

2 People living with disabilities are everywhere! Most disabilities are invisible but they are very present

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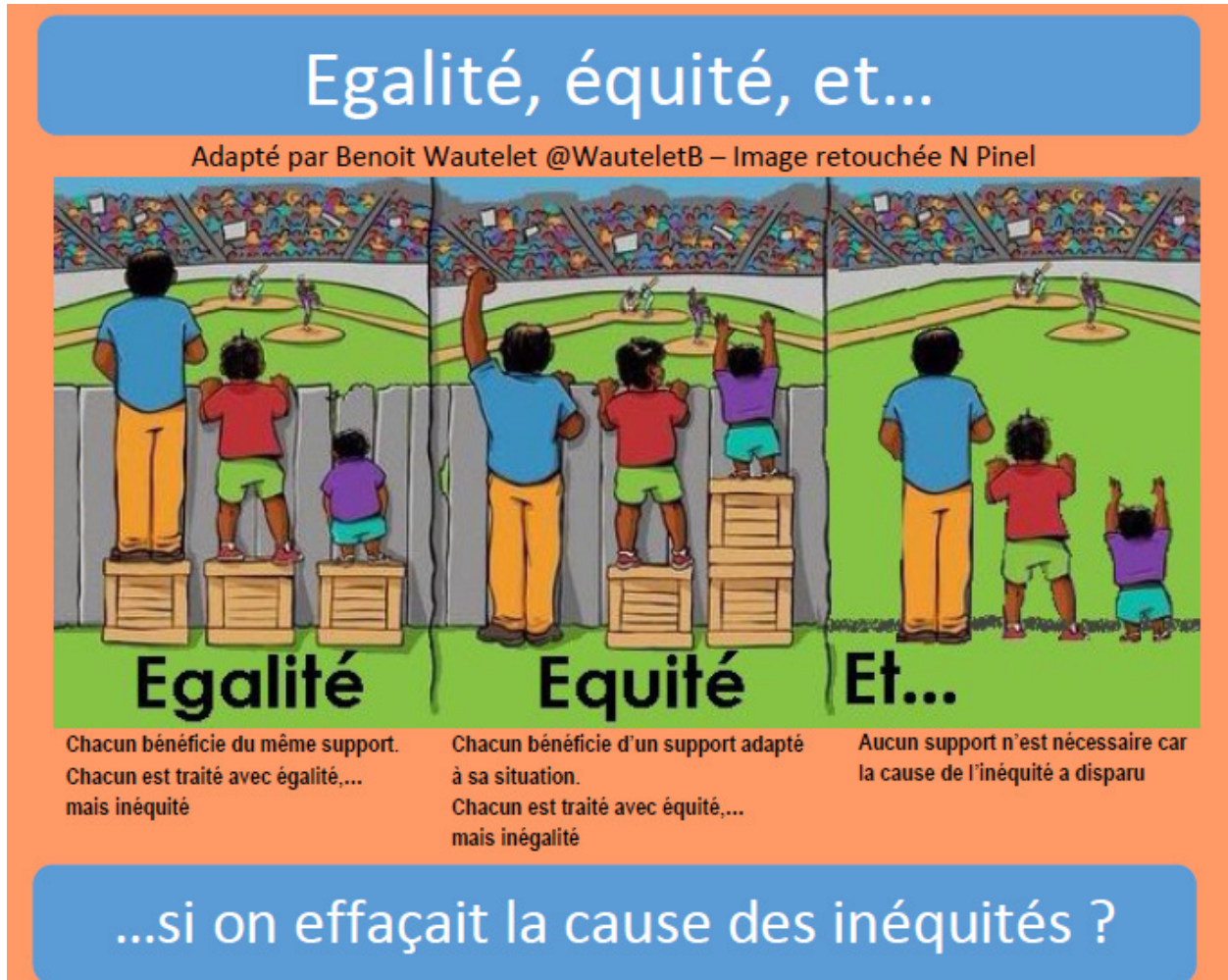
When it comes to the average person, there is an alternative whenever we encounter a lack of accessibility: reasonable accommodation, which, as its name suggests, is reasonable!

For example, if we consider a simple meeting, here is a non-exhaustive list of the accommodations we might foresee in our plan:

- For a person living with a motor impairment (which one? Say, someone who uses a wheelchair!): make sure that the building is accessible and that it has accessible washrooms. In the room where the activity takes place, make enough space to allow for the person or people to be able to move around so that they are not forced to stay in one place all day.
- For someone with a visual impairment: **description** is important. Describe the room (size, shape, location of all participants), describe the contents of images (if you are using visual supports). Don't worry if you haven't arranged for braille translation when you use paper documents; instead, just send the document by email. New reader technology will allow people who are visually impaired to access the material (be aware, though, that Word documents are preferable as not all readers read PDFs or other document formats).
- For people who are hard of hearing, Deaf, or deafened: what air is to sound, light is to the image! Sign language is fundamental, but so is lighting in the spaces we use. In order to read lips and hear you, the hard of hearing or Deaf person needs to face the person who is speaking. If the person turns around, it is as though they have pressed the "mute" button. And one more thing: there is no need to scream! Facial expressions matter too; just speak at an ordinary pace!
- For people with cognitive disabilities: these folks understand at their own rhythm...Do not forget that they are there. Address them directly and use simple words.

There are other disabilities that we did not mention here and other recommendations we have to give, but as we explained above, it is impossible to list them all! What should you do if you are facing a situation that is not covered in the points above? The answer is in the next section.

Figure 2: ...what if we erased the cause of inequity?



4 When in doubt, ask!

When someone is open about their disability, you can openly ask them the question! Without asking what they “suffer” from, you can simply ask them “do you have any requests or needs that, if met, would facilitate your participation in this activity?” “What can we do to facilitate your participation?”.