

Urban Equity Climate Compact



Urban Equity Climate Compact Core Competency: Data, Measures and Evaluation

1. WHAT IS DATA, MEASURE AND EVALUATION?

Data plays an essential role in the decision making process within organizations. The collection, analysis, interpretation and distribution of data can be used to identify problems, which can inform where to deploy resources. As programs are implemented data can be used to track progress and evaluate the program's effectiveness. However, this data life cycle can either create benefits or burdens for communities. Data equity acknowledges this and considers that marginalized communities often lack access to data-gathering processes and may also experience harm from the misuse of data¹. Further, data equity acknowledges that data collection and analysis may be biased and be used to skew how information is presented and how decisions are made.

Types of Data²

- Qualitative data can answer questions such as “how did this happen” or and “why did this happen.” Qualitative data can't be measured and is generally descriptive. (Example: lived experiences)
- Quantitative data answers key questions such as “how many,” “how much” and “how often”. Can be measured by numerical variables. (Example: cost)

Data measures that effectively drive policies center equity and value life experiences.

2. WHY IS DATA, MEASURES AND EVALUATION IMPORTANT IN EQUITY WORK?

Data tells the story of communities. However, the narrative that data can show may not always paint an accurate picture. Those who handle data have the power to shape conversations that can lead to policy and program decisions, which impact individuals³. How data is used can either reinforce stereotypes or dismantle the systems that perpetuate racial divides⁴. When an equity-centered lens is taken, data is handled without bias and ensures harm is not a result of its use.⁵

Although some organizations intend to implement equity efforts or believe they are implementing programs equitably, people within the community may not be receiving the benefits. Because of this, it is important to gather data from communities to assist in measuring and evaluating equity efforts.

3. HOW TO COLLECT DATA, MEASURE AND EVALUATE EQUITY WORK?

Handling the life cycle of data and sharing narratives associated with it should be done responsibly and equitably⁶. According to a U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' 1979 Belmont Report, three things to consider to protect human subjects and make communities a priority during the data life cycle are:⁷

- **A respect for persons:** This requires acknowledging the autonomy of people and protecting those with little to no autonomy.
- **Beneficence:** This requires respecting a person's decisions in order to protect them from harm and secure their well-being.
- **Justice:** This occurs when the distribution of what someone deserves is fair. Injustice occurs when someone does not receive a benefit they deserve or when they receive a burden unduly.

One of many ways to handle data equitably is to access and analyze disaggregated data. Disaggregated data provides more detailed information, which will enhance your understanding of problems and allow you to design and implement a more appropriate approach to creating solutions.

RESOURCES FOR DATA EQUITY

Data Equity Framework

<https://weallcount.com/the-data-process/>

Evident Change: Data for Equity Model Overview

<https://www.evidentchange.org/sites/default/files/inline-files/Data%20for%20Equity%20overview.pdf>

Urban Institute Equitable Data Practice

<https://www.urban.org/elevate-data-equity/resources-elevate-data-equity/equitable-data-practice>

1 Lee-Ibarra, J. (2021). Data equity: What is it, and why does it matter? JLI Consulting.

2 Sm, Sharma, M., Marc, Moses, & Yusufun. (2021). 6 types of data in Statistics & Research: Key in data science. Blog For Data-Driven Business.

3 Gaddy, M., & Scott, K. (2020). Principles for Advancing Equitable Data Practice. Urban Institute.

4 Lee-Ibarra, J (2021)

5 Ibid.

6 Gaddy, M., & Scott K. (2020)

7 Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP). (2021). Read the Belmont Report. HHS.gov.