AEQUITAS ready to challenge our thinking on human rights

AEQUITAS is a newly incorporated non-partisan, non-profit organisation dedicated to the promotion of human rights education, citizenship education and intercultural education in Cyprus.

The centre of its activities is in its headquarters in Limassol, although it plans to coordinate seminars, workshops and events on a national scale. AEQUITAS aims to cooperate with like-minded organisations and individuals abroad with a view to promoting its core values both regionally and internationally.

At its centre, AEQUITAS is committed to the tenet that ‘Every human being has rights’ and that the most effective and durable way to enlighten a society about its fundamental human rights is through education.

The director of the organisation, Natalie Alkiviadou, is a qualified lawyer who feels passionately that Cypriot society has a fair way to go in its understanding and appreciation of human rights issues.

“AEQUITAS is very much about education. That is where our emphasis will be. When we change the mindset of a society, its people, then we can begin to change action on the ground”. She added “We are committed through our activities, to cultivate a spirit of respect, non-discrimination and tolerance in Cypriot society”.

In the short time since the organisation was established (December 21, 2011), Alkiviadou says the response has been very positive. “Our website is up and running and it is constantly updated so that it’s in line with EU legislation and amendments. Unfortunately implementation here on the ground in Cyprus is not always in line with legislation. This is something that hopefully we can help improve”.

Currently AEQUITAS is made up of a seven-member board, representing a cross section of society and skills. They are all volunteers, working towards the promotion of human rights education through various activities that will be introduced during the coming months.

“We have workshops, seminars, environment projects, exchanges with young people lined up to discuss many issues. This year, 2012, is the Year of Active Ageing and solidarity between generations. We will be promoting this as well as other issues such as multiculturalism, gender and trans-gender, disability, abuse, bullying...there is much to do.

"We will also be issuing bi-monthly newsletters which will focus on a specific law in each issue. In June, exchanges are planned with leaders from similar NGO’s in other countries to share information and network. We also have an Advisory Board in the pipeline”.

Alkiviadou believes there have been many improvements in Cyprus on the issue of human rights education but there is still much to do. Funding for the NGO is through the European Commission and company sponsorships.

For more information on AEQUITAS visit their website http://www.aequitas-humanrights.org.