



How can we promote health equity during shocks?








Health inequities across the globe are exacerbated by crises, disproportionately impacting **marginalised communities** in the Global South.

Why does health inequity matter?

Health inequities undermine individual and societal well-being, with the greatest impact often felt across the Global South. Disparities in health outcomes are exacerbated by shocks, leading to further social instability and economic loss. We analysed health promotion interventions in the context of Nigeria's ongoing conflict, Nepal's earthquake (2015), and Brazil's Zika virus outbreak (2015-2016) to uncover strategies that help us build sustainable healthcare systems that foster resilience in our interconnected world.

Findings show that:

- 1  **Community leadership** is crucial for health interventions to be inclusive, effective, and sustainable. It increases **service utilisation and health literacy**, especially among marginalised groups.
- 2  Leveraging existing **local structures**, networks, and communication channels improves context-specific health messaging.
- 3  Using flexible, adaptive strategies and **mobile communication** technologies that are responsive to evolving needs is essential to bridge healthcare access gaps in remote or crisis-affected areas.
- 4  Multi-sectoral collaboration and **coordination** across health, humanitarian, government, and community stakeholders yields more comprehensive and **effective outcomes** in health promotion interventions.
- 5  Integrating **mental health support** with primary care enhances overall community resilience and health-seeking behaviours in **post-disaster** settings.

To strengthen health responses to complex global shocks, we must:

- **Invest in community health workers.** By offering comprehensive training grounded on local knowledge and allocating resources, governments can empower community health workers to serve as frontline responders to shocks and health literacy enablers.NSAGs' influence.
- **Promote meaningful and sustained community leadership.** Governments in the Global South can benefit from promoting meaningful and sustained community participation that fosters adaptive, responsive health strategies.
- **Integrate mental health care in crisis response.** By embedding mental health support within crisis response mechanisms, governments can boost resilience and health-seeking behaviours among marginalised communities.
- **Establish coordination mechanisms.** By facilitating intersectoral partnerships, governments can ensure cohesive and comprehensive health responses to shocks.
- **Leverage South-South cooperation.** Cross-regional cooperation among Global South countries is needed to enhance crisis response to shared challenges through shared practices, resources, and innovations.

We need to reconceptualise **resilience** not merely as the ability to bounce back from crises, but as the capacity to transform and address **underlying inequities.**

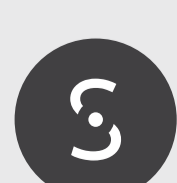


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