

Equitas welcomes three new staff members:

Christine Messier, Program Officer, Middle East and North Africa

Annie Pettigrew, Education Specialist

Radhananth Gagnon, Education Specialist

Program Activities

MARCH 2006 – NOVEMBER 2006

International Human Rights Training Program (IHRTTP)

- Participation of 129 human rights educators from 57 countries at the three-week training session, *Ste-Anne-de-Bellevue, June 2006*
- Follow-up meeting with Haitian IHRTTP alumni *Port-au-Prince, October 2006*
- Indonesian Annual Human Rights Training Program Planning Meeting *Jakarta, November 2006*

National Human Rights Institutions Program

- Training workshop with Nepal National Human Rights Commission *Kathmandu, May 2006*
- Workshop on Human Rights Education Evaluation *Kathmandu, August 2006*
- Workshop on Building Strategic Partnerships for Human Rights Education in Nepal *Kathmandu, August 2006*

Middle East & North Africa Program

- Inception mission *London, Cairo, Alexandria, Amman and Beirut, March 2006*
- Exposure week for 12 IHRTTP participants from the Middle East and North Africa *Montreal & Ottawa, July 2006*
- Regional Working Session *Amman, Jordan, September 2006*
- Regional Working Session *Amman, Jordan, November 2006*

Indonesia: Strengthening human rights protection in the Tsunami-affected regions

- Study visit by 7 Indonesian Partners *Montreal & Ottawa, May 2006*
- Training workshops *Jakarta & Banda Aceh, November 2006*

Africa: Minority Rights

- Workshop on Minority Rights with International Centre for Ethnic Studies (ICES) *Yaoundé, Cameroun, July 2006*

Central Asia: Consultation with Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women

- Publication of the proceedings held in Almaty, Kazakhstan *July 2006*

Canada: Human Rights Education in Summer Day Camps

- City of Montreal –Launch of tool-kit, Play it Right *July 2006*
- Tool-kit used in 80 camps reaching approximately 12,000 children *Summer 2006*
- National Program Needs assessments conducted *Vancouver, Winnipeg, Toronto and Moncton/Fredericton, Summer 2006*



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Building a culture of human rights in the Middle East and North Africa

In January 2006, Equitas signed a three-year agreement with the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) to support human rights education activities in the Middle East and North Africa with a particular focus on Iraq. The goal of the project is to contribute to increased respect for human rights, advances in democracy and good governance, and reduced conflict in the Middle East and North Africa, in particular in Iraq, through effective human rights education.

The proposal grew from links made during the 2004 International Human Rights Training Program (IHRTP) between participants from the Middle East and North Africa and Equitas. They left determined to build a joint project. It did not take long for results to be produced. Within months, a proposal to support human rights education in the Middle East and North Africa, with a component dedicated to Iraq, was drafted.

Activities came to an official start at the end of March 2006 with an inception mission undertaken by the Director of Programs, the Director of Education and the newly-hired Program Officer. During this initial two-week mission, Equitas staff visited Jordan, Egypt and Lebanon, to validate the objectives and components of the program. IHRTP alumni, national, regional and international organizations working on the defense and promotion of human rights (including women's organizations), national and regional experts in human rights, national human rights institutions and United Nations agencies were consulted. The mission not only allowed Equitas to strengthen existing partnerships but also to make significant new contacts for its programming in the region.

Since the inception mission, Equitas has carried out several program activities with IHRTP alumni and its partners:

- 12 human rights educators from the Middle East and North Africa participated in the IHRTP in 2006 and stayed on in Canada for an extra week after the program allowing them a chance to exchange with Canadian NGOs, government representatives and other members of civil society.
- A regional working session was held in Amman in September 2006 with 20 participants, the majority of which were IHRTP alumni, during which long-term strategies were discussed and regional Training of Trainers workshops were prepared.

Equitas is preparing to open an office in the region in early 2007 with the mandate to coordinate activities and ensure communications between partners, participants and Equitas in Montreal. By March 2007, Equitas will have held its first Training of Trainers workshop, in Amman, with 30 human rights educators from the whole region. This intermediate to advanced training session will be held entirely in Arabic.

Between now and 2009, human rights educators from the region will continue to attend the IHRTP and further Training of Trainers and evaluation workshops will be held. Local human rights education workshops for Iraqi NGOs and support to human rights training activities undertaken by program participants at the regional and local levels are also planned.



Equitas staff meet with Egyptian alumni, Cairo, March 2006



Regional working session, Amman, Jordan, September 2006

For more information on this program, please contact Ms. Christine Messier, Program Officer, Middle East & North Africa, cmessier@equitas.org

This program is made possible by the financial support of the Government of Canada provided through the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

Louise Arbour visits Equitas' Montreal day camp project

On a hot summer morning in July, Madame Louise Arbour, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights joined a group of 20 children at the Dixie day camp in Lachine, Quebec to experience first hand "Play it Right", the human rights toolkit developed by Equitas. The toolkit, based on play and produced in concert with the City of Montreal for use in its summer day camps, is intended to help children learn about human rights, promote cultural diversity and fight discrimination.

Madame Arbour readily joined the children to play several games from the toolkit. In "Around the world with a hula-hoop", the children learned the importance of cooperation and inclusion as they tried to make a hula-hoop go around in a circle without letting go of each other's hands.

In "I have the right to...", the children learned of their rights to education, to safety, to freedom of expression and to rest and of the responsibilities that these rights entail.

Madame Arbour told the children how many children in the world do not have the same opportunity as they do to exercise their rights. She also expressed the importance of respecting differences as an important step in educating children to respect human rights.

Madame Arbour also visited Equitas' office where she met with staff and members of the Board of Directors. During discussions, the High Commissioner for Human Rights expressed a strong interest in continued collaboration with Equitas and encouraged us to continue working closely with her staff.



Madame Louise Arbour joined children at a Lachine day camp to play games from the "Play it Right!" toolkit.

'Play it Right' – Equitas in Canada

BY LAURA BUTLER

For Equitas, the 1990s were characterized by increasing engagement and success with its international programming. Recognizing the crucial role of human rights education in Canada and given the wealth of expertise developed internationally, Equitas established a strategic goal to reinvigorate its Canadian programming, focusing on children's rights.

Since 2003, Equitas has worked with the City of Montreal's *Direction des affaires interculturelles* to strengthen the capacity of the city's employees to integrate multicultural and human rights education activities into summer camp programs for children aged 6-12.

The result has been the development of interactive educational materials in the form of the *Play it Right Toolkit* containing activities and games specifically designed for use with children outside the formal classroom setting. The toolkit focuses on a rights-based approach to anti-discrimination and equips camp staff with the knowledge and skills to promote the values of human rights, inclusion and cultural harmony.

"I realize more and more that it is possible to take good preventative action through play."

During the summer of 2006, the *Play it Right Toolkit* was used in over 80 summer camps serving around 12,000 children across Montreal. While the toolkit is at the core of the project, capacity-building workshops are key to ensuring the sustainability of results and over 500 recreation staff were trained in 2006.

The outstanding results and high level of enthusiasm generated in Montreal convinced Equitas of the excellent prospects for a national-level program implemented initially in Moncton, Fredericton, Toronto, Winnipeg and Vancouver. In 2006, a detailed needs assessment was conducted in each of these cities involving 50 organizations and 28 summer camps.

As in Montreal, camp staff noted the children's enthusiasm for these innovative new games as well as the impact of the toolkit in creating an atmosphere of fair play, inclusion and respect.

"There was less conflict and more respect. The children needed less assistance in resolving their conflicts; they remembered the games and used the solutions."

During the winter of 2006/2007, Equitas will share the results of the needs assessment, plan training and develop strategies to ensure sustainable implementation in the four cities. In Montreal, further training will be conducted and the sustainability strategy refined. Through ongoing promotion and public engagement we hope to see the project further expanded with children from East coast to West coast inspiring us all to "Play it Right!"

These projects have been made possible thanks to the generous support of: City of Montréal, *Immigration et Communautés Culturelles Québec*, Heritage Canada, TD Bank Financial Group, The J.W. McConnell Family Foundation.

Laura Butler is a Program Assistant at Equitas

Electronic copies of the *Play it Right* toolkit are available on our website at http://www.equitas.org/toolkit/downloads/Play_It_Right_Toolkit.pdf



For further information, please contact Canadian Program Officer, Frédéric Hareau, fhareau@equitas.org.

The "Play it Right!" toolkit contains over 40 activities designed to promote human rights, respect for diversity and peaceful resolution of conflicts.

Equitas hosts its 2nd annual fundraising cocktail

On November 29, 2006, over 100 people gathered at the Atrium of McGill University's Faculty of Law for Equitas' 2nd annual fundraising cocktail whose theme was Human Rights Education in Canada. We had the great pleasure to welcome the Honourable Frank Iacobucci, former Supreme Court Justice of Canada and the Canadian Government's Representative to lead discussions toward a fair and lasting resolution of the legacy of Indian residential schools.

During the cocktail, Marcel Tremblay, member of the Executive Committee of the City of Montreal spoke enthusiastically of the success of our joint programming for children in Montreal day camps, teaching conflict resolution and non-discrimination. He is especially proud that this model has been warmly embraced and is being exported to other major cities in Canada, such as Toronto, Vancouver, Winnipeg and Moncton. We were delighted that he also reaffirmed the city's continued support for this work in the coming years.

Our Guest of Honour, Frank Iacobucci, moved all in attendance by sharing his experience working to find a fair and equitable settlement for the aboriginal students who attended Residential Schools. He reminded us that Canadians should learn from historical injustices in this country in order to better promote and protect human rights for all in the future.

Special thanks go out to all who attended and to the following sponsors:

- **Platinum Sponsors:** Borden Ladner Gervais, Claudia's Catering, Marché Adonis
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Peter Leuprecht, Director, Montreal Institute of International Studies, Université du Québec à Montréal, the Honourable Frank Iacobucci, Max Yalden, former Chief Commissioner of the Canadian Human Rights Commission, Ian Hamilton, Executive Director, Ruth Selwyn, former Executive Director, Nandini Ramanujam, President, Board of Directors, Nicholas Kasirer, Dean of the Faculty of Law, McGill University, Pearl Eliadis, former President, Board of Directors and Rob Yalden, Treasurer at the fundraising cocktail.

Donor recognition corner

EQUITAS WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE FOLLOWING INDIVIDUALS WHO MADE DONATIONS BETWEEN APRIL AND OCTOBER 2006:

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