Four Approaches to Supporting Equitable Research Partnerships
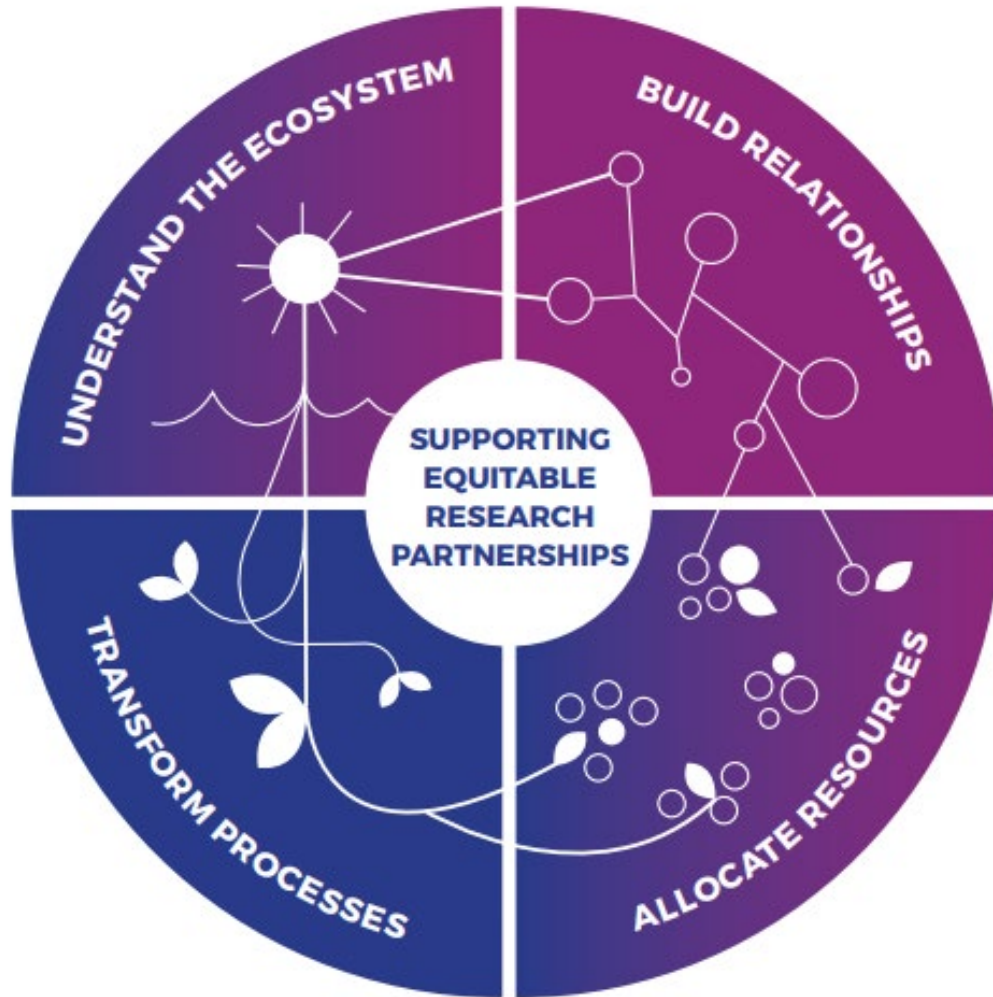
The role of funders in enabling equitable research partnerships for development

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This Good Practice Document…

SUPPORTING EQUITABLE RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS

- Was developed by a **taskforce of global research funders**

- Contains **four inter-connected approaches** to supporting equitable research partnerships

- Provides **practical recommendations** for:
  - Research funders
  - Institutions
  - Research teams

- Links to **case studies** and collates existing **resources**

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How this document was created
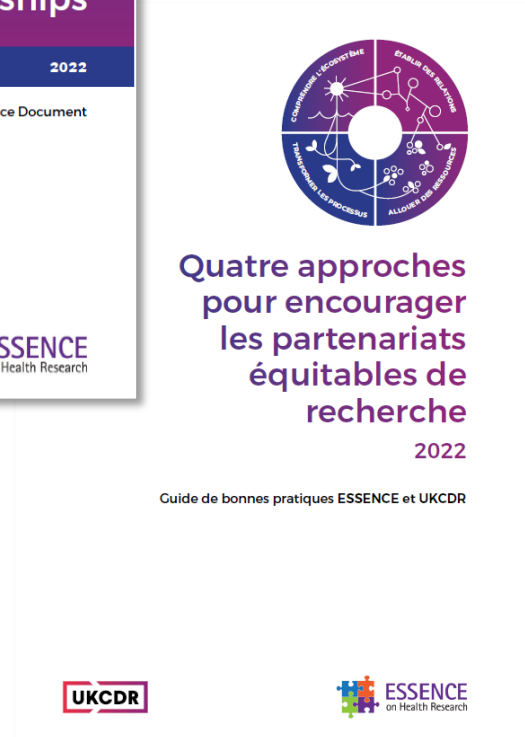
Project process:

- Global survey (418 responses)
- 5 consultative groups
- Review of existing resources
- Development of 9 learning case studies
- Launch of Equitable Partnerships Resource Hub

How to use this document

- Pick an approach relevant to your work or look at them all together

- Recommendations at three-levels:
  - Funder
  - Research institution
  - Researchers

- Read additional resources

- Make a plan of action

| For funders	For research institutions	For researchers	RECOMMENDATIONS ON APPROACH 1 SUPPORT THE RESEARCH PARTNERSHIP ECOSYSTEM
On expanding the value mindset			
●			Recognise the value inherent in equitable partnerships and establish funding policies and practices that go beyond identifying and managing risk in purely financial terms.
●			Consider how the attitudes and culture in HIC funding organisations impact on LMIC partners, and address inclusion and representation in internal decision-making structures.
On taking a holistic approach to equity			
●	●		Reflect, monitor and reward the implementation and promotion of equitable partnership building practices across the research continuum, and create an enabling environment that encourages researchers to strive for equity in all dealings with project partners.
●			Ensure LMIC representation in funder-level partnerships (see Case Study 1) as well as in research-priority setting and call design (see Case Study 3).
●			Work with partners to design research calls in ways that enhance equity, including, for example, pre-call announcements, long call windows and clear eligibility guidelines.
	●	●	Support the co-development of collaboration agreements that guide partnerships between research teams in multi-country consortia.
On addressing power imbalances			
●			Develop policies that facilitate and increase LMIC leadership and ownership, such as funding LMIC partners directly and supporting LMIC-led research proposals (see Case Study 2 and Approach 3).

Why equity is important
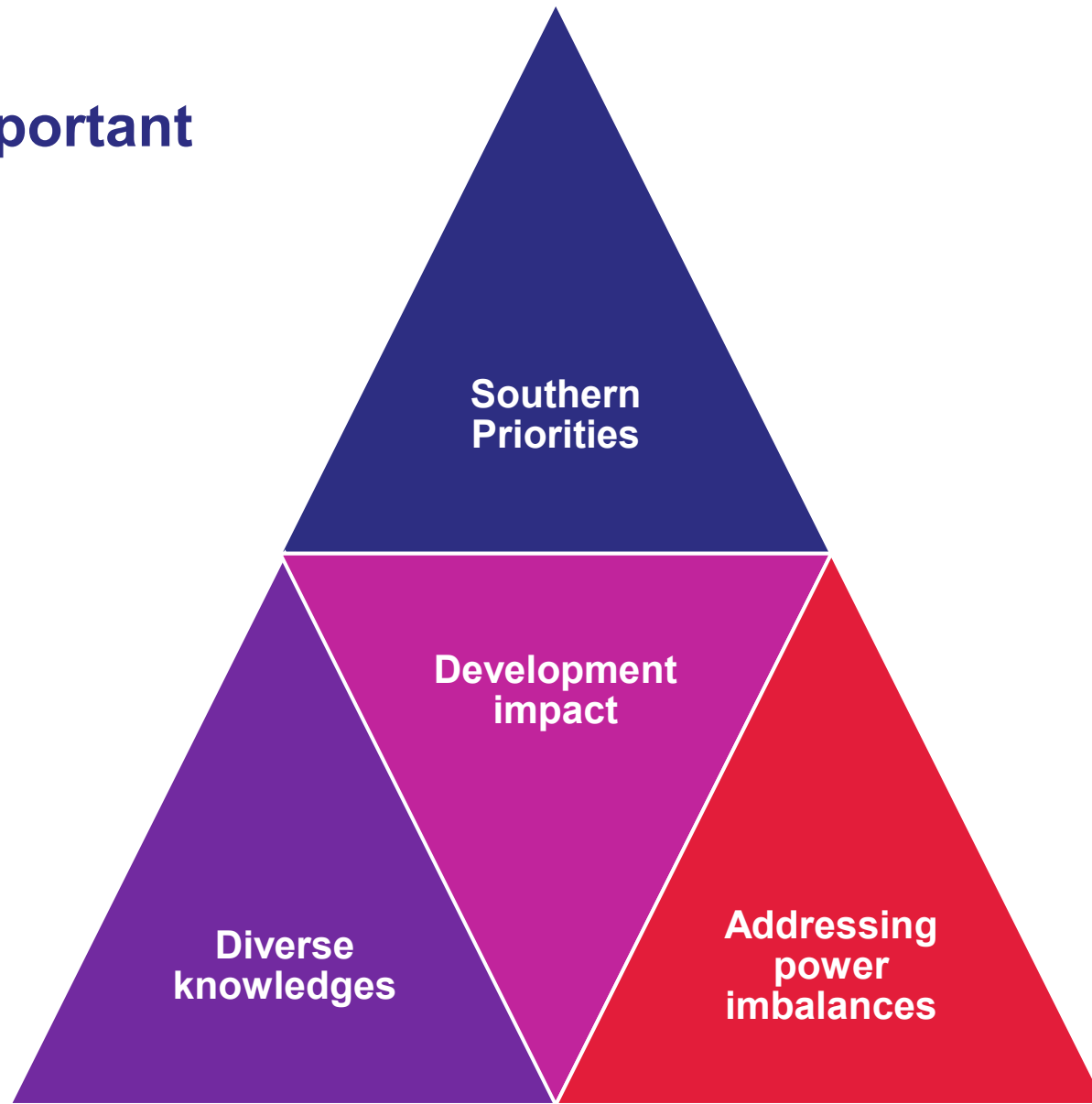
What does equity look like?
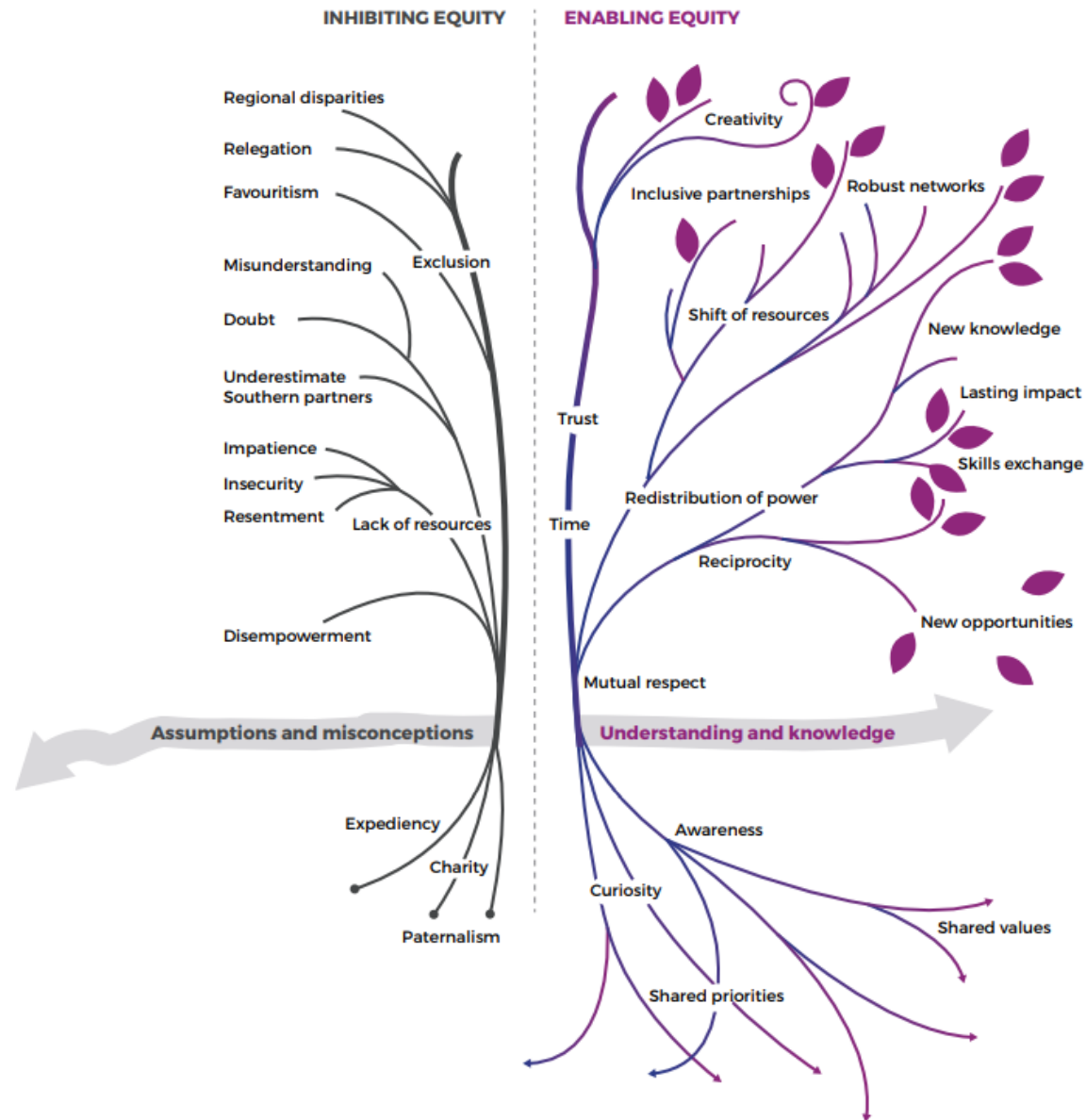
Approach 1. Support the research partnership ecosystem
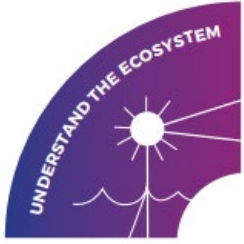
UNDERSTAND THE ECOSYSTEM

" Effective and truly equitable partnerships require financial security and long-term commitment.
– Researcher, Nepal

- *Shifting attitudes to value*
- *Equity holistically*
- *Addressing power imbalances*
- *Long-term approach*

Example funder recommendation:
For HIC funders, ensure LMIC representation in funder-level partnerships as well as in research-priority setting and call design.

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Approach 2. Strengthen research relationships and research systems

" For a partnership to be truly equitable, all parties have to realise they need each other and can learn from one another.

– Researcher, Netherlands

- *Knowledge of context*

- *Two-way learning*

- *Respectful research relationships*

- *Invest in support system around research*

Example funder recommendation:
Ensure that project funding contributes to a strategy for strengthening institutional research systems, including research management and financial capabilities.

Approach 3. Budget for partnership building

> "We have no funding for pre-proposal work to set the agenda and thresh out the issues. There needs to be support for the pre-proposal stage, that is what is lacking."
>
> – Researcher, India

- *Address power and resource imbalances*

- *Support partnership building*

- *Development of outputs, impact and future collaboration*

Example funder recommendation:
Use flexible pump-prime funding mechanisms such as pre-call workshops and two-stage funding calls to support partnership building.

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Approach 4. Implement processes and procedures that sustain partnerships

" When HIC and LMIC institutions see partnerships as purely contractual, short-term thinking magnifies power imbalances.

– Research Manager, UK

- *Distributed research governance*

- *Addressing the terms of research:*
  - *Due diligence*
  - *Costing*
  - *Intellectual property*
  - *Ethical review*

Example funder recommendation:
Strengthen the role of research management professionals so that they can help to embed equity in all institutional agreements and support research managers from LMIC institutions in negotiating contracts.

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Get in touch

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Resource hub:
ukcdr.org.uk/guidance/equitable-partnerships-hub/

Good Practice Document:
ukcdr.org.uk/resource/ukcdr-and-essence-2022-four-approaches-to-supporting-equitable-research-partnerships/

Four Approaches to Supporting Equitable Research Partnerships

2022

ESSENCE and UKCDR Good Practice Document

Equitable Partnerships Resource Hub

The UKCDR & ESSENCE equitable partnerships resource hub aims to support all those involved in the research process to embed practices which ensure equity in the design, delivery and dissemination of research

The hub brings together relevant tools, guidance and resources from global partners focused on ensuring equity in international research partnerships.

GUIDANCE

KFPE: A Guide for Transboundary Research Partnerships

Transboundary and intercultural research in partnership is challenging. This is particularly the case when cooperation takes place between rich and poor countries. This guide is based on 11 principles and 7 key questions.

15 January 2021

GUIDANCE

TRUST Consortium: Global Code of Conduct

The Global Code of Conduct for Research in Resource-Poor Settings, aims to achieve fair partnerships in research The code has been designed specifically to combat 'ethics dumping' – the practice of exporting unethical research practices to lower-income settings.

24 March 2021

REPORT

Elrha: Partnerships review – Research for health in humanitarian crises

GUIDANCE

World Bank: Sourcebook for Evaluating Global and Regional Partnerships Programmes