

Sparking
action
for social
change

equitas

Centre international d'éducation aux droits humains
International Centre for Human Rights Education

annual report 2011–2012

Our Mission

Equitas works for the advancement of equality, social justice and respect for human dignity in Canada and around the world through transformative human rights education programs.

Our Vision

Our innovative programs equip organizations and the communities they serve to build a global culture of human rights.



OUR STAFF

CONTACT US

Equitas – International Centre for Human Rights Education
666 Sherbrooke Street West,
Suite 1100
Montréal, Qc, H3A 1E7 Canada
Tel: (514) 954-0382
Fax: (514) 954-0659
Email: info@equitas.org

www.equitas.org

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ADMINISTRATION

Ian Hamilton
Margareta Agop
Pego Brennan
Carole Michaud
Thérèse Palu
Ronit Yarosky

Executive Director
Controller
Executive Assistant
Administrative & Program Assistant
Administrative Assistant
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EDUCATION

Vincenza Nazzari
Amy Cooper
Cristina Galofre
Leigh Jaschke
Julien Landry
Annie Pettigrew
Daniel Roy
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Director of Education
Education Specialist
Education Specialist, Equitas Community
Education Specialist
Education Specialist
Education Specialist (on leave)
Senior Education Specialist
Education Specialist

PROGRAMS

Frédéric Hareau
Milagros (Bing) Arguelles
Chris Bradley
Laura Butler
Laura Cliche
Gail Dalglish
Natalie Doyle
Julie Kon Kam King
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Director of Programs
Program Officer, Asia and Middle East
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INTERNS: Francesco Agazzi, Karine Azoulay, Imène Benaïssa, Isabelle Bourgeois, Caroline Donohue, Marie-Lise Drapeau, Arianne Duplessis, Mariana Ryan, Mélanie-Ann Smithman, Frédérique Turbide, Messaoud Amer Yahia, Yitong Zhang. Some internships are funded by Service Canada and the Faculty of Arts Internship Office of McGill University.

THANK YOU TO ALL OUR VOLUNTEERS: Alan E. Suaze, Anges Agnero, Anjeza Bregaj, Bahar Mohafer-Shajaei, Ben Musampa, Brian Fung, Catherine St-Amand, Emilie Dutil-Bruneau, Eudoxie Bakumba, Ian Roy, Jasmine Remy, Jess Messer, Jocelyn Chouinard, Joel Kaushansky, Julie Beausoleil, Kimberley Melo-Serpa, Kirsten Marsh, Lara Cousins, Margaret Fraser, Mariam Kalifa, Marianna Ryan, Melissa Yonganrioglu, Michael Cooper, Michaël Houle, Miju Martin, Molly Hamilton, Nadia Santagata, Pacita Candelario, Prya Morley, Rachel Lau, Salami Obatoki Folonso, Tania Ghaaie, Ti-Anna Wang, Viet Anh-Vo, Vital Bintu Kanywabahizi, Yasser El-Hamamsy, Zahra Jalili.

COVER: *Joséphine Yameogo from Burkina Faso trained as a mechanic despite strong resistance from her family and society, and with Equitas' support is now working to change attitudes about women in non-traditional professions and to promote their equal access to these professions. To learn more about Joséphine's story, [click here.](#)*

Photo: Natalie Doyle

Gearing human rights education toward equitable development

Message from the President and Executive Director

In 2011–2012 we supported over 26,000 men and women from 60 countries through our high quality international human rights education programs. Civil society and government human rights champions in our global network collaborated to remove inequalities and give women a political voice, worked to lift children out of poverty and bring them security, and opened up new opportunities for youth. Equitas alumni have become leading actors in their countries' economic, political and social development.

In **Canada**, we made a difference in the lives of **76,000 kids in 20 communities**, boosting their self-esteem and leadership skills as they were learning respect for others. We are preparing the next generation to become the responsible, active citizens that can build stronger and more inclusive Canadian communities.

We couldn't have this positive impact on the lives of thousands without you! The generous support of our funders, individual donors and volunteers is making a world of difference.

Moving forward, Equitas will build on its programming expertise, established networks and leadership as Canada's premiere knowledge sharing hub on human rights education for equitable development.

We'll have a sharper geographic focus, working in countries most in need where we can have real impact. In Colombia, Haiti, Egypt, Senegal, Tanzania and beyond, we'll empower and support community leaders who can **spark action for lasting social change.**

We'll be focusing on the participation and rights of women, children and youth, and on the inclusion of discriminated against and marginalized groups to create opportunities for all.

And we'll continue to ensure sound management for concrete, sustainable results.

We already stand on solid ground. Join us in building a more equitable future.

Robert Yalden
President of the Board

Ian Hamilton
Executive Director

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Thank you to the volunteer committee members.

Communications: Lynn Bessoudo, Geoffrey McDade, Leslie Quinton, Ron Wigdor
Programs: Philippe LeBlanc, Yves Lafontaine, Ndiaga Loum
Finance: Stéphanie Jean

Promoting human rights for development worldwide

We equip human rights defenders to build more inclusive communities and to contribute effectively to development goals, reinforcing networks built through our training programs since 1980.

HIGHLIGHTS 2011-2012

During the year, Equitas' international program **SUPPORTED 26,000 PEOPLE** through their actions for change, and we are closely monitoring progress toward concrete development results. We owe the success of our international programs to the ongoing financial support of the **CANADIAN INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY (CIDA)**. The confirmation of a number of new donor partners in 2011–2012 is a strong indicator that our programs are very relevant and having the desired impact.

WE TEAMED UP WITH LOCAL PARTNERS IN HAITI TO INVOLVE DISPLACED PERSONS in post-earthquake reconstruction, designing a citizen engagement toolkit to help them take control of their lives, speak up against violence and actively participate in local initiatives.

Funders CIDA, Ministère des Relations internationales du Québec, American Jewish World Service, Christian Aid

WITH OUR SUPPORT, OUR PARTNERS IN KENYA, TANZANIA AND UGANDA expanded the East Africa Human Rights Program to better **INTEGRATE MARGINALIZED GROUPS** in the national dialogue for economic and political reform.

Funders CIDA, Open Society Initiative for East Africa, American Jewish World Service

WE EMPOWERED WOMEN TO STAND UP FOR EQUALITY including in access to education and economic resources, and collaborated with civil society to help governments in **BURKINA FASO, CAMEROON, CÔTE D'IVOIRE AND SENEGAL** implement international human rights commitments.

Funders CIDA, Organisation internationale de la Francophonie

WE PROMOTED YOUTH CIVIC PARTICIPATION IN EGYPT, IRAQ, JORDAN, MOROCCO AND PALESTINE using the practical toolkit *Let's Act Together for Change* jointly developed with frontline workers.

Funders Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, Jordan Civil Society Program

Photo: UN Photo/Albert Gonzalez Farran



IN INDONESIA AND THE PHILIPPINES, WE NURTURED EFFICIENT NETWORKS that are now promoting emerging issues such as LGBT rights and religious freedom despite strong resistance, and organizing their own national human rights training programs with Equitas coaching.

Funders CIDA, HIVOS

WE FOSTERED DIALOGUE BETWEEN LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND CIVIL SOCIETY to contribute to strengthening democracy in **ARMENIA, AZERBAIJAN, GEORGIA AND UKRAINE**.

Funders CIDA, Donner Canadian Foundation

Geared up for greater impact

Equitas' annual three-week training program for human rights defenders from around the world gives them new skills to bring back home to channel action for change.

In 2011-2012, **99 PARTICIPANTS FROM 55 COUNTRIES** assembled at John Abbott College in Ste-Anne-de-Bellevue to gain new knowledge and skills to promote human rights principles and values more effectively in their communities. We improved the curriculum, rethinking the role of human rights in the changing global environment and putting emphasis on participants' plans for concrete action at home.

This session was followed by a series of regional

activities involving hundreds more people to consolidate learnings, support the implementation of human rights activities and improve the evaluation capacity of our partners. Our fruitful collaboration with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights also led to the publication of *Evaluating Human Rights Training Activities*, a handbook designed to help human rights educators ensure their work has maximum impact.

Photo: Rachel Lau



Women spring up in Egypt, engage politically

In the wake of the Arab Spring, women turned out in record numbers for Egypt's first free parliamentary election in 80 years. **Equitas** is no stranger to this promising change, having grown strong ties with partners building civic engagement in the country since 2005, including one who has his rightful claim to fame.

Akram Amin was on **Tahrir Square** in Cairo from the first day when what he calls the "freedom revolution" sparked on Jan. 25, 2011, forcing an election months later. Despite the curfew, "people of all ages, men and women, were chanting for bread, freedom and social justice," says Akram. They were denouncing corruption and repression, and called for democratic reforms and a responsive non-military government.

"Women played an important role in the events, participating effectively in the demonstrations, voicing their opinion and being part in many ways of the national movement for democracy," stresses Akram.

In the largely conservative and poverty-stricken

Menia region where Akram had worked tirelessly over the previous two years to increase women's political participation with his colleagues of Together for Development and Human Rights Education, many of the women he had trained got involved. In the election that followed, **19,550 women** of the 30,000 he reached **cast ballots**, a resounding success given the region's 2006 low turnout of 17%.



Above: Egyptian women line up to vote in parliamentary elections on Dec. 2, 2011. Photo: UN Women/Fatma Elzahraa Yassin

Originally, the women whom Together for Development supported in the region were left out by their communities and local authorities, many were illiterate with no access to education, and traditional practices and harassment limited their **capacity to participate effectively in social and political life**.

"Discrimination against women has had negative impacts over the years on women and their perception of their roles as active citizens," explains Akram. With a dozen colleagues and field workers, Akram involved women from eight of the poorest communities across Menia, Beni Suef and Cairo slums in literacy classes and life skills workshops centred on economic, political and health awareness. Akram used Equitas approaches "to reflect with them on the importance of their vote and broader participation."

It was following his 2005 experience with Equitas' International Human Rights Training Program (IH RTP) in Canada that Akram founded Together for Development with colleagues back home to instill a rights-based approach to national civil society efforts on good governance. He came back to the IH RTP in 2012 to facilitate workshops and gain new skills relevant to his work with the women of Menia.

Over the years, with the **guidance of Equitas**, Akram gained the confidence and skills to work more effectively with marginalized women. He empowered them **to draw on their rich personal experiences and knowledge** to seek their own solutions to the problems affecting their lives. They learned they could make a difference by seizing opportunities for greater social and political participation, not the least in elections.

With the new political context, many challenges remain. The new Parliament is wrapped in the cloak of religious conservatism and fewer women are represented. "Our hope is that genuine democracy will be the solution," says Akram. "Human rights defenders must organize better to weigh on political organizations so all Egyptians are heard." Equitas is working with Akram and others in Egypt to make this happen.



Freedom of religion and women's rights champion honoured

On April 4, 2012, Pakistani human rights defender Asma Jahangir was presented with the **2012 Equitas Award for Human Rights Education** in recognition of her courageous fight for women's rights and religious freedom. The Toronto gala cocktail held in her honour highlighted the immense challenges human rights defenders face. Ms. Jahangir herself was imprisoned, kept under house arrest and received numerous death threats for her legal aid work and staunch criticism of laws discriminating against women and other marginalized groups in Pakistan. An alumna of Equitas' International Human Rights Training Program in 1990, she has become a leader in the global human rights community and was appointed United Nations Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Execution in 1998 and on Freedom of Religion or Belief in 2004.

"I hope this award will encourage others to continue this struggle, knowing their work is recognized and appreciated by stellar organizations like Equitas."

ASMA JAHANGIR

Above: The Hon. Ed Broadbent introduced Asma Jahangir, and Phil Fontaine presented her with the Award. Robert Yalden, Equitas Board President and Ian Hamilton, Executive Director, were also present. Photo: YESTEK Inc.



We wish to acknowledge the indispensable support of all our sponsors who made this event possible: Bell (Silver), Borden Ladner Gervais LLP and Bruce Power (Bronze), as well as AIMIA (Supporter).



Play it Fair!

300,000 children reached since 2006

We work hand in hand with camp and after-school program educators across Canada to teach children aged 6 to 12 the values of inclusion, non-discrimination and peaceful conflict resolution.

HIGHLIGHTS 2011-2012

EQUITAS EXPANDED ITS PLAY IT FAIR! PROGRAMMING INTO THE AFTER SCHOOL REALM with 120 new partners coming on board in 2011-2012, thanks to the generous support of TD Bank Group and The J.W. McConnell Family Foundation as well as TELUS Community Boards, City of Montreal and MICC.

EQUITAS LAUNCHED THE INAUGURAL PLAY IT FAIR! AWARD recognizing local innovation and creativity in using our tools, and exceptional contributions to promoting children's rights. The winner of the 2011-2012 Award was Tom Higashio and his team at the Britannia Community Centre in Vancouver, BC.

EQUITAS PARTNERED WITH THE LESTER B. PEARSON SCHOOL BOARD in early 2012 to hold a *Play it Fair!* workshop for daycare technicians and spiritual animators from two dozen elementary schools in greater Montreal and the West Island in an effort to fight discrimination and bullying in schools. As a result of this pilot project, 41 schools will be trained and offering *Play it Fair!* programming by August 2012.



Funders

- TD Bank Group
- The J.W. McConnell Family Foundation
- City of Montreal
- Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles du Québec (MICC)
- TELUS Community Boards
- The May Kersten Social Justice Fund at the Foundation of Greater Montreal
- City of Victoriaville



Play it Fair! 2011-2012

18
communities

136
new partner
organizations

1,000
newly trained
child care workers

75,000
children reached

“Through *Play it Fair!* I realized the importance and responsibility we have as counselors and think we should be showing these kids these rights and positively influencing them while they're young, to mould them into responsible, positive adults.”

PROGRAM LEADER

Speaking Rights

5,300 youth reached since 2010

We engage youth between 12 and 18 years old in learning about human rights and exploring issues that are important to them so that they can be change-makers in their communities.

HIGHLIGHTS 2011-2012

WE LAUNCHED *SPEAKING RIGHTS* IN BRITISH COLUMBIA AND MANITOBA THANKS TO THE MORE THAN 120 YOUTH AND 50 YOUTH WORKERS who gave input on the needs and issues of their communities, allowing us to adapt the program Toolkit. Forty-five organizations were trained in Vancouver, Victoria, Surrey, Chilliwack, Lillooet and Winnipeg. The growth of these new partnerships was made possible with the support of the Vancouver Foundation, RBC Royal Bank and the Winnipeg Foundation.

WE HAVE BEGUN WORKING WITH THE UNESCO ASSOCIATED SCHOOLS PROJECT NETWORK, a global initiative connecting more than 9,000 educational institutions in 180 countries to support international understanding, peace, intercultural dialogue, sustainable development and quality education. In the context of this partnership, Equitas will be offering a first *Speaking Rights* training at Olds High School in Calgary in August 2012.



Funders

Citizenship and Immigration Canada
City of Montreal
Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles du Québec
Vancouver Foundation
RBC Royal Bank
Winnipeg Foundation
George Hogg Family Foundation

Speaking Rights 2011-2012

7
cities

100
organizations on board

260
youth workers trained

1,300
youth reached

“**I** find the interacting environment, teamwork, role playing, and putting yourself in other people's shoes are so much more effective in promoting human rights, non-discrimination, and peace among youth than tedious lecturing.”

YOUTH, VICTORIA IMMIGRANT
& REFUGEE CENTRE SOCIETY





Connecting children and youth leaders in Vancouver

Tom Higashio was only three months old when he moved to Canada from Japan but this early promise of a life of opportunities is akin to his own dedication to empowering kids in his Vancouver community.

For 14 years, Tom has been a Recreational Programmer for Youth at Vancouver's **Britannia Community Centre**, known as a hub for vibrant community exchange. Tom's goal: "to get youth to be the best people they can be."

His commitment to children and youth rights grew after taking part in Equitas' national **Play it Fair! training in 2006**. Since then he has been implementing the program within Britannia Community Centre's day camps. "Camps offer the opportunity to learn about rights in an informal setting through play," explains Tom. Britannia being a very diverse community, this type of program is key to promoting a culture of respect and inclusion in the neighbourhood. "But every community needs it," adds Tom.

Working with his team at Britannia, they have reached roughly **30,000 children and youth** in six years through *Play it Fair!* Every week at the Britannia Community Centre you can see children playing with a purpose in the gym or in the park talking about **respect for diversity, cooperation, inclusion and fairness**. "Conflict is always going to be around but it's how we deal with it that matters," explains Tom.

Taking things one step further, Britannia now has **children's rights** incorporated into its hiring practices and communications with parents. Tom has also been working to make *Play it Fair!* annual training available to organizations across Vancouver.

Through the years Tom's commitment to children's

rights has inspired dozens of youth workers from his team to **make a difference**. Some have gone on to become teachers, bringing the *Play it Fair!* Toolkit to their classrooms, while some have taken part in international initiatives for children. "Many have become passionate advocates of children's rights."



Tom's team has also been one of the first in the province to adopt Equitas' new **Speaking Rights** program for youth 12-18. For two years, they have used the new activities for their four-day Diversity Camp workshops, offering a chance for youth to **learn about their rights, reflect on their shared values and differences**, and seek opportunities to engage in their community. "It's been thought-provoking and emotional; it's a safe place for them to talk," says Tom.

On International Human Rights Day in December 2011, Tom was presented with the inaugural *Play it Fair!* Award marking the **impact** he and his staff have had **on the lives of children and youth in Vancouver every day**. "I'm fortunate to have a great team here. It's this team that makes the program happen because they are so passionate and want to do what's best for these kids. They are the reason why the program is so successful here," Tom says. "We will continue our work to bring out these values in youth."

In Canada



BRITISH COLUMBIA

Victoria
Saanich
Vancouver
Surrey
Gibsons
Bowen Island
Chilliwack
Prince George
Lillooet

MANITOBA

Winnipeg
Cree Norway House

ONTARIO

Toronto

QUEBEC

Montreal
Pincourt
Beaconsfield

NOVA SCOTIA

Halifax/Dartmouth

NEW BRUNSWICK

Fredericton
Moncton/Dieppe

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Charlottetown

NEWFOUNDLAND and LABRADOR

St. John's

2011-2012

20
communities

350+
partner organizations

1,260
child care &
youth workers trained

76,300
children &
youth reached



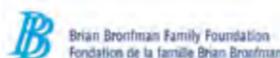
Spotlight on children's rights



On November 24, 2011, **MORE THAN 200 GUESTS** joined the **RT. HON. MICHAËLLE JEAN**, former Governor General of Canada and UNESCO Special Envoy for Haïti, to celebrate the fifth anniversary of *Play it Fair!* She praised the children's rights education program and its impact in Canada and in Haïti where children are using their positive learning experiences to become effective leaders in their communities. Andrew Molson, Honorary Chair of the event, Kathleen Weil, Québec Minister of Immigration and Cultural Communities, representatives from the City of Montreal, as well as long-time supporters and funders of the program were also present.

EQUITAS EXTENDS HEARTFELT THANKS to the lead sponsor of the gala event, TD Bank Group, and to all the sponsors and supporters who made invaluable contributions to its success: SNC Lavalin (Gold); Brian Bronfman Family Foundation, CAE, Osler, Hoskin & Harcourt LLP (Silver); AIMIA, Voyages Bangkok, Borden Ladner Gervais LLP, Hill+Knowlton Strategies, Muse Entertainment, Norton Rose, Rio Tinto Alcan (Bronze); Montreal Alouettes, Bell, Birks, Boucherie Westmount, Montreal Canadians, Claudia's Catering Service, Délices de Dawn, Hyatt Regency Montreal, Montreal Impact, Michael Cooper, Edgewood Greenhouses Ltd, Yves Rocher (Supporters). We thank singer Lynda Thalie for lending her talents to our cause, and NATIONAL Public Relations for providing ongoing support.

Above: Rt. Hon. Michaëlle Jean visiting a Play it Fair! site in Haiti, September 2011.
Photo: Carl Henry Jean



Financial statements for the year ended March 31, 2012

STATEMENT OF REVENUES AND EXPENSES

Revenues	2012	2011
Grants	\$2,414,303	\$2,870,097
Tuition	221,596	159,097
Donations	121,074	49,195
Interest	2,031	462
Total Revenues	2,759,004	3,078,851
Expenses		
Projects	2,323,220	2,705,046
Administrative and general expenses	402,509	401,445
Amortization of capital assets	5,284	7,769
Total Expenses	2,731,013	3,114,260
Excess (deficiency) of revenues over expenses	27,991	(35,409)
Net assets balance at beginning of year	225,653	261,062
Net assets balance at the end of year	\$253,644	\$225,653

BALANCE SHEET

	2012	2011
Current assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$412,611	\$127,706
Short-term deposit	9,000	13,333
Accounts receivable	116,676	189,159
Prepaid expenses	16,720	27,513
	555,007	357,711
Capital assets	7,463	11,084
	\$562,470	\$368,795

Liabilities and Net Assets

Current liabilities		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$93,846	\$75,109
Deferred revenue	53,545	20,020
Deferred contributions	161,435	48,013
	308,826	143,142

Net assets

Invested in capital assets	7,463	11,084
Restricted for endowment purposes	8,650	8,650
Unrestricted net assets	237,531	205,919
	253,644	225,653
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	\$562,470	\$368,795

This financial information has been extracted from the financial statements audited by KPMG s.r.l./S.E.N.C.R.L.



Equitas crosses the \$100,000 donation mark. We did it – thanks to you!

THANK YOU FOR BEING SUCH A BIG PART OF OUR SUCCESS. Your tremendous support, generosity and involvement have helped us increase our fundraising to \$120,000 this year, from less than \$20,000 only five years ago. Your continued support enables us to do a better job of implementing our programs in Canada and around the world, improving the lives of tens of thousands of women, children and men every year. **YOUR SUPPORT TRULY HELPS ADVANCE EQUALITY, SOCIAL JUSTICE AND RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS.**

For information on Equitas' Major Gift and Planned Giving programs, please contact Ronit Yarosky at 514-954-0382 ext 241.

To make a donation, please visit www.equitas.org. Thank you!

Making a difference

Ian Boeckh is one of Equitas' most generous and committed donors. Coming from a family where charity is paramount, giving is an integral part of Ian's life.



The Boeckh family always knew that they had to find what Ian calls a "higher purpose" for their successful business, which they sold to establish and fund the Graham Boeckh Foundation in support of mental health.

Ian personally supports Equitas' work because Equitas finds creative solutions to some of the world's most challenging problems – solutions that have a lasting impact and are cost effective. Equitas gives people the tools, rather than the money, to change their lives and their communities. Ian calls this "building human infrastructure for a more effective society."

Ian also appreciates the fact that while Equitas has a huge international reach and reputation, it is located

"up the street in Montreal, you can pick up the phone and speak to the staff, visit, interact with and meet the partners and staff."

While Ian feels fortunate that he and his family have been able to make a difference in the world of mental health, he is a firm believer that one doesn't have to be wealthy to engage in charitable activities. "People don't realize their potential in philanthropy until they do it. It's not just about giving away money. Take the bull by the horns and do things – see how rewarding it is!"

Equitas thanks Ian Boeckh and all our supporters for their generosity. Thank you for helping to build a global culture of human rights!