



**Dr. Veronica Lane** - Proud member of the Diné (Navajo) Nation. From Béesh Háágééd (Coppermine) in northern AZ



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

# Elevating equity for Indian Country in data and statistics

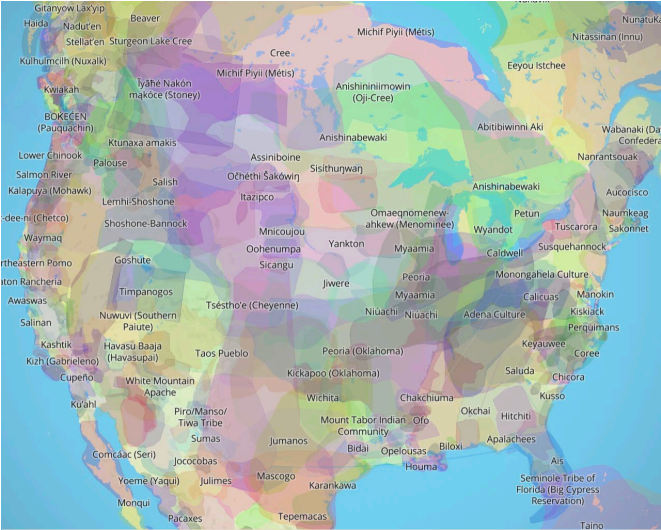
OCTOBER 22, 2024

Jacob Malcom, Director, Office of Policy Analysis and Statistical Official, Dept. of the Interior

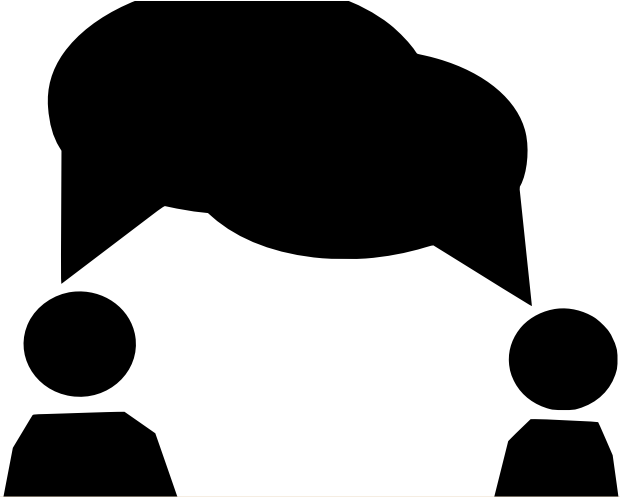
Veronica Lane, Associate Chief Data Officer, Office of the Asst. Sec. Indian Affairs, Dept. of the Interior



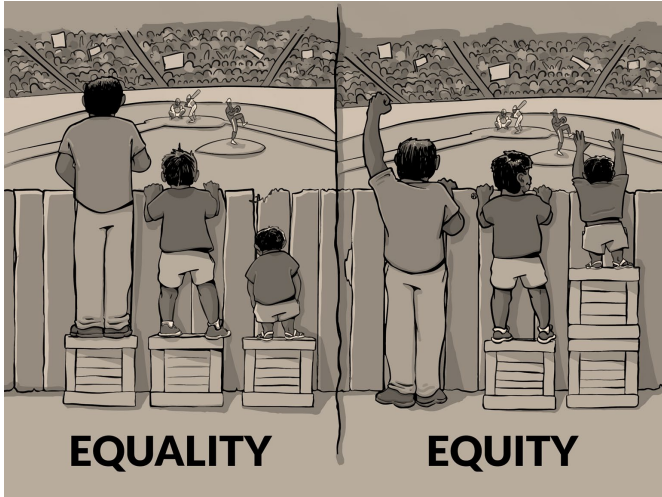
# Challenges



History



Contact / communications



EQUALITY

EQUITY

Equity and equality

# History, context

- Contrast official reports on Indigenous Peoples from mid-1800s and 2000s (AUS, CAN, USA examples)

Comparing these two reports highlights that the measuring and recording of Indigenous disadvantage is a long-established bureaucratic response. The resemblance of official documentation in 1858 to that in 2016, and the similarity of the data reproduced, also makes clear that between the first and second inquiries, the “welfare of the Native” is largely unchanged. Despite the more than 150 years of social policy enacted upon Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, as the data indicate, we remain the poorest, sickest, and least educated and employed group in Australia. This Australian example is repeated in other guises across the CANZUS countries. Inquiries such as the 1996 Canadian Royal Commission into Aboriginal Peoples (Government of Canada 2016) or the 1928 Meriam Report from the United States (NARF 2019) all document through data, in great detail, the level and depth of Indigenous disadvantage and the lack of change. To discuss the history of Indigenous policy in Australia, Aotearoa New Zealand, Canada and the United States, therefore, is to discuss the history of an unrelenting repetition of policy failure.

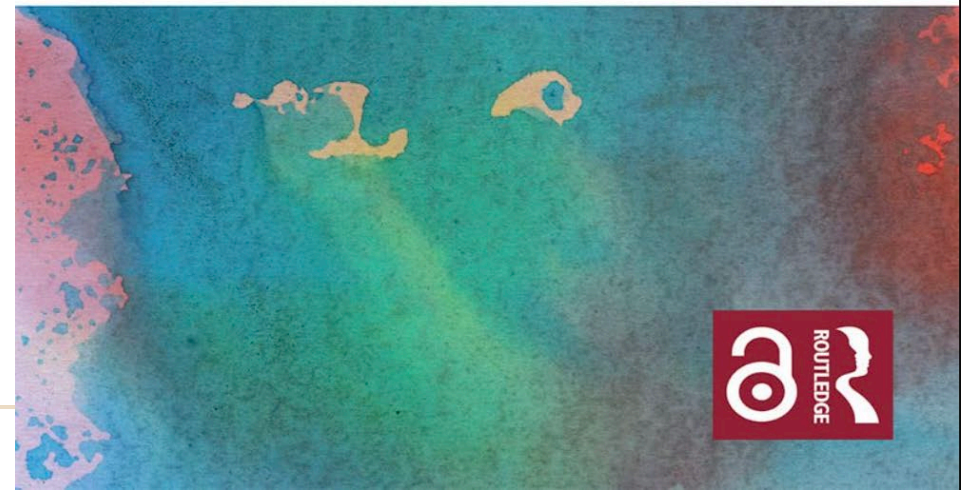


*Routledge Studies in Indigenous Peoples and Policy*

## INDIGENOUS DATA SOVEREIGNTY AND POLICY

Edited by

Maggie Walter, Tahu Kukutai, Stephanie Russo Carroll and  
Desi Rodriguez-Lonebear





# Investing resources to better communicate, engage, and understand the context

- Community engagement
  - At what stage are you engaging Indigenous/Tribal communities in the research process?
  - Have they been given opportunities to provide input into the development of the RQ's, methods, instruments, results, interpretation, and dissemination? (CARE Principles)
  - Have adequate relationships been developed to foster trust?
  - What historical wrongs or challenges should be considered?
- Have potential barriers from participation been identified and mitigated?
  - Access to internet/connectivity
  - The burden of mailers that must be returned to distant post offices/Lack of physical street addresses
- Data use
  - How is the data to be used or managed?
  - What decisions or policy changes may result from the collection of the information?
  - Are these decisions being clearly communicated from the outset?

# Equality



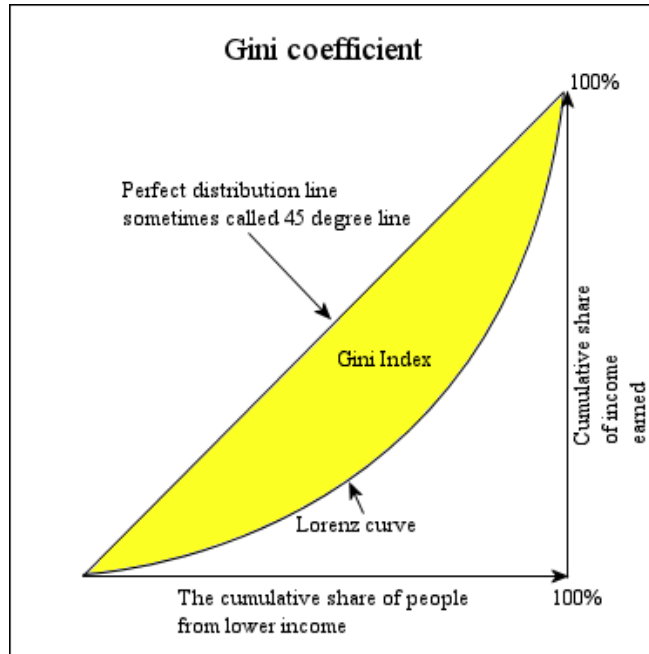
# Equity



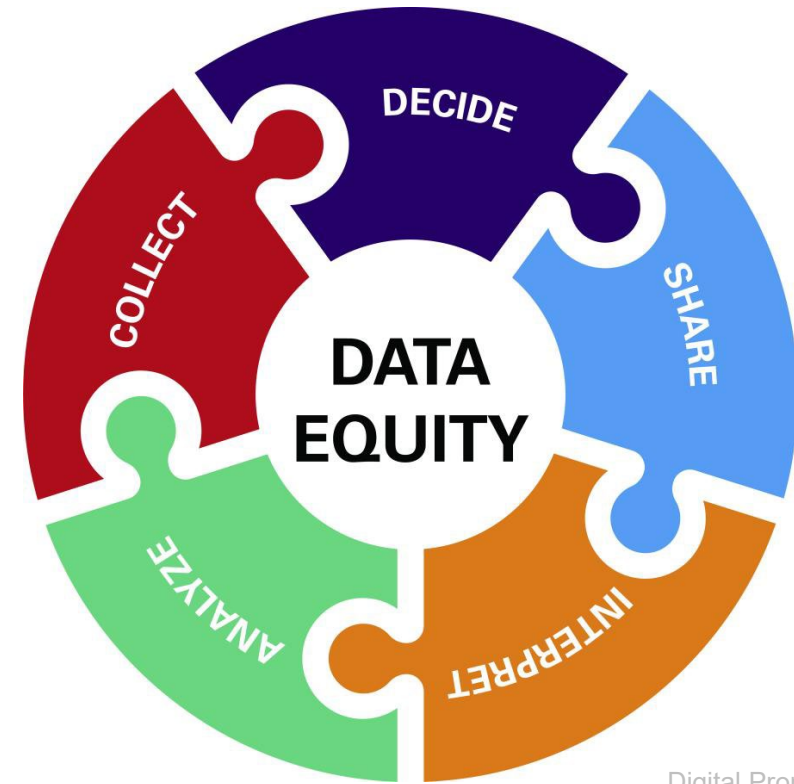
© 2017 Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.  
May be reproduced with attribution.

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation 2017

# Equity Data and Data Equity



**Equity data:** Data about equities and inequities that people and groups experience.



Digital Promise 2021

**Data equity:** People and groups have equitable access to and capacity to generate and use data.



# Putting the pieces together: Equity Data and Data Equity

We have literally centuries of *equity data*, showing inequities and inequality, and a history of not moving the needle on outcomes.

Increasing *data equity*—capacity for self-determination, data sovereignty—is essential to changing course in Indian Country.



# Tribal self-determination and data sovereignty

- *USG policy supports and prioritizes Tribal self-determination*
  - Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975
  - History of not providing necessary support, leading to current inequities
- *And what of Tribal data sovereignty?*
  - Data for and about Tribes must be seen as a Trust obligation



# Solutions



# The Importance of Quality Data and Stats for Indian Country

- Inform policy making
- Equitable resource distributions
- Effective program management
- Honor Tribal Sovereignty



# Solutions: Shared Goals and Actions

- Enhance data sharing and access, consistent with Tribal data sovereignty
- Improve data quality and integration
- Create new data sources
- Develop key economic and program research products



# Solutions: What You Can Do

- Build relationships, ensure reciprocity
- Keep Tribal data sovereignty in mind and help others remember
- Help ensure accountability for data
- Be a civil servant—for Interior, for the USG, for a Tribe, state, or locally





**Dr. Veronica Lane** - Proud member of the Diné (Navajo) Nation. From Béesh Háágééd (Coppermine) in northern AZ

