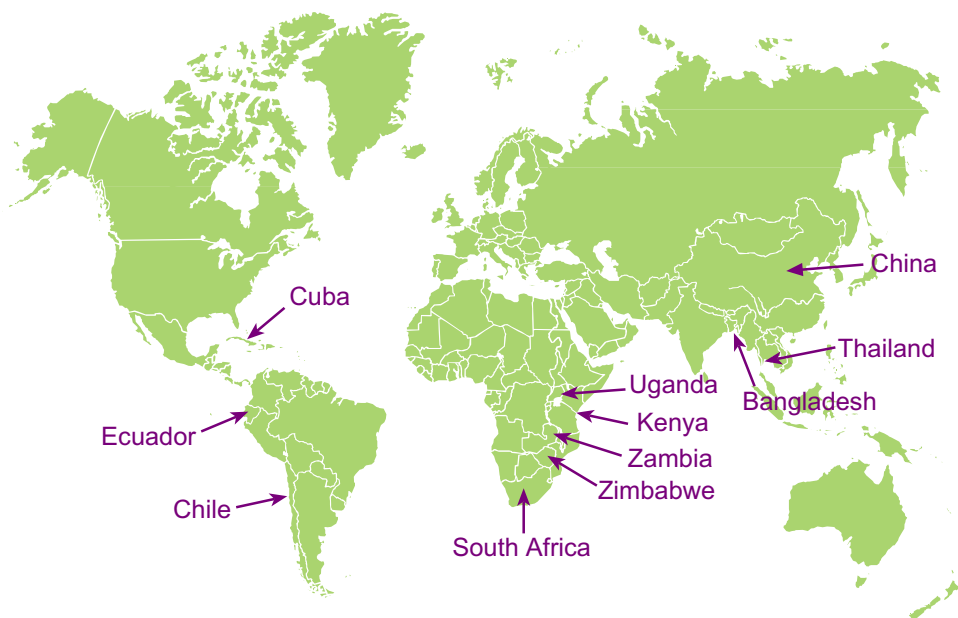




GEGA

A Global Equity Gauge Alliance



“By the year 2015 every country should have an integrated system for monitoring health inequities that informs, monitors and evaluates health and other socio-economic policies. The systems should be responsive to the national or local contexts in terms of priority indicators to be monitored and strengthened by access to a common global fund of knowledge and technical expertise.”



Background

This vision emanates from a meeting in Chile, November 1999, when a group of technical experts and practitioners met with the aim of taking forward the research and policy agenda for monitoring equity in health. As a step toward this vision, an international meeting convened in South Africa in August 2000 launched monitoring initiatives (or ‘health equity gauges’) in 11 new countries.

What is an Equity Gauge?

An Equity Gauge is an active approach to monitoring equity in health and health care through partnerships of key stakeholders. The Gauge relies upon three structural pillars for success in drawing attention to and reducing inequities:

- measurement
- advocacy/action and
- community participation

Equity Gauges measure aspects of the health care system, but above all are concerned with gaps in health status between population groups. A particular focus is placed on the social determinants of health disparities.

The South African Equity Gauge

The idea of the Equity Gauge originated in South Africa. The project was developed during 1998 following a series of meetings that brought together South African legislators and technical experts—both South African and international. The project aims to promote equity in health and health care through measuring and monitoring a series of key equity indicators and promoting understanding of the determinants and causes of inequity. Data on indicators is drawn from routine surveys and commissioned research. In keeping with the project's aim of empowering legislators and the wider public, emphasis is placed upon ensuring that technical information is provided in a usable and accessible format. Activities of the project to date have included publications, workshops, site visits, and media launches. A number of these activities are designed to assist both legislators and the media to understand the determinants of inequity. For example, site visits are arranged to some of the most under-resourced districts in the country.

What is the Scope of an Equity Gauge?

Geographic Focus


The current Gauges encompass different approaches to geographic scope. Some Equity Gauges operate at a country-wide level, some monitor a subset of districts or provinces in a country, a few operate at a regional level and others focus specifically on equity within a city or municipality.

Indicators to be measured

The indicators chosen by the Gauges vary according to the particular needs of the country as well as of the stakeholders. However most Gauges incorporate measurements of:

- socio-economic and health status;
- distribution of resources (finance, personnel and drugs)
- quality of care
- access to and utilisation of health care





Indicators are measured across a variety of dimensions including between socio-economic groups, between groups with differing educational levels, between geographical areas and across race and gender.

A range of stakeholders

Stakeholder partnerships represent the diversity of local context. The range of partnerships includes Parliamentarians and Councillors, the media, Ministries and Departments of Health, academic institutions, churches, traditional leaders, women's organisations, community-based and non-governmental organisations, local authority organisations, and civic groups.

Gauge Activities

The current Equity Gauges are tackling equity monitoring in a variety of innovative ways. In the sphere of measurement, activities include analysis of secondary data sets including household surveys and budget data, undertaking primary research using focus groups and participatory research appraisal as well as quantitative research methods, and incorporating equity measures into existing surveys.

Equity Gauges will make specific policy recommendations and recommend strategic health interventions based upon the data collected through the measurement and monitoring of health disparities. Some groups incorporate a training component for health personnel. Others are developing more transparent, accountable health resource allocation formulas. Still another approach is the development of national health reports that highlight equity issues.

Information dissemination activities are designed to promote crucial stakeholder empowerment as well as contribute to advocacy. Information is disseminated through advocacy workshops, community meetings, site visits, publications, newsletters, official reports, posters and the media.

A Global Equity Gauge Alliance (GEGA)

The impetus for an international alliance comes from the meeting held in South Africa in August 2000. At that meeting participants called for the establishment of a network that could provide support to emerging Gauges.

What will the Global Equity Gauge Alliance (GEGA) do?

The GEGA will be a force for promoting equity in health and health care by:

- Providing technical assistance to country Gauges in the three core technical areas (measurement, advocacy and community participation)
- Articulating a strategic vision for a network of Gauges
- Establishing minimum standards for an Equity Gauge
- Promoting good practice and evaluation
- Encouraging exchange between emerging Equity Gauges
- Refining and promoting active equity monitoring skills
- Fostering the establishment of regional networks
- Encouraging the development of new country Gauges
- Forging links between Equity Gauges and other international organisations focussing on equity
- Assisting in resource mobilisation
- Participating in information dissemination activities including hosting a website and proactive media liaison.

Who will co-ordinate and support GEGA?

GEGA will be advised by a Council of internationally renowned individuals who collectively will bring expertise in the Gauge technical areas and provide strategic leadership. Council members will be drawn from Academia, international organisations, and the NGO sector.

How will GEGA be Funded?

The GEGA development is currently being funded by the Rockefeller Foundation and the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation (USA), and other partners will be actively sought.

Equity Gauges

Country	Stakeholders	Focus
Bangladesh	ICDDR,B; BRAC; Bangladesh Inst.of Development Studies Bureau of Statistics	This Gauge incorporates equity dimensions into existing data collection systems and reporting, introduces a national data collection system, develops research capacity and disseminates findings among policymakers, researchers, NGO leaders and civil society.
Chile	National Committee for Better Health; Ministry of Planning; National Institute of Statistics; Catholic U. of Chile; U. of Chile	The new Committee for Better Health works with other stakeholders to redesign the main population based survey to track socioeconomic inequities in health and identify key policy levers to reorient policy toward equity outcomes.
China	Ministry of Health, Centre for Health Statistics and Information; Beijing U.; Chinese Academy of Preventive Medicine	An innovative longitudinal survey mechanism will continuously monitor household (and community) cohorts for a systematic documentation of health inequalities in China. Strong emphasis on community involvement.
Cuba	Nat School of Public Health, U. of Havana; Ministry of Health; Provincial & municipal Health Directorates; Community organisations	Analyses of routine data at national level with an equity lens will inform implementation of municipality level monitoring with quarterly dissemination of results through, among other means, the participating social organisation networks.
Ecuador* (El Tambo)	ALDES (Social Development Alternatives); U. of Cuenca; 1 st Municipal Council; 3 indigenous peoples' groups	This municipality-based Gauge will develop community level indicators on social determinants of health, social participation in policymaking, and health conditions and develop interventions to narrow health gaps.
Kenya* (Nairobi)	APHRC/Population Council Nat. Council on Population and Development; Nairobi City Council	The Nairobi urban Gauge seeks to analyse existing demographic and health data to map health disparities in Nairobi. A 'Voices from the slums' newsletter workshop with parliamentarians will be part of the dissemination of key findings.

NOTE: Philippines and Malawi are expected to launch gauges in 2001.

Country	Stakeholders	Focus
South Africa* (Cape Town Metropole)	"Unicity" and provincial Departments of Health; NGOs; Community health committees	Using the recent reorganisation of the local government as an entry point, the partners in this urban Gauge will use HIV prevalence as a 'tracer condition' to identify discrepancies between health needs and health care resources.
South Africa	National and Provincial Legislators; NGOs Local Gov., Media, Centre for Health Policy, Health Economics Unit	Routine data analysis, commissioned surveys, site visits, workshops, publications, mass media, and support of parliamentary committees comprise the key activities used to highlight 'health gaps' in South Africa.
Thailand	Health System Research Institute; Provincial Department of Health; Mahidol U.	This Gauge links analysis of secondary national data sets to public health sector reform debate and key policy-making units, identifying and monitoring inequities in health at the national, regional and provincial levels.
Uganda	Ministry of Health; Members of Parliament; Inst. of Public Health Makerere U.; Local Councils; health committees; Natl. Drug Authority	Uganda's Gauge seeks to monitor how well the current health policy plan redresses the existing inequities in health status and service delivery, with a particular focus on the impact of decentralisation. District and national level monitoring, workshops with community involvement.
Zambia	Parliament; House of Chiefs; Medical Council; Women for Change; 4 political parties; CHESSORE; Medical School of the U. of Zambia.	Working at district, provincial and national levels, this Gauge will monitor health and health service delivery across social strata including: gender, socio-economic status, religion, geographical location, provinces and districts. Results will be published in <i>The Zambian Health Review</i> .
Zimbabwe	TARSC; Ministry of Health; Ministry of Finance; Parliamentary Budget and Health Committees; Health providers; Civic groups.	In Zimbabwe, equity monitoring will focus on resource allocation in order to shift the focus from a system which currently favors the well-to-do to one based upon health need, preventive and primary care indicators.

* City Wide Gauge

GEGA

A Global Equity Gauge Alliance



For more information:

Health Systems Trust web page:

<http://www.hst.org.za/hlink/equityint.htm>

Rockefeller Foundation web site:

*<http://www.rockfound.org>, under Programs,
Health Equity.*



Printed on recycled paper