



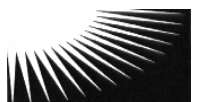
***NSW HEALTH PROMOTION DIRECTORS***  
***EQUITY PROJECT REPORT***

***June 2003***

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## Executive summary

Inequity in health and its consequences are getting closer attention in Australia and overseas due to consistent evidence from epidemiologists, sociologists and other researchers about the increasing gap in health status between people who are more and less advantaged. Despite strong support for the link between low socio-economic status and poor health, examples of 'good practice' to address inequity are not extensive. Although equity is an underlying principle of health promotion practice, in general health promotion grapples with how to translate this rhetoric into practice.

This project was a partnership between Centre for Health, Equity Training, Research and Education, the Health Promotion Service, South East Health and the University of NSW. The NSW Health Centre for Health Promotion and the Health Promotion Service, South East Health funded the project. It was developed and implemented on behalf of the NSW Health Promotion Directors network.

The project aimed to identify good practice in health promotion equity based projects, current gaps and future opportunities in addressing local and state equity issues, and to develop tools to support practice.

The project involved in-depth interviews with health promotion practitioners, group consultations with population health managers and consumer advocates and the development testing of '*Four Steps Towards Equity: A Tool for Health Promotion Practice.*' Project implementation was supported by an ongoing literature review on the nature of inequity in health and effective interventions.

*Four Steps* provides a series of questions and prompts to challenge and assist practitioners and managers to consider and integrate equity into their core work practice. It includes general information about equity in health and why it is an important issue to address; the elements necessary for an organisation to effectively support equity practice; and the components essential to equity practice at all stages of the planning cycle. The tool is supported by a website that provides more detailed information including the policy context for equity work in NSW, case studies, reports, references and links to other resources and tools.

As a result of this work it is recommended that:

- The Centre for Health Promotion, NSW Health: continue to provide leadership for further development of equity approaches with health promotion across the state; develop a dissemination strategy for the project products; and advocate for an integrated approach to equity within NSW Health, across government departments and NGOs.
- The NSW Directors of Health Promotion: provide leadership for further development of equity approaches at the local level; use the four steps tool to increase focus on and strengthen existing equity work; promote the project report, tool and website within local networks; and participate in planning and implementing new initiatives to support the NSW Health Promotion Director Network priority focus on equity, 2003-2005.
- Health promotion practitioners: use the four steps tool to increase focus on and strengthen equity work; and provide leadership for further development of equity approaches at the local level.

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