



**THE  
READY  
COMMITMENT**

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educate. empower. change.

## **TD Bank Group and Equitas – New Funding Agreement and Event with UN Human Rights Expert Rita Izsák-Ndiaye**

**Vancouver, March 11, 2019** – Equitas, Canada's most recognized and most active human rights education organization, is happy to announce that TD Bank Group, through The Ready Commitment, will be funding human rights education programs for hundreds of thousands of children across Canada for the next 3 years. The Ready Commitment, a multi-year program to help individuals and communities prosper, will provide Equitas with \$525 000 over 3 years to support children's participation in activities that build their sense of awareness and understanding of diversity and inclusion and enable them to initiate actions to promote belonging in their communities. The multi-year funding also supports public events that engage individuals from the public, private, and community sector in dialogue about connected, equitable, inclusive communities such as the upcoming Community Dialogue with Rita Izsák-Ndiaye, former United Nations Special Rapporteur on Minority Rights.

### **TD and Equitas - A Long-Standing Partnership**

In partnership with TD since 2006, Equitas offers programming in 52 communities across Canada that focuses on working with organizations that support the active participation of children who are experiencing exclusion, isolation, and barriers to belonging in their community.

As part of The Ready Commitment, TD will target \$1 billion in total by 2030 towards community giving in four areas critical to building an inclusive and sustainable tomorrow – Financial Security, a more Vibrant Planet, Connected Communities and Better Health. Thanks to TD's remarkable support in the Connected Communities driver of The Ready Commitment, Equitas will continue to work in partnership with more than 500 organizations, including community-based organizations, schools, and municipalities to offer training and coaching for staff working to build their capacity and provide opportunities for children's leadership. Running for more than 12 years, Equitas' *Play it Fair!* program is an innovative initiative for children aged 6-12 years old that reinforces understanding of human rights and equips them with knowledge and skills to promote inclusion and respect for diversity in their communities.

Equitas has a Regional Office in Vancouver working in collaboration with municipalities, community-based organizations and school boards across the Lower Mainland and BC to support the participation of children and youth in their communities.

### **Community Dialogue – A Woman's Journey for Human Rights**

In partnership with Simon Fraser University and held at SFU's Goldcorp Centre for the Arts on March 12, *Building Connected Communities - A Woman's Journey for Human Rights*, invites Vancouverites to meet Rita Izsák-Ndiaye, United Nations independent expert in human rights and share lessons learned on

building more equitable and inclusive communities. Only a few days after International Women's Day, the event brings together close to 100 individuals from the Vancouver academic, public and community sectors for an inspiring discussion on gender equality and human rights and highlights the contributions of remarkable women human rights defenders.

The Community Dialogue will be moderated by a diverse panel including **Silvio Albuquerque**, member of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and Ambassador, Consul General of Brazil in Vancouver, **Brenda Morrison**, Director of SFU's Centre for Restorative Justice, Associate Professor in SFU's School of Criminology and member of the Child Rights Academic Network, and **Robert Daum**, PhD. Fellow & Senior Consultant at SFU's Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue, member of the Board of Directors of Reconciliation Canada, and Chair of The Laurier Institution.

The Equitas Community Dialogue is an opportunity to raise awareness about human rights education and funds for the cause of human rights. All proceeds from the event go to support human rights education. More information on [Eventbrite](#).

#### Event Details

- Date: Tuesday, March 12<sup>th</sup>
- Time: 7 – 9 pm
- Location: SFU's Goldcorp Centre for the Arts, Djavad Mowafaghian World Art Centre  
149 W Hastings St, Vancouver

#### **Roundtable Discussion – Bringing Together Thought Leaders in Diversity & Inclusion**

Prior to the Community Dialogue, Equitas will be hosting a Roundtable Discussion, bringing together thought leaders from the community, public and private sectors together with special guest Rita Izsák-Ndiaye to discuss how we can be fostering more conversations on building inclusive, equitable and connected communities where all groups can actively participate. With participation from leaders in Diversity & Inclusion from corporations such as TELUS, as well as from the City of Vancouver and the City of New Westminster, and active community-based organizations, the discussion promises to be rich and inspiring.

#### Event Details

- Date: Wednesday, March 12<sup>th</sup>
- Time: 2 – 4 pm
- Location: SFU's Goldcorp Centre for the Arts, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor  
149 W Hastings St, Vancouver

#### **Meet Rita Izsák-Ndiaye**

Rita Izsák-Ndiaye, a human rights expert from Hungary, currently based in Senegal, has worked with civil society and multilateral organizations in various countries, including in Somalia and Bosnia & Herzegovina, as well as with the Government of Hungary, in the fields of discrimination, racism, minority rights, social inclusion and on other related issues. She was the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Minority Rights from 2011-2017 and is currently the Rapporteur of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. Rita was inspired by her own experiences of prejudice and

discrimination to work on human and minority rights. Her father's family was forcibly moved under post-war population transfers from Czechoslovakia (present day Slovakia) to Hungary due to their Hungarian ethnicity in 1947 and her mother is of Romani origin.

Rita holds a Masters in Law from the Péter Pázmány Catholic University in Budapest and participated in Equitas' [International Human Rights Training Program](#) (IH RTP) in 2003. The IH RTP alumni network is one of the largest global communities of human rights defenders. To see a sneak preview of Rita Izsák-Ndiaye's thoughts on human rights education, see this [short Equitas video](#) on the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights.

## Quotes

"At TD, we are proud to be working with Equitas to enable 100,000 diverse children this year to participate in activities that create meaningful connections and cultivate their sense of belonging as they become leaders promoting inclusion and respect for diversity with their peers, their families, and members of their community. This program is a great example of what we want to achieve through The Ready Commitment, our global corporate citizenship platform. Together we are opening doors to a more inclusive tomorrow." – **Valérie Picher**, Associate Vice-President, Community Relations, TD Bank Group

"It is more important than ever to take a stand for equality and human rights. Thanks to the support of The Ready Commitment, Equitas is able to convene these important conversations about respect for diversity and inclusion. Our guest, Rita Izsak-Ndiaye has a wealth of international experience and insight to share which will help to mobilize Canadians and stimulate further reflection on how we can build stronger and more resilient connections between the diverse communities, both in Toronto and across Canada." – **Ian Hamilton**, Executive Director, Equitas

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## About The Ready Commitment

*TD has a long-standing commitment to enriching the lives of its customers, colleagues and communities. As part of its corporate citizenship platform, The Ready Commitment, TD is targeting CDN \$1 billion (US \$775 million) in total by 2030 towards community giving in four areas critical to opening doors for a more inclusive and sustainable tomorrow – Financial Security, Vibrant Planet, Connected Communities and Better Health. Through The Ready Commitment TD aspires to link its business, philanthropy and human capital to help people feel more confident - not just about their finances, but also in their ability to achieve their personal goals in a changing world. For further information, visit [td.com/thereadycommitment](http://td.com/thereadycommitment)*

## **About Equitas**

*Based in Montreal, Equitas is Canada's most recognized and active human rights education organization. We work for the advancement of equality, inclusion and respect for human dignity through transformative human rights education programs. With strong support from government for over 25 years and from leading corporations in Canada, our programs are already reaching 120,000 children and youth annually in 52 communities across Canada, including Vancouver. Overseas, Equitas has trained human rights defenders to reinforce a culture of human rights in over 140 countries. Over the past 50 years, Equitas has reached over 4 million people worldwide. For more information, visit [equitas.org](http://equitas.org)*