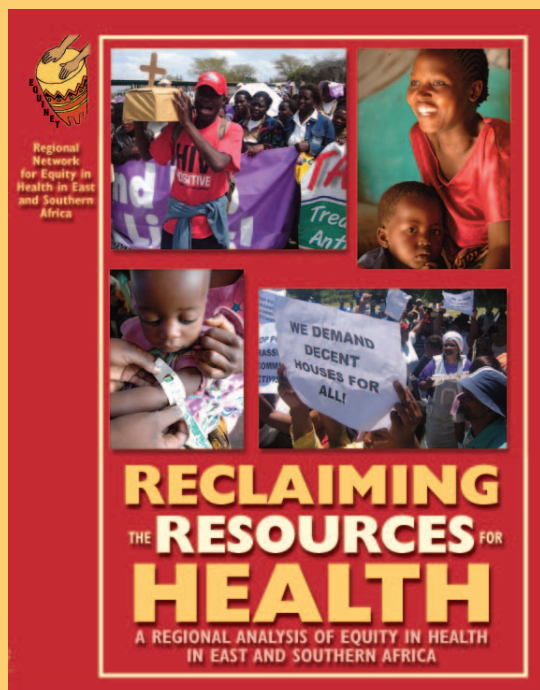


RECLAIMING THE RESOURCES FOR HEALTH:

A regional analysis of equity in health
in east and southern Africa



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The background

Global attention to equity and to Africa is growing. In 2006 the United Nations focused on these issues in three key reports and the WHO set up a Commission on the Social Determinants of Health. With Africa as the focus of commissions and special programmes, the WHO Director General declared improved health in Africa a top priority. The 30th anniversary of the Alma Ata declaration on primary health care will bring even greater focus on health in Africa in 2008.

Missing from this heightened focus is a synthesis of evidence and analysis by people within Africa of how to tackle inequalities in health. This book fills that gap.

The book

This regional equity analysis offers a comprehensive, yet accessible, resource presented through text, tables, figures, case studies, quotes and images. Evidence is drawn from published literature and formal government data, as well as from less commonly documented experience within the region – from grey literature, interviews and testimonials, gathered through participatory processes. It strikes a balance between technical information and terminology and descriptive insight into people's experience of providing and accessing healthcare in the region.

Although the health picture for east and southern Africa is currently quite bleak, the spirit that emerges across the seven sections of the book is one of hope:

- **Section 1: Progress in health** traces the sources of inequalities in health within and between communities and countries in the region, analysing links between poverty, inequality and health.
- **Section 2: Reclaiming the economic resources for health** maps the outflow of resources from Africa, the consequences and the options to address outflows in areas such as food security and access to medicines.
- **Section 3: Building universal, comprehensive people centred health systems** shows the ways in which health systems can make a difference, particularly for those with greatest health needs, and presents lessons learned from primary health care and from the roll-out of prevention and treatment for HIV and AIDS.
- **Section 4: Fair financing of health systems** explores options for increasing the resources for health systems and for overcoming barriers to services for people with the greatest need.
- **Section 5: Valuing and reclaiming investments in health workers** outlines the outflows of health workers from vital health services and discusses the policies and measures to involve, value and retain health workers in the region.
- **Section 6: Organising people-centred health systems** points to the many ways health systems can act to empower people, stimulate social action and build alliances to promote equity-oriented health systems.
- **Section 7: Taking action to reclaim the resources for health** summarises the policy messages presented and proposes targets and indicators to signal progress in key dimensions of health equity, and towards meeting regional and global commitments.

The audience

This book provides a source of evidence and analysis to support and advance the work of health policy makers, researchers and activists and the diverse academic, state and civil society community involved in health equity within east and southern Africa. It is relevant for policies and programmes within and beyond the health sector in the region and will be valuable to international agencies working on and in Africa, particularly given the current global commitment to and attention on Africa.

The authors

The book was produced by the steering committee of the Regional Network on Equity in Health in east and southern Africa (EQUINET) (www.equinetafrica.org), a network of professionals, academics, civil society members, policy makers, state officials and parliamentarians. Production was supported by SIDA (Sweden) and IDRC (Canada). It draws on and will feed into the several thousand organisations and individuals involved in EQUINET training, research, policy dialogue and information activities over the past seven years.