

# Health equity in the world's most unequal region: A challenge for public policy in Latin America

## Equidad en salud en la región más desigual del mundo: Un reto de políticas públicas en América Latina

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Re-democratization has transformed the social agenda and the role of the state in Latin America with a growing commitment to health equity and social justice, yet these aspirations are strained by the region's profound socioeconomic inequalities. Efforts to provide universal coverage to the right to health have led to the development of a variety of public policies, whose scope depends on how the concepts of health and equity are understood. In general, policy action has centered on health system reforms and only recently on integrated intersectorial action to address wider social determinants of health, particularly structural determinants. Furthermore, if the goal is health equity the predominant minimum standards approach cannot be the final answer, but only a step on the road to equality. Finally, realizing universal coverage of the right to health through public policy requires the strengthening of governmental institutional capacities with an intersectorial and participatory lens