



Gender Equity vs Gender Equality

Equity versus Equality in the context of gender can be a bit confusing. Gender equality and gender equity are related terms but have different meanings. While the words sound similar, the definitions and practical usage are different.

This brief explanation is presented to help clear up confusion.

Firstly, what is meant by “gender”.

The term gender refers to the economic, social, and cultural attributes and opportunities associated with being male or female. In most societies, being a man or a woman is not simply a matter of different biological and physical characteristics. Men and women face different expectations about how they should dress, behave, or work. Relations between men and women, whether in the family, the workplace, or the public sphere, also reflect understandings of the talents, characteristics, and behaviour appropriate to women and to men.

Gender thus differs from sex in that it is social and cultural in nature rather than biological.

Gender attributes and characteristics, encompassing the roles that men and women play and the expectations placed upon them, vary widely among societies and change over time. But the fact that gender attributes are socially constructed means that they are also amenable to change in ways that can make a society more just and equitable.

United Nations Population Fund <https://www.unfpa.org/resources/frequently-asked-questions-about-gender-equality>

Equality means everyone is treated exactly the same way, regardless of need or any other individual difference. Equity, on the other hand, means everyone is provided with what they need to succeed.

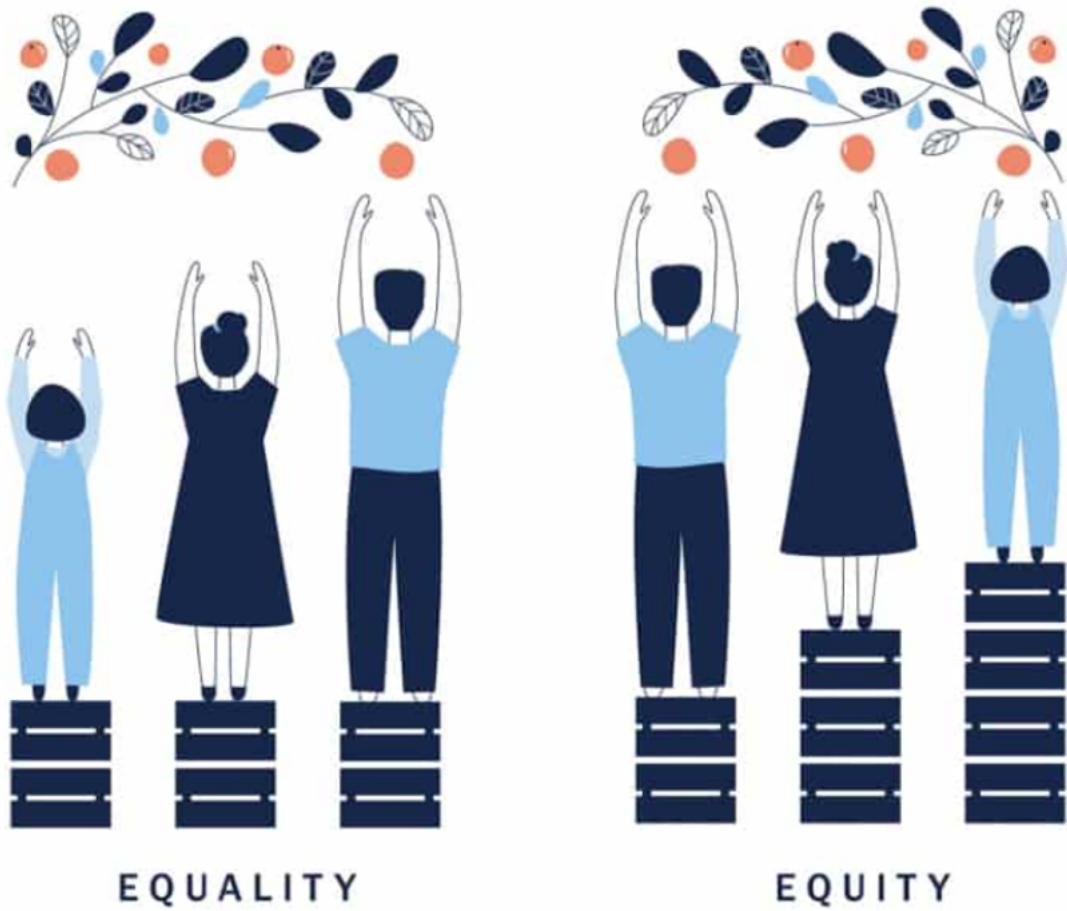
Gender Equity

Gender Equity is ‘the fairness of treatment of all genders depending on their specific needs. This could mean equal treatment or treatment that is different but is considered equivalent based on rights, obligations, opportunities, and benefits.

Gender Equality

Gender equality doesn’t mean that all genders are the same or that they become the same. It means that rights, responsibilities, and opportunities do not depend on whether a person is born male or female. All genders should have access to the same levels of opportunities despite their gender.





Gender equality, equality between men and women does not mean that women and men have to become the same, but their rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they were born male or female. Gender equity means fairness of treatment for men and women according to their respective needs.

This may include equal treatment or treatment that is different, but which is considered equivalent in terms of rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities.”

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO).

