

PRESS RELEASE

International Human Rights Training Program

120 HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS IN MONTREAL FOR A UNIQUE 19-DAY HUMAN RIGHTS TRAINING SESSION

Montreal, June 7, 2010 – 120 human rights defenders from over 55 countries have arrived in Montreal for the 31st edition of Equitas' *International Human Rights Training Program* (IH RTP) which will run from June 6 to June 25 2010. They have been selected from over 900 applicants to participate in this one of a kind three-week program; a once in a lifetime experience for them. Equitas provides these courageous and dynamic individuals with comprehensive and ongoing support that allows them to transfer knowledge acquired during the program to the work of their organizations and to affect social change in their communities.

Over the last 31 years, Equitas has trained over 3,000 activists worldwide to influence their governments and the international community to implement the principles and values of human rights in their social actions in order to build a global culture of human rights. Upholding human rights is a constant struggle, especially in crisis situations, as demonstrated by the tragic events that occurred in Haiti last January. "The international community now has a responsibility to ensure that its aid is being delivered in an equitable manner, respecting human rights values and principles", says Ian Hamilton, Executive Director of Equitas. "While many will be focusing on world leaders in Toronto for the G20, the participants in our programming will be working on how the rhetoric of the world leaders can be translated into reality in an equitable and just fashion. You can't have maternal and child health, which are the G8 and G20 priorities, without participation, accountability and equality."

2010 IH RTP highlights

When : June 6 to June 25, 2010

Where: John Abbott College, 21,275 Lakeshore Rd., Ste. Anne de Bellevue, Quebec

- Opening Ceremony (June 7, 6 :30 to 7 :30 p.m.): Welcome evening that sets the tone for the program.
- Presentations by leading human rights experts (throughout the program).
- Host dinners (June 11): Join Canadian families as they host cultural exchange dinners with delegates.
- Visit Montreal Memorial Holocaust Museum (June 13): Participants will tour the museum and then share experiences with Holocaust survivors.
- Interviews with participants: Interviews can be arranged with human rights defenders from over 55 countries including **Haiti, Iraq, Togo, Afghanistan, Thailand, Zimbabwe and South Africa.**

A lasting impact around the world

In recent years, Equitas alumni promoted human rights and democratic principles and contributed to the following changes:

Haiti: Development and implementation of education activities based on human rights values and principles.

Kenya: Introduction of compulsory and free primary education.

Democratic Republic of the Congo: Mobilization of women in a campaign in Eastern Congo to end impunity for perpetrators of sexual violence.

Middle East and North Africa: Establishment of a regional network of activists committed to advancing the values of human rights and democratic pluralism.

Indonesia: Integration of a human rights approach in the work of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour after a needs assessment conducted by a IHRTP alumni.

About Equitas

Equitas – International Centre for Human Rights Education is a Montreal-based organization with over 40 years of experience. Equitas is recognized internationally as a leader in the design and delivery of highly effective human rights education programs. The innovative methodology of Equitas programs is being emulated around the world. Equitas provides education programs in Canada and follow-up programs in Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Central and Eastern Europe as well as Central Asia. These programs equip organizations and the communities they serve to build a global culture of human rights. In May 2009, Yolande James, Minister of Immigration and Cultural Communities presented Equitas with the *Prix de la citoyenneté* (Ann Greenup) recognizing exceptional efforts in the struggle against racism in Quebec for its *Play it Fair!* program.

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For more information, to attend an event or to arrange an interview, please contact:

Emilie Dumas
Communications Assistant, Equitas
(514) 954-0382 ext: 245
(514) 677-8523
edumas@equitas.org

OR

Ian Hamilton,
Executive Director, Equitas
514-954-0382 ext. 234
(438) 274-9222
ihamilton@equitas.org