



Terms and Definitions

Equity:

Just and fair inclusion into a society in which all can participate, prosper, and reach their full potential.

Other definitions:

- Third leg of sustainability stool
- The PEOPLE dimension of sustainability
- Fair access to livelihood, education, and resources; full participation in the political and cultural life of a community - Huntsville Sustainability Report
- The fair, just and equitable management of all institutions serving the public directly or by contract; the fair, just and equitable distribution of public services and implementation of public policy; and the commitment to promote fairness, justice, and equity in the formation of public policy.- National Academy of Public Administration
- Social equity is defined as participatory governance; deliberate and inclusionary processes; considering the needs of all members of the community, including those most vulnerable. Social equity means strengthening the representation of all people in the decision making process. The greater the participation in the governance process, the more well-informed policy decisions are and the better long term outcomes for meeting all of the goals of the city. - Boulder's Social Sustainability Plan.

Energy Equity:

Energy Equity is the equal distribution of the benefits and burdens of energy production and energy efficiency.

Implicit Bias:

Also known as unconscious or hidden bias, implicit biases are negative associations that people unknowingly hold. They are expressed automatically, without conscious awareness. Many studies have indicated that implicit biases affect individuals' attitudes and actions, thus creating real-world implications, even though individuals may not even be aware that those biases exist within themselves. Notably, implicit biases have been shown to trump individuals' stated commitments to equality and fairness, thereby producing behavior that diverges from the explicit attitudes that many people profess. The Implicit Association Test (IAT) is often used to measure implicit biases with regard to race, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, and other topics.

Inclusion:

Authentically bringing traditionally excluded individuals and/or groups into processes, activities, and decision/policy making in a way that shares power.

Racism:

To refer to individual, cultural, institutional and systemic ways by which differential consequences are created for groups historically or currently defined as white being advantaged, and groups historically or currently defined as non-white (African, Asian, Hispanic, Native American, etc.) as disadvantaged.

That idea aligns with those who define racism as prejudice plus power, a common phrase in the field. Combining the concepts of prejudice and power points out the mechanisms by which racism leads to different consequences for different groups. The relationship and behavior of these interdependent elements has allowed racism to recreate itself generation after generation, such that systems that perpetuate racial inequity no longer need racist actors or to explicitly promote racial differences in opportunities, outcomes and consequences to maintain those differences.

Individual or internalized racism:

The room we're all sitting in, our immediate context.

This is racism that exists within individuals. It is when one holds negative ideas about his/her own culture, even if unknowingly. Xenophobic feelings or one's internalized sense of oppression/privilege are two examples of individual or internalized racism.

Interpersonal racism:

This is the racism that occurs between individuals. It is the holding of negative attitudes towards a different race or culture. Interpersonal racism often follows a victim/perpetrator model.

Institutional racism:

The building this room is in, the policies and practices that dictate how we live our lives.

Recognizing that racism need not be individualist or intentional, institutional racism refers to institutional and cultural practices that perpetuate racial inequality. Benefits are structured to advantage powerful groups as the expense of others. Jim Crow laws and redlining practices are two examples of institutional racism.

Structural Racism:

The skyline of buildings around us, all of which interact to dictate our outcomes.

Structural racism is the normalization and legitimization of an array of dynamics – historical, cultural, institutional and interpersonal – that routinely advantage Whites while producing cumulative and chronic adverse outcomes for people of color. Structural racism encompasses the entire system of White domination, diffused and infused in all aspects of society including its history, culture, politics, economics and entire social fabric. Structural racism is more difficult to locate in a particular institution because it involves the reinforcing effects of multiple institutions and cultural norms, past and present, continually reproducing old and producing new forms of racism. Structural racism is the most profound and pervasive form of racism. For example, we can see structural racism in the many institutional, cultural and structural factors that contribute to lower life expectancy for African American and Native American men, compared to white men. These include higher exposure to environmental toxins, dangerous jobs and unhealthy housing stock, higher exposure to and more lethal consequences for reacting to violence, stress and racism, lower rates of health care coverage, access and quality of care and systematic refusal by the nation to fix these things.

Racial Equity:

Racial equity is the proactive reinforcement of policies, practices, attitudes and actions that produce equitable power, access, opportunities, treatment, impacts and outcomes for all. It seeks to address root causes of inequities not just their manifestation. This includes elimination of policies, practices, attitudes and cultural messages that reinforce differential outcomes by race or fail to eliminate them.

Power:

Power is the ability to do or act; capability of doing or accomplishing something. Power is often conceptualized as power over other individuals or groups, other variations are power with (used in the context of building collective strength) and power within (which references an individual's internal strength). Learning to "see" and understand relations of power is vital to organizing for progressive social change.

Sources: Partnership for Southern Equity, Government Alliance on Race and Equity