

Health Overview

This provides a brief overview of the issues that are health and inequality. To find out more, download the critical thinking activities, workshops and presentations, and look at the action guide to see what more you can do to help.

TAGS

Health and Inequality

Introduction

Inequality means that certain individuals, groups or communities are not similar – they don't share the same standards of living, they are treated differently, they don't have the same opportunities and rights. No society could be completely equal in every way. However big and growing differences between the income and wealth of different groups in society are recognised as a growing problem. Large inequalities are seen as being unfair and bad for society as a whole.



Saratanu Ademu, 7 months pregnant and a Health worker and Facilitation in the Bongo District of the Upper East Region of Ghana

Economic inequality is the most visible form of inequality and it can have far reaching effects. However, inequality also affects people's opportunities. This may mean that people don't get the same access to education, basic services such as clean water, and other basic rights only because they don't live in the same region, they were not born in the same family or they are not of the same gender. This is this kind of inequality we will study here. Inequality has a big impact on poverty reduction, and links to the Sustainable Development Goals 2015-2030 and their predecessors the Millennium Development Goals.

Birth Rights in Ghana

In 2008 the government of Ghana implemented free health care for pregnant mothers. This has helped Ghana make good progress in reducing maternal mortality (when mothers die during childbirth). However, despite this progress, there is still large inequality in the experiences of mothers from different parts of Ghana.

The PowerPoint presentation looks at the experience in the public health care system of Selina Fletcher, a mother giving birth in the capital city of Accra, and Adumporka Abotiyure, a new mother from the remote Upper East region in 2011.

Selina gave birth in a comparatively well equipped and staffed national teaching hospital. Adumporka had to walk 4km to a local health centre where there wasn't a bed available on arrival

and which she had to leave two hours after giving birth. Yet they are both citizens of the same country and therefore should be entitled to similar standards of public services.