

Work sheet for the basic document
"Inequality and Health"

Equity: a step by step approach in health promotion projects

This work sheet is intended for project managers and is a guide to understand the complexity of social inequality or equity. It also helps to define the interactions and relationships between different causes of inequality and to finally apply these insights - step by step - in the course of project implementation.

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Introduction

Men in Switzerland live on average about five years less (79 years) than women (84 years). Men who have only completed compulsory education have an even lower life expectancy: when they are 30 years old they can expect to reach an average age of little over 73, whereas female academics of the same age will reach an average age of a little over 85. The Swiss health survey also shows that people with lower incomes feel less healthy than higher earners, tend to have a heavier body weight and worse smoking habits. The study "Sport Schweiz 2008" reveals that the proportion of people who do not engage in sports activities is higher in foreigners as well as in people with low income and in people who are educationally disadvantaged.

These few examples demonstrate that there is a clear relation between education, income, sex and national origin on the one hand, and health, health behaviour and life expectancy on the other. While this is not a new finding, it is one which is frequently forgotten when it comes to concrete initiatives to improve health. Depending on their social background and position in society, individuals have different health risks and different capabilities of adopting health-promoting behaviour. This is why, when planning and implementing programmes of health promotion and prevention, social inequality must always be kept in mind.

Moreover, the concepts of inequality, equity and equity are often used synonymously. If any distinction is made, one might say that "inequality" refers to general structures, while "equity" and "equity" refer to the ways how these structures affect life (and health). This is where one would possibly start in order to reduce social inequality.

General information about the work sheet

The basic document

The background document "Inequality and Health" is available from the site www.quint-essenz.ch. It provides a detailed explanation of the meaning of social inequality, how it works and why questions of inequality and equity are central to health promotion. Furthermore, the document provides references to the scientific literature.

The work sheet

This work sheet will help you assess current or planned projects in respect of issues related to inequality so that your project may successfully contribute to the promotion of equal opportunities. The work sheet also contains examples and hints from practice. These show some of the concrete responses to social inequality in projects. The work sheet is suitable for self-reflection and for discussion within the project team.

The starting point is the **inequality model** presented and discussed in the basic document and reproduced here on page 4. It distinguishes between different impact levels. For this work sheet, the model was decomposed into the different levels, as each one can be focused on individually. Each level is briefly introduced and explained with examples. Additional explanations and references are in the basic document (see also related links).

Time needed

Teamwork: 3 - 4 hours

Individual study time: 2 - 3 hours

Note:

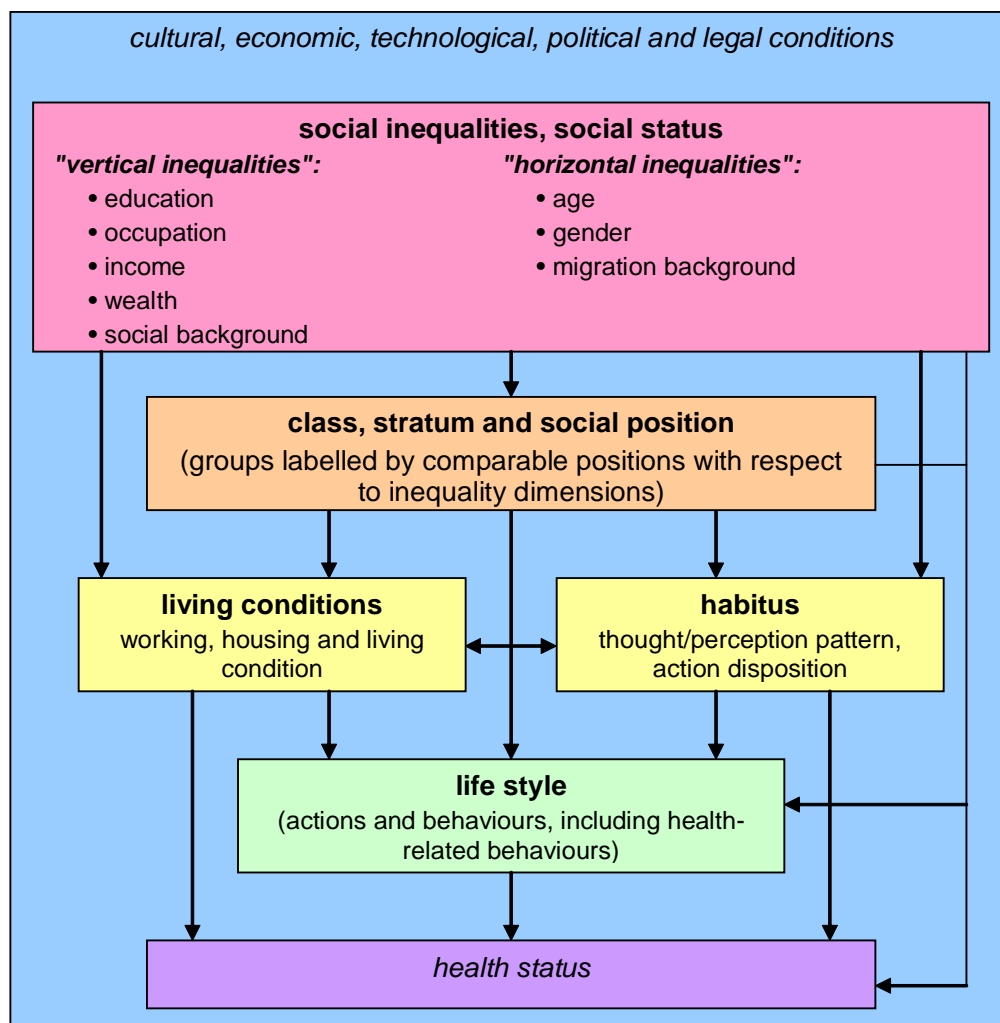
When working with this document, the reflections and the conclusions you draw will be shaped by your own way of thinking and your own perceptions. This means that another person or another project team may arrive at somewhat different results. It is therefore recommended that - in a further step - personal ideas regarding the problem that your project is addressing should be checked against a sound evidence base.

Objectives:

- ⇒ The project management and/or the project team will develop a clear understanding of the benefits gained from including into their project aspects related to equal opportunities.
- ⇒ The project is analyzed with regard to the health promotion principle of "Equity".
- ⇒ The links between various effects are defined. Findings can be clearly assigned to the appropriate project phases.
- ⇒ Interventions and measures are defined and recorded in the relevant planning and project management documents.

Support

Health Promotion Switzerland offers expert advice regarding the implementation of your project as well as support and guidance for team discussions (also on-site). Contact your [regional consultant](#) ([Http://www.quint-essenz.ch/de/consultants](http://www.quint-essenz.ch/de/consultants)).



The model shows the interactions and relationship between inequality, lifestyle/health behaviour and health. When assessing a situation different types of inequality effects must be considered. The arrows in the figure show possible links, always in relation to health. For example, characteristics of social inequality not only directly affect our health, but also affect health indirectly via living conditions, habitus and/or lifestyle.

In the following work sheet, each level is presented briefly and discussed in regard to projects. By the end of your work session you will have gained more insight and new ideas, and you will have a better idea at which levels to position your project in order to have the best possible impact.

Link to more information in the basic document "Inequality and Health"

Framework conditions

⇒ Culture, ecology, economics, technology, politics and policy, law

The model refers to Switzerland and its neighbouring countries. The further away you are in terms of cultural and political environment, the more the model is likely to change. For example, in many non-European societies "religious affiliations" play a greater role than in Europe and gender relations are organized differently.

In other words, the inequality model described here only applies to a specific cultural, historical and political context. The model's details may also vary under different framework conditions.

When planning your project, you must therefore bear in mind the following:

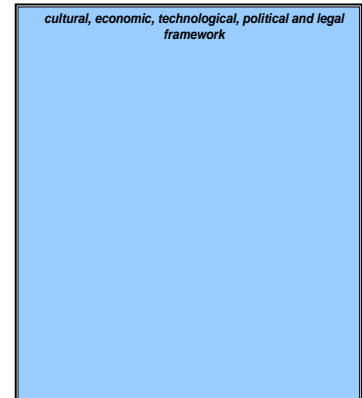
1. Keep a critical distance when adopting projects and programmes from other cultural contexts. What is successful in the U.S. or in Finland may not necessarily work in your own country.
2. Even when working in your own country, your target-groups may come from different cultural contexts than your own and your concerns may be misunderstood or understood differently from what you mean. For example, you might adapt your objectives and interventions to the learning behaviour of your specific target audience.

Link to more information in the basic document "Inequality and Health"

Questions and approaches for discussion and reflection:

- Where does your project come from? Could there be „adjustment problems“ due to the different cultural, political and legal conditions of the target groups?

Notes

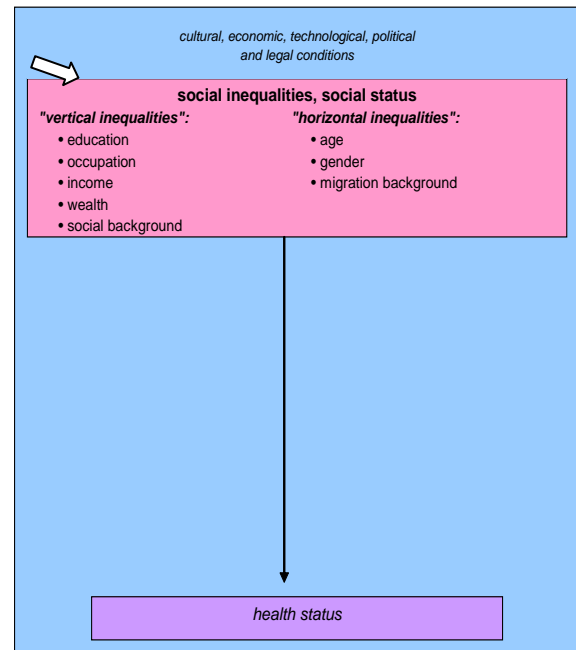


Social inequality, social status

The basic document "Inequality and Health" mentions eight important characteristics of inequality describing the position of a person or a group in our society.

For practical reasons, they are condensed to just seven points in the table below. Here, we do not differentiate between the target groups' income and wealth because they are difficult to assess separately and their expected effects are very similar in any case.

Example: a better **education** generally leads to higher health literacy, while the exposure to health risks depends on one's **professional occupation**. These risks can then affect health status and cause different health problems, depending on **age** and **gender**.



Link to more information in the basic document "Inequality and Health"

Inequality characteristics, their measurement and effects

Feature	Measurement	Effects
Social Background	Education, occupation, income and wealth. (Children and adolescents: Indicators of parents)	The positions held in each of the different features lead to advantages (resources) and disadvantages with respect to ... individual ... social and ... health related living conditions and options for action.
(School) education	highest level of education, educational qualifications	
Occupation and employment status	Level of employment, occupation and professional status (employed, executive position, independent, entrepreneur, etc.)	
Income / wealth	personal income, household income, and/or wealth (such as bank balance, pension assets, real estate)	
Gender	Sex of the person	
Age	Age of the person	
Migration background	Country of origin, duration and status of residence in immigrant country	

Questions and approaches for discussion and reflection:

- Review the seven characteristics of inequality and briefly consider which of these are particularly important for your target group. Why?

Notes

Class, stratum and social position

If you analyze the positions of your target groups in relation to the different characteristics of inequality, you will probably find that groups, despite their differences, also have common features. Moreover, your target groups may share similarities with other social groups that are not at the centre of your project.

The concepts of "class", "stratum" and "social position" refer to these commonalities. Even if every member of a target group has an individual destiny, they also have similarities. The more clearly visible these are, the more distinct the social strata or the social positions become.

You may also find that your target audiences sometimes have conflicting combinations of characteristics - such as a high level of education combined with a low income. These conflicting combinations are important for project planning precisely because they can lead to conflicting problems and opportunities for your target groups.

Example: Imagine a female doctor of philosophy who has not found any work in her field and therefore has to clean offices at night. In normal circumstances, her high level of education would have a positive impact on her living conditions and her health, assuming that she has a comparatively high level of health literacy. Under ideal conditions, these positive effects would be amplified by a low-risk and well-paid professorial position at a university and she would belong to a low-risk social class.

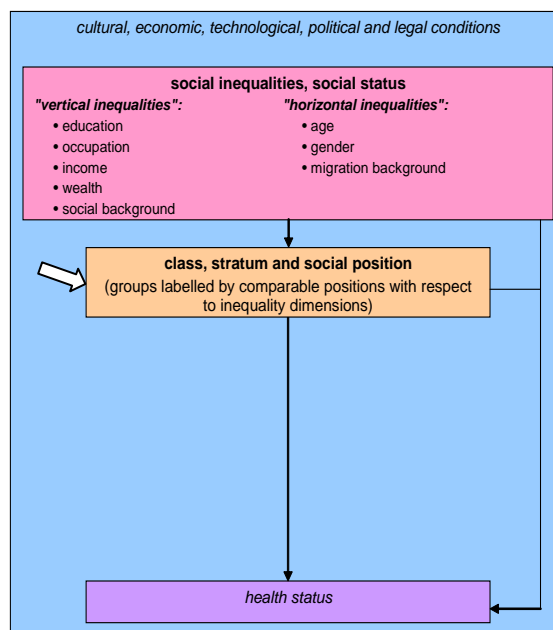
But the relatively low income and the rather unhealthy and stressful job (night shift, exposure to dust and fumes from cleaning products, unsafe commute to work, etc.) in our example may outweigh the positive education effects. Suppose also that the woman is a foreigner, and would, among other things, have greater difficulties in finding an affordable and quiet apartment while her night shifts make her integration into the migrant community more difficult.

[Link to more information in the basic document "Inequality and Health"](#)

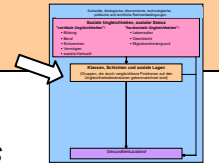
Questions and approaches for discussion and reflection:

- ▶ **Which similarities do your target groups share?** (use the table with the inequality characteristics, measurements and effects on page 6)
- ▶ **The following analytical instruments (1 and 2)** provide you with a deeper insight into your own position and that of your target group and the resulting disadvantages, opportunities and resources for your project.

Notes



Class, stratum and social position



Analysis Tool 1: "The Inequality Chart"

Objective: To determine the positions of the project team and the target groups

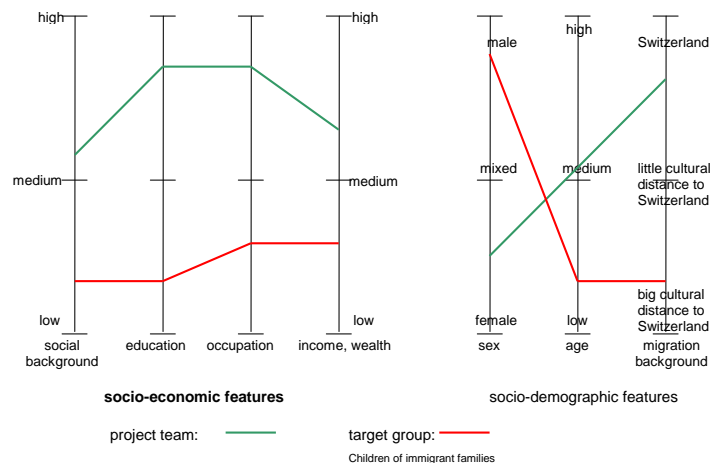
Procedure:

1. Together define the main target groups of the project (max. 3) and choose one colour for each of them.
2. Each team member thinks about the average position on the scales of inequality of both the target groups and the project team and enters the different positions in the following graphic.
3. The positions are then connected.

How to complete the chart

► **Estimate** the position of each of the different target groups and the project team. For example, ask yourself whether the education or income levels of the target group members is relatively high, medium or low. If the members of your target groups have no post-compulsory education, for example, mark this far down on the vertical axis "education". You then connect the various points, as shown in the following figure.

Example for filling in the "inequality chart"



Note: The characteristics of "income" and "wealth" are listed as one item in the tools. A differentiated assessment of the target groups' income and wealth is difficult and the expected effects of these two characteristics are very similar.

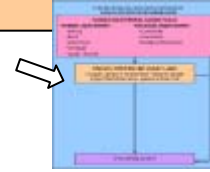
► **Unclear target groups:** It may not be possible for you to identify clear and well defined target groups. This may occur if you are planning an intervention in a large company with a wide variety of employees, for example.

In this case select two sub-groups which seem especially typical or where you expect particularly strong effects from - or resistance to - your intervention. Insert the positions of these two groups on the chart. Find the average of all target groups and use it to create a third "target group".

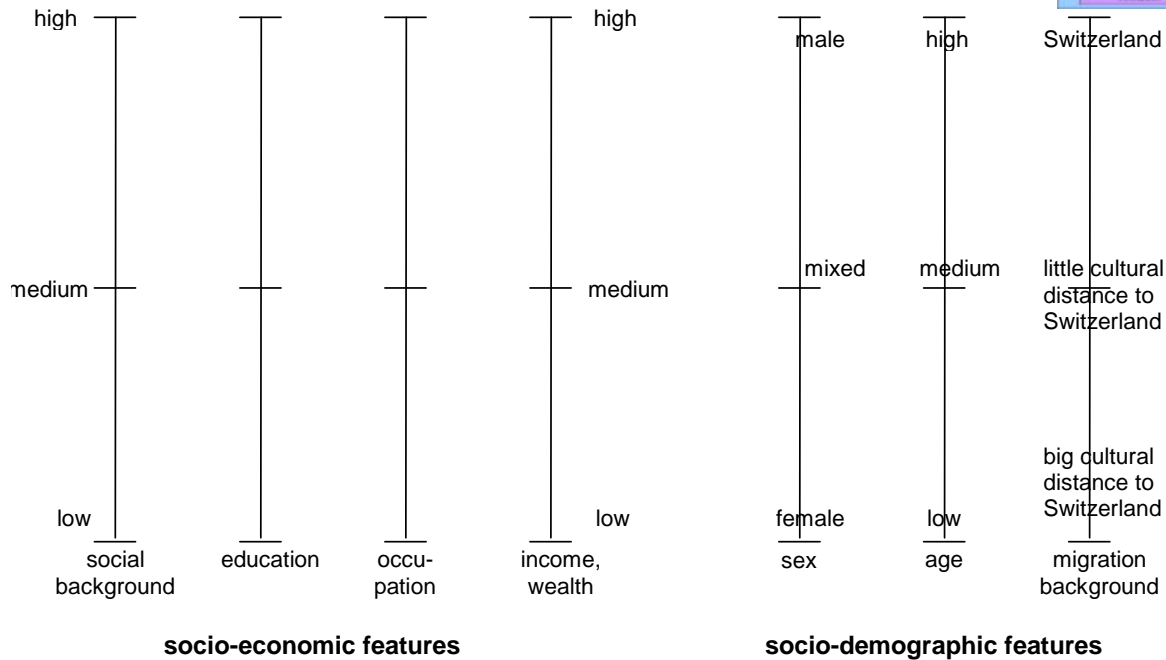
► **Children:** If your target group is children, it makes sense to indicate the (presumed) position of their parents' origin, education, occupation and income / wealth on the axis.

► **Position on the scale:** the fact that men are listed higher up on the scale than women, reflects the continued disadvantages that women in Switzerland face in various fields of life. The same applies to the dimensions of age and immigration background: children and young people have fewer rights than adults; and Swiss citizens, due to their civil rights, generally have better opportunities compared to foreigners. For this reason, advanced age and Swiss citizenship are entered at the upper end of the relevant dimensions. However, the choice of the expressions "male", "older age" and "Swiss citizen" as the top points of the dimensions constitutes no value judgment.

Class, stratum and social position



Analysis Tool 1: "Inequality Chart"



Key:: Colours for ...

project team:

target group 1:

target group 2:

target group 3:

Note: We recommend that you carry out this analysis as a team or at the very least with another key person. The analysis tool is also a good starting point for introducing a participatory process in a project. For Participation see also www.quint-essenz.ch (<http://www.quint-essenz.ch/de/topics/1117>).

Questions and approaches for discussion and reflection:

Please compare your images and discuss the following questions:

- ▶ Where do the curves of those involved in the project meet? Where do they not meet?
- ▶ How can any differences be explained? Is there an evidence base for the explanation?
- ▶ Are there particularly important characteristics of the target group which are relevant for the objectives of the project?
- ▶ How do similarities and differences affect the project (project team, needs assessment, objectives, measures, steering)?

Notes

Class, stratum and social position

Analytical tool 2:

"Disadvantages, opportunities and resources of the target groups"

Objective: target group analysis and reflection



Procedure:

1. All participants individually fill out the table on the following page.

Example regarding some features of inequality in a target group of female migrants with low educational attainment.

⇒ **Disadvantages** could occur because of poor access to information (lack of **education**), poor chances on the labour market (**occupation**) or discrimination based on gender and lack of civil rights (**migration background**).

⇒ **Opportunities and resources** on the other hand could result from solidarity networks in the immigrant community or from specific knowledge on balanced diet from the country of origin (**migration background**).

If you cannot find any disadvantages or opportunities/resources in one or several of the dimensions (e.g. social background) you can leave the cell empty.

2. The participants select the most significant features of inequality e.g. **yellow**.

3. The participants select the most significant common features, e.g. **orange**.

Example for completion:

(Project: "Promoting sport in a school setting", target groups: teachers, parents, students)

Problems and opportunities of target groups in relation to the project objectives and based on the results of the inequality chart.

* TG = Target group	Disadvantages	Opportunities and Resources
TG * 1: Teachers (IP)		
Social background	--	--
Education	<i>personal distance to the low educational background of the students</i>	<i>high acceptance by parents and children at primary school level</i>
Occupation	<i>- Bound by the curriculum - flexibility? - "Walk the talk"?</i>	<i>- pedagogic background - daily contact with students</i>
Income, wealth	--	--
Gender	<i>Acceptance of female teachers, especially by fathers and male adolescents?</i>	<i>Boys' great interest in sports</i>
Age	<i>older teachers are possibly less open for new approaches (motivation?)</i>	<i>- Experience of older teachers - Fresh ideas, motivated younger teachers</i>
Migration background	<i>Acceptance by Swiss parents uncertain</i>	<i>Cultural diversity</i>

Class, stratum and social position



Problems and opportunities of target groups in relation to the project objectives and based on the results of the inequality chart page 9.

* TG = Target group	Disadvantages	Opportunities and Resources
TG * 1: _____ —		
Social background		
Education		
Occupation		
Income, wealth		
Gender		
Age		
Migration background		
TG * 2: _____ —		
Social background		
Education		
Occupation		
Income, wealth		
Gender		
Age		
Migration background		
TG * 3: _____ —		
Social background		
Education		
Occupation		
Income, wealth		
Gender		
Age		
Migration background		

Class, stratum and social position



Questions and approaches for discussion and reflection:

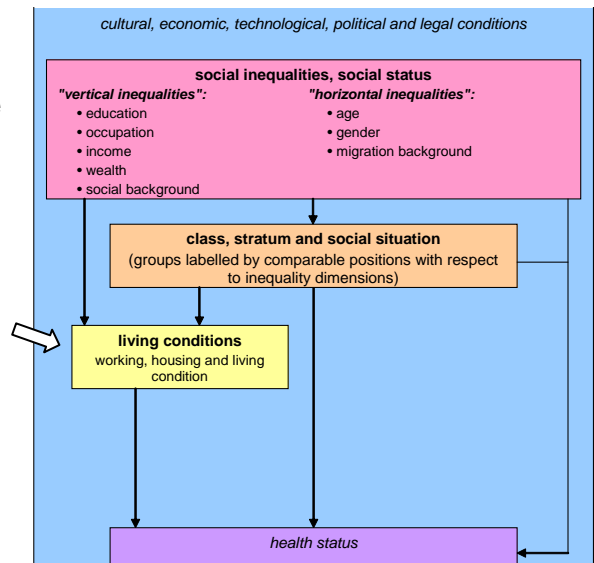
- ▶ What are the main differences and similarities between the target groups?
- ▶ What are the target groups' available opportunities and resources for the project?
- ▶ How can the most important commonalities be used for the project's objectives and actions?
- ▶ Can the disadvantages jeopardize the project objectives? Are there any disadvantages which have a greater impact than others?
- ▶ How can the disadvantages be countered?
- ▶ Are there areas of potential contradictions, conflicts and problems of understanding between the project team and the target groups? (see also "Inequality Chart" on page 9)

Notes

The mediatory level of *living conditions*
(mediates between structures and interventions)

The position anyone has on any feature of inequality has been discussed and it should now be clear that the position one occupies is closely associated with specific living conditions, which in turn can have an impact on the health opportunities and on the measures that you are planning.

Example: People with low income generally live in smaller homes of a poorer standard and in neighborhoods with a lower quality of life. This may lead to additional problems.



Link to more information in the basic document "Inequality and Health"

Questions and approaches for discussion and reflection:

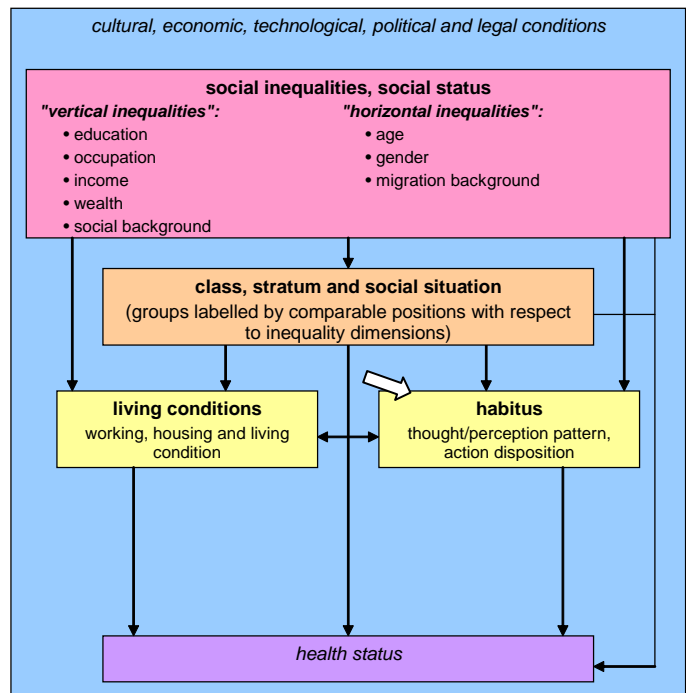
- ▶ How are the living conditions related to the social position of the target groups?
- ▶ What is the effect of actual life conditions on your target groups?
In particular, discuss the following aspects:
 - Housing
 - Employment status
 - Family and relationships, social networks
 - Leisure
- ▶ What effects should be considered in relation to needs assessment, objectives, measures and interventions or for the management or control of the project?

Notes

The mediatory level of habitus
(mediates between structures and interventions)

Apart from concrete conditions of life, deeply rooted patterns **of thinking and of perception** - the so-called "habitus" - also play a role. The habitus involves conscious and unconscious ideas about what we like and influences our choices when faced with different alternatives. Habitus could also be defined as people's basic **behavioral dispositions and preferences**. Habitus may be attributed in part to social inequality and living conditions. Particularly important factors are social background, age (generation effect) and education.

Example: Many older women have been taught that some sports activities are "improper." Such attitudes - acquired during childhood and adolescence and ingrained over years or decades – cannot be changed overnight. Accordingly, it can be very difficult to persuade this group to partake in regular physical activity.



It takes a relatively long period of time to change such deep-rooted patterns of thought and behaviour. This must be considered when deciding the timing and the objectives of projects.

Link to more information in the basic document "Inequality and Health"

Questions and approaches for discussion and reflection:

- ▶ Which deeply ingrained thought and perception patterns are characteristic for your target group?
- ▶ Which thought and behaviour patterns can you build on when you define the objectives and interventions; which ones may jeopardize the project's success?
- ▶ Are there ways to overcome hindering thought and perception patterns?
- ▶ When planning your intervention, was the length of the change process taken into consideration?

Notes

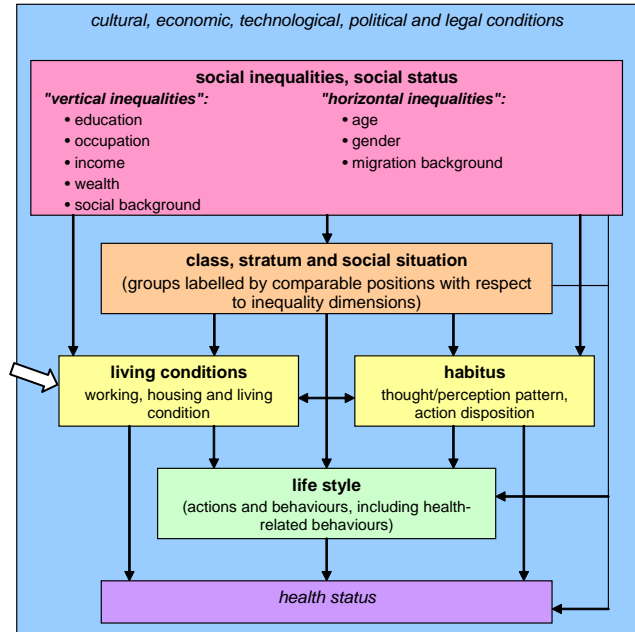
Lifestyle

How does inequality affect health-related behaviour?

The final level of the model pertains to specific behaviour patterns ("lifestyle") and to their impact on health.

With the adjoining model, behaviour can be adequately explained; however, this is only possible when considering all the different levels.

Example: Children of immigrant families with low education and income often live on congested streets (**social inequalities** → **social situation**). Many parents who are at work during the day worry about the safety of their children and prefer keeping them at home (**living conditions**). At home, these children will entertain themselves watching TV and playing computer games; they also eat fast food and engage in little physical activity (**lifestyle**). This can later lead to a lifestyle where watching TV is the norm (**habitus**) with no other imaginable alternatives. The poor diet and lack of physical activity negatively affect health in many ways (**state of health**).



Background information about this topic, see: "State of the Art: Wie können wir der Übergewichtsepidemie entgegenwirken? Ganzer Bericht, Gesundheitsförderung Schweiz, 2005; Berichte MigesBalù, www.ovk.ch, 2005 - 2008.

Link to more information in the basic document "Inequality and Health"

Questions and approaches for discussion and reflection:

- ▶ Which supportive or obstructive behaviour patterns are present in your target groups?
- ▶ Are there differences within the groups that must not be neglected?
- ▶ In your target group, what is the relationship between lifestyle and social situation, living conditions and habitus?
- ▶ How could the lifestyle of the target groups influence the project goals and measures?

Notes

Further Reflection

Analysis Instrument 3:

"Causal relationships and levels of intervention in the inequality model"

Objective: recognizing and identifying the interactions and relationships between different causes and options for action.

You have thought about the various aspects of the inequality model in the context of your project and have recorded the potential impact on the project's objectives and measures.





Finally, you have to be able to identify these relationships and potential courses of action for each dimension of the inequality model and in regard to your own project.

With the help of this tool, hypothesize what effects might be achieved by the project and how they could be checked by an evaluation.

Procedure:

1. **Decide which levels impact positively or negatively on the next level and ultimately may have an effect on the health of your target groups. Mark them in the model on page 18 with the appropriately coloured arrows:**

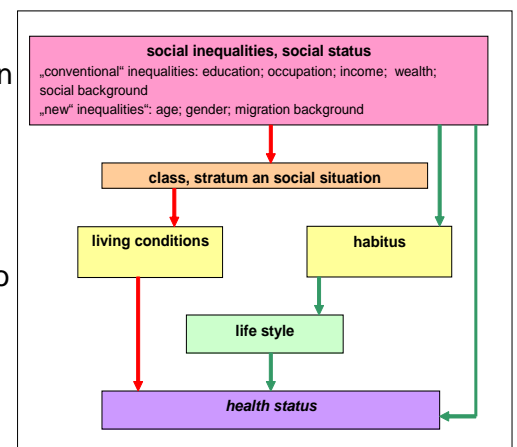
Significance of the arrows:

-  positive effect
-  negative effect
-  Levels which are impacted by the project
-  Possible approaches

Case Study - Part 1:

Imagine you are involved in workplace health promotion. Your target group consists of unskilled workers who are performing heavy physical work under difficult conditions (noisy manufacturing plant with odor nuisance)...

Workers such as these are characterized by rather low positions on various dimensions of inequality, which, inter alia, lead to more problematic social and life situations and/or working conditions which can then also have negative repercussions on health (**red arrows**). It is possible that your target group is made up of young migrants who, by their religious or cultural background, are prohibited from consuming alcohol and tobacco and are required to lead a healthy lifestyle. Such prescriptions can of course have beneficial effects on habitus and lifestyle (**green arrows**).

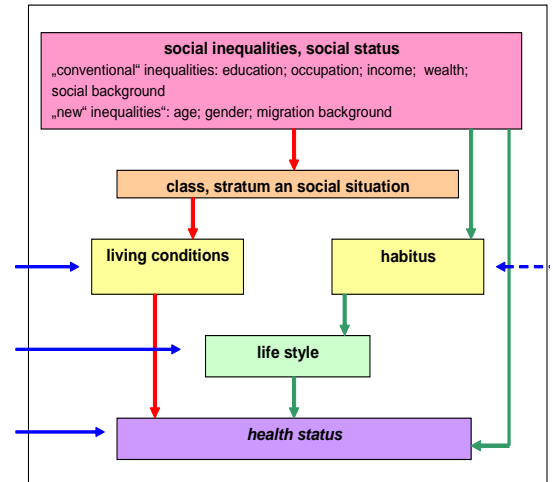


2. Mark the levels where you can achieve effects with blue arrows.

health status

Case Study - Part 2:

In your project you want to optimize the planning and production processes at the plant, so that the odour emissions decrease and thus have a positive effect on life and working conditions. In order for existing rules regarding hearing protection to be observed, you run an information campaign and introduce controls, thus impacting on lifestyle (blue arrows).



From your reflection you might come to the following conclusion:

Alcohol and tobacco abstinence imposed by religion or culture affects the target group's health in a positive way. It could be worthwhile to take this into account and to use the dimension of 'habitus' as a positive starting point for the project (blue dashed arrow).

Hypothesis:

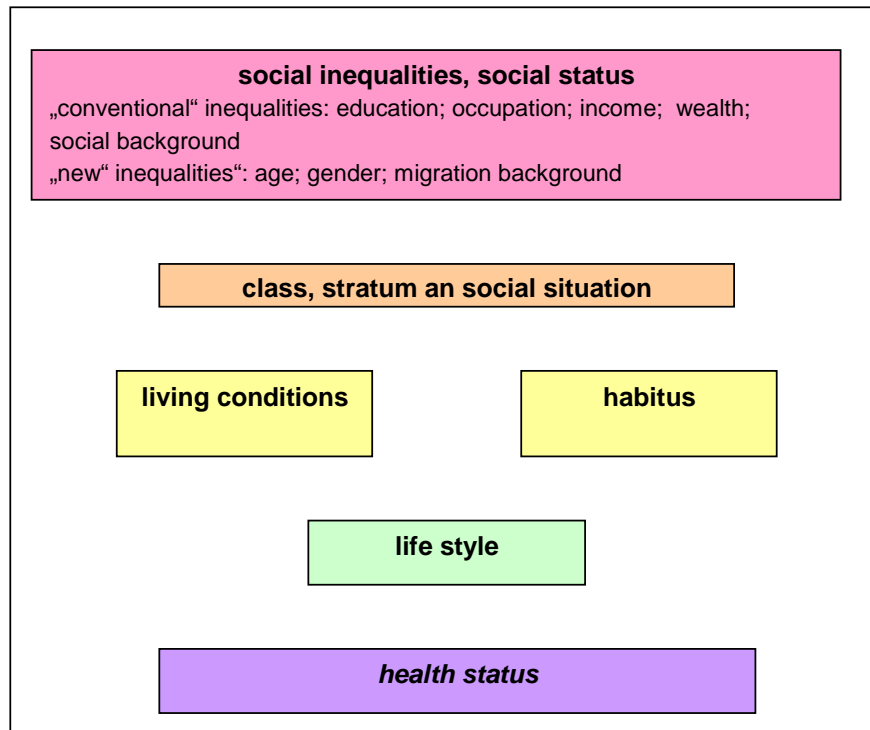
"Target groups use their breaks from work to avoid emissions."

Indicator: the target group is using the smoke-free and freshly ventilated break room on a daily basis.

Analysis Instrument 3:

"Causal relationships and levels of intervention in the inequality model"

Objective: recognizing and identifying the interactions and relationships between different causes and options for action.



- positive effect
- negative effect
- levels which are impacted by the project
- - → possible approaches

Questions and approaches for discussion and reflection:

- ▶ On which levels of the model is there scope for promising and effective intervention?
Reflection: Put key words to the results of your reflection process (problematic issues, opportunities and resources) and assign them to the relevant aspect (level). With your team, discuss their importance with regard to the intended interventions and project objectives (weighting).
- ▶ What practical conclusions can be drawn regarding your objectives and interventions?
- ▶ Formulate measurable hypotheses about the effects.

Notes:

Project management www.quint-essenz.ch

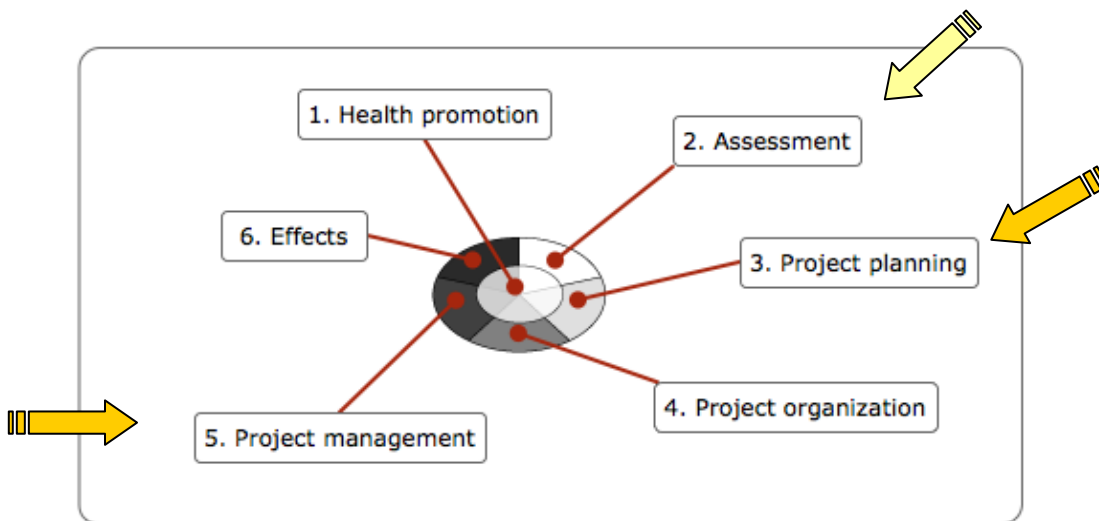
Match the findings of the reflection process with the current state of project implementation.

Are you in the **planning** phase?

Allow for your findings in the [project justification](#) (objective need / subjective need), but especially in the [project planning](#) (objectives). www.quint-essenz.ch provides the appropriate tool: [Project Planning / Planning Table](#).

Are you managing an ongoing project?

The results of your analysis should eventually be incorporated into the controlling process and the evaluation. Helpful tools for successful project management are available: [Project management chart and detailed planning](#).



Planning interventions

The following concrete measures will be implemented:

Project goals	Intermediate objectives	Measures	Dates

We hope that you will enjoy the work, achieve good results and improve the quality of your projects!

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