



## **Equitas is Empowering Women and Girls to Advance Gender Equality around the World**

**Montreal, September 25, 2019** – Equitas is investing in the economic, political and social empowerment of women and girls, and is making gender equality a priority in its new project. The Government of Canada has approved new funding for Equitas, to implement a new five-year project designed to increase gender equality worldwide, *Advancing Equality through Human Rights Education*. Equitas will receive up to C\$17,680,395 from 2019-2024 to carry out the project. Its principal objective will be to contribute to the empowerment of women and girls to advance gender equality in their communities in five target countries specifically (Burkina Faso, Haiti, Kenya, Senegal and Tanzania) and also around the world, through its International Human Rights Training Program (IH RTP) delivered in Montreal each year to human rights advocates from across the globe, as well as through its Regional Human Rights Training Programs in East and West Africa, and through the dissemination of educational material to a global online network of over 4,300 human rights educators.

Discrimination and violence against women and girls are widespread, deep rooted, and prevalent in many parts of the world. Gender inequalities are also exacerbated when compounded by the effects of poverty, marginalization, and discrimination based on other grounds such as race, ethnic and religious identity, disability, age, class, sexual orientation, gender identity or any other marginalized identity. Through *Advancing Equality through Human Rights Education*, Equitas, Canada's oldest and most active human rights education organization, will work in partnership with local organizations in the five target countries to contribute to the empowerment of women and girls. The project will equip them with tools and knowledge required to advance gender equality in their communities. It will promote the leadership of women and men in community mobilization activities that advance gender equality. It will reinforce collaboration among women's and human rights organizations, and support efforts to influence decision-makers in fulfilling their human rights obligations related to gender equality, reaching over 2,500,000 people around the world. The project will focus particularly on issues such as violence against women and girls, women's participation in decision-making and harmful traditional practices such as child and forced marriage.

Building on its longstanding experience and expertise in human rights education, its extensive network of partners worldwide and the results of recent programs delivered in partnership with Global Affairs Canada, Equitas is confident the project will contribute to the advancement of gender equality. The project's main activities include local, regional and international human rights training for human rights defenders; coaching; community mobilization actions; community forums and policy dialogues; and support to national and international movements dedicated to advancing gender equality.

### **In Partnership with Local Organizations**

Lasting social change comes through collaboration and equitable partnership. *Advancing Equality through Human Rights Education* will be implemented in close collaboration with the local partners, including the Mouvement burkinabé des droits de l'homme et des peuples (MBDHP) in Burkina Faso, the Groupe d'appui aux rapatriés et réfugiés (GARR) and Partners for Engaged Citizenship in Haiti, Women's Empowerment Link (WEL) in Kenya, the Rencontre africaine pour la défense de droits de l'homme (RADDHO), the Réseau Equitas Sénégal pour l'éducation aux droits humains (RESEDHU) and the Comité de lutte contre les violences faites aux femmes (CLVF) in Senegal and TUSONGE Community Development Organization in Tanzania.

## Quote

“Equitas’ work through *Advancing Equality through Human Rights Education* is essential in today’s global context, where gender inequalities are alarmingly prevalent and human rights issues such as sexual and gender-based violence, discriminatory laws, policies and practices, unequal access to resources and opportunities, and the feminization of poverty, are widespread. Through transformative education programs, our work equips community members, along with civil society and government stakeholders, to better understand their rights and responsibilities and to take action to advance gender equality and reinforce respect for human rights.” - **Ian Hamilton, Executive Director, Equitas**

## Quick Facts – the Situation of Women Globally<sup>1</sup>

- 35% of women have experienced physical and/or sexual violence at some point in their lives
- 200 million women and girls alive today have undergone female genital mutilation
- 15 million adolescent girls (aged 15 to 19) have experienced forced sex
- 650 million women and girls in the world today were married before age 18
- 2.7 billion women are legally restricted from having the same choice of jobs as men
- 2.5 billion women and girls suffer the consequences of discriminatory laws

## Quick Facts – *Advancing Equality through Human Rights Education*

- 5 target countries (Burkina Faso, Haiti, Kenya, Senegal and Tanzania) & global approach
- 2, 500,000 people to be reached by project impacts (58% who identify as women)
- 4,300 human rights defenders already connected through online community
- 590 human rights defenders to be trained globally and in East and West Africa (55% who identify as women)
- 250 decision-makers to be engaged

## Related Links

- [Video: Advancing Equality through Human Rights Education – Burkina Faso](#)
- [Advancing Equality through Human Rights Education leaflet](#)

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## About Equitas

Based in Montreal, Equitas is Canada’s oldest and most active human rights education organization. We work to advance equality, social justice and the respect for human dignity through transformative education programs. Equitas’ programs have reached over 4 million people worldwide over the course of the last five decades. For more information, visit [www.equitas.org](http://www.equitas.org)

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<sup>1</sup> Statistics from UN Women