

UNIT 4 EQUITY AND EQUALITY PROMOTING SCHOOL





Introduction

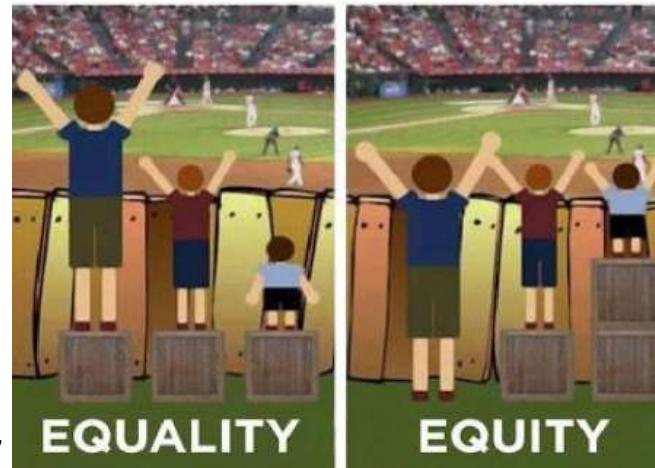
- Welcome to unit 4 where we will learn about equity and equality in child friendly schools.
- In the previous units, we have looked at two dimensions of CFS namely; inclusiveness and safety and protection in schools. In this unit, we shall explore the concept of equity and equality in out schools.
- We shall also examine the legal provisions for equity and equality.
- In addition, we shall examine types of inequalities found in out schools and their impact.
- We shall conclude the unit by looking at the skills required for enhancing equity and equality in the schools.



Expected learning outcomes

Upon completion of this unit, you will be able to:

- a) Define the concepts of equity and equality.
- b) Describe the legal framework for equity and equality.
- c) Explain the types of inequity found in schools.
- d) Describe equity and equality initiatives in education in Kenya.
- e) Discuss the impact of equity and inequity in schools.
- f) Discuss the barriers to equity in education.
- g) Identify the groups at risk of being excluded.
- h) Apply the skills required for enhancing equity and equality in the school.



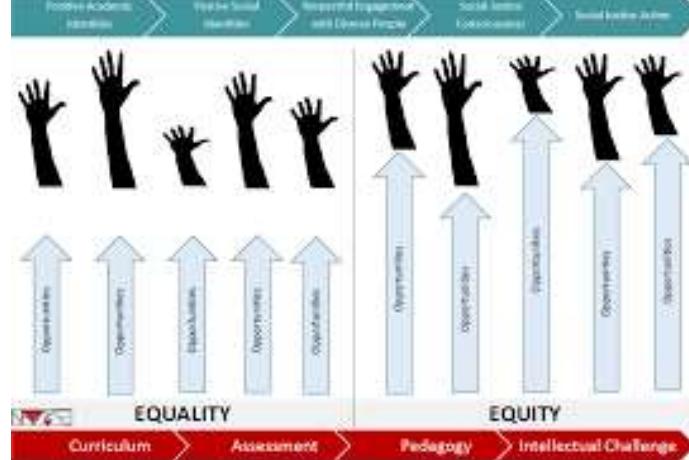
Definition of equity and equality

EQUALITY

EQUITY

(a). Equity: In education, the term equity refers to the principle of fairness and inclusion. Equity as fairness implies that personal or socio-economic circumstances, such as gender, ethnic origin or family background are not obstacles to educational success. Equitable education systems are fair and inclusive and support their students to reach their learning potential without either formally or informally pre-setting barriers or lowering expectations.

(b). Equality: Equality refers to everyone having the same rights and being offered the same opportunities. Equity is the vehicle that ensures that individuals have what they need to enact those rights and access those opportunities. Although the term 'equity' is often used interchangeably with the term 'equality', the two terms are not the same. For instance 'equity' may include educational models, programs, and strategies that are fair, but may not necessarily be equal. Note that 'equity' is a process while 'equality' is an outcome.



Legal framework

(a). Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC): Article 28 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) ensures each child's right to a free and compulsory basic education and to the protection of their dignity in all disciplinary matters. In addition, Article 29 charges States Parties to ensure the fullest possible development of each child's ability and to the development of their respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms; for parents, cultural identity, and values; and for the environment.

(b). Constitution of Kenya: Kenya has entrenched inclusivity in the Constitution by guaranteeing the right of every learner to a free and compulsory basic education including protection against unfair discrimination.



(c). Basic Education Act (2013): The right of every child to free and compulsory education, on-discrimination, encouragement and protection of the marginalised, persons with disabilities and those with special needs and other disadvantaged groups.

(d). Education Sector Policy on HIV and AIDS (2004): This policy acts as a guideline for effective prevention, care and support within the public sector where HIV and AIDS programs are being implemented. The policy applies to learners, employees, managers, employers, and other providers of education and training in all public and private, formal and non-formal learning institutions at all levels of the education system in the Republic of Kenya. It also calls upon all to join in the fight against HIV and AIDS.

(c) Gender in Education Policy (2008): This provides a planning framework for gender-responsive education at all levels. It highlights key concerns in education including disparities, retention and transition rates, and persisting negative socio-cultural practices and attitudes. The policy formalizes the rights and responsibilities of all people involved directly or indirectly in the education sector, and are further expected to contribute to the elimination of disparities.



Types of inequity

Societal inequity: Learners may be disadvantaged by pre-existing bias and prejudice in the society, with both conscious and unconscious discrimination surfacing in schools in ways that adversely affect learning acquisition, academic achievement, educational aspirations, and post-graduation opportunities. Such societal prejudices promote biases based on gender, race, ethnicity, religion, disability etc.

Socioeconomic inequity: Learners from lower-income households, on average, underperform academically in relation to their wealthier peers, and they also tend to have lower educational aspirations and enroll in college at lower rates (in part due to financial considerations). In addition, schools in poorer communities, such as those in rural or disadvantaged urban areas, may have comparatively fewer resources and less funding opportunities.



Cultural inequity: Learners from diverse cultural backgrounds may be disadvantaged in a variety of ways when pursuing their education. For example, recently arrived immigrant and refugee students and their families may have difficulties navigating the public-education system or making educational choices that are in their best interests.

Familial inequity: Learners may be disadvantaged in their education due to their personal and familial circumstances. For example, some learners may live in dysfunctional or abusive households, or they may receive comparatively little educational support or encouragement from their parents (even when the parents want their children to succeed in school). In addition, learners whose parents have not earned a secondary school education or college/degree may, on average, underperform academically.

Programmatic inequity: School programs may be structured in ways that are perceived to be unfair because they contribute to inequitable or unequal educational results for some students.

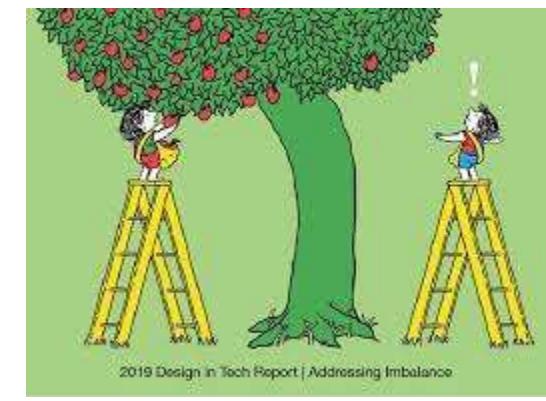


Staffing inequity: Schools located in wealthier communities may be able to hire more teachers and staff, while also providing better compensation that attracts more experienced and skilled teachers. Students attending these schools will likely receive a better-quality education. Staffing situations in schools may also be inequitable in a wide variety of ways. In addition to potential inequities in employment—e.g. female teachers not being promoted to administrative positions at the same rates as their male colleagues—students may be disadvantaged by a lack of diversity among teaching staff.

Instructional inequity: Students may be enrolled in courses taught by less-skilled teachers, who may teach in a comparatively uninteresting or ineffective manner or in courses in which significantly less content is taught. Students may also be subject to conscious or unconscious favoritism, bias, or prejudice by some teachers, or the way in which instruction is delivered may not work as well for some students as it does for others.

Assessment inequity: Students may be disadvantaged when taking tests or completing other types of assessments due to the learning disabilities or physical disabilities that may impair their performance. In addition, situational factors may adversely affect test performance. For example, lower-income students who attend schools that do not regularly use computers may be disadvantaged—compared to wealthier students with more access to technology at home.

Linguistic inequity: Learners, who are not yet proficient in English, may be disadvantaged when taking tests and assessments presented in English. In addition, these students may also be disadvantaged if they are enrolled in separate academic programs, held to lower academic expectations, or receive lower-quality instruction as a result of their language abilities.





Equity and equality initiatives in Kenya

- The key concerns of the Government of Kenya have been access, retention, equity, quality, relevance, and internal and external efficiencies within the education system.
- To address the educational needs of all children and youth, including the marginalized and vulnerable, the Government introduced Free Primary Education in January 2003.
- This strategy provides equal education opportunities through abolition of fees and introduction of capitation grants to primary schools.
- Free Day Secondary Education (FDSE) was introduced in 2008, to ensure that students from poor households can access secondary education.



Other ongoing programmes to support free schooling initiatives include:

- Support to low-cost primary boarding schools in ASALS;
- Special capitation grants for special needs education at Kshs. 2000 per child over and above the normal capitation of 1020;
- Providing support to non-formal schools for procurement of teaching- learning materials to institutions offering the primary school curriculum in slum areas, construction and rehabilitation of classrooms;
- Special grants for expanding educational opportunities in ASAL areas for the construction and equipping of schools, as well as improving school health and nutrition in collaboration with Ministry of Public Health and Sanitation and the World Food Program;



- Creating an education bursary for the needy, and a bursary for girls in ASAL and in high poverty areas, as well as for laboratory and ICT equipment;
- Providing incentives such as economic stimulus package/economic recovery strategy, grants for drought-afflicted schools;
- Continuous in-service education and training for Key Resource Teachers (KRTS) in specialized subjects such as Math, English, Science, G&C and Social Studies;
- Continuous in-service education and training on pedagogical skills for primary math and science teachers through the SMASE program;
- Integration of ICT in pre-service teacher training courses; In-service education and training for college lecturers on both pedagogy and andragogy; and
- Efficiency in disbursement of devolved funds through Electronic Funds Transfer.
- Elimination of grade repetition: Note that grade repetition is costly and ineffective in raising educational outcomes.



Impact of equity in education

- The impact of equity in education includes:- Equity results in successful secondary education completion which in turn gives individuals better employment and healthier lifestyle prospects resulting in greater contributions to public budgets and investment.
- More educated people contribute to more democratic societies and sustainable economies, and are less dependent on public aid and less vulnerable to economic downturns.
- Societies with skilled individuals are best prepared to respond to the current and future potential crises.
- Therefore, investing in early, primary and secondary education for all, and in particular for children from disadvantaged backgrounds, is both fair and economically efficient.



Barriers to equity and equality in education

- **Educational performance:** Low grades are a signal of lower preparation to progress through the educational system.
- **Learners' behaviour:** Drug or alcohol abuse, juvenile delinquency and negative emotions are associated with dropping out of school.
- **Family background:** Learners from families with low education, negative attitudes towards schooling, inability to support their children, or poverty stricken single parents have a higher likelihood of dropping out.
- **School structures resources and practices:** The way learning is delivered, extra-curricular activities, discipline, relations with peers and teachers and some pedagogic practices have a strong impact on students' learning, motivation and sense of belonging.
- **Educational system level policies:** Policies such as grade repetition can contribute to increased dropout.



- **Labor market conditions:** Some labor markets (e.g. tourism, construction) can attract young people out of school into unskilled jobs with poor prospects. Children from Baragoi in Samburu have resorted to attending school late because they have to look after the family cattle during the morning hours.
- **Discrimination:** Learning is often hindered when learner are treated differently in view of their gender, religion, clan, ethnicity, economic status etc.
- **Safety:** Lack of safety including fear of violence when going to school, while at school or going home from school may keep children from attending school.
- **HIV/AIDS:** Learners infected with or affected by HIV/AIDS may be stigmatized and eventually drop out of school.
- **Pregnancy:** Girls who become pregnant while in school may be stigmatized and eventually drop out of school.
- **Negative socio-cultural norms:** Traditional roles that subjugate women could restrict access and retention of girls' education. \
- **Special needs:** The inability of schools to handle learners with special needs or abilities is major contribution to the exclusion of these learners.



Groups at risk of exclusion

Unreached children in Kenya include:

- children working or living on the streets;
- those in ASALs and pockets of poverty such as the urban informal settlements and rural poor regions;
- children with special learning needs (particularly the mentally, physically challenged and those with learning difficulties); and children engaged in forms of child labor.
- Others include:
 - Most Vulnerable Children (MVC) including orphans; adolescent mothers and sibling minders;
 - those affected by HIV and AIDS;
 - those discriminated against because of gender, culture and religion; young offenders;
 - victims of domestic and country political violence; and refugees.

Skills required to promote Equity and Equality in education institutions

Skill 1: Ensure the enrollment of the disadvantaged, orphans, children with disabilities, girls and boys from poor households as follows:

- **Creating learner profiles:** Maintaining a detailed profile of learners in the schools by name, age, gender, health status (medical condition or impairment), home background (address or phone contacts, education and socio- economic status of care givers, distance of residence to school and means of transport) is another important step in creating equitable schools.
- This information eases retrieval of personal data on learners especially those identified as excluded. In the process:
 - It helps schools and communities to identify not only the out- of- school children but also those at risk of dropping out;
 - It makes it possible to design tailor made interventions to suit the individual needs of learners;
 - Shows the diversity of learners in the community in terms of their individual characteristics and those of their families;
 - Guides schools in planning for interventions to overcome factors that exclude children from schools.
 - Ensure that the school development plan addresses the learner's needs holistically.



Skill 2: Keep records of absentees and reasons for the absenteeism:

- Attendance is an important factor in school success among children and youth.
- Studies show that better attendance is related to higher academic achievement for students of all backgrounds, but particularly for children with lower socio-economic status. Learners who attend school regularly score higher on tests than their peers who are frequently absent.
- Chronic absence is increasingly identified as an important "early warning sign" that a student is at risk for school failure and early dropout.
- Chronic absenteeism is usually defined as missing ten percent or more of school days.
- It is important to analyze attendance data to identify those students who are chronically absent including the reasons for this absenteeism.



- Examples of factors that can contribute to student absenteeism include: family health or financial concerns, poor school climate, drug and alcohol use, transportation problems, and negative community attitudes etc.
- Managing absenteeism can be done as follows:
 - Inform parents of their legal obligations about enrolment and attendance.
 - Implement strategies to manage student enrolment, absences, chronic absenteeism, school refusal and truancy.
 - Monitor student absences and identify when a student is absent for three or more consecutive days, or where there is a pattern of persistent unexplained absences, or where a student's attendance rate is reasonably considered unsatisfactory.
 - Take reasonable steps to follow-up unexplained absences as soon as possible, or ideally within three days of the absence.
 - Work with education stakeholders to engage with the student and their family with the aim of returning the student to school.

Skill 3: Ensure that special needs teachers are available/deployed in the school:

- Request for special needs teachers
- Encourage public/private partnerships in mobilizing resources for acquisition of special needs teachers;
- Support teachers to be trained in special needs education.



Skill 4: Avail and utilize special needs facilities:

- Ensure that you avail disability-friendly facilities and equipment (e.g. ramps, toilets, braille materials, hearing aids, clearly defined paths etc.





Skill 5: Ensure that the school seeks out the non-attending and not enrolled:

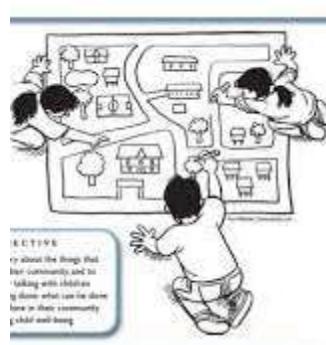
- Identify all out-of-school children in the community and put effort to enroll and retain them in the school.
- This can be achieved through mapping and action planning as follows:

(a). School-community mapping: The school-community mapping process is a "*whole school*" approach that enlists the participation of ALL school-community members in developing maps that indicate the households in the community, the number of children per household, their ages, their levels of education and whether they are attending schools or not. Involvement of ALL school-community members is significant as it helps builds strong links between schools and their communities. It also provides schools with a negotiation platform as they seek support and resources for interventions that are especially important in creation of child friendly institutions and promotes community ownership of school programs such as the learning that comes from the mapping process.



(b). Child-to-child mapping:

- This involves using children to make maps towards identifying their out- of- school peers as well as influencing caregivers and community members to allow their out- of- school peers to attend school.
- Child-to-child mapping involves:
 - Gathering the children together and communicating the objectives of the activity in an easy- to- understand language;
 - Guiding them to list down and draw the community's landmarks and to draw pictures of these. Use materials or symbols such as stones and sticks or even color coded stickers to represent structures, features and phenomena appropriately (such as homes, roads, rivers, hazardous, danger prone or even safe areas);



- Guiding the children to map these onto a large piece of manila, cardboard paper or even canvas sheeting ensuring that they ALL agree with and, are able to identify with the placement of features and landmarks on the map.
- Particular care should be taken to ensure accurate representation of the following themes on the community map:
 - The residences of ALL the children, their ages and whether or not they are in school;
 - Residences of other important community members;
 - Community play or work spaces;
 - Risky, hazard prone and safe areas in the community;
 - Places most frequented by the children;
 - Transportation routes especially those used to and from school.



c). Action planning: following identification of ALL the out- of- school children there is need for schools to analyze and interpret the data accruing with a view to devising appropriate intervention strategies for getting ALL the children in the community back to school and learning. This process entails:

- Identification of a team to reflect on the information generated by the school-community mapping and child-to-child profile processes as well as with the capacity to plan suitable interventions;
- Engage the team in developing a list of actions required to get ALL the out-of- school children to schools and learning, the challenges and obstacles involved in implementation of the different strategies, the likelihood of their successes and how the obstacles identified could be overcome to facilitate success of the planned interventions.
- Further, they should prioritize the identified actions on the basis of those likely to yield the greatest impact, in the process merging similar actions to avoid duplication of efforts and save resources; and work with existing resources as well as mobilize stakeholders for support in transforming the school into a child friendly environment to enhance retention of ALL children.



Skill 6: Promote gender sensitivity and understanding of gender rights:

- Schools in most cases reinforce the existing gender ideology, stereotypes, norms and expectations everywhere (these themselves are similar in certain aspects and different to some extent in different contexts).
- Schools have the potential of playing a transformative role in changing the prevalent notions and unequal relations using specific and targeted interventions such as:
 - Girls and boys treated equally in teaching, seating, assignment, access to materials, asking questions/feedback etc.
 - Gender awareness clubs operational in school.
 - Instructional materials reflect and promote gender balance in roles of males versus females.

Skill 7: Facilitate second chances for drop-outs (both girls and boys):

- This involves enforcing a policy that allows dropouts (pregnancy/truancy/child labor) to re-enter the education system.





- In this unit we have looked at the concept of equity in schools.
- We have looked at what the law says about equity and equality in our schools.
- We have also looked at different types of inequities in education and the initiatives that the government has put in place to address the inequalities.
- In addition we have looked barriers to equity and equality and impact of inequalities on education.
- We hope you are now in a position to implement the skills we have discussed in order to ensure that your school has equity and equality.