE STATUS OF WOMEN COMMITTEE
21 April 2023

TOPIC: Human Trafficking of Women, Girls and Gender-Diverse Individuals for Sexual Exploitation

Submitted by:

BRAVE Education Foundation - Fondation pour l'éducation BRAVE (BRAVE Education)
300, 1550 5 Street SW Calgary AB T2R 1K3

Who Are We?

BRAVE Education is founded on the three pillars of research, education and collaboration. We are committed to collaborating with community organizations, youth serving leaders and policy-influencers with a vision to ensure every child in Canada has access to age-appropriate and culturally-relevant human trafficking prevention education. The embodiment of BRAVE's approach is 'nothing about us without us' and is foundational to BRAVE's success in serving communities to help protect children.

Introduction:

BRAVE Education submits this brief in the interest of all women and girls in Canada, with particular attention to equity-seeking communities including Indigenous women and girls, newcomer communities, gender diverse populations, and women and girls in both rural and urban areas who are being, have been, or are at risk of being trafficked.

The Canadian Centre to End Human Trafficking reported that from 2019-2020, the vast majority of human trafficking victims/survivors were Canadian; only 14 percent of victims/survivors were foreign nationals.¹ Additionally, the Trafficking in Persons in Canada 2021 report by Statistics Canada identified 3,541 police-reported incidents of human trafficking in Canada between 2011 and 2021.² Given the complex and hidden nature of this crime, we acknowledge that this figure represents only a small portion of the human trafficking in Canada of only those incidents reported to police. According to the same report, 96% of the police-reported victims were women and girls.³ We know that women and girls are deeply affected by crimes of Human Trafficking in Canada. We commend the Status of Women Committee on their work with the current study and write the following in support of this study.

Importance of Research

BRAVE supports research on the state of Human Trafficking in Canada. We believe that more research is needed to identify the risk factors for young women and girls in Canada with special attention to the intersections of gender diversity, Indigenous women and girls and newcomer communities. BRAVE urges the Committee on the Status of Women to prioritize conducting more research, and to identify further gaps in literature and research through the study the committee currently has underway so that these gaps can be attended to in the future.

Importance of Intersectional, Trauma-Informed and Survivor-Led Responses

BRAVE Education seeks to highlight the importance of intersectional, trauma-informed and survivor-led insights to the sex trafficking of women, girls and gender diverse peoples. We believe that the experiences of survivors are invaluable and can help protect our children and youth from being trafficked and others from engaging as exploiters. We urge the Committee on the Status of Women to amplify survivors' voices, and to approach all research, interviews, and reporting with a trauma-informed approach.

Importance of Prevention Education

BRAVE Education believes in using the upstream approach in the fight against Human Trafficking. As such, we stress the importance of age-appropriate, culturally-relevant, strengths-based and interactive prevention education for children and youth of all ages and sexes, especially prior to the average age of recruitment of 12-14 years old. Concurrently, professional development education for youth-serving caregivers is of vital importance: for health service providers, educators, support staff, law enforcement, hospitality staff and others who may unknowingly come in contact with incidents of human trafficking, so they may provide a safety net of support for youth.

Recommendations:

The Human Trafficking of women, girls and gender diverse peoples in Canada is a growing issue that needs to be addressed from all sectors - political, legal, economic and social. In line with BRAVE Education's 3 pillars: Research, Education and Collaboration, we offer the following recommendations:

RESEARCH

- Increased research on how to effectively prevent sexual exploitation of women, girls, and gender-diverse populations, including human trafficking prevention education.
- Increased research on the human trafficking/sexual exploitation of gender-diverse populations that is survivor-informed, trauma-informed, and intersectional in approach.
- A consideration for funding specific to a research project, which requires 25% of matched funds for its award from Mitacs, that BRAVE initiated in partnership with University of Calgary and Canadian Children's Optimist Foundation. This plan leverages existing relationships in equity-seeking communities for research, representing \$2.75 million over the next 5 years.

EDUCATION

- Increased funding for human trafficking prevention education across Canada including healthy relationship and strength-based training to increase protective factors for Grades K-12, and education for educator, caregiver adults and community leaders who form their community network of support.
- Increased access to professional development education for all caregivers and frontline professionals, including service providers who interact with children, youth and individuals to equip them to form safety nets for children and youth, preventing them from being recruited into sexual exploitation and sex trafficking, and how to respond to disclosures. These may include coaches, educators, health care workers, youth leaders, hospitality staff, bus drivers, law enforcement, and many more.

COLLABORATION

- Increased collaboration in all sectors to build professional competence and resources for prevention that comes from knowledge-sharing from frontline staff, including social workers, service providers, and other organizations that support victims and survivors to ensure they have the resources they need and a knowledge hub to share information and data for prevention purposes in a timely manner.
- More collaborative efforts from law enforcement and youth-serving agencies to handle disclosures with trauma-informed care together to encourage wrap-around care, to prevent further exploitation and end human trafficking across Canada.

- Increased resources and funding for prevention education inclusive of all sexes, delivered from a strengths-based approach, to encourage all youth to become anti-trafficking advocates.

Endnotes

1. Canadian Centre to End Human Trafficking. (2021, February 22). *Human Trafficking Corridors in Canada - Canadian Centre to End Human Trafficking*.
https://www.canadiancentretoendhumantrafficking.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Human-Trafficking-Corridors-in-Canada-Report.pdf?mc_cid=4e78b00aa1&mc_eid=1827d2f4d4
2. Conroy, S. ((2022, December 6). *Trafficking in Persons in Canada, 2021*. Government of Canada, Statistics Canada. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2022001/article/00010-eng.htm>
3. Conroy, S. ((2022, December 6). *Trafficking in Persons in Canada, 2021*. Government of Canada, Statistics Canada. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2022001/article/00010-eng.htm>