

## **Inequity and inequality**

**Inequity and inequality are closely related in origin and in some of their secondary definitions, so mixing them up is never a serious error, but there are differences between them. Inequality refers primarily to the condition of being unequal, and it tends to relate to things that can be expressed in numbers.<sup>1</sup> Inequity, in its main sense, is a close synonym of injustice and unfairness, so it usually relates to more qualitative matters.<sup>2</sup> For example, one might say that income inequality results from inequity in society, or that inequality in taxation is a great inequity.**

**But inequality does cross into more qualitative territory in some of its secondary uses, especially where it refers to a lack of equality in opportunity or treatment. Inequality in this sense, often used in reference to disparities in rights or freedoms, is virtually interchangeable with inequity. Because the words come so close together here, the use of inequality in place of inequity is rarely a problem. Using inequity in place of inequality in the latter's quantitative senses is potentially problematic, however, because inequity is not conventionally used this way.**

### **Example1.**

Facing inequities and lacking opportunities to other children.

### **Example2.**

Inequality between countries in access to food, water, housing and work.