

equitas

educate. empower. change.

Annual Report
2015-2016

BUILDING WELCOMING AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES IN A DIVERSE WORLD





EQUITAS – INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION

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COVER PHOTO:

A young student attends a special Equitas activity in the Canadian Senate to celebrate National Child Day 2015. More than 300 students (grade 4, 5 and 6) from Ottawa schools took over the Senate for an hour of celebration and learned about their rights through two Equitas Play It Fair! activities. © Equitas, 2015

OUR MISSION

Based in Montreal, Equitas is Canada's oldest and most active human rights education organization. We work for the advancement of equality, social justice and respect for human dignity through transformative human rights education programs. In the last 50 years, we have reached over 2 million people worldwide.

OUR VISION

Inclusive, equitable and safer communities where women, children and youth, and marginalized groups are taking leadership to promote respect for diversity and human rights.

EQUITAS AT A GLANCE

- ▶ FOUNDED IN 1967
- ▶ STAFF OF 40 PEOPLE
- ▶ 17 BOARD MEMBERS
- ▶ AN OPERATING BUDGET OF \$3.9 MILLION IN 2015-2016
- ▶ MORE THAN 5,000 HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS TRAINED FROM 140 COUNTRIES
- ▶ MORE THAN 700,000 CHILDREN AND YOUTH REACHED IN CANADA IN 42 COMMUNITIES

It is with renewed energy that we will soon be celebrating our 50 years of existence! 50 years of **education** in the field of human rights, providing practical tools for people to emerge as human rights leaders — 50 years of **empowering** communities to build solidarity, participate in decision-making and take responsibility for their own development — 50 years of striving for social justice and positive **change** to advance all human rights for ALL people.

All throughout 2017, we invite you to discover on our website 50 stories of 50 inspiring human rights educators whose visionary leadership is making a difference in Canada and worldwide; to be a part of the festivities at our two annual events in Toronto and Montreal; and to join us for thought-provoking exchanges at the end of the year during our International Conference on Human Rights Education.

There will be much to celebrate in 2017! Subscribe to our newsletter and follow us on social media to catch it all.

RENEWING OUR COLLECTIVE COMMITMENT TO FUTURE GENERATIONS: BUILDING INCLUSIVE, EQUITABLE AND SAFER COMMUNITIES

The plight of millions of refugees and migrants shocked the world in 2015, and one question kept surfacing: what can we do to help in our communities? As we turned to our network of alumni, partners and friends for ideas and inspiration, they were unanimous in underlining the important need for human rights education to create and sustain a welcoming environment for people forced to flee their homes. Respect for diversity and inclusion were at the heart of their responses, just as diversity and inclusion were at the heart of our work in Canada and around the world in 2015-2016.

In the complex mosaic which is our world today, how does Equitas make a difference? Whether promoting women's and young girls' rights in Senegal, reinforcing the LGBTQI rights movement in Haiti, equipping young leaders in the Middle East and North Africa to participate more effectively in community life, or developing new partnerships to support work with Indigenous youth in Canada, our efforts have taught us that human rights education requires a long-term commitment to individuals, communities and to future generations.

We know that tackling big problems requires addressing issues at a deeper level. There are no quick fixes to solve racism, sexism, bullying, homophobia, or violence. Equitas' human rights education programs address the root causes, transforming individual and community attitudes and behaviours and producing sustainable solutions to discrimination, inequality and violent conflict.

This year, girls and boys like Pamithi and Shehana in Sri Lanka were able to develop the skills they need to approach a changing world with open minds. Women like Soraya in Colombia were empowered to take on leadership roles and mobilize their communities in the peace process. Networks of solidarity were strengthened in Msaranga, Tanzania, engaging key actors to come together to address the issues of gender-based violence and violence against children. Canadian children like Veronica, Jaden and their classmates in

Montreal were exposed to topics they don't come across in textbooks and, through fun games, learned about human rights values such as inclusion and respect for diversity.

Our reputation and the impact of our actions are our two most valuable assets. It is by taking their full measure that we can judge the progress accomplished in a year.

In this 2015-2016 annual report, you will find an overview of the tangible results of our work and that of our partners with an emphasis on four major areas where we are focused on sharing our expertise: 1- women's rights and gender equality (including the rights of LGBTQI persons); 2- child and youth participation; 3- capacity building of human rights defenders; and 4- evaluating the impact of human rights education.

Furthermore, this year has highlighted our reputation and ability to make a difference and have an impact in Canada and around the world. New projects and renewed partnerships in Haiti, la Francophonie and in Canada demonstrate the continued relevance for our work and demand for our expertise, as does the constant interest in our annual International Human Rights Training Program and for our unique educational tools and resources.

As we will celebrate our 50th anniversary in 2017, Equitas will continue to innovate and act as a global leader in the human rights education movement. We will continue to open up spaces where the voices of women,

children, youth and marginalized groups are amplified and their leadership as solution makers in building safer, more inclusive and more equitable communities is recognized.

This is our commitment.

Thank you for your ongoing trust and support, and we hope to pursue this journey together.

Sincerely,



Melissa Sonberg
Chair



Ian Hamilton
Executive Director

HIGHLIGHTS 2015-2016

Young Canadians help promote respect for diversity and welcome newcomer and refugee children using *Play it Fair!* thanks to a renewed three-year \$450,000 commitment by TD Bank Group for our award-winning program in Canada.



In Montreal, the International Human Rights Training Program welcomes 86 human rights defenders from 49 countries to strengthen human rights education worldwide.



For International Women's Day 2016, Quebec Minister Christine St-Pierre visits Equitas projects on the participation of women and girls in Senegal.

Launch of a new project on *Preventing Torture in the Francophonie*, in partnership with Swiss-based organization International Bridges to Justice (IBJ) and partners in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Burundi, Rwanda, Senegal, the Ivory Coast and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The *Mosharka Project* (2012-2016) engages 1,661 youth and 16,675 community members in five countries in the Middle East and North Africa. Youth leaders are more active, aware and better equipped to participate in community life and implement human rights projects.



Young Indigenous women in British Columbia develop the #IAmBeautifulConfident public awareness poster campaign encouraging positive body image, self-confidence, and self-love to promote mental and physical health of young women. The poster is shared with 6,000 people.



Kouraj, UPLCDS, AJWS and Equitas start a new project in Haiti funded by the European Union (2016-2019), *Strengthening the movement against homophobia and for the rights of LGBTI people in Haiti*.

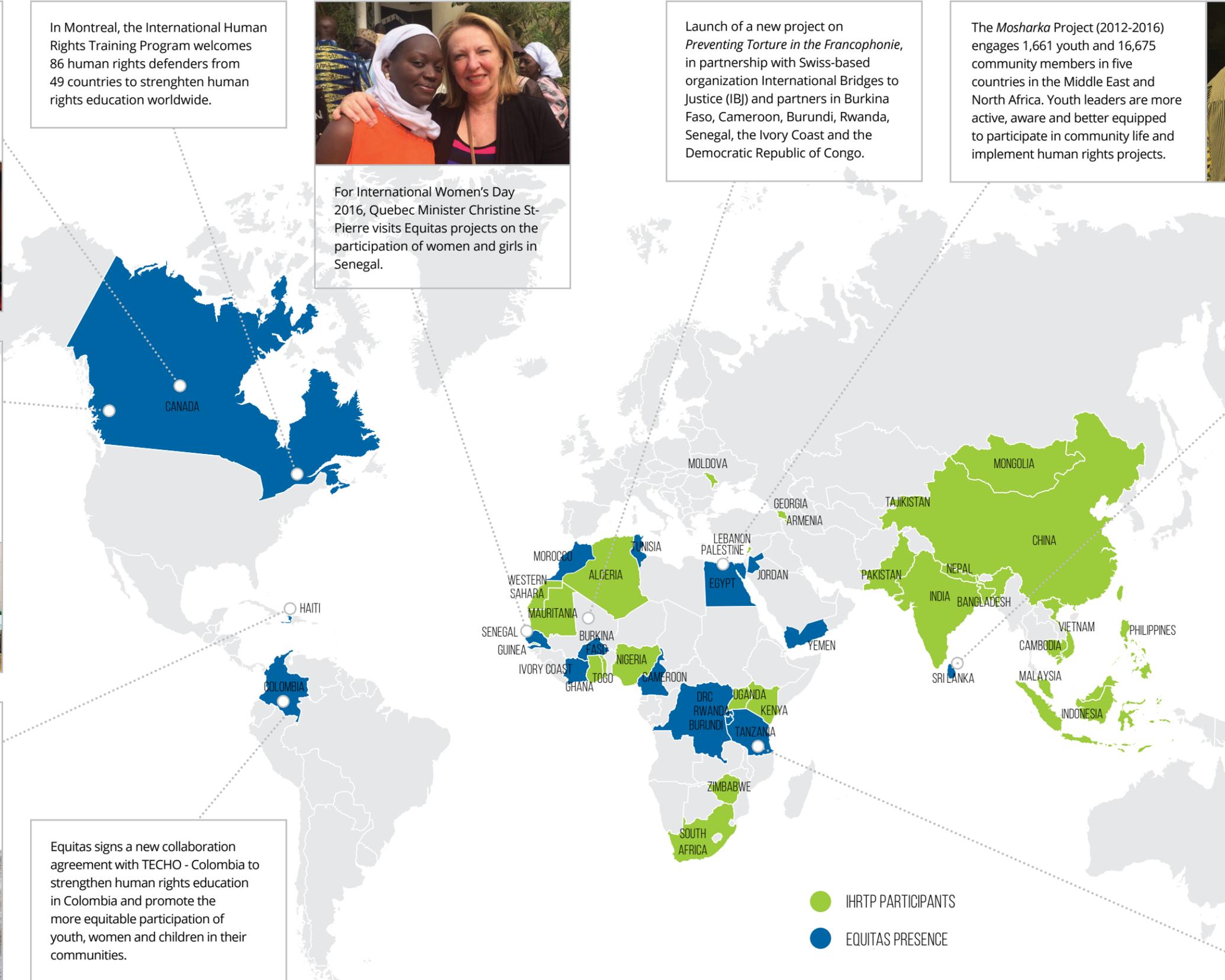


Equitas signs a new collaboration agreement with TECHO - Colombia to strengthen human rights education in Colombia and promote the more equitable participation of youth, women and children in their communities.

Former Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga is keynote speaker at the launch of *The Chronic and the Acute: Post-War Religious Violence in Sri Lanka*, published by the International Centre for Ethnic Studies and Equitas.



A new *Action Guide - Ushiriki Nguvu Yetu* ("Participation is our strength" in Swahili) is developed to support organizations working in communities to fight violence against children and women.





LEADING

THE WAY FOR GENDER EQUALITY AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN AND GIRLS THROUGH HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION

Above - Meet Maimouna Diop, a female community leader, Equitas program participant from Pikine, Senegal and an inspiration to many young girls. Through human rights education, Maimouna defends the right for every woman, like her, to aspire to decision-making positions. © Equitas 2016

In 2015, UN member states reaffirmed gender equality as a global priority when they adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

We know that gender inequalities remain deeply rooted worldwide and global commitments are not enough. This is why Equitas and its partners are actively promoting human rights education that results in innovative community-based solutions to prevent discrimination, challenge entrenched attitudes that lead to inequality, strengthen networks of solidarity and facilitate dialogue with decision-makers.

In 2015, we launched a three-year Action Plan to promote and integrate gender equality in a systematic way in all our programs and organizational practices. Together with our partners in Canada and worldwide, we strive for improved opportunities and equal participation of men, women and members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex (LGBTQI) community and people who do not ascribe to culturally and socially constructed gender roles. Here are some examples which demonstrate how Equitas, thanks to your support, strengthened local and global efforts to achieve the goal of gender equality and the empowerment of women and young girls in 2015-2016.

NEW LEADERSHIP EMERGING TO CONDEMN VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN SENEGAL

In March 2016, Quebec's Minister of International Relations and la Francophonie (MRIF), Christine St-Pierre, met with community members from Pikine — a suburb of Dakar — to discuss the impact of Equitas' project in the area, *Empowerment and participation of women and girls in Senegal*. The project has equipped 51 civil society organizations and government institutions; 662 women and community leaders; and has reached out to more than 22,500 young people and women in the communities of Pikine and Thies, enabling them to know their rights and participate more in their community.

Using the *Action Guide* developed by Equitas and its partners, new leadership is emerging, especially among young people in the community. For the first time, many women are daring to denounce domestic violence and many men in the community have joined the women to condemn violence against women. The project has had concrete results on the participation of women and youth in the economic and democratic life of Senegal, and reduced violence against women and girls.

Equitas works in Senegal with the Rencontre africaine pour la défense des droits de l'Homme (RADDHO), the Réseau Equitas Sénégal pour l'éducation aux droits humains (RESEDHU), the Comité de lutte contre les violences faites aux femmes (CLVF), and with government institutions and other civil society organizations.

The project is undertaken with the financial support of the Ministère des Relations internationales et de la Francophonie, the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie and the Government of Canada through Global Affairs Canada.

"The discussions we had made me realize the tremendous mobilization of the various stakeholders to promote a greater empowerment of the women and girls in this community." - Christine St-Pierre

ENGAGING COMMUNITIES TO ADDRESS GENDER EQUALITY AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN TANZANIA

The participatory approach used in all Equitas programs is particularly effective in empowering women and young girls to organize and challenge entrenched discrimination, a prerequisite for their social and economic empowerment. In Tanzania, a national training session and community forums held in 2015-2016 have had significant impact in addressing gender inequality, gender-based violence and in advancing women's rights to participate in decision-making.

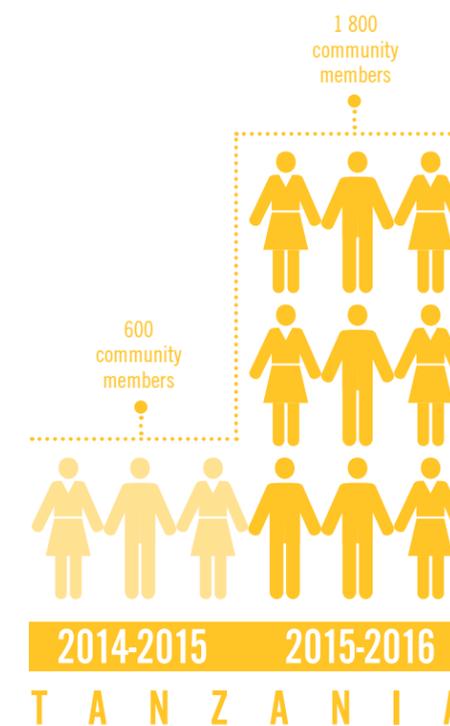
In the community of Msaranga, for example, women who participated in trainings and community initiatives reported increased confidence and ability to lead in their communities. Similarly, men involved in the trainings and initiatives also reported shifts in attitudes and behaviour in the home towards domestic chores and the traditional roles of men and women. Nearly 1,800 community members were reached by the project in the Kilimanjaro region in 2015-2016, tripling its outreach from the previous year.

"When you empower women in decision-making, you empower the whole." - Community member, May 2015.

The project is undertaken with support from the Government of Canada through Global Affairs Canada. Equitas works in Tanzania with local partner TUSONGE.

COMMUNICATING BETTER TO SUPPORT HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION

Equitas collaborated again with Montreal-based Public Relations Without Borders in 2015-2016 to help local partners in Senegal and Tanzania gain new communications strategies and tools to effect lasting changes in their communities.



EQUIPPING YOUNG CANADIAN WOMEN AND GIRLS TO BE LEADERS TODAY AND TOMORROW

A simple question can sometimes reveal the reality of girls' and young women's participation: where and how do we see and support young women's participation in our communities?

In Canada, Equitas and its partners invited young women to participate in workshops on self-esteem, identity, barriers to their participation, and together initiate Action Projects to create spaces for participation in their communities.

We know that empowering women and girls can lead to a positive change in their own lives and that of their peers. In 2015-2016, Equitas created spaces for meaningful dialogue between young women, female role models, civil society organizations, and decision makers to address the barriers to their participation in community life. A particular focus was put on building the leadership of newcomer and young refugee women, young Indigenous women, young women who face socio-economic barriers, and young women in care.

Thanks to the generous support of RBC, TELUS Vancouver's Community Board, BC Ministry of Justice, Coast Capital Saving, Winnipeg Community Foundation, City of Montreal, Quebec Ministry of Immigration, Diversity and Inclusion, and Hamber Foundation, new *Speaking Rights* and *Young Women Young Leaders* projects focusing on gender equality were initiated in Vancouver, Winnipeg, Toronto, Ottawa and Montreal.



using *Speaking Rights* reported that youth have a greater knowledge of rights and community issues, including gender equality and women's rights. *Speaking Rights* was implemented in 20 Canadian communities and reached 9,154 community members.

Central to the *Speaking Rights* program are opportunities for capacity building among staff within organizations working with youth in an effort to increase their skills to promote youth participation, gender equality and human rights values. Equitas conducted



built new skills, shared their ideas, and initiated change in their communities. More than 22 youth-serving organizations gained new approaches and tools, and strengthened their programs and practices to better include young women and support their active participation in their community.



(including youth)

were reached by our *Young Women, Young Leaders* projects.

"Supporting Equitas and promoting gender equality is very important to me because I grew up in house with four women and now I'm the proud father of a 22 year old young woman. As we know, women are the backbone of communities and we must work to make sure that their strength is never diminished. In my career and personal life, I was able to witness how supporting and giving equal opportunity to women can only be a benefit to the growth of our society." - Fritz Jr. Charles-Antoine, A.I.C.B., Senior Account Manager, Business and Personal, RBC Royal Bank of Canada

"The [girls] learned a lot about different issues, like hypersexualization, sexism, egalitarian relationships, sexual exploitation, women's rights. They developed critical thinking and analysis skills regarding these phenomena and then they became agents of change." - Youth worker, Montreal



ENGAGING

CHILDREN AND YOUTH TO PARTICIPATE IN COMMUNITY LIFE

Above - Created and developed in Montreal, the award-winning *Play it Fair!* toolkit and games are now used by children aged 6-12 in 42 communities across Canada and in nearly 15 countries around the world. In northern Colombo, Sri Lanka, children from Buddhist, Muslim, Christian and Hindu Sunday schools use *Play it Fair!* to better understand each other's religious expression and practices, and foster religious understanding. © Equitas, 2015

Children and youth play an important role in building an inclusive society based on respect, equality and full participation of all its members, regardless of ethnic and cultural background, language, religion, sex or other distinction.

At Equitas, we know that by exposing children and youth to human rights ideas they might not come across in regular textbooks or within their families, we help them become aware of their rights and empower them to stand-up and take leadership in promoting values of inclusion, non-discrimination and peaceful conflict resolution.

We have been developing innovative human rights education games and activities, tools and unique programs that increase awareness and encourage the participation of children and youth since 2004. Here are some of the ways we helped build children and youth leadership in Canada and internationally in 2015-2016, thanks to your support.

FOSTERING RELIGIOUS UNDERSTANDING AND INTER-FAITH DIALOGUE AMONG CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN SRI LANKA

Building children and youth leadership means supporting the development of attitudes, behaviours, knowledge and skills that enable children and youth to participate in positive social change in their communities. Community action projects in Colombo are an important part of our *Promoting Religious Harmony Project* in Sri Lanka, fostering religious understanding between children from different religious communities (Buddhist, Christian, Muslim and Hindu). In 2015-2016, 22 teachers from four Sunday schools were trained and used our *Play it Fair!* approach to engage children on how human rights values such as respect for diversity and inclusion can build bridges and understanding between different religious communities.

“During the Ramadan, the Islam Sunday school for the first time has invited three other Sunday school children from other religious groups for the IFTHAR program. A Hindu Sunday school principal said that such a thing had not happened in the past. This is a direct impact of our program.” - Jegan Prakash, Equitas program participant from Colombo.

The *Promoting Religious Harmony Project* in Sri Lanka indirectly reached more than 3,000 community members in three districts to reduce inter-religious tensions, generate a spirit of understanding, contribute to the promotion of religious diversity, and develop lessons for other societies experiencing similar conflict.

The project was made possible thanks to the financial support from the Government of Canada through Global Affairs Canada.

STRENGTHENING REGIONAL YOUTH NETWORKS TO PROMOTE HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION IN MENA

This year marked the conclusion of our successful *Mosharka* project in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). Through human rights education and training, the project worked towards developing a common and inclusive regional agenda for youth. The implementation of 20 youth-led community initiatives across Yemen, Jordan, Egypt, Tunisia and Morocco allowed the 1,660 youth involved to address root causes and initiate social dialogue on issues such as the exclusion of vulnerable groups from social and economic life, child marriage, intertribal conflict and sexual harassment. The projects have reached 16,675 people since 2012.

“Our theatre play presented important issues in a humorous way. The mothers who attended commended us on helping them become more aware of the negative consequences of early marriage on the health of their daughters.” - Maha, Morocco

Our work with youth in the region will continue through our new initiative *Joussour*.

The project was implemented in partnership with the Arab Network for Civic Education (ANHRE), Horus Foundation for Development and Training, Change Academy for Democratic Studies, Association marocaine pour l'éducation de la jeunesse (AMEJ), Association des Femmes Tunisiennes pour la Recherche et le Développement (AFTuRD) and the Youth Leadership Development Foundation.

The Mosharka project was made possible through the support of the European Union, the Canadian Fund for Local Initiatives (CFLI) in Jordan and the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie (OIF).

CHANGING PRECONCEIVED NOTIONS ABOUT GENDER IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

“The Mosharka project helped change preconceived notions my family had about my capacity to contribute to my community.” - Nadaa, Yemen

Gender equality was an integral part of Equitas' *Mosharka* project. Half of people reached were women, including 40% from marginalized groups.

Glimpse of a youth-led project to promote gender equality:
In Morocco, the project on early marriage aimed at raising awareness and fostering dialogue among families, women, civil society organizations and local authorities to identify ways to put a stop to early marriages. Activities organized as part of the project included creating and presenting a theatre play on early marriage, organizing group discussions with families and youth and conference on the issue.

SUPPORTING CHILDREN AND YOUTH AS LEADERS IN THE PROMOTION OF DIVERSITY, INCLUSION AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN CANADA

In Canada, we reached over 100,000 children and youth this year, working in partnership with 300 partner organizations in 42 communities across the country.

Inspired by the successes of our *Speaking Rights* and *Young Women, Young Leaders* programs, this year, elementary school aged children led community Action Projects to give every child and youth the chance to be a leader of community change.

Play It Fair! is made possible thanks to financial support of the TD Bank Group, United Way of the Lower Mainland, City of Montreal, Quebec Ministry of Immigration, Diversity and Inclusion, The Canada Post Community Foundation, and MK Social Justice Fund.

500 CHILDREN AGED 6 TO 12



attending the English Montreal School Board's B.A.S.E. afterschool programs developed Action Projects to make their schools and communities more welcoming and inclusive places to be. Story books, movie trailers, fun games and poster campaigns were created to promote respect for diversity, anti-bullying, teamwork and the right to a clean environment.

"The [Play It Fair!] activities really made a positive change in our school. It made the kids realize that we should all do our part to live in a better society even though it's small changes and we should all take it seriously," said one of the EMSB school educators.

"The national *Play It Fair!* program is fantastic. By teaching our children (...) the values of human rights, we help them build self-esteem and become more autonomous. What a great way for TD, through Equitas and its partners in 42 communities across Canada, to give a chance to the youth to prepare for their futures!" - Sylvie Demers, Senior Vice President, Quebec Region, TD Bank Group.

ON NATIONAL CHILD DAY 2015...



- Our annual Postcards to Parliament campaign encouraged 10,000 Canadian children to share their ideas about why children's rights matter with Prime Minister Trudeau.

- 300 children from Ottawa schools took over the Senate and learned about their rights through two *Play It Fair!* games.

"We are thrilled to welcome Equitas to the Senate Chamber for this special event," said Senator Munson. "Teaching children about their rights is central to National Child Day and *Play It Fair!* offers a fun and engaging way to educate them."

100% OF YOUTH FEEL THAT THEIR PROJECT HAS MADE A POSITIVE DIFFERENCE IN THEIR COMMUNITY.



As part of the 20 youth-led *Speaking Rights* community Action Projects in 20 Canadian communities, 229 youth leaders were able to create change in their schools, municipalities, community organizations and engage with decision-makers to discuss important issues.

IMPACT STORY

MA MAWI WI CHI ITATA: WE ALL WORK TOGETHER TO HELP ONE ANOTHER



Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata (Ma Mawi) is a Grandmother in the Winnipeg family of community service-providers working with Indigenous families for more than 30 years. *Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata* means "we all work together to help one another" in Ojibway. Over the last 10 years, Ma Mawi and Equitas have been exchanging knowledge, ideas, and working together to strengthen programming that engages and supports Indigenous youth.

This year, young Indigenous women at Ma Mawi created a live magazine-video focused on mental health in their community, aimed at sharing experiences, teaching others about available resources and sharing traditions to help in healing. Young women expressed that they felt compelled to do something: "because we've lost friends to suicide and addictions. We feel like we've grown closer together."

The live magazine-video was shared through the network of youth centers in Winnipeg and continues to be used in the community to encourage ongoing conversations around mental health.

"We are still showing the video and sharing it with the community. A lot of the time the youth in the video are recognized and are the go-to youth for others when they need help or resources [on mental health] ... Our video was shown to our leaders and our Executive Director who then took it to show in Switzerland at a conference about violence against Aboriginal women." - Coordinator, Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre, Winnipeg

This thoughtful project started by young Indigenous women in Winnipeg is making a difference in their own lives, the lives of their peers, and spreading awareness and understanding about a critical issue across the community and beyond.



BUILDING THE CAPACITY OF HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS EVERY DAY

Above - Akudo Oguaghamba from Nigeria founded Women's Health and Equal Rights Initiative to combat the double stigma faced by non-heterosexual women. Using techniques learned at Equitas' 2015 International Human Rights Training Program, she works to educate communities and bring people together to combat discrimination and empower women © Equitas, 2015

Tens of thousands of courageous people around the world work daily to promote a more just, equitable and peaceful world. They are the champions of the global human rights movement who struggle against great odds to overcome discrimination, intolerance and violence, and build communities that embrace equality, non-discrimination and respect for human dignity.

For 50 years, Equitas' unique programs and innovative educational tools have been equipping frontline human rights defenders and educators with the knowledge, skills and attitudes to become more effective in their work. Following their participation in Equitas programs, they are better able to protect the rights of marginalized and vulnerable groups and empower their communities to meaningfully participate in decision-making processes. Here are some of the results of our work empowering human rights defenders in 2015-2016.

STRENGTHENING HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION GLOBALLY

(SHREG) is a project that engages human rights defenders in making communities safer, more equitable, more democratic and respectful of human rights. Activities include the International Human Rights Training Program (IHRTP), and internationally recognized three-week training held in Montreal; Regional Human Rights Training Sessions in East and West Africa; national initiatives in Tanzania, Senegal, Haiti and Colombia; as well as an important knowledge-sharing component. The SHREG project is undertaken with the financial support of the Government of Canada provided through Global Affairs Canada.

IMPACT STORY

Since 2014, Esmeralda has been very involved in the human rights education activities undertaken by Equitas and its local partners in the municipality of La Victoire in Haiti. Wishing to take on a greater role in her community, she decided to run for the office of mayor of La Victoire. Her leadership inspired community organizations to work together to promote her candidacy and to encourage women, generally absent from Haitian institutions, to participate more actively in the political life of La Victoire. Esmeralda is now mayor, and is committed to the promotion of human rights and the participation of women in her community.

In recent months, many women have obtained positions in public institutions, a direct result of the Citizenship Engagement Program that has been active in communities over the last few years.

ACQUIRING HUMAN RIGHTS KNOWLEDGE AND EDUCATION SKILLS IN MONTREAL, CANADA

Held annually in June in Montreal, the IHRTP is a unique training specifically dedicated to building the capacity and skills of human rights educators. In 2015, 86 human rights defenders from 49 countries acquired practical tools to improve the effectiveness of their human rights education efforts (e.g., training, awareness campaigns, information dissemination, policy dialogue) and deepen the impact of their work.

"I will be taking experiences of working in human rights in different contexts and applying some of the good practices in my work. I have made a good network of human rights defenders who can contribute in jointly creating pressure to further the cause of human rights. I have gained knowledge on designing actions to effectively address human rights issues in my local context." - IHRTP participant from Nepal

The IHRTP is funded by the Government of Canada through Global Affairs Canada, with additional contributions from the American Jewish World Service, AIMIA, the Donner Canadian Foundation and generous individual donors and foundations.

MAKING NEW ALLIANCES FOR CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT IN HAITI

"One thing I want to emphasize is the depth of the way that people understand and take action on what they are learning." - Amber Lynn Munger, American Jewish World Service on the Citizen Engagement Program.

2015-2016 saw a real shift in the way people and communities involved in the *Citizen Engagement Program* are thinking about engagement and community collaboration. This year, members of marginalized groups, including youth, LGBTQI people and persons living with disabilities, were actively sought out to take part in community actions and, subsequently, increasingly took on leadership roles in initiatives. Networking and collaboration between local and national authorities and community members were also strengthened, enabling communities to better identify the solutions to issues they face and plan actions to support the reduction of violence, ensure respect for equality and non-discrimination of vulnerable groups, and promote safer communities.

Different projects involving 276 community members, including 156 youth and children in 2015-2016, show how, through human rights education, communities that come together can take control and bring sustainable solutions.

The Citizen Engagement Program is funded by the Government of Canada through Global Affairs Canada, with the financial support of the Ministère des Relations internationales et de la Francophonie du Québec, American Jewish World Service, National Endowment for Democracy and the Office du haut-commissariat aux droits de l'homme en Haïti.



EVALUATING

THE IMPACT OF HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION WORLDWIDE: THE KEY TO CONTINUED AND SUSTAINABLE SUCCESS

Above - In 2015-2016 in Haiti, evaluation meetings led to the conclusion that the program participants were ready for the next phase of the project sooner than originally anticipated. We focused on equipping coaches, community facilitators, local leaders and state actors to engage with each other to improve laws, policies and programs to promote democratic inclusion and participation of marginalized groups at community and national levels. In this photo, Equitas partner Patrick Camille on the left, one of the coaches involved in evaluating our program in Haiti. © Mikael Theimer, 2016 (www.mikaeltheimer.com)

Evaluating the impact of human rights education is a complex undertaking, just as the goal of social change is very broad and complex. Equitas supports rigorous, systematic and continuous evaluation of human rights education and training worldwide to ensure our approach stays relevant and has a genuine empowering effect.

Evaluation of human rights education is a developing field. Thanks to your continued trust and support, we are able to pursue our commitment to evaluation of human rights education by documenting our findings, developing participatory baseline studies, guides and trainings, and sharing accessible tools that are adaptable to different contexts. Our team is dedicated to making sure our work as human rights educators makes a difference. Here are some of the ways we contributed to evaluating impact in 2015-2016.

UNDERSTANDING OPPORTUNITIES AND BARRIERS TO THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN, CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN COLOMBIA

Efforts done so far by the National Government and the FARC to end the armed conflict and build a sustainable peace in Colombia, constitute an important and necessary step to achieve desired social changes after more than 50 years of conflict. Regardless of political outcomes, we are convinced that human rights education can play a key role in this peace building process. Women, children and youth, as well as ethnic minorities (Indigenous and afro-Colombians) have disproportionately suffered human rights violations, including gender-based violence, forced displacement and disappearances. In 2015-2016, Equitas carried out a baseline study in and with the communities of Usme (Bogotá) and Soacha (Cundinamarca) to gain a better understanding of existing opportunities and barriers to the participation of women, children and youth in their community. More than 125 people participated in the study. Root-causes of the barriers to participation faced by these groups were identified, among others, to be stereotypes and negative perceptions of youth; gender-based discrimination and violence against women; and the exclusion of children from decision-making processes. Following the study, Equitas held public community events to share the results in an engaging way and involve community members in the process ahead.

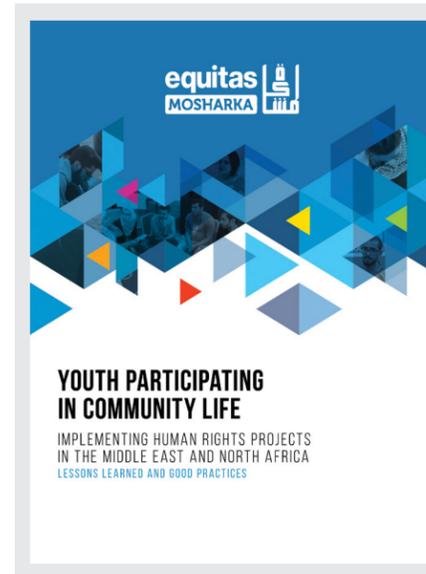
This project is undertaken with the financial support of the Government of Canada provided through Global Affairs Canada and is implemented in collaboration with the NGO Techo Colombia.

The Gallery Walk is a discussion technique which involves presenting complex information visually on large posters for a group to view and react to in a supportive and informal way. Equitas has used this technique with groups in Colombia that took part in the participatory evaluation process. The Gallery Walk enabled us to share back and validate data collected with the whole community. The accessible format of the Gallery Walk helped the communities see how they could use the evaluation results to take action for social change.

SHARING LESSONS LEARNED AND GOOD PRACTICES WORLDWIDE

It is part of the Equitas approach to assess how well we are doing in order to help us do it even better... and to share these experiences and good practices with other communities.

Published in 2016, the Compendium *Youth Participating in Community Life - Implementing Human Rights Projects in the Middle East and North Africa* is a practical tool that suggests new avenues of action to pursue the engagement of youth in the region, establish mechanisms for dialogue with decision-makers as well as ensure real opportunities for change for youth and other vulnerable groups.



EQUITAS SHARES IT! - In 2015, Equitas launched a new online initiative, *Equitas Shares It!* where everyone can learn about Equitas' most recent thinking, practices, and tips in everything human rights education. Seven accessible tools were published online in the first year.



THANK YOU!

TO OUR SPONSORS AND DONORS FOR THEIR GENEROUS SUPPORT OF TWO MEMORABLE EVENINGS!

CELEBRATING INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS DAY IN TORONTO

On December 9, 2015, Equitas was delighted to hold a cocktail, graciously hosted by TD Bank Group, with the young and dynamic women's rights advocate, Libyan-Canadian Alaa Murabit and CTV's Lloyd Robertson, on the theme of "Identity and Mobility: Human Rights Education in a Changing World". Guests had the opportunity to meet one of the world's leading voices for women's rights and one of Canada's leading journalists.

TORONTO COCKTAIL SPONSORS



MONTREAL 10th GALA FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

On February 11 2016, Equitas held a masked Gala at the Rialto Theatre. The great variety of masks, the dynamic guests who wore them, the beautiful venue and the energy in the room was positively fantastic! Guest speaker and Equitas alumnus Ala'a Jarban delivered a powerful message of perseverance, hope and courage. In his conversation with CTV Montreal's Caroline Van Vlaardingen, he shared his thoughts on the challenges of being an LGBTQI rights defender in Yemen and in Canada and on the importance of creating a welcoming environment for refugees in Canada, and in Montreal. We thank Kathleen Weil, Quebec Minister of Immigration, Diversity and Inclusion; Dimitrios (Jim) Beis, Montreal Councillor and Drew Wawin, District Vice-President, TD Canada Trust who addressed our guests as well.

"Oh what a night indeed! Congratulations to you and your team on putting together such a wonderful, successful event! Looking forward to next year's gala."
Annick Laberge, Associate Vice-President, Regional Support, TD Canada Trust

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Thank you to all our volunteers:

Anne-Virginie Desmarais, Bechir Djaby, Benoit Healy, Darena Muça, Emilie Hebrard, Francis Zangue, Gabriel Fournier, Ian Roy, Jess De Stefano, Julie Hoang, Killian Thompson, Lauren Thompson, Louisa Kraft, Marie Chabot-Johnson, Mariem Fafin, Medjine Antoine-Bellamy, Melanie Haffar, Michael Cooper, Michaela Mayer, Milan Hareau, Martina Rompala, Melissa Desmond, Nirushaa Senthilnathan, Pacita Candelario, Svjetlana Markovic, Viet Anh Vo, Francesca Valenti.

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Thank you to our volunteer committee members:

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THANK YOU!

Equitas wishes to thank its financial partners, both Canadian and international, whose generous support enabled us to make a difference in 2015-2016!

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Equitas also thanks the following organizations with whom we worked in partnership in 2015-2016:

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 Service Canada

Equitas also thanks all the individual donors who made a gift this year. We are truly grateful for your continuous support.

www.equitas.org

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2016

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS AND NET ASSETS	2016	2015
REVENUES		
GRANTS	\$ 3,641,459	\$ 3,205,161
TUITION	141,161	171,058
DONATIONS	147,423	173,068
INTEREST	1,524	4,222
TOTAL REVENUES	3,931,567	3,553,509
EXPENSES		
PROJECTS	3,375,087	3,003,571
ADMINISTRATIVE AND GENERAL EXPENSES	519,854	527,466
AMORTIZATION OF CAPITAL ASSETS	14,643	17,560
TOTAL EXPENSES	3,909,584	3,548,597
EXCESS OF REVENUES OVER EXPENSES	21,983	4,912
NET ASSETS BALANCE AT BEGINNING OF YEAR	219,546	214,634
NET ASSETS AT THE END OF YEAR	\$ 241,529	\$ 219,546
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION	2016	2015
ASSETS		
CURRENT ASSETS		
CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS	\$ 898,802	\$ 656,181
SHORT-TERM DEPOSIT	8,650	8,650
ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE	275,908	162,680
PREPAID EXPENSES	17,860	22,862
	1,201,220	850,373
CAPITAL ASSETS	25,755	37,344
TOTAL ASSETS	\$ 1,226,975	\$ 887,717
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
ACCOUNTS PAYABLE AND ACCRUED LIABILITIES	\$ 78,185	\$ 87,502
DEFERRED REVENUE	58,789	17,190
DEFERRED CONTRIBUTIONS	848,472	563,479
	985,446	668,171
NET ASSETS		
INVESTED IN CAPITAL ASSETS	25,755	37,344
RESTRICTED FOR ENDOWMENT PURPOSES	8,650	8,650
UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS	207,124	173,552
	241,529	219,546
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	\$ 1,226,975	\$ 887,717

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