

The Symbiosis of Equality Impact Assessment and Stakeholder Engagement



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A background image showing a group of diverse young people in a social setting. On the left, a young woman with long red hair is smiling. In the center, a young woman with curly dark hair and glasses is looking towards the camera. On the right, a young man with glasses is smiling. The image has a soft, slightly blurred quality.

1

INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

PARALLEL LINES?

Equity

Legitimacy

Trust

PARALLEL LINES?

Equality Impact Assessment

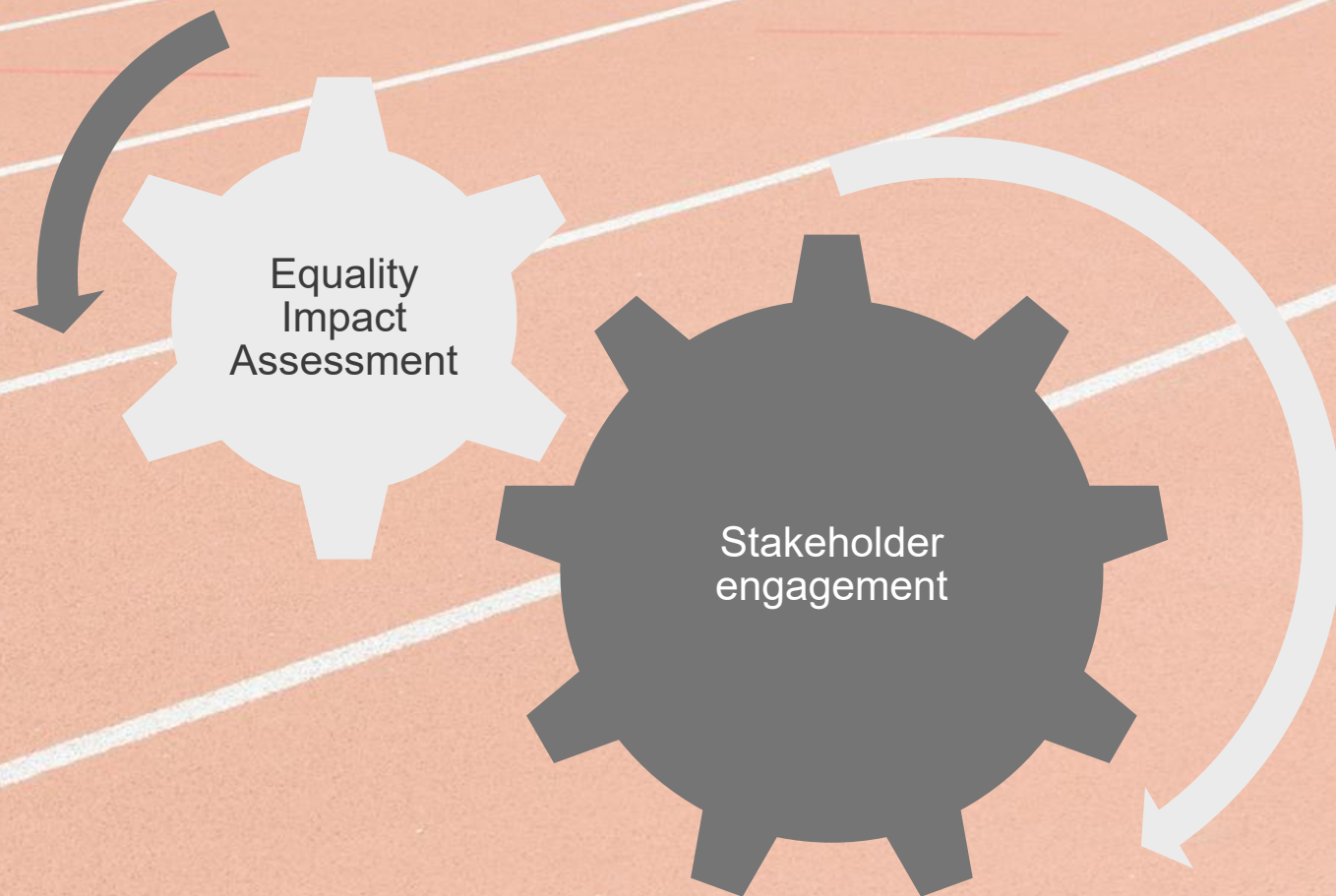
Stakeholder engagement

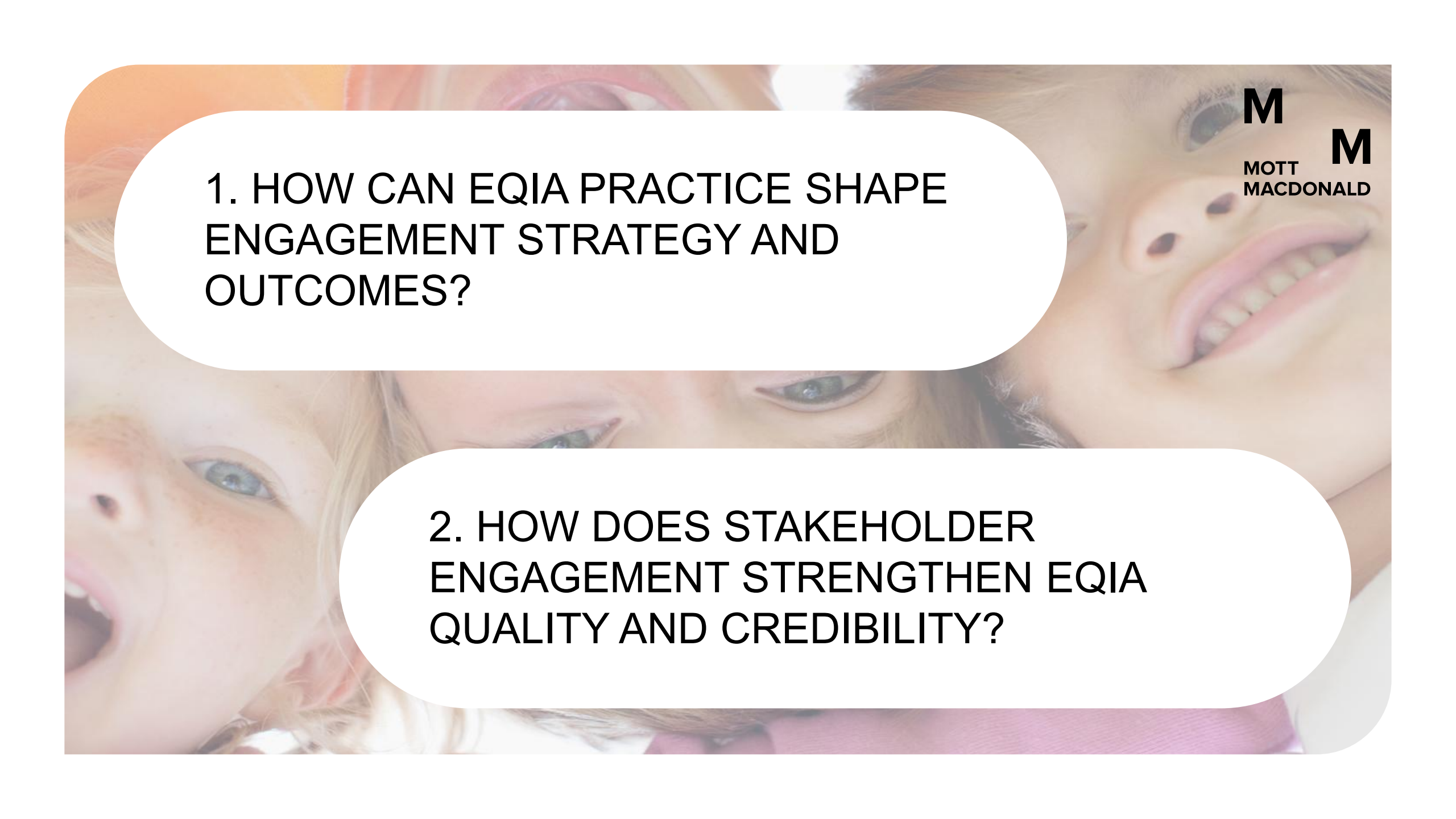
PARALLEL LINES?

Stakeholder engagement

Equality Impact Assessment

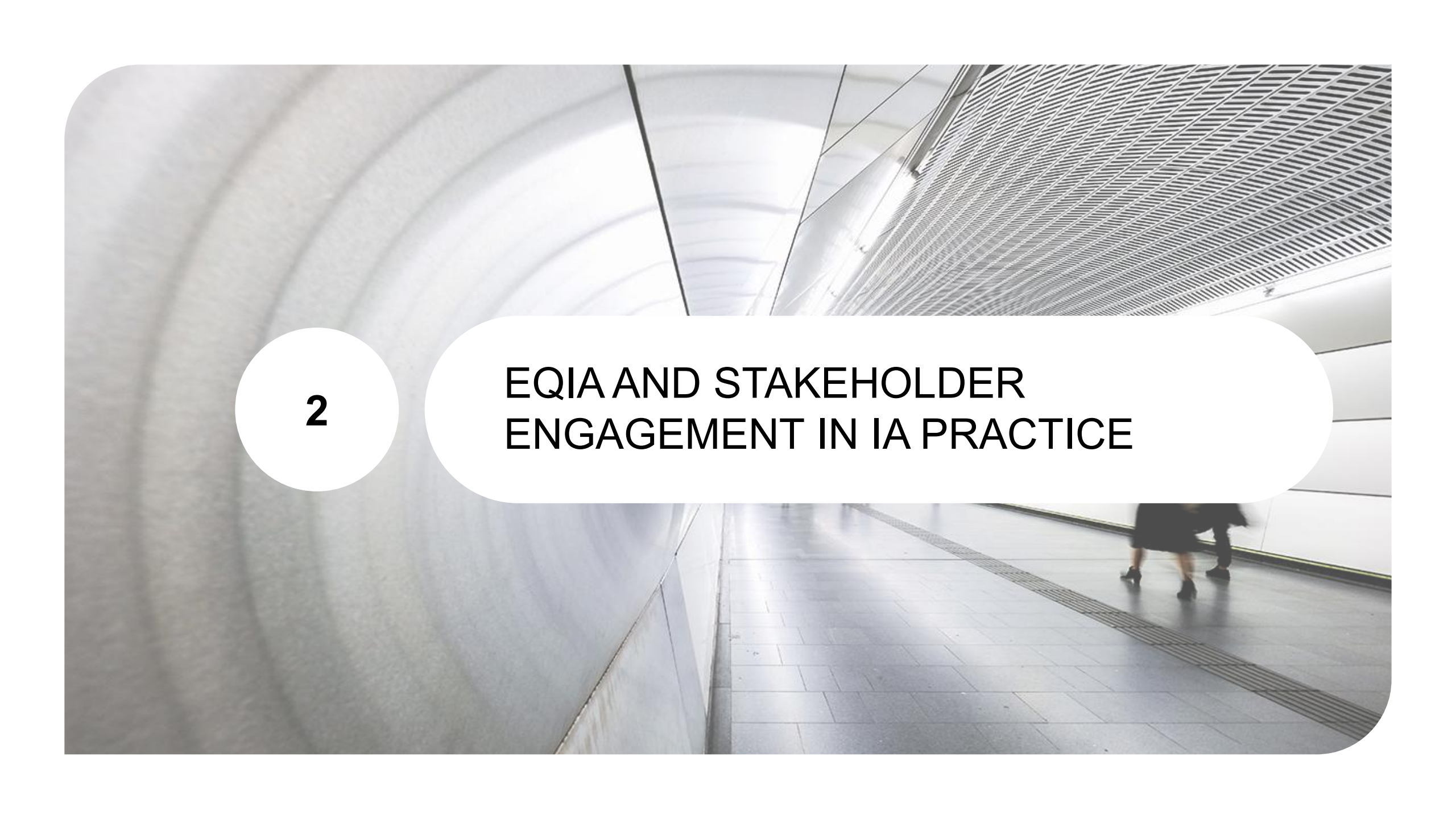
PARALLEL LINES?



The background of the slide features a collage of close-up photographs of children's faces, showing various expressions and features like eyes, noses, and mouths. The images are slightly blurred and overlaid with a semi-transparent white layer where the text boxes are located.

**1. HOW CAN EQIA PRACTICE SHAPE
ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY AND
OUTCOMES?**

**2. HOW DOES STAKEHOLDER
ENGAGEMENT STRENGTHEN EQIA
QUALITY AND CREDIBILITY?**



2

EQIA AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT IN IA PRACTICE

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Objectives

- Identify and assess effects on equality
- Identify opportunities to promote equality
- Address, remove or mitigate any negative impacts

Equality effects

- Where the impact on a particular group might be different from other sections of the population.
- Where the impacts might be disproportionately felt by some groups of people.

PROTECTED CHARACTERISTICS



Age



Disability



Gender
Reassignment



Marriage &
Civil
Partnership



Pregnancy &
Maternity



Race



Religion &
Belief



Sex



Sexual
Orientation

KEY CONSIDERATIONS IN EQIA

Different needs,
experiences, issues
or priorities

Different levels of
uptake

Different levels of
access

Social, physical or
cognitive barriers

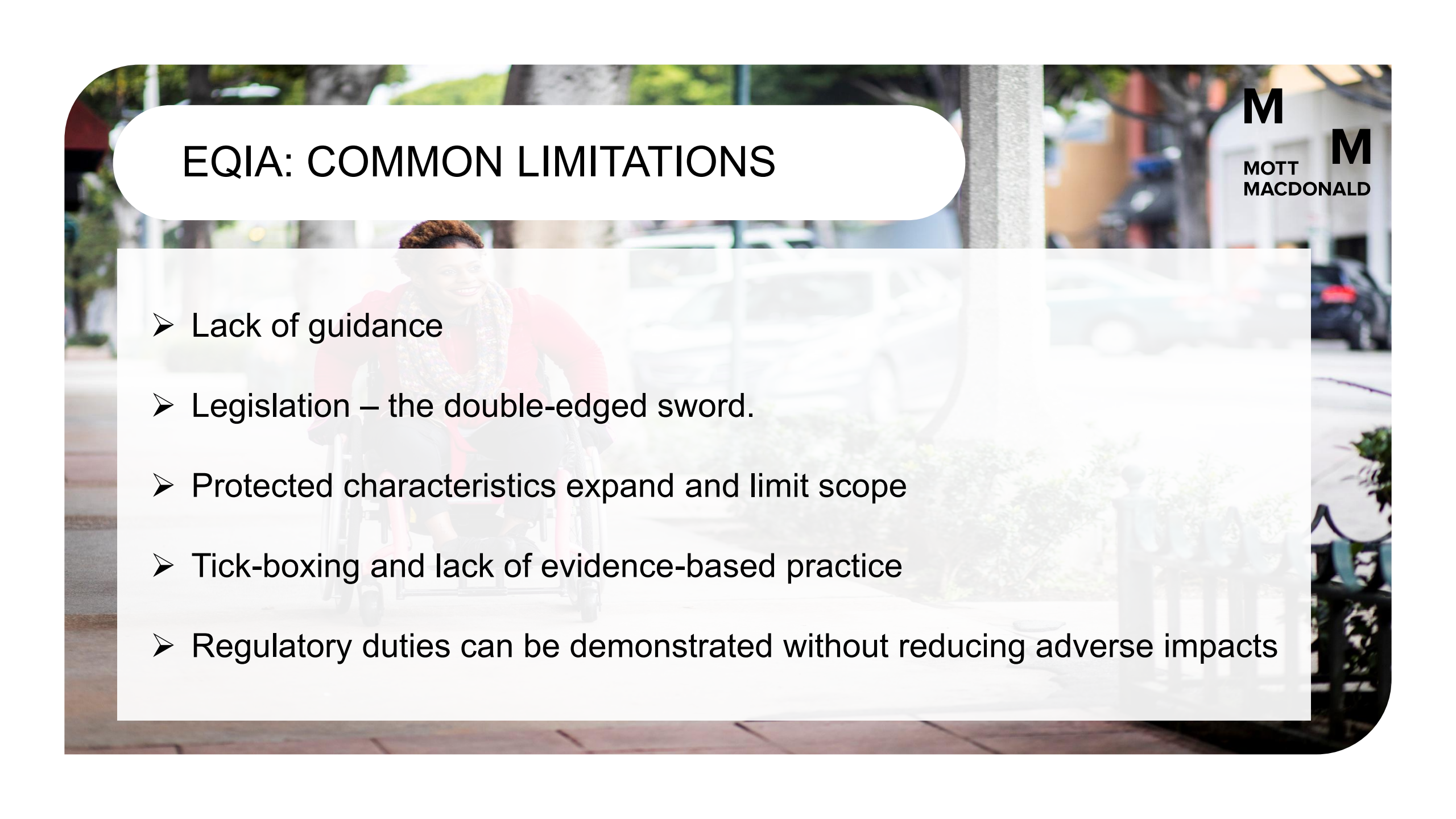
Opportunities to
advance equality

Concerns about
actual, perceived or
potential
discrimination

Impact on equality
of opportunity

Impact on
community relations
and cohesion

Direct or indirect
discrimination

A background image showing a woman with dark hair, wearing a red top and a patterned scarf, smiling while sitting in a wheelchair on a city sidewalk. The background is slightly blurred, showing trees and a street.

EQIA: COMMON LIMITATIONS

- Lack of guidance
- Legislation – the double-edged sword.
- Protected characteristics expand and limit scope
- Tick-boxing and lack of evidence-based practice
- Regulatory duties can be demonstrated without reducing adverse impacts

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT - USES

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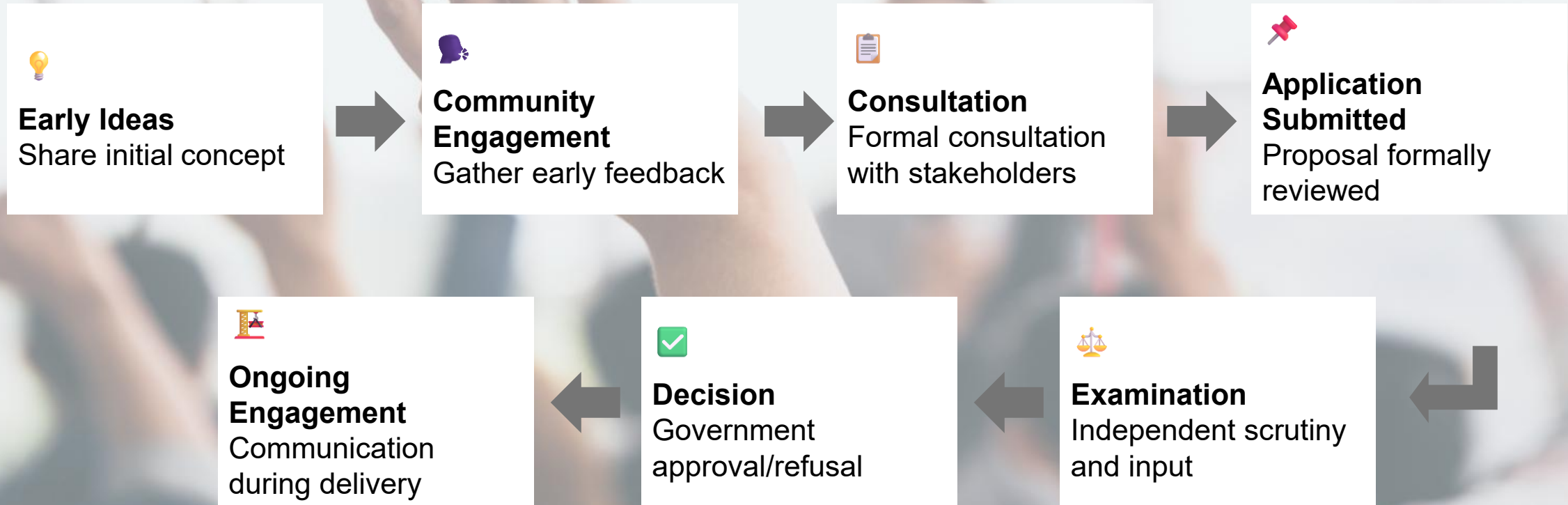
Driving policy
and strategic
decision-
making

Programme
development,
optioneering,
site- and route-
selection

Informing
project design
and service
delivery

Statutory
consultation
and
community
engagement in
consenting

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT – KEY STEPS



STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT - LIMITATIONS

Limitations of statutory requirements in terms of scope, methods, and timing

Overly motivated by programme and consenting risk, rather than social risk

Insufficiently integrated with Impact Assessment processes

Limited interface with EqIA

THE DANGERS OF SEPARATION

EqlA becomes:

Desk-based

Inaccurate

Hypothetical

Compliance-
driven

THE DANGERS OF SEPARATION

Stakeholder engagement becomes:

Broad-brush

Scatter-gun

Self-limiting

Insular

A background image showing a group of people, including a woman with long braids in an orange sweater, working together at a table. They are looking at a laptop and various documents. The scene is brightly lit, likely by a large window in the background.

3

A NEW SYMBIOTIC MODEL

AN ITERATIVE FEEDBACK LOOP



HOW ENGAGEMENT INFORMS EQIA

1.

Improving the evidence-base

- Filling gaps in evidence
- Providing new evidence
- Validating or challenging assumptions and findings

2.

Driving deeper insight

- Revealing lived experience and unintended impacts
- Revealing community perceptions of impact

3.

Informing assessment conclusions

- Improving confidence in attribution of effects and significance
- Supporting mitigation actions and improving confidence in mitigation judgments

HOW EQIA INFORMS ENGAGEMENT

Collaboration

The EqIA draws evidence from the stakeholder engagement process.

How consultation and engagement are delivered is key to a successful EqIA. EqIA has a role in shaping engagement.

Asking the right Questions

Providing input into what questions are being asked to ensure the capture of equity issues of concern to stakeholders

Informing the analysis of the data captured / collected.

Capturing data

Capturing information on respondents to identify where different groups have perspectives on the impacts of the project.

Considering protected / minority communities and groups who are seldom heard.

Accessibility

Influencing the methods, channels (including format and language), and timings of engagement to drive equitable access and inclusivity.

Considering physical and social access barriers and intersectionality

ITERATIVE

NOT

LINEAR



4

APPLICATION – IMPACT ASSESSMENT IN UK CONSENTING

LINEAR TRANSPORT - RAIL

Challenges of severance, noise and accessibility for existing communities:



Stakeholder engagement – evidence informs EqlA



EqlA informs scheme design, mitigation delivery, and further engagement



Iterative relationship delivers a more consentable scheme

SOCIAL HOUSING RENEWAL



Community-led engagement

Through a residents' manifesto of wants and needs invited before any proposals were touted. The project was able to respond to the vast majority with ease.



Intertwined EqlA and stakeholder engagement process

Presenting emerging findings and discussing them with communities as guests at community forums



Community acceptability of otherwise objectionable but essential redevelopment

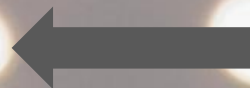
Overwhelming support for the proposals in community ballot (a London requirement) with high turnout.

AIRPORT EXPANSION

EqlA commissioned
based on policy
drivers, risk
management, ambition

Findings from
consultation augment
and bolster EqlA

EqlA shapes
engagement and
consultation process



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IMPLICATIONS FOR IA PRACTICE

MISINFORMATION, TRUST AND LEGITIMACY

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Transparency

Drives transparency in
decision-making

Influence

Demonstrates voices
influence outcomes

Communication

EqlA is a
communication tool,
not just an assessment

Feedback

Closing the feedback
loop with stakeholders

PRACTITIONERS AND PROJECTS

Implications for EqlA and Stakeholder Engagement practitioners:

- Embed EqlA thinking early in engagement planning
- Treat engagement outputs as evidence, not anecdote

PRACTITIONERS AND PROJECTS



Benefits for project teams:

- Improved risk management and defensibility of design and approach
- Stronger consent and permitting outcomes

PRACTITIONERS AND PROJECTS

Opportunities for the wider practice community:

- Strengthening the social dimensions of Impact Assessment through disaggregation of impacts and credibility of evidence
- Reframing 'compliance' tools as design intelligence

A photograph of four students sitting around a table in a library, smiling and looking at each other. They are surrounded by bookshelves filled with books. A white circle and a white rounded rectangle are overlaid on the image, containing the number 6 and the word CONCLUSIONS respectively.

6

CONCLUSIONS

KEY BENEFITS

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**More
inclusive**

**More
responsive**

**Legitimacy &
reilience**

EQIA AND ENGAGEMENT ARE MOST
POWERFUL WHEN
DESIGNED TOGETHER,
REVISITED ITERATIVELY, AND
COMMUNICATED TRANSPARENTLY



IAIA26
QUÉBEC CITY, CANADA

Let's continue the conversation!

Message me your questions or comments in the IAIA26 app.

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