

Equity in relation to Treaty¹

When the Treaty was negotiated in 1840, equity was not an issue for tangata whenua in relation to Pākehā - hapū were in control of their domains and outsiders were admitted on their terms; Nevertheless as a sign of respect Captain Hobson promised, in Article 3:

Hei wakaritenga mai hoki tēnei mō te wakaetanga ki te Kāwanatanga o te Kuini. Ka tiakina e te Kuini o Ingarangi nga tangata Māori katoa o Nu Tirani ka tukua ki a ratou nga tikanga katoa rite tahi ki ana mea ki nga tangata o Ingarangi.

("The Queen will protect all the Māori people of New Zealand and give them all the same rights as those of the people of England")

The colonisation process introduced major equity problems for Māori as the government tried to assimilate them and unfairly acquired their assets, particularly land. Today, equity for Māori is a human rights issue, but it is also essential for moving forward on the Treaty. In order to have a meaningful, mutually beneficial, long-term relationship, injustice must be addressed and the parties must be on a level playing field. The first step is to identify indicators of equity in relation to employment – job descriptions, recruiting, selection, promotion, and so on. Also there is the need to check that there is equity in delivery of services; for example in relation to 'client' satisfaction, do Māori rate the organisation's service delivery as highly as tangata tiriti do? The next step is to collect information in relation to the indicators, then to analyse that information for disparities between Māori and tangata tiriti. Disparities do not necessarily mean inequities (a low proportion of Māori working as cleaners may be a good thing), but they need to be investigated and strategies identified for improvements where needed. We would suggest the following primary distinction between general equity and Treaty-specific approaches: a policy or a strategy or an activity is general equity if:

- it is also relevant to other marginalised groups;
- it does not recognise hapū authority.

In order for a policy, strategy or action, to be part of Treaty application:

- a) the purpose should be to move toward a Treaty relationship; or
- b) be done in the context of a negotiated relationship with a Treaty partner.

¹ From: *Treaty Journeys: International Aid Agencies respond to the Treaty of Waitangi*. Council for International Development. 2007. Used by permission.