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| ABOUT PARTNERSHIPS FOR EQUITY AND INCLUSION This briefing brings together evidence produced by five research projects focusing on the equitable treatment of populations that experience exclusion from education, healthcare, local government and peacekeeping processes[[1]](#endnote-1). Our partnership aims to build on this evidence to produce new knowledge on how public services can be a mechanism for increasing the social inclusion of disadvantaged groups in ODA-eligible contexts. We have conducted seven pilot projects that align with the principles and strategies set out in this briefing. These focus on interventions that could be scaled up to make a significant difference to reducing the disadvantage faced by social groups that experience discrimination. | |
| WHY IS EQUITY IMPORTANT? Failure to address inequity in society has led to widening divisions between rich and poor and between diverse ethnic, religious and other social groups that, in turn, is linked to civil unrest, conflict and humanitarian crisis[[2]](#endnote-2),[[3]](#endnote-3). Discrimination based on poverty, gender, ethnic or religious identity, age or intersectional disadvantage significantly influences social as well as economic sustainability and development 2,3,[[4]](#endnote-4),[[5]](#endnote-5),[[6]](#endnote-6).Competition for resources is a key driver of social conflict4,[[7]](#endnote-7) and public services such as healthcare, education, local government and policing can often act as a mechanism through which dominant groups maintain privilege through unfair resource allocation and discriminatory practices towards others in society[[8]](#endnote-8), [[9]](#endnote-9). Changing the culture within these services to help reduce inequity is, therefore, essential for social stability and cohesion as well as for equitable development that leaves ‘no-one behind’ [[10]](#endnote-10),[[11]](#endnote-11),[[12]](#endnote-12),[[13]](#endnote-13),[[14]](#endnote-14),[[15]](#endnote-15). | HOW CAN EQUITY BE ACHIEVED AT POLICY LEVEL? **Revise policies that create inequity:** Assess the impact of public service policies on different social groups and on intergroup dynamics, acknowledging political and systemic bias, discrimination and structural or indirect violence. Promote the need for inclusion for economic growth and as a human right.  **Change social norms:** Develop a cross-sector vision for an interdependent and fair society. Integrate public services into a process of substantial social, economic, and political change that aspires to social justice and aims for societal transformation, drawing on the transformative role of education to embed this process. Use equity and legal frameworks to evaluate public service activity and to drive changes in practice. Remove public service practices that contravene these laws or value frameworks.  **Ensure equitable participation:** Provide resources and opportunities for the representation of excluded groups in collaborative decision-making, planning and political control. Correct power imbalances and ensure effective participation in public service policy-making and reforms at local, national and global levels.  **Redistribute resources:** Take systemic opportunities to redress injusticesthrough restructuring public services e.g. through quota systems, service relocation, allocation of resources, financial assistance or incentives, targeting provision at those experiencing disadvantage. Increase the availability and quality of robust data on disadvantaged groups. Use this to examine inequities within systems and between groups in relation to service access, representation, resources and outcomes. Introduce clear mechanisms for use of equity data in planning processes.  **Resource social cohesion** **interventions:** provide support for interventions thatemphasise social development and that address political, economic, and sociocultural inequality and injustice as well historic tensions and grievances. |
| HOW CAN EQUITY BE ACHIEVED ATSERVICE LEVEL?Cross-sector collaboration: partnerships between a range of local public institutions, NGOs and academics can help to address the drivers of disadvantage in a holistic way, improve outcomes and promote social cohesion and trust in services. Development of a common language across different agenciesEqual access: recognition and accommodation of cultural and religious identity, gender relations and norms, sexuality and other types of diversity.Interventions that target disadvantage and support inclusion within public services and in economic growth. Use of motivational interviewing, social-psychological interventions additional practical and financial support and engagement with carers and support networks to address poorer outcomes in disadvantaged groups. Innovative approaches to make data collection more inclusive. **Equitable participation**: in governance and ‘all-stakeholder’ decision-making, including civil society and NGOs; equal representation for disadvantaged groups especially those who experience multiple layers of exclusion. |

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| WHAT WORKS FOR INDIVIDUALS AND COMMUNITIES? **Individual capacity and cultural capital**, for example, through skills development, changing individual behaviour and reducing negative perceptions of services through community engagement. Initiatives such as behaviour change training, alongside making services easier to access, also has the potential to improve service user understandings of systems and outcomes.  **Increased levels of trust** in public services systems and between different identity groups  **Opportunities to share experiences** especially in conflict settings | WHAT KIND OF RESEARCH DESIGN SUPPORTS EQUITABLE OUTCOMES? **“Decolonising knowledge”** by critically reviewing existing approaches and exploring local/alternative understandings of issues through dialogue among key stakeholders. This can help produce contextualized knowledge that is empowering to disadvantaged groups. This understanding should be linked to public service responses that meet the needs and aspirations of disadvantaged groups.  **Collaboration with disadvantaged communities** bymodelling social inclusion in the research process through: representation and empowerment of community advocates at all stages of the research process; mutual benefits from such engagement and constructive, long-term, rather than tokenistic, relationships. Privileging the voice of these participants, who may be involved as co-researchers, helps challenge assumptions and stereotypes linked to societal power-imbalances that exist. Mutual learning and intercultural dialogue is a significant aspect of such research, recognising that everyone involved in the collaboration has valued knowledge to share.  **Co-designed and participatory research methods** that draw out experiential knowledge from local people and recognise the multiple ways in which those from disadvantaged populations are excluded from society – by different public services and through different types of discrimination operating simultaneously. These methods can reveal the everyday lives of people in disadvantaged groups in ways that give them control over how their stories are told and support their input into how services are developed. Capacity that already exists in excluded communities and ways of increasing capacity are supported by such methods  **Analysis of the research context:** this should include recognition of relevant cultures (such as ethnic and religious heritage, gender norms) and the interplay between culture, economics and politics within social relations, including the political aspects of how public services are governed. This analysis can help identify the system reform needed to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals relating to equity, such as SDGs 1, 2, 4, 5, 10, 11 and 16. It could also inform development of multiple inclusion strategies needed to address the drivers of social exclusion in society, policymaking, institutions and within communities. Research that addresses barriers to effective involvement of disadvantaged groups and increases the accountability of public services can have significant impact on civic participation and the representation of disadvantaged ethnic and religious groups in decision-making processes. |
| PILOT STUDIES We have supported a number of pilot studies that align with the recommendations and approaches outlined in this policy briefing, including collaboration with disadvantaged populations, public service practitioners, policymakers and NGOs. Projects have involved diverse public service sectors (health, education, local government, peacekeeping) and have the potential to inform the development of equity interventions. These projects explore multilevel exclusion and multiple forms of disadvantage. |
| WHAT NEW RESEARCH IS NEEDED? **More evidence and robust evaluation** of existing or innovative interventions is needed for: local government and police sectors; multilevel and multisector strategies; the multiple mechanisms through which particular groups are excluded from public services; initiatives focused on religious minorities and on intersectional disadvantage.  **Use of the ‘4Rs framework’** to promote social cohesion: Redistribution, Recognition, Representation and Reconciliation  **Use of legal frameworks** to conduct independent evaluations into public service activities and potential abuses of process  **Experiential knowledge** on the everyday narratives and lives of excluded populations that can be incorporated into analysis tools and programme planning. Exploring the everyday lives of people to provide a holistic picture of challenges influencing the way people act and respond. Using this to inform future plans for service development and for comparison with views of different stakeholders and different types of evidence |



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