

## **In the time it takes you to read this letter, you can make a difference in the lives of people whose human rights are not being respected.**

We just voted in a federal election, exercising a right we consider fundamental. Of those who voted, however, some might remember a time when half of us were not allowed to vote.

In some parts of Canada women did not have the right to vote until 1940.

That unjust situation is behind us now, but human rights advances such as more equal status for women happen because of the work and support of brave and committed people. As we look back at how human rights have made progress over time, there is one constant and recurring factor that we find decade after decade: People.

## **People Having an Impact**

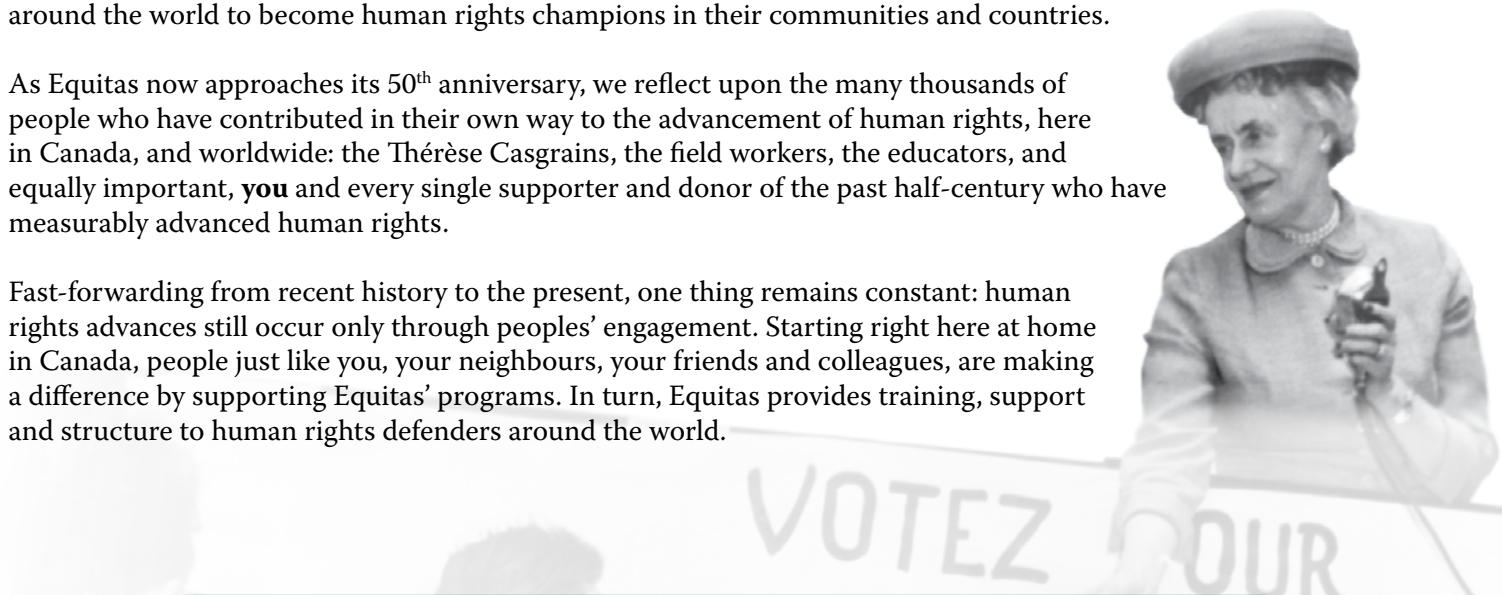
### **Transforming History**

When the last Canadian province finally granted women the right to vote in 1940, that was due to the work of people - people like Thérèse Casgrain, the tireless women's rights advocate from Quebec, and one of the founders of Equitas.

For nearly 50 years, Equitas has worked tirelessly in Canada and around the world to build a global culture of respect, equality and human rights, supporting and empowering courageous men and women around the world to become human rights champions in their communities and countries.

As Equitas now approaches its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we reflect upon the many thousands of people who have contributed in their own way to the advancement of human rights, here in Canada, and worldwide: the Thérèse Casgrains, the field workers, the educators, and equally important, **you** and every single supporter and donor of the past half-century who have measurably advanced human rights.

Fast-forwarding from recent history to the present, one thing remains constant: human rights advances still occur only through peoples' engagement. Starting right here at home in Canada, people just like you, your neighbours, your friends and colleagues, are making a difference by supporting Equitas' programs. In turn, Equitas provides training, support and structure to human rights defenders around the world.



**Consistency breeds success.**

**By becoming a monthly donor, you provide constant, regular sustenance to human rights education, in Canada and around the world.**

**You can donate now!**  
[www.equitas.org](http://www.equitas.org)



## People Having an Impact

Through Education of Children Across Canada

### Imagine being bullied in your own schoolyard.

Teachers, camp counsellors, community workers and others are using Equitas' award-winning *Play it Fair!* program to teach Canadian children how to address issues such as bullying, discrimination and exclusion, and how to be leaders in the promotion of human rights, respect for diversity and peaceful conflict resolution.

Thanks to the support of people like you, this amazing program is now in over 550 summer camps and 170 schools across Canada, including 22 Aboriginal communities, and has reached over half a million Canadian children!

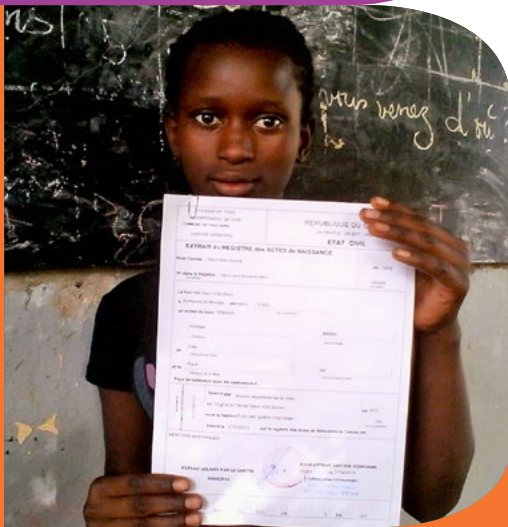
**“The *Play It Fair!* activities give the children the ability to express themselves. It shows them that their voice counts.”**

-Youth Worker, Vancouver

### Recognition for *Play it Fair!*

- Tri-City Award by Youth R.E.A.C.H. British-Columbia (2015)
- Rights and Freedoms Prize by the Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse du Québec (2014)
- Trailblazer Award by the Canadian Coalition for the Rights of the Child (2014)

**Make a difference, make a donation now.**



## People Having an Impact

On the Right to Identity

### Imagine that you don't exist.

The relief and joy of having a birth certificate or identity card is something we take for granted. According to UNICEF, 45% of children under five years old worldwide do not possess a birth certificate.

It's hard to imagine the struggles millions face due to the absence of this piece of paper. Birth certificates are essential to have access to education, health and immunization, a passport and the ability to move freely. For women, the situation can be even worse should their husbands die or find themselves in an abusive relationship. The absence of a birth certificate leads to an absence from society: exclusion.

But human rights defenders are working hard to include these individuals in society. In Senegal, Equitas partners like Fatimata Sy are taking on this issue. After participating in Equitas trainings, local partners successfully implemented awareness and registration campaigns.

The project has had so much success that the Attorney General took notice and held special public hearings on the issue.

For a few dollars a month, you can help people like Fatimata Sy change lives in her community.

**Your donation is life-changing!**

**“Why is it important to support Equitas' work?”**

For the human rights approach that is often missing. Equitas' approach encourages people to adopt human rights values, so that they know their rights and they start to demand that these rights be respected.”

- Fatimata Sy,  
Equitas partner in Senegal

# People Having an Impact

On Civic Engagement

Imagine that sending your child to the well could result in unimaginable violence or serious illness.

Access to clean water and safe streets for our children is something we take for granted.

Equitas' programs advance human rights in ways most of us cannot imagine. The engagement of people in their immediate world produces great results.

In Haiti, Equitas' Citizen Engagement program helps communities identify the root causes of problems in their community and equips local leaders to implement practical solutions.

Many communities in Haiti depend on wells for their drinking water. These wells often become a source of conflict and sites of violence, causing turmoil in the community and to the detriment of the health of its citizens.

In Thomassique, where one has to travel up to two miles to find water, young girls are often victims of sexual assault on their way to fetch water. As a community action, 23 organizations carried out an awareness campaign to bring an end to violence against girls.

In La Victoire, a municipality strongly affected by cholera in 2013, community leaders trained by Equitas worked with local citizens to restore a well that had been unused for 14 years. Thanks to their efforts, fifty families in La Victoire now have access to safe drinking water.

These collaborative actions reinforce individual self-esteem and confidence and have shown the population, particularly women and young people, how solidarity and teamwork can accomplish great things and advance human rights for the whole community.

**Donate today.**

**Help young Haitians become leaders and peace-builders in their communities.**

**Your gift of \$6 a month goes towards helping young Haitians become leaders and peace-builders in their community, for example paying for transportation for two from a remote village to the place of training.**

**Your contribution enables the success of future leaders.**



**“Together, we can take control of our own development, even when the state is absent.”**

- Paul Edex,  
young leader and resident of La Victoire

# People Like You Having an Impact Right Now

The fight for human rights takes many forms, wears many faces, and happens in many places. That place and that time can be where you are sitting at this moment reading these lines.

## Have an impact on the advancement of human rights.

Throughout this letter, we have told you about just some of the concrete, positive impacts that Equitas' programs are having here at home in Canada, and throughout the globe.

Those impacts begin with you. Your support and contributions enable effective programs that produce real, concrete improvements in the human rights of individuals and societies.

Thérèse Casgrain, John P. Humphrey and a group of people started this endeavour in 1967, and it is people like you who will ensure its continued success on a global scale.

For more information about giving the gift of human rights, a monthly gift, or any other question, please visit our website at [www.equitas.org](http://www.equitas.org) or feel free to contact us at 514-954-0382 extension 234. It is always a pleasure to speak with our supporters.

There are a myriad of ways that your donations help, so don't delay.

With gratitude,

Ian Hamilton

Melissa Sonberg



Executive Director

Chair, Board of Directors

## PS - This holiday share the gift of human rights education.

By dedicating a gift to a loved one, you are supporting Equitas' vital work, and your loved one will receive a beautiful card letting them know that a gift has been made in their honour. There are five beautiful cards to choose from.

**You can have an impact. Donate now.**  
514-954-0382 ext. 241 | [www.equitas.org](http://www.equitas.org)



# equitas

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

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