

Health Equity Fact Sheet

What is health equity?

Health equity is achieved when everyone can attain their full potential for health and wellbeing. It refers to the absence of unfair, avoidable or remediable differences in health among groups of people - whether those groups are defined socially, economically, demographically, geographically or by other dimensions of inequality (e.g. sex, gender, ethnicity, disability, or sexual orientation).¹

Why is it important?

Health inequities are inequalities that are avoidable, unfair and unjust. They are driven not only by differences in access to health services but also in overall living and working conditions. Realising every individual's right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health is fundamental to ensuring human potential, eliminating poverty and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

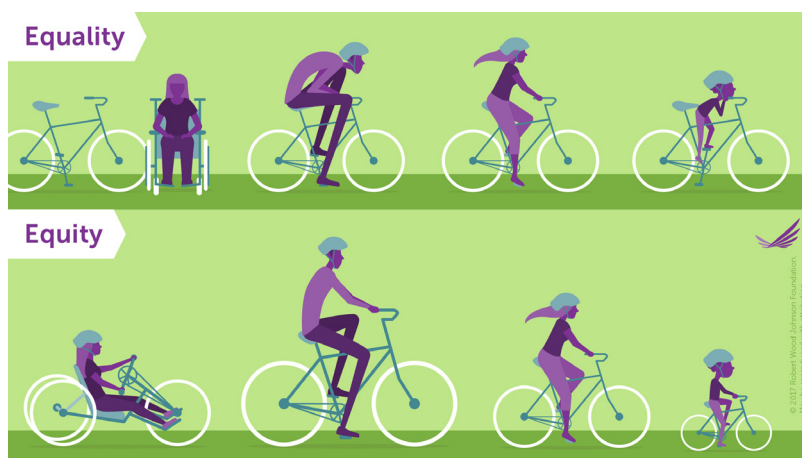
How can we achieve health equity?

Health equity can be promoted by prioritising those who are in the most vulnerable or marginalised situations and tailoring or providing additional services to meet their needs; enabling all individuals to access the services they need without violence, coercion, stigma or disrespect; consulting service users about their needs in the design, delivery, monitoring and evaluation of programmes; and considering health and wellbeing in the context of wider social, economic and environmental determinants of health.

Visualising health equity

Equality: providing everyone with the same resources, a 'one size fits all' approach.

Equity: providing people with resources that fit their individual needs.



Equality/Equity Bike Graphic. Reproduced with permission of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Princeton, N.J.

About this K4DD fact sheet

Authors

Beatrice Egid and Kerry Millington

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Questions to consider when developing new policies and programmes

- ▶ Who are the most vulnerable groups? Who is most in need? How are we targeting them?
- ▶ Who will benefit from this work and who is likely to be left out?
- ▶ Why are people being left out? What barriers are preventing them leading healthy lives?
- ▶ What harm will this do to their health and wellbeing – physically, mentally and socially?
- ▶ What can we do differently to remove barriers and reduce harm?

More information on health equity and the right to health can be found in the FCDO global health toolkit (page 24).

¹https://www.who.int/health-topics/health-equity#tab=tab_1