



FACE EQUALITY
INTERNATIONAL

MEDIA RELEASE: For Friday 17th May 2019

Campaign for face equality ‘becomes a global movement’ with the first International Face Equality Week

A week of awareness-raising events, media coverage and social media activity begins around the world today to promote ‘Face Equality’ – the fair treatment of people with facial and body differences and the elimination of disfigurement discrimination.

The 30 NGOs that are members of Face Equality International, the new alliance representing people with disfigurements, will be holding Face Equality Days in their own countries and regions – starting with the Sunshine Welfare Foundation co-ordinating activities in Taiwan on 17th May:

- In the Czech Republic, a direct video message from someone with personal experience of living with a disfigurement will go out to viewers in cinemas across the nation as run by the NGO, [Be TCS](#).
- In Turkey the charity, [Happy Faces](#) has been chosen as the most inspiring organisation in Turkey and so will feature across national TV during the week, and will involve a number of influential celebrities in support of the movement.
- In Nepal, there are activities to bring together patients with a variety of different appearance affecting conditions such as burns and craniofacial conditions. This work is supported by HM British Ambassador to Nepal, [Richard Morris](#).
- In Taiwan, the [Sunshine Welfare Foundation](#) is doing an island tour to promote face equality - and the Mayor of Tainan has pledged his support to the international face equality movement. Tainan is now the first city in the nation to no longer require prospective employees to include a photograph with their resume, in an effort to stamp out appearance discrimination (<https://www.sunshine.org.tw/english/news/237>)
- In Canada, three member organisations are coordinating open events and social media campaigns, drawing on the support of local MPs wherever possible. [About Face](#) is focusing on raising public awareness of facial differences alongside fair treatment.

Dr James Partridge OBE, founder and Director of Face Equality International says:

“Wherever they live in the world, people with disfigurements – whether from cleft lip and/or palate, birthmarks, burns, acid violence, facial paralysis like Bell’s palsy, skin conditions such as psoriasis and vitiligo or after facial cancer –

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are disadvantaged by the way they are received. They experience isolation, bullying, ridicule and staring in public, low expectations in school, problems getting work and harassment in the workplace, abuse on social media and stereotyping in the media and films.

“The first International Face Equality Week demonstrates that the campaign for Face Equality has become a global movement. We aim to tackle three problems commonly associated with disfigurement – ignorance, fear and unwitting prejudice – by celebrating the achievements and ambitions of people with disfigurements and by bringing the disadvantages they face to public attention. Our growing movement demands respect and fair treatment for everyone, backed up by effective anti-discrimination protection in every country.”

NGOs that are participating in the International Week include Smile Train, the Phoenix Society for Burn Survivors and FACES in the US, the European Cleft Organisation, the Smile Foundation in South Africa and Changing Faces in the UK.

[A full list of Members of Face Equality International is here:
<https://faceequalityinternational.org/thealliance/>]

ENDS

NOTES TO EDITORS

- Media enquiries should be addressed to Phyll Swift on phyllswift@gmail.com or mobile: +44 (0) 7841 908852. Interviews can be arranged with Dr Partridge and other spokespeople.
- Case studies and interviews available upon request (as above).
- For more detail about the aims and founders of Face Equality International, please see <https://faceequalityinternational.org>
- The campaign for face equality was launched in May 2008 by Changing Faces in the UK.

Charities, associations and companies of all kinds are encouraged to get involved by contacting the Face Equality International HQ (info@faceequalityinternational.org) and support the campaign across social media by following @FaceEqualityInt

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From Taiwan

“My name is Tsai-Yu KUO, I’m a burns survivor and I don’t let my scars define who I am or what I can do. I’m a post-graduate student, I’m a daughter, I’m a classmate, I design fashion, I play guitar, I love diving but I can’t really swim... I’m a multi-faceted person.

“We can’t entirely escape being judged by our appearance. But if our appearance is what people see first, at least it should be the starting point to finding a deeper meaning.

“People should make the effort to look beyond our appearance and get to know the multitude of stories behind each of our faces. Every face is different, we are all unique but we all deserve to be respected and treated fairly.”

From Europe

Amanda Bates, European Cleft Organisation

“As someone who was born with a facial difference, I am well aware of the challenges such as discrimination and stigma. My involvement with European projects has also opened my eyes to the fact that more than a million people within the EU have a cleft or other craniofacial condition so their needs are not a marginal concern. International Face Equality Week marks a significant step towards the global recognition of anti-discrimination legislation and human rights, which I unreservedly support.”

From Canada

Kariym Joachim, AboutFace Ambassador and Board Director

“As our world becomes a ‘global village’, steps to challenge perceptions of facial differences must now happen on an international scale. There is no better way to do that than through an International Face Equality Week co-ordinated by an alliance of national organisations striving for face equality. As an individual with a facial difference, I’m excited to reach across borders to forge meaningful links, share my own experiences, and grow as a facial difference advocate!”

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