



Why strive for equity over equality?

Empowering every Kiwi to live up to their full potential, removing obstacles and paving the way forward, will result in better outcomes for Aotearoa New Zealand.

It's increasingly important that we have a common understanding of Equity and Equality – words matter; having a shared understanding removes the first barrier. Equity calls for both a **focus on rights** (Te Tiriti and fundamental rights) **and needs** (Equity, Diversity and Inclusion), that are people centric and population based on those who are systemically underserved.



Equality primarily centres on equal distribution and treating everyone the same, while equity acknowledges and accommodates the diverse starting points and unique needs of individuals.

Equity vs. Equality

The concept that every New Zealander should have access to equal opportunities is rarely disagreed with. However, it raises questions as to how we can address the fundamental inequities people are starting out with. Equity provides help to people based on individual needs. While this might seem unequal, in a world where we don't all begin from the same starting point, to overcome this disadvantage we need to strive for equity over equality.

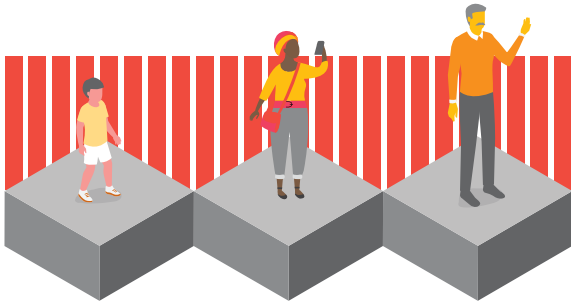
Is equality enough?

Equality focuses on ensuring that every individual is given the same opportunities and resources, but it expects the same or equal results for all individuals regardless of their status, needs and opportunity. The idea of equality is that everyone will be able to achieve based on their efforts and contributions to society. However, with a number of baseline inequalities in societies, there's now a debate over whether equality is enough and that equity is a more important principle.

Equity – a more even playing field

Equity is the quality of being equal or fair. Like fairness, equity is an ethical concept based on a model of justice where distribution of resources ensures everyone has at least their minimum requirements. It does not necessarily mean that resources are equally shared but acknowledges and takes into account individual differences and recognises that 'one size doesn't fit all'. This entails adjusting approaches to individuals to ensure that everyone can reach the same goals, even if it means working differently to address their unique needs.

“Equality ignores needs, Equity prioritises needs”



Equality – if we treat everyone the same, nothing changes.

This image illustrates the fundamental difference. On the left; “equality” is where the three individuals are provided with the same-sized box to stand on to see over the fence. This approach doesn’t consider the unique needs of each individual, so not all spectators are able to see what’s over the fence.



Equity – if we provide what everyone needs, we create needed change.

On the right, “equity” is represented; each individual is supplied a different sized box for their specific needs. As a result, all three are now at the same height and can effectively see over the fence and watch the game.

In essence, equality involves treating everyone identically, while equity involves treating people fairly by **taking into account what they need to have an equal opportunity**. It ensures that everyone is on the same level and can all enjoy watching the game.

Equity and transformation

Due to persistent disproportionate inequities experienced by Māori, Pacific Peoples, and minority communities, there is a notable shift within organisations in Aotearoa New Zealand. Large transformation programs are now centered on equity and aimed at creating impactful and sustainable change for communities in need. In response to this shift, our clients from diverse sectors are requiring support to deliver equitable outcomes.

Our approach to equity in transformation has been developed to reflect our unique capability to integrate context, equitable considerations and the human and cultural elements into our client’s work. Through our commitment to deeply understanding the specific context of our clients and taking into account the needs and experiences of the individuals and communities they serve, we’re able to support them to bridge the gap between equity and business objectives.

Our Equity tīma (team) understands the needs and unique challenges that people encounter. We work across sectors, helping our clients push the boundaries and achieve equity and improve outcomes in the community. Equity in access, opportunities, sustainability, health, education, business and overall wellness are not uncommon and we are committed to supporting our clients to transform their organisations to be both inclusive and equitable in their service offerings.



Our expertise covers;



Strong cultural appreciation.

We have a deep cultural connection to and respect of te ao Māori, Pacific and other cultures within Aotearoa. We understand the foundations of tikanga Māori and the systemic drivers of inequity in Aotearoa.



Experience. Our experience spans policy, strategy, design, engagement, execution to implementation. Our growth strategy has been deliberate and is focused on driving meaningful change.



Authenticity. Coming from diverse backgrounds, we're motivated by personal and professional desire to protect and improve social outcomes for those communities most impacted by inequity.



Connections. We see our role as convenor, facilitator, and doers to co-create solutions that look beyond traditional western frameworks. We are well connected across sectors and bring diverse perspectives and insights to our work.

We work alongside a number of PwC practices, including [Manukura](#) and [Hauora](#) to ensure a holistic approach to the equity mahi.



Iwi



Government funded bodies



NGOs



Public agencies



Primary health organisations



Private hospital groups

Contact us



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Source for the original people on boxes image: www.interactioninstitute.org and madewithangus.com

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