

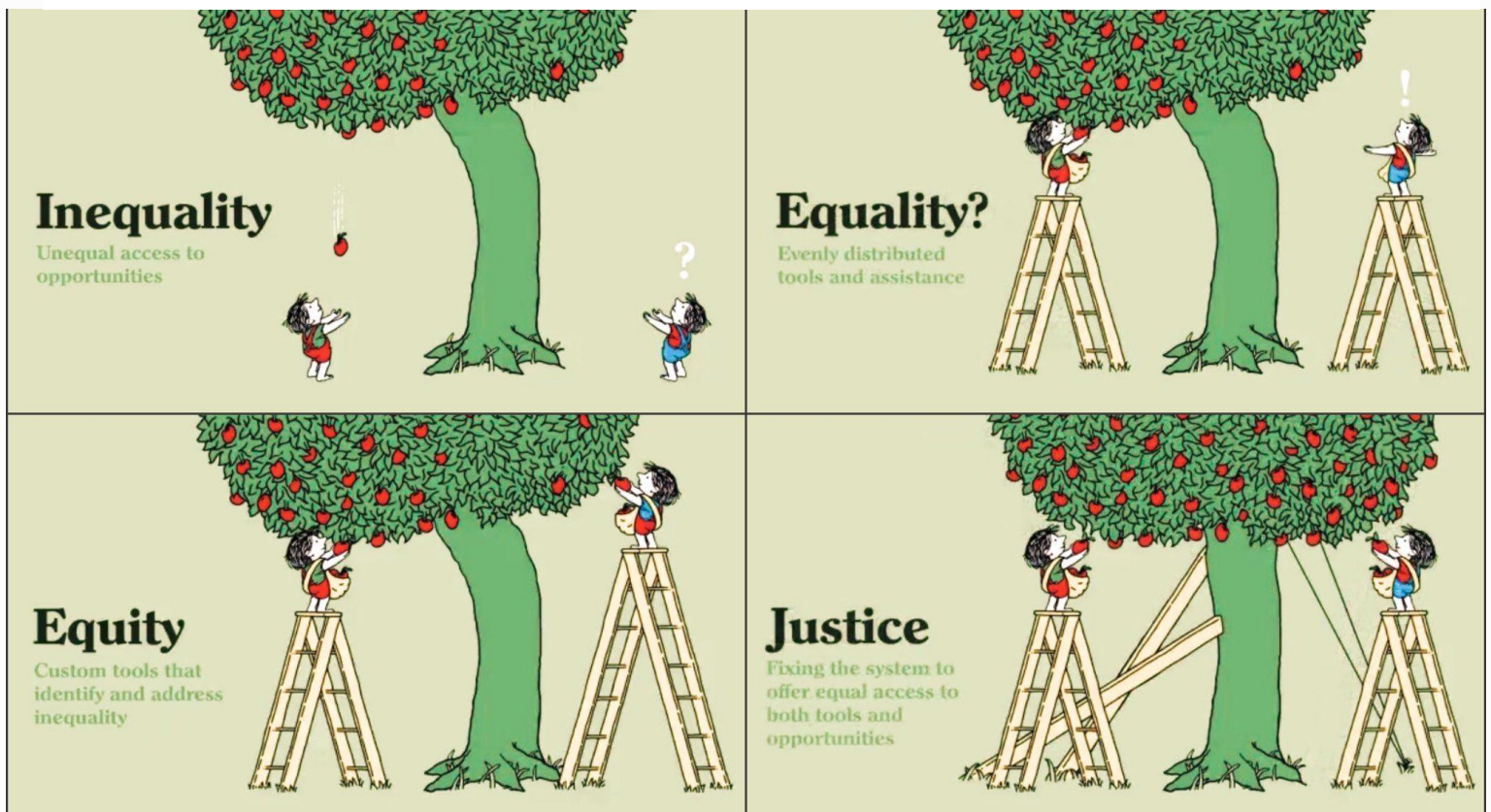


Supporting Inclusive Communities



MODULE 4: EQUALITY, EQUITY, AND JUSTICE

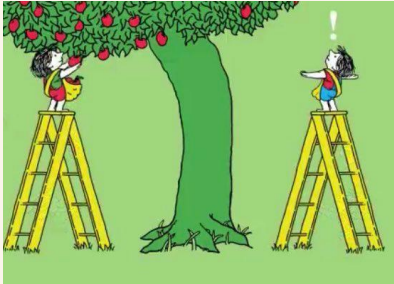
Module synopsis: Learn about the differences between equality, equity and justice as a response to inequalities that may be present in your Community Leagues.



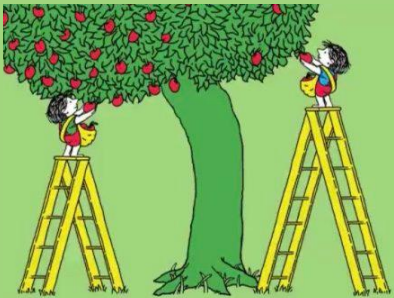
The above cartoon drawn by Tony Ruth (@lunchbreath on twitter) demonstrates the different approaches we can take to ensuring all people have access to Community League programming. Inequality is present when some residents in your neighbourhood can access your space and programs and others cannot. Reasons for inequality are tied to the advantages and disadvantages we discussed in module 2. In the pictures, inequality is symbolized as a tree that leans too far right meaning the person standing on the left gets no apples.

MODULE 4: EXPLORING WAYS TO ADDRESS INEQUALITY

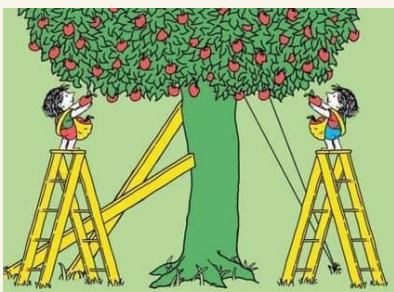
There are three main ways to address inequality: equality, equity and justice.



1. Equality is when we address inequality by ensuring everyone has the same tools and resources to succeed. This is shown in the image as giving both people the same height ladder. Equality solutions often use a “one size fits all” approach making them less expensive or time-consuming to implement. Equality approaches work well when everyone would benefit from the same tool or service. However, as shown in the cartoon, equality does not always address the specific barriers a person is facing; thus sometimes these solutions can be rendered useless.



2. Equity requires us to acknowledge that based on the variety of lived experiences, intersectionality & advantages we explored in section two, folks in our communities face different barriers. As such the solutions we implement should be tailored to address the specific needs of each individual or community. In the cartoon, this is depicted as providing each person with the appropriately sized ladder. Equity solutions require more time to implement because you must do background research on each underrepresented group in your community. In addition, building individualized tools and resources can be costly. However, they are a great way to ensure overcoming specific barriers to access or participate in League activities that underrepresented groups are facing.



3. Justice oriented solutions are required when the root cause of inequality lies in societal systems or function. Justice requires us to think systematically about how current societal norms and ways of doing things are creating inequalities. In the cartoon, the slanted tree is what is creating inequality and by creating solutions to fix this, the inequality is now not an issue. Justice oriented solutions take time to implement and can be more costly as it requires us to make systemic changes; however, the benefit is that we remove all causes of inequality making a more accessible and just experience for all.

MODULE 4: ACTIVITY

To further illustrate how inequality may be present and ways we can address it, let's use the following example:

Your League is hosting its AGM in-person in its hall. This is a special AGM because League members will finally get to vote on a new name for the renovated ice rink, so your board is hoping for a good turn out. Let's pretend your hall has only one entrance, with no automatic door and two concrete stairs users must climb or descend to get in and out of the building. Some residents have started to voice concerns because they feel that the current hall entrance makes it hard for them to get inside the space to attend meetings. As a result, they feel as though their voices are not represented in League decisions and they miss out on seeing their neighbours.



In the next pages, we'll go through the steps that can be taken to figure out what the best solution is to the problem posed. As you go through the activity, feel free to reflect on how this scenario may play out in your League. The solutions you identify may be good ones to purpose in a future board meeting (and don't worry, we'll be giving tools on how to bring ideas forward in future modules).

STEP 1: WHO'S IMPACTED AND HOW?

The first step to addressing inequalities is to figure out who is being impacted and how. To find out who the underserved populations are, your League needs to get out there and talk to the community. Some suggestions include:



- Holding virtual or in-person meetings to discuss your League members current access to Community League resources and programming.
- Sending out a survey in multiple modalities like mail-outs, virtual, or phone/text surveys.

Remember, each engagement action will be accessible to some in your community so by using multiple methods you can ensure that you reach as many people as possible.

Based on this information in the example, consider who in your neighbourhood would have difficulties coming to the AGM and who would not and how you might collect this information.

STEP 2: FIGURE OUT WHAT THE ROOT CAUSE IS.

From your engagement in looking at how community members are being impacted in step 1, you would have uncovered the main challenges and causes they are experiencing as it relates to inequality. Identifying the root cause is important because it guides the types of solutions we should implement. If you didn't uncover root causes in step 1, you'd have to go back and do more engagement with your community members. In our example, the main challenge appears to be hall access.

One technique highlighted by the [Community Tool box](#) to identify root causes is called "But, why?" This activity is most useful when people who are affected by the problem and those who can contribute to building solutions participate together.

Here's how the activity works:

A Community League examines a community problem by asking what caused it. Each time someone affected by the problem answers, the rest of the group continues to probe, by asking "But why?" or "How could that have been prevented?"

Consider our example from the last page. Choose one of the groups you identified might struggle to access the community hall, and in the context of your Community League or neighbourhood, fill out the following boxes using the "But, why?" technique.

Main Challenge: **Not everyone can attend the League's AGM in person.**

Q: But why? A: Because...

Q: But why? A: Because

Could that have been prevented? A: Yes (think of actions that could have been taken)

How?

But why haven't we tried this action? A: Because...

But why? A: Because...

Keep going until you discover the root cause. For an example of this filled out [see here](#). For more practice,

STEP 3: FIGURE OUT WHAT TYPE OF SOLUTION IS NEEDED.

Once you identify what the root cause is, it is easier to figure out which solution oriented approach (equality, equity, or justice) would be best to develop and implement. Knowing the approach is important because it allows us to consider if we are addressing the inequalities that are contributing to the challenges underrepresented groups are facing. Below we've highlighted some characteristics of equality, equity and justice oriented solutions. Read through, and consider the scenario as well as the needs and capacity of your Community League.

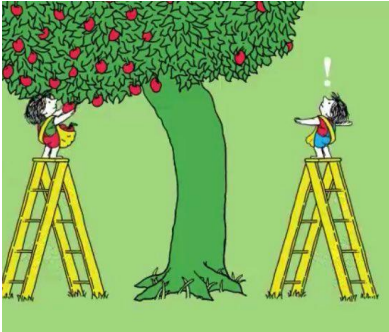
Then brainstorm on some solutions to ensuring everyone can attend the AGM and decide on what orientation your ideas would fall under.

Note: In real-life challenges, brainstorming solutions should be done as a collaborative effort with your board and League members being part of the conversation.

Solution Type	When to use	Example
Equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When there is one root cause of inequality identified. • When the cause of is inequality is linked to an element of League operations that can be changed. • When one set of tools/resources can be developed to solve the problem. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giving everyone a mail-out ballot to cast their votes. This is an example of equality oriented solution because everyone who wants to come to the AGM now has the same opportunity to vote.
Equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When each underrepresented group is experiencing a different root cause for inequality. • When the cause of is inequality is linked to an element of League operations that can be changed. • When creating custom sets of tools or resources is feasible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring in-person AGMs are concurrently streamed online for all residents to access. This way folks who want to attend in person can, and those who cannot can still be part of the meeting.
Justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When the root cause of inequality is tied to societal systems (or the relationships between individuals, groups, environments (both physical and virtual), and institutions (like governments). • Solutions must focus on changing the system. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your Community League applies for a grant and builds a ramp in the main entrance, thus allowing all members of your community to be present for the in-person AGM. In this solution you've changed an aspect of the built environment to improve access.

MODULE 4: SUMMARY

At times it might seem as though any solution is better than doing nothing. However, the wrong oriented solution can actually cause more harm than good. Consider, the cartoon mentioned on the first page. Using an equality oriented solution (i.e., equal-sized ladders) doesn't help the person collect apples, which could lead to feelings of frustration, sadness and eventually cause the person to leave the activity altogether.



For those facing inequalities, it takes courage for them to speak up about their experiences. As League members, we need to be proactive in creating opportunities for people to voice their experiences and problem-solve together. This requires us to reflect and to create opportunities for engagement, such as step one in our activity. Page 27 of the City of Edmonton's "[Art of Inclusion: Our Diversity & Inclusion Framework](#)" highlights a process that your League can take to create solutions that tackle inequalities for folks in your neighbourhood to participate in your Community Leagues. Our modules help you to go through this process on an individual level.

MODULE 4 REFLECTION AND RESOURCES

- After going through the activity presented in this module do you think your League can implement a similar process to supporting the participation of all community members in the League movement? If no, what barriers or challenges exist in your League to do so? (You may want to try the "But, why?" technique to figure out the root cause of the challenge).
- What might happen if underlying causes of inequalities are not addressed in the population your Community League serves?
- What is one action you can commit to doing to uncover inequalities that may be present for some folks in your neighbourhood? Once you identify inequalities, how might you work with your neighbours to address them?

If you're interested in learning more about inequality, [here is a link](#) to a collection of Ted Talks on understanding and overcoming inequality.

