

# Ethical collaboration: assuring equity in international research

Eva Kagiri-Kalanzi & Lata  
Narayanaswamy

## SCHEDULE

<b>10.00</b>	Welcome	Eva & Lata
<b>10.05</b>	Decolonisation: What is it and why it matters to how we do research in UK HE	Lata Narayanaswamy
<b>10.35</b>	Q&A	
<b>10.45</b>	Group/Individual exercise	Lata
<b>11.05</b>	Break	
<b>11.15</b>	Facilitating equitability in research projects and with researchers	Eva Kagiri-Kalanzi
<b>11.35</b>	Group Exercise	Eva
<b>11.55 – 12.00</b>	Reflection and feedback	Eva and Lata



# Decolonisation: What is it and why it matters to how we do research in UK HE

Ethical collaboration: assuring equity in international research

Thursday 7 December 2023

Dr. Lata Narayanaswamy

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School of Politics and International Studies

University of Leeds, UK

Today ...

We will discuss:

1. Reflecting on shared global colonial histories
2. Whose knowledge(s) count?
3. To 'decolonise' we must be more 'inclusive' and 'localise'
4. Where do we from here?
5. Activity: spheres of influence

# Colonialism has irredeemably shaped the world

Proliferation of capitalism,  
including a fundamental shift  
in the production-  
distribution relations of so  
much of the world



## Racism as a political system ...

‘Ironically, the most important political system of recent global history – the system of domination by which white people have historically ruled over and, in certain important ways, continue to rule over nonwhite people – is not seen as a political system at all. It is just taken for granted; it is the background against which other systems, which we are to see as political, are highlighted ... What is needed, in other words, is a recognition that racism (or, as I will argue, global white supremacy) is itself a political system, a particular power structure of formal or informal rule, socioeconomic privilege, and norms for the differential distribution of material wealth and opportunities, benefits and burdens, rights and duties’ (Mills, 1997: 1-3).



African girl in a human zoo,  
Belgium 1958.



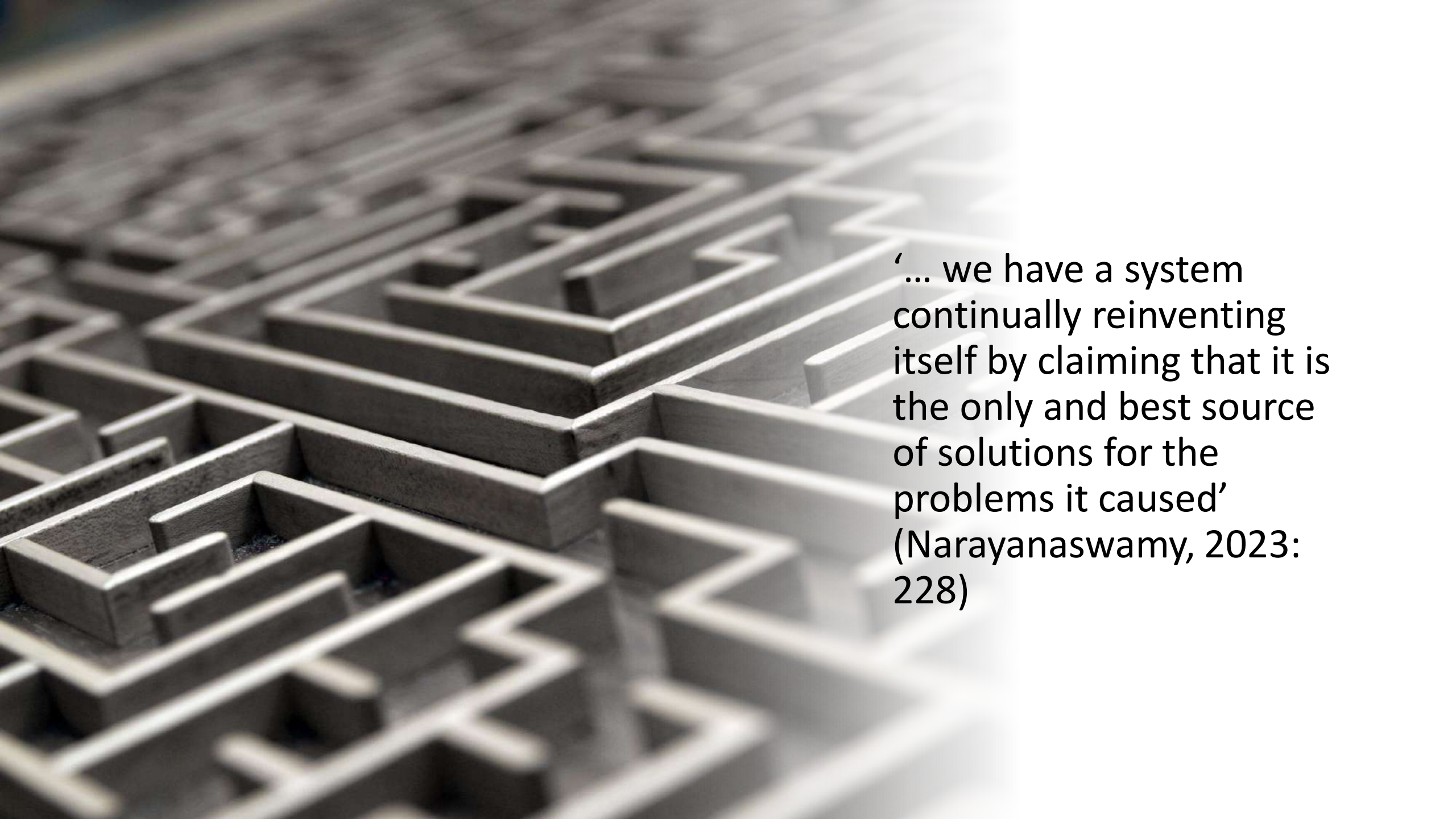
## Confronting shared, global colonial legacies ...

- Colonialism is not just the story of the black and brown Other living in places distant from Europe and North America
- Colonialism is OUR story
- We must recognise the CONTINUITIES in how the world works today ...

Wasn't  
colonialism a  
long time ago?  
We don't think  
like this anymore

...





'... we have a system continually reinventing itself by claiming that it is the only and best source of solutions for the problems it caused' (Narayanaswamy, 2023: 228)



# Why coloniality matters to EVERYONE ... or unflattening the 'Global South'



04/09/2023 BY CHRISTIANE KLIEMANN  
Contested development imaginaries: Hindutva and the co-optation of 'decolonisation'

By Kalpana Wilson, Giti Chandra and Late Narayanaswamy

**United Nations** | **UN News**  
Global perspective Human stories

Home Topics In depth Secretary-General AUDIO HUB

'Deplorable' killing of Afro-Brazilian man shows need to address racism, discrimination

EXPLAINER

## Why Do Caribbean Countries Want to Leave the Monarchy Now?

Of the 14 countries beyond the United Kingdom that retain Queen Elizabeth II as head of state, at least six in the Caribbean want out.

## Landmark deals give Indigenous key role in Canada resource projects

YQT community signs unprecedented agreement with coal company giving Indigenous leadership 'veto' on proposed project

**NEO-COLONIALISM** ... speaks to the fact that in the post-colonial moment, we do not only deal with just the consequences of a colonial past, but also with the continuation and reproduction - albeit more covertly - of the structures and relations of extraction, dispossession and imposition between the former colonizers and the colonized peoples. What is more, the colonizing practices and institutions of the flag-planting days, are continued by national and economic elites. This reinforces the fact that for the majority of the previously colonized peoples, the conditions of colonization persist, even in the absence of the White colonizer. Colonization models are thus perpetuated by fellow citizens, former colonizers, and other external actors, as well as through institutions of global governance.

- Atuire and Rutazibwa (2020)



Whose knowledge counts?

How do we  
decide what  
the problem is  
that requires  
researching?

'Many researchers, academics and project workers may see the benefits of their particular research projects as serving a greater good 'for mankind', or serving a specific emancipatory goal for an oppressed community. But belief in the ideal that benefiting mankind is indeed a primary outcome of scientific research is as much a reflection of ideology as it is of academic training. It becomes so taken for granted that many researchers simply assume that they as individuals embody this ideal and are natural representatives of it when they work with other communities.'


- Linda Tuhiwai Smith in her book *Decolonising methodologies: research and indigenous peoples*



To decolonise  
we **MUST** be  
more inclusive  
and localise ...?

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# Problematizing 'inclusive' research design

- Ideas
  - '... in reality, development 'rationalities' are so entrenched (Olwig, 2013) that some critics have argued that for many individuals, communities and groups it would be 'almost impossible . . . to envisage futures that are not bound up in some form of development imaginary' (Laurie et al., 2005: 470, citing Escobar, 1995).
- The language of our practice
  - English
  - Professionalised/academic/jargon
- Universalisation of Western frameworks

But where is  
the local?

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The local is not homogenous

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Re-homogenises 'black and brown  
others' as indistinguishable

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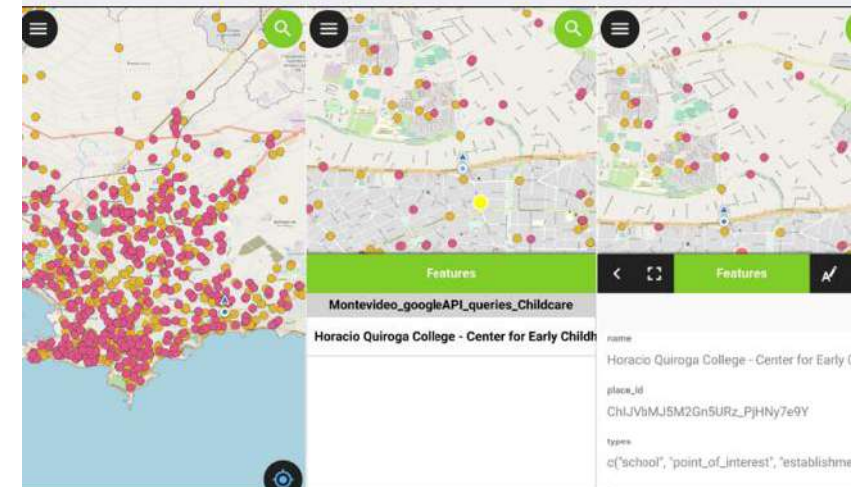
Structures of aid intact

# Where do we go from here? Starting the conversation ...

Questions we can ask ourselves and each other:

- What are the ETHICS of my activity?
  - Am I even the right person to be asking the question?
- What happens if I change my perspective?
  - What if I measure something else? (eg care in Bogota)
  - What kind of life do people want?
  - Whose views and voices ACTUALLY count?
- How can we challenge dominant N-S knowledge representations?
  - Whose ideas about 'sustainable development' or 'gender' count?
  - Who gets to decide what 'progress' or 'empowerment' looks like?
- **How do I work out what is needed to do the work and then make DEMANDS for what WE need?**

**Figure 6.** Pilot Crowdsourcing Mapping Project of Montevideo's childcare centers using QField. Browse mode.

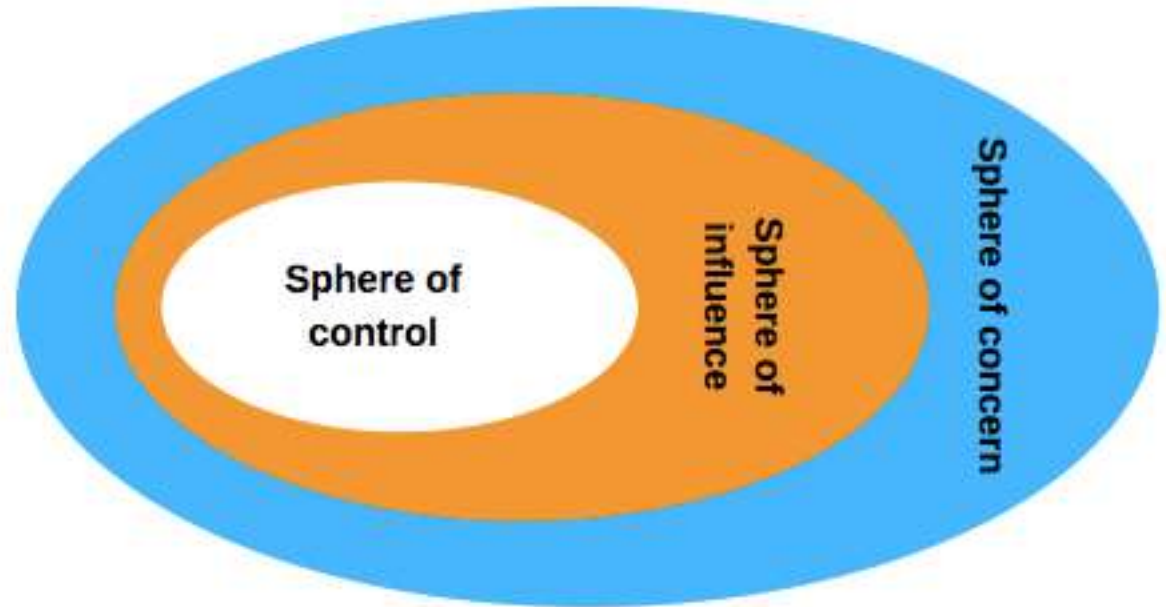


Note: In this case, different colors represent the different data sources where the data point was retrieved from (yellow=administrative records; red=Google Places API scrapping).

# Activity 1: What can we do? (20 mins)

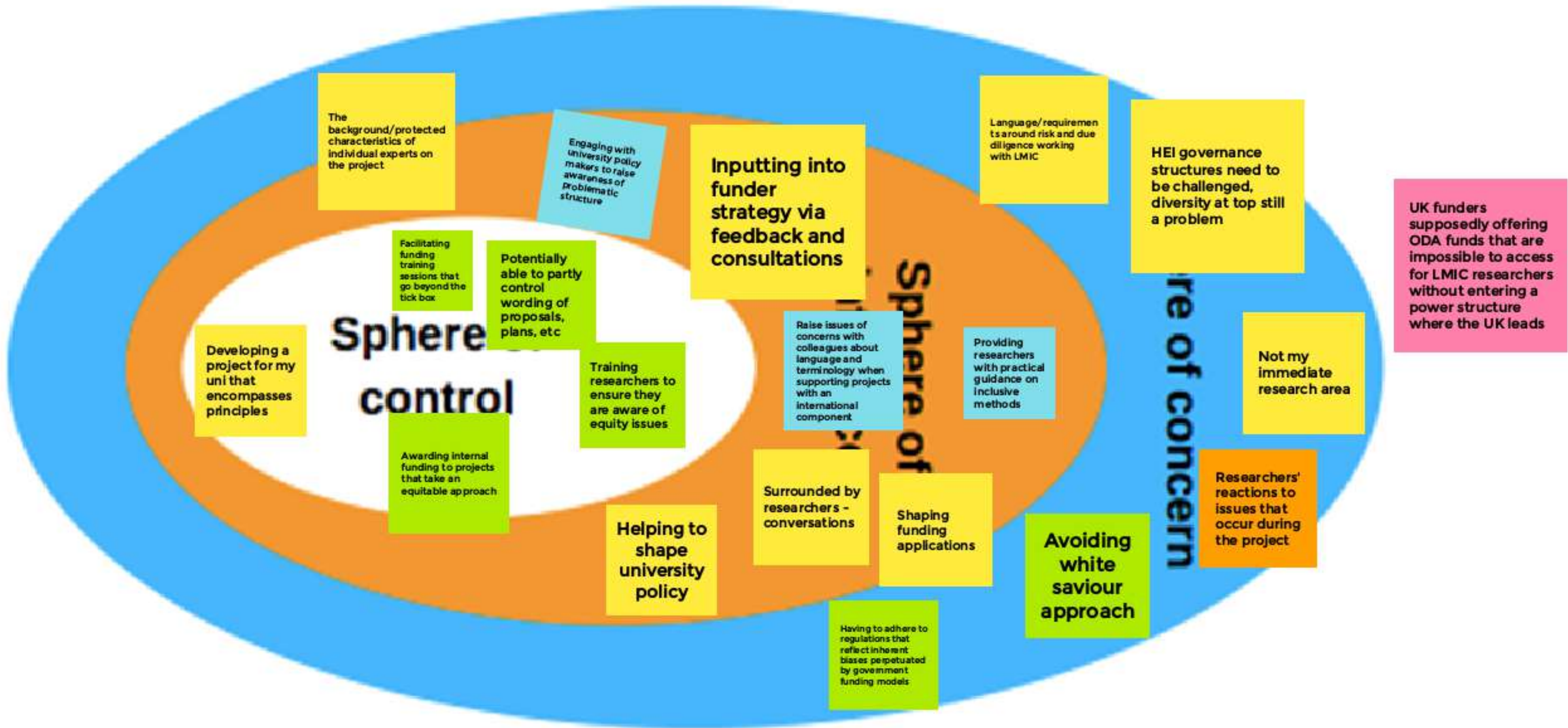
Practically, what CAN we do: Exploring and mapping our 'spheres of influence'

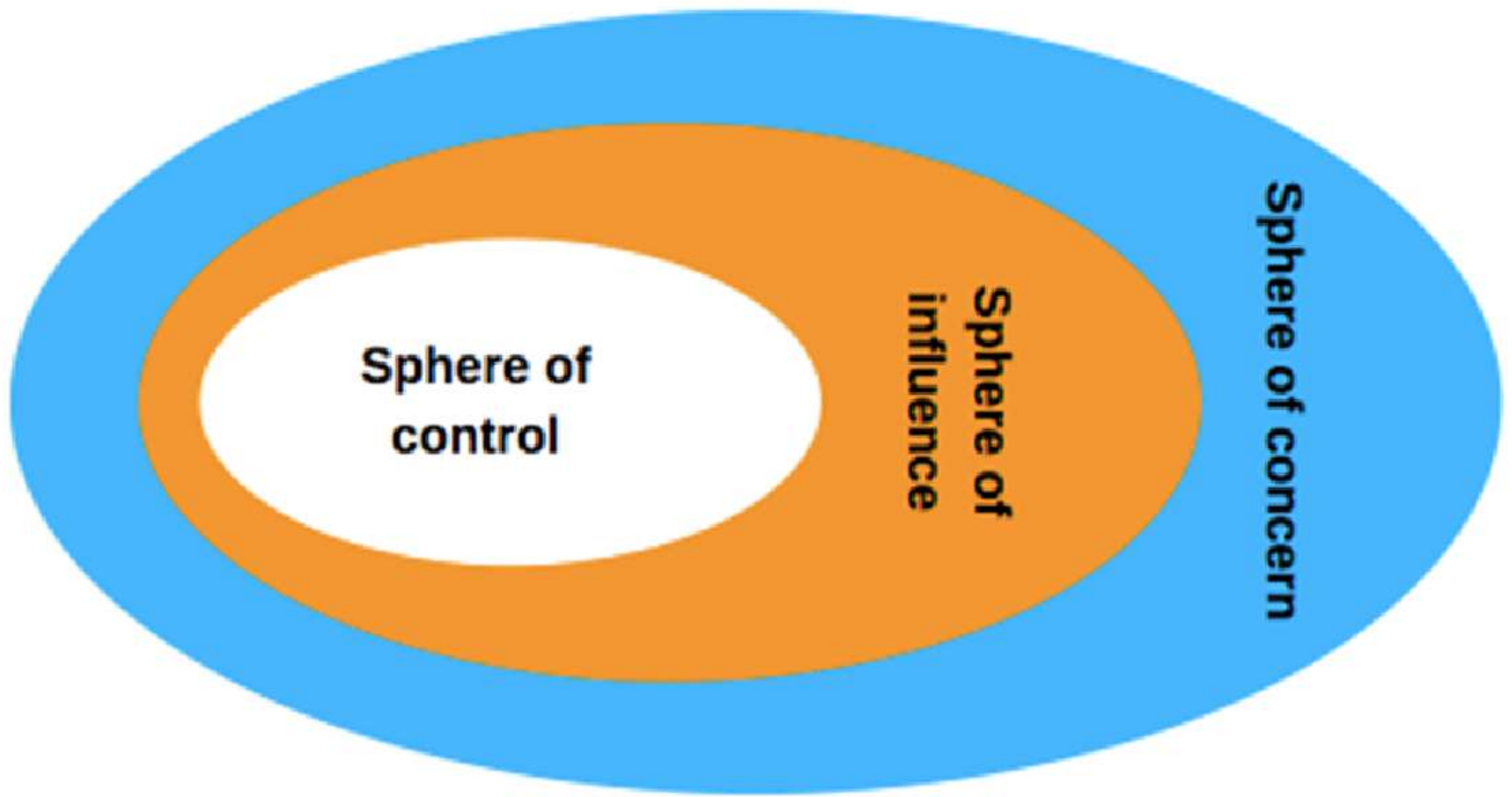
- This is about identifying what we are – and are not – able to influence, taking into consideration our positionality, capacity, as well as our internal and external networks and stakeholders











**Sphere of  
control**

**Sphere of  
influence**

**Sphere of concern**



# **Ethical collaboration: assuring equity in international research**

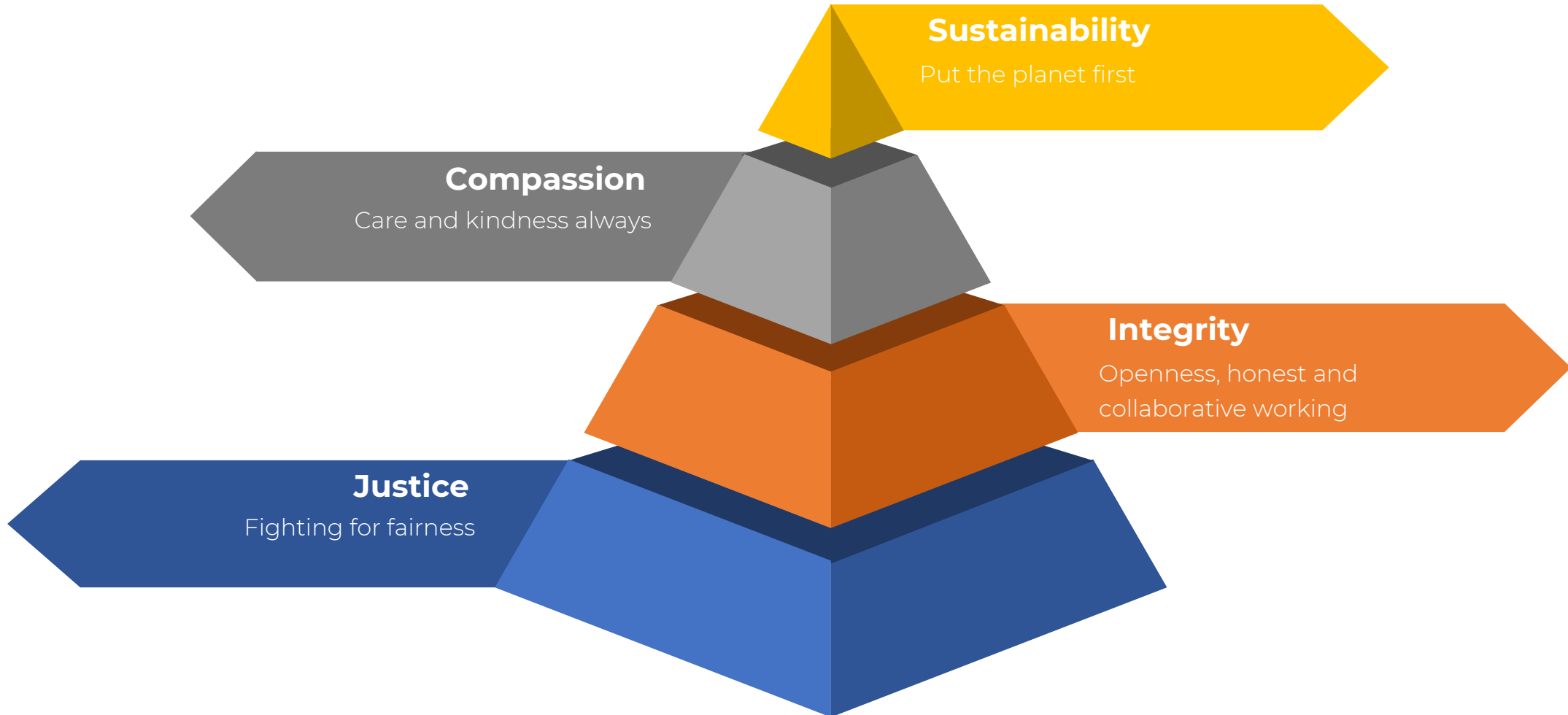
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07/12/2023

# BACKGROUND

- Currently Head of Partnerships and Communities at Scientia Scripta, a values-based science and innovation support agency with a mission "to democratise science and innovation, for good."
- SS provides [strategic communications](#); [public engagement with research](#); and [impact management, monitoring, evaluation and reporting](#). Across these three core services, our consultancy ranges from strategy and planning to delivery, evaluation, and storytelling.
- **Approach:** we work with clients and communities to nurture lasting and meaningful connections, assisting clients to transition towards co-creative practices that manage risk, deliver positive impact and drive system change.

# SCIENTIA SCRIPTA VALUES



# OUR CLIENTS

Strategic  
communications



Ethical  
engagement



The  
Alan Turing  
Institute



Effective impact





# CENTRING EQUITABILITY IN RESEARCH COLLABORATION WITH LMICs

# COLLABORATION AND EQUITY

Research collaboration with partner institutions around the globe plays a key role in assisting organisations to strategically tackle global challenges, achieve their internationalisation agendas, build knowledge, and strengthen relationships.

To be ethical and sustainable, institutions need to build and maintain global academic partnerships that are responsible, equitable and reciprocal

- **1:** Strengthen mutual learning, knowledge exchange and skills development
- **2:** Achieve demonstratable research impact for the LMIC and UK academics
- **3:** Enhance visibility of LMIC scientists as knowledge producers and contributors
- **4:** Contextualise the research emerging from the partnerships and increase visibility of UK – LMIC research in both UK and partner countries



# CONVERSATIONS ON EQUITABILITY....



## Funder driven

Inclusion of equity as a key-  
aspect of funding calls  
Lack concrete monitoring  
mechanisms



## Institutionally driven

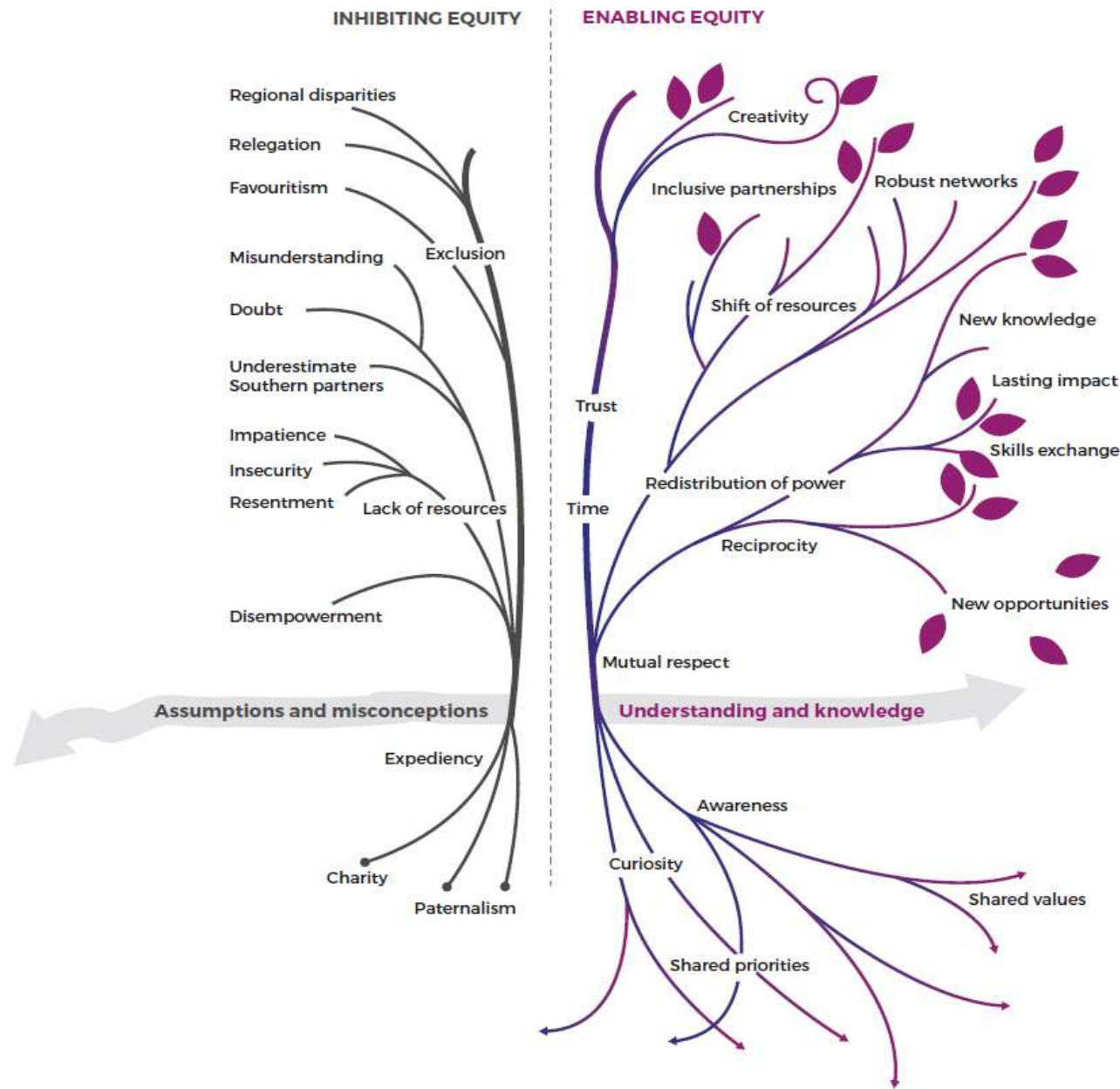
Institutional strategies  
Adoption/application isn't always  
across faculties and disciplines



## Researcher driven

Intrinsic motivation

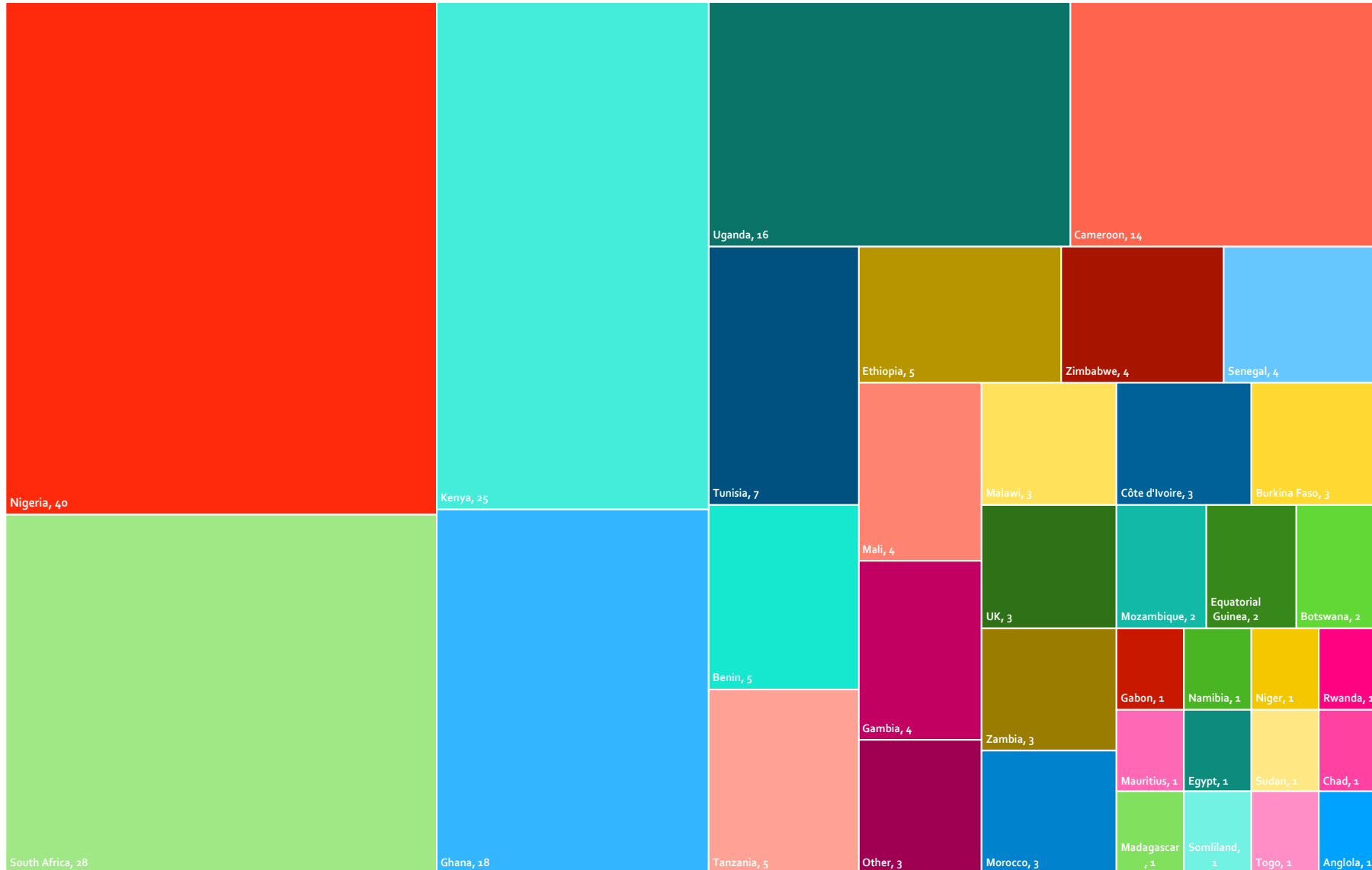
Do not always occur in an enabling  
environment  
Lack concrete actions that can be  
evidenced



Elements of the research ecosystem that enable or inhibit equity in research partnerships

# RM LANDSCAPE IN AFRICAN INSTITUTIONS

Respondants by country



**By region:**

38% West      8% Central  
 30% East      6% North  
 17% South     3% Other

**By gender:**

62% Male  
 37% Female  
 1% Not recorded

**By job role:**

45% Researcher/ lecturer  
 19% Senior manager  
 10% Research manager  
 10% Administrator  
 16% Other/ not stated

# IT'S NOT ALL ABOUT DIFFERENCE...



# UNDERSTANDING CONTEXT

Financial contribution does not equal Knowledge Value

## Diversity of institutions

- Difference; nationally, regionally, language, resources, experience

## Resource constraints

- Teaching staff double as research administrators
- Capacity to manage funder requests

## Systemic inequality

- Power dynamics
- Value attribution

- Trust
  - Openness & honesty early in the process on expectations (e.g contracts, due diligence requirements)
- Deepen understanding on partner context
  - Put in place accommodating measures
  - Sign-off processes, availability of expert support; lead-times
- Challenge researchers to think about inequalities during project planning
  - Co-authorship and attribution; project ownership; impact both in the UK & partner country

# EXAMPLES

- **Institutional guides:** Glasgow University – [A guide to ethical challenges in international research](#)
- **Co-developed guides:** Altink A, De Jong S, Gascoigne J, Grugel J, Mazumdar P, Omukuti J, Roy I and White P (2022) [Guide to Good Practice for Inclusive Research in Global Development](#). Interdisciplinary Global Development Centre, University of York. Available online.



# FACILITATING CHANGE

# CHALLENGES FROM PRE-TRAINING SURVEY



## Project administration

Terminology  
Funds administration  
Due diligence processes  
Contracts



## Cultural differences

Costing, pay and expectations  
'Non-traditional' partners  
Norms and beliefs e.g differing views on rights



## Un-intended impact

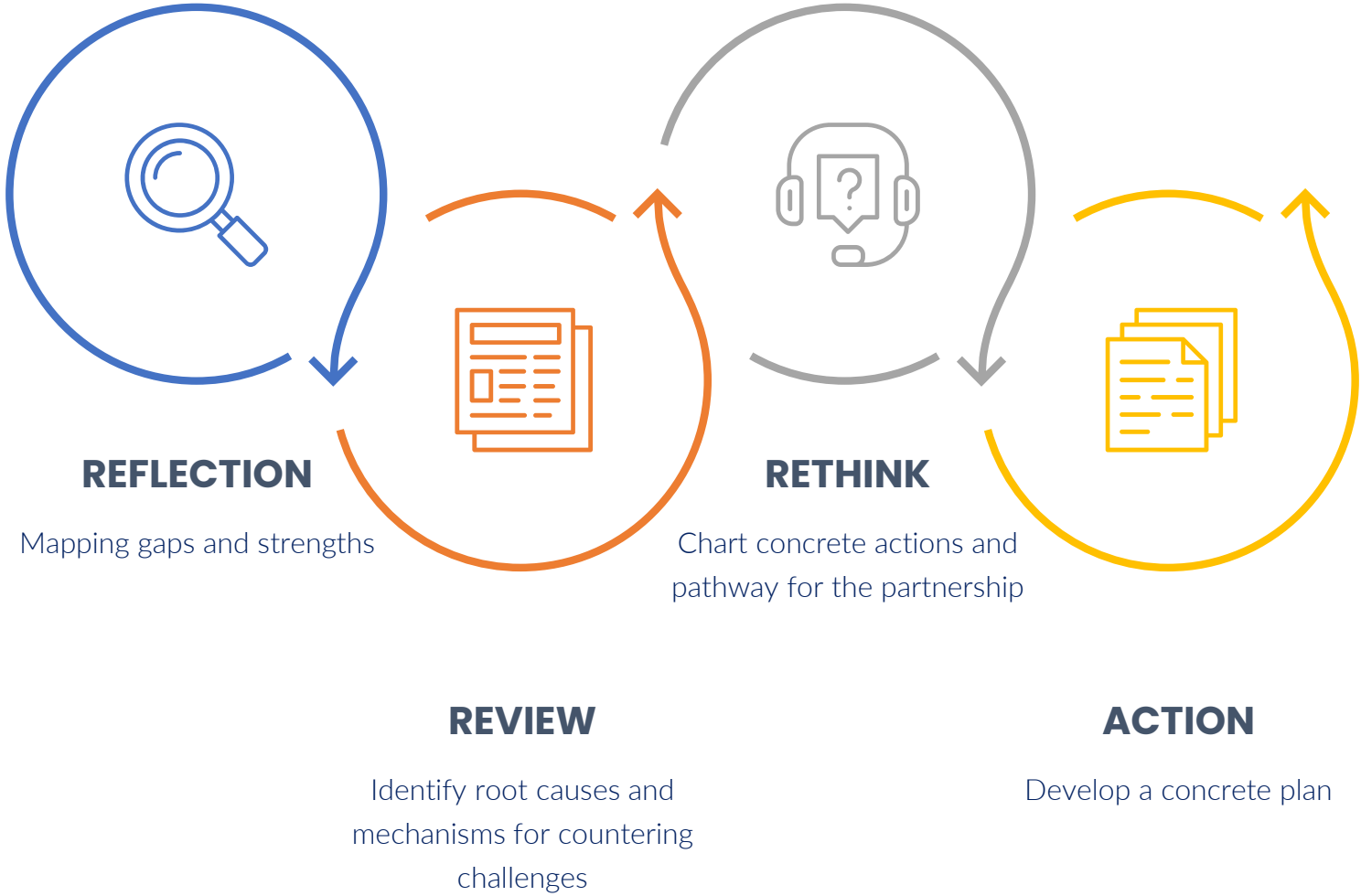
Impact of partnerships in the wider society

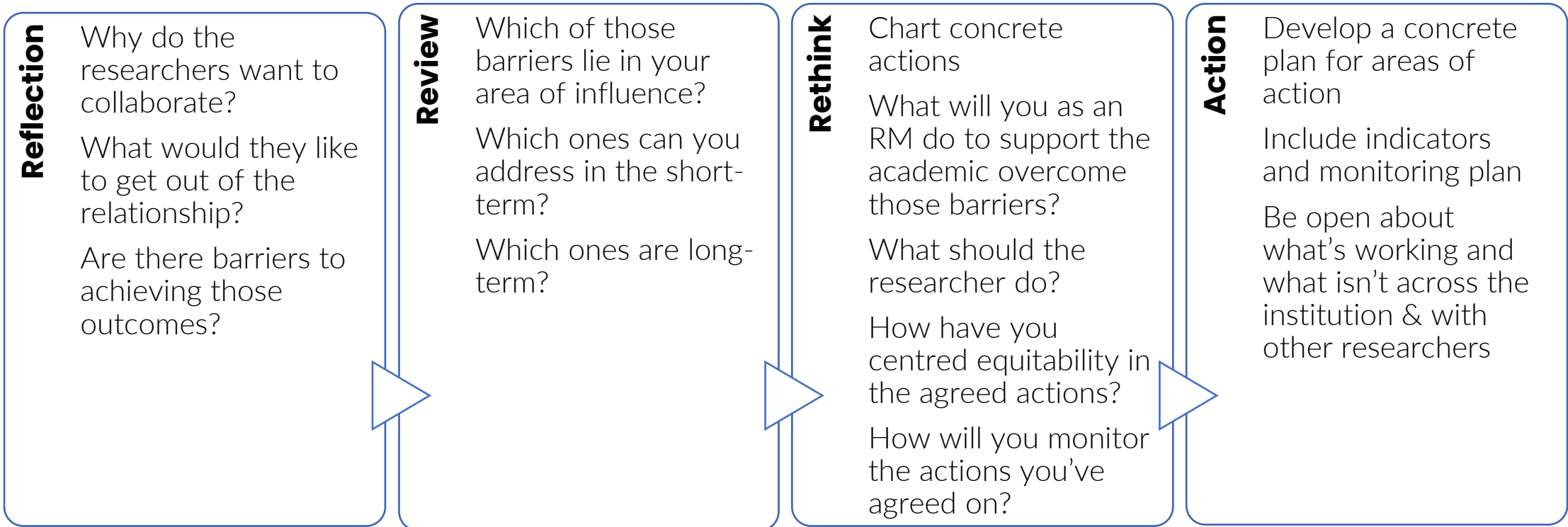
# THE 3R APPROACH

- Adapted from an academic focused workshop series
- Ran as co-creation workshops
  - UK & LMIC research teams work together to develop partnership frameworks
- For research managers
  - Can be conducted as a workshop for researchers
  - Used to provide guidance on how to facilitate conversation with researchers

# IGNITE CHANGE WITH ACADEMICS

Develop an equitable partnerships pathway through a 4-stage process.





**Outputs**

- ✓ Priorities/areas they'd like to build on

**Output**

- ✓ Defined priorities to action

**Output**

- ✓ Actions to counteract barriers

**Output**

- ✓ Equitability action plan

# EXAMPLE OF AN ACTION PLAN

	Barriers/Challenge	Project actions	Responsible	Indicators
Power dynamics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Joint ownership and responsibility for the research project</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Equal collaboration in project design and preparation (research question development, proposal co-writing and project development)</li> <li>Jointly determine the varying levels of partners' involvement in all phases of the project cycle.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Researcher, LMIC partner &amp; RM</li> <li>Researcher and LMIC partner</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Defined roles in the project team</li> <li>Participation in project design and development</li> <li>Mutually defined expected outcomes</li> </ul>
Project administration & management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Open and transparent communication</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Xxxx process will be followed to solve potential conflicts</li> <li>Project communication will be conducted on xxx platform</li> <li>xxxx project meetings will be held per month</li> <li>Xxxx process will be followed to communicate publicly on the project</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Researcher &amp; LMIC partner</li> <li>Researcher &amp; LMIC partner</li> <li>Researcher &amp; LMIC partner</li> <li>Research &amp; LMIC partner</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project meetings</li> <li>Active use of communication platform</li> </ul>

## Challenge

- Challenge researchers
- Go beyond 'thinking' to 'doing'
  - Include their partners' views in their responses

## Appreciate

- Appreciate the researchers' context
- Contention between teaching, research and challenging the status quo
  - What you can do vs what they can do

## Advocate

- Be an advocate
- Monitoring the outcomes of facilitating action will help you build a case institutionally

## Seek opportunities

- Take advantage of low-hanging fruits
- Can you plug ethical & equitable partnerships into conversations on Responsible Research?

# GUIDES

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[A Glossary For Research Development: Exploring core language for tracking and qualification](#) – Co-developed by research support professionals from the UK and African countries, the guide provides a glossary of terminology used in research management. Useful for facilitating discussion and translating funder language between UK & LMIC partners

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[Five keys to improving research costing and pricing in low- and middle-income countries](#) – a guide on how to support research costing in LMIC institutions. For research managers, the guide can be useful in identifying areas of intervention.

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[Four Approaches to Supporting Equitable Research Partnerships](#) – a guide on how to support equitability across funders and researchers. Includes recommendations for researchers.



# CONTACT INFORMATION

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