



# EQUITY

## enabling the poor to access services

Metric: The proportion of clients receiving services distributed across national wealth quintiles



### **Purpose of this briefing note:**

*This is a call to action for all programs to measure equity using a standardized measurement approach.*

**Intended audience:** *Implementers, researchers, funders, or partners of programs that provide health services.*

## BACKGROUND

Social franchising is a model for organizing networks of private providers that deliver quality-monitored health services known to improve health or avert disease or disability. There are more than 70 social franchises offering health services in at least 40 countries.

Many programs measure if their health services are reaching the poor or most vulnerable and are constantly searching for the best method to do so. The Metrics Working Group has responded to this need by presenting a robust, validated and feasible approach to equity measurement.

Equity is one of six essential goals put forward by the Metrics Working Group.

To learn more, visit [m4mgmt.org](http://m4mgmt.org).

### **Why measure equity?**

Measuring equity makes it possible for a program to know if it is serving those most in need. In practice, this most often means the poor. While placing service-delivery points in low income neighborhoods and capping prices are critical approaches to encouraging use of health services among the poor, they do not guarantee that the poor are using the services to the degree that is anticipated. Measurement and tracking are key.

Members of the Metrics Working Group created a simplified, country-specific version of the Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) wealth index questions, reducing the number of questions from 30-60 in the original index to 8-18 questions in the new index. The new questions are easier to answer, with fewer response options. This methodology is called the EquityTool.

### **Why measure equity using a standardized metric?**

Consistent use of the same metric will permit comparison across years, and across programs. This type of analysis can lead to better programmatic decision making.

### **How can equity be measured?**

The Metrics Working (MWG) advocates for the use of wealth indices adapted from the DHS. The wealth indices measure equity in terms of asset ownership and household characteristics. Using DHS as the source for questions allows for rigorous analysis by sub-populations, useful comparisons within a country context, and comparisons across countries.

### **Are there resources to support social franchises in measuring equity?**

Yes! The MWG has developed the EquityTool, which includes technical documentation, application support, and instructional demos. Most importantly, analysis is now automated. Simply enter your data and see results immediately! The EquityTool is available at [equitytool.org](http://equitytool.org).



## Measure equity at little cost

The MWG has tested the wealth indices alongside other equity measurement tools, and rated each based on attributes that would facilitate rapid adoption by social franchise programs.

- **The measurement approach has already piloted, tested, and validated.** The DHS survey has already been administered in over 90 countries.
- **Data collection is easy.** The survey includes yes/no questions to measure household assets. It can be used in exit interviews, or administered separately. Each survey requires less than 5 minutes to complete, and data collectors don't need extensive training. Surveys and training tools are available at [equitytool.org](http://equitytool.org).
- **Data analysis is easy.** Just enter the data and generate an immediate report illustrating the wealth distribution of your clients.
- **Data interpretation is easy.** Findings are presented as a distribution graph. The graph places individual households on a scale of relative wealth. Program findings can be compared to national or regional distributions, which are available on the DHS website. Guidance for interpreting results is also available at [equitytool.org](http://equitytool.org)

Sample quintile results

1 = Lowest wealth quintile; 5 = Highest wealth quintile



*In this hypothetical chart, the majority of clients are from the lowest two wealth quintiles. This is a valuable data point for programs that want to know if the poor are using services or not, and to what extent.*

**Recommendation: Measure equity using the [EquityTool](http://EquityTool)**

## EQUITY DATA USES

- Understand which populations programs are serving
- Understand if programs are serving specific vulnerable populations in relation to their need (such as people living with HIV, family planning users, and low-income families)
- Make evidence-informed program decisions
- Report to donors and policymakers
- More broadly, these data are useful for setting global benchmarks

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- An overview, guidance, and support to use the EquityTool is available at [equitytool.org](http://equitytool.org):
  - » Country-specific survey questionnaires
  - » Guidance material on how to collect, enter, and analyze data
  - » An overview to determine which data collection method best meets your program needs
  - » Analysis is now automatic!
- Visit [M4Mgmt.org](http://M4Mgmt.org) to learn more about each of the six goals, the recommended metrics and how to measure performance



The Metrics Working Group is supported by Metrics for Management. Visit [www.m4mgmt.org](http://www.m4mgmt.org) to learn more.