



8quity: Embedding equity in our research processes – May 2025

FACTS:

- The World Health Organization (WHO) defines equity as the absence of avoidable or unfair differences between groups of people. This concept, grounded in distributive justice, applies directly to research.
- Embedding equity-oriented practices in health research is crucial to addressing rather than reinforcing existing structural inequalities.
- To truly challenge inequities, research must embed equity-focused practices intentionally, consciously, and deliberately at every stage.

PROJECT CYCLE:

2023 – 2025

PARTNERS:

The George Institute

SUPPORTERS:

GeorgeThink 2022 Seed Grant
for Early Career Researchers

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:

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BACKGROUND:

- 8quity is a framework designed to make research fairer and more inclusive, supporting the Sustainable Development Goals and Leaving No One Behind agendas.
- It aligns with the “Nothing About Us Without Us” principle and decolonisation efforts at The George Institute to challenge outdated power structures in research.
- 8quity focuses on three key areas:
 - Individual Reflexivity - researchers reflecting on their own biases and power dynamics;
 - Organisational Responsiveness - focusing on how institutions support embedding equity in research; and
 - Systemic, Structural and Planetary Transformation - highlighting the interplay between individual self-awareness, institutional action, and broader systemic forces, where each element influences and is shaped by the others.

AIM:

- To develop practical tools for researchers to plan and review studies fairly and inclusively, regardless of study design.
- To create an inventory of tools, tips, training modules, videos, and capacity-strengthening sessions for various stages of research.
- To identify lessons and best practices on embedding equity from research projects at The George Institute, and understand the enablers and barriers experienced by researchers.

METHODS:

- Five case studies were developed (three from India and two from Australia) representing a range of study designs, research foci, size and governance structure. For example, three projects had an equity focus, all were three-to-five years duration, and four projects had an implementation component.
- A total of 26 in-depth interviews and a yarning session were conducted involving principal investigators, researchers, community members, and other actors involved in the research process.
- The interview tool and analysis process were informed by the domains of the 8quity toolkit, namely: team, question, design, analysis, capacity, context, proposition, and benefit.

IMPACT

- Examples of successful equity integration at The George Institute include diverse teams, deep community engagement, and government collaboration to drive change. However, gaps remain, requiring further efforts to embed these practices consistently.
- Challenges include securing funder support, overcoming methodological resistance from journals, and navigating power imbalances in participatory research. The Institute is implementing strategies to address these barriers.
- To ensure long-term success, the Institute is committed to a sustainable support system and funding model to embed equity across all research areas and regions.

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