

Equity in Research for Development:

Envisioning an equitable future for research across the North-South Divide

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This presentation:

1. Background to existing work and our project
2. Key lessons and insights emerging from the Southern Voice-IDS project
3. Moving aspirations for equity into action
4. Exploring potentials for greater collaboration and knowledge sharing amongst different actors in the global research ecosystem, placing the interests and priorities of global South researchers at the centre

1. The issues

- North-South research partnerships are crucial for achieving development goals, but underlying power dynamics and structural challenges in collaborations remain problematic
- A surge in efforts to promote equity includes new guidelines, funding requirements, and discussions aimed at increasing localisation and reshaping power imbalances in development research – mostly led by global North actors
- Many funders still display risk-averse behaviours, and few examples of meaningful accountability mechanisms enabling Global South researchers to hold Northern-based collaborators or funders to account for claims of ‘equitable partnership’ made on their behalf

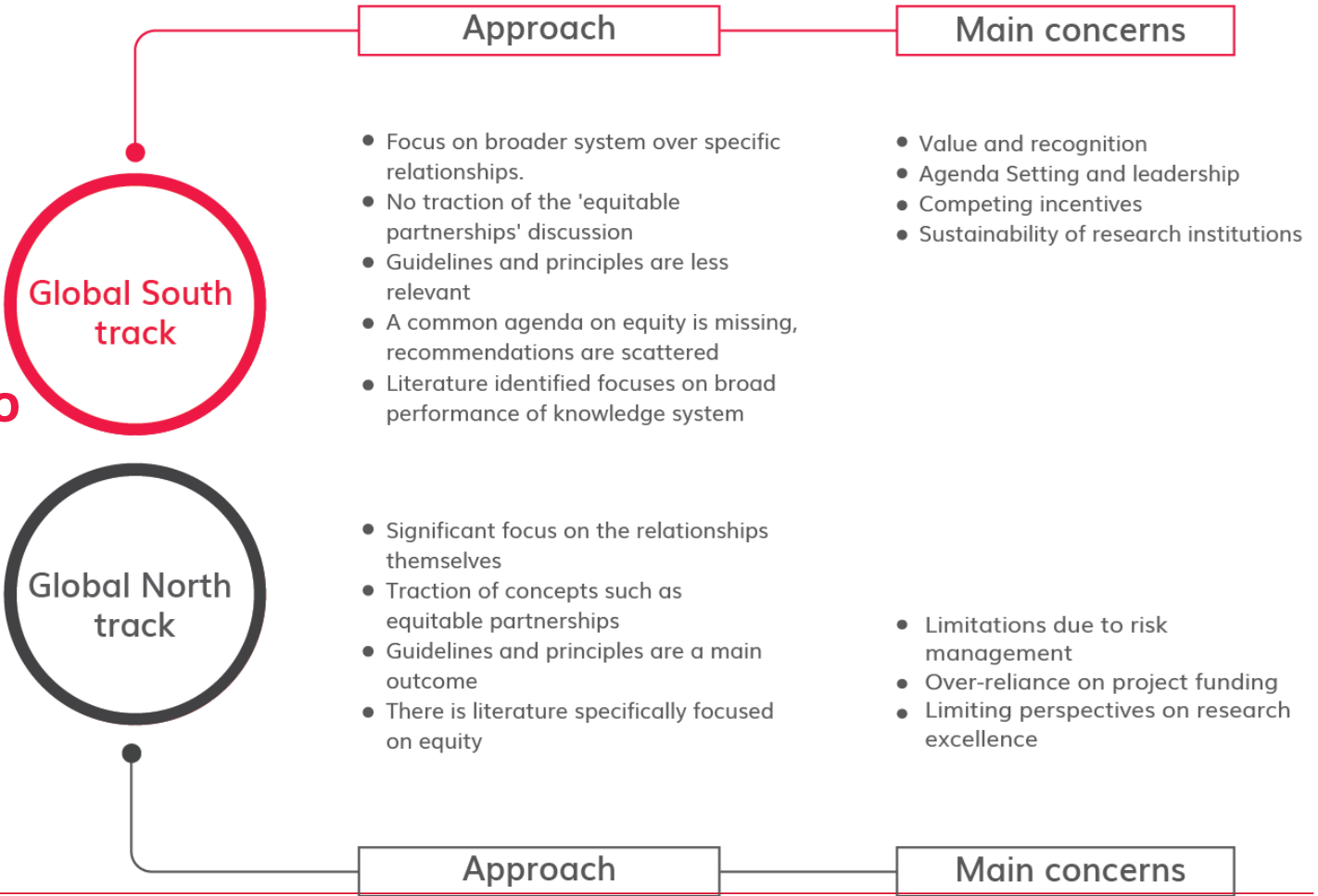
Initiatives currently exploring partnerships, through partnership.....



2. Project example: Southern Voice and IDS



Dialogue of two tracks



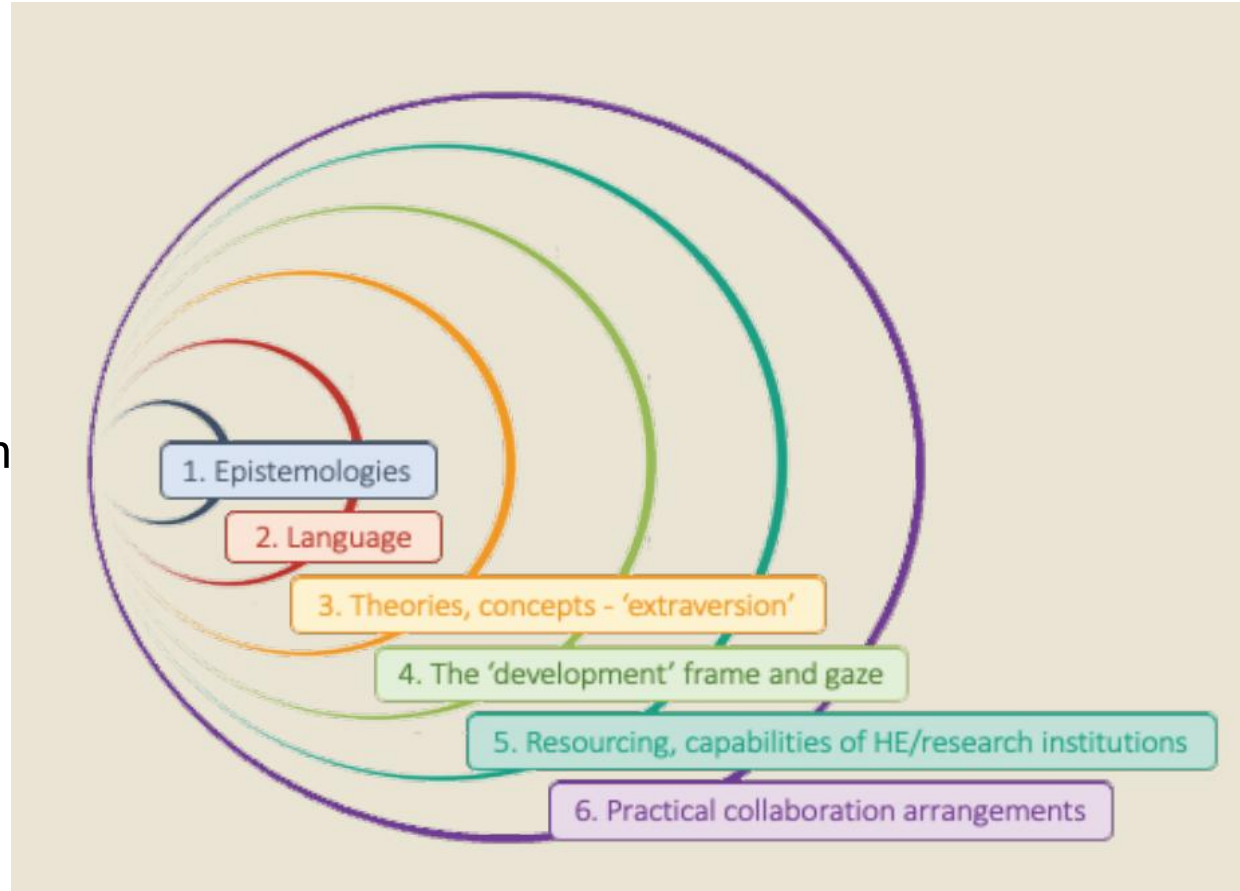
Insights from the project

- “Equitable partnerships” agenda has momentum within institutions of the Global North that engage in partnerships for research in the Global South
- Perceived benefits include desire to enhance effectiveness and efficiency of research projects, and a moral imperative to “decolonize” practices
- Brought about positive actions, e.g. further localization, numerous principles and guidelines, and emphasis on open dialogue
- Global South researchers acknowledge existence of many imbalances that manifest at various stages and levels of a North-South partnership for research
- **But** their primary concerns relate to how these partnerships perpetuate, rather than mitigate, the dynamics of the structures in which they operate

Learning from others about putting power at the centre

The uneven playing field in global production of scientific knowledge; multi-layered power relations
(Africa Charter)

<https://parc.bristol.ac.uk/africa-charter/>



Proposed Framework

Ultimate Purpose

Research that is relevant to society and contributes to improving the lives of those marginalised and excluded.



Objectives

Strengthen Agency

- Global South actors have larger say in the agenda-setting process
- Global South exercise more leadership in research endeavours
- Global South institutions are stronger, and more sustainable



Spaces of Change

Funding

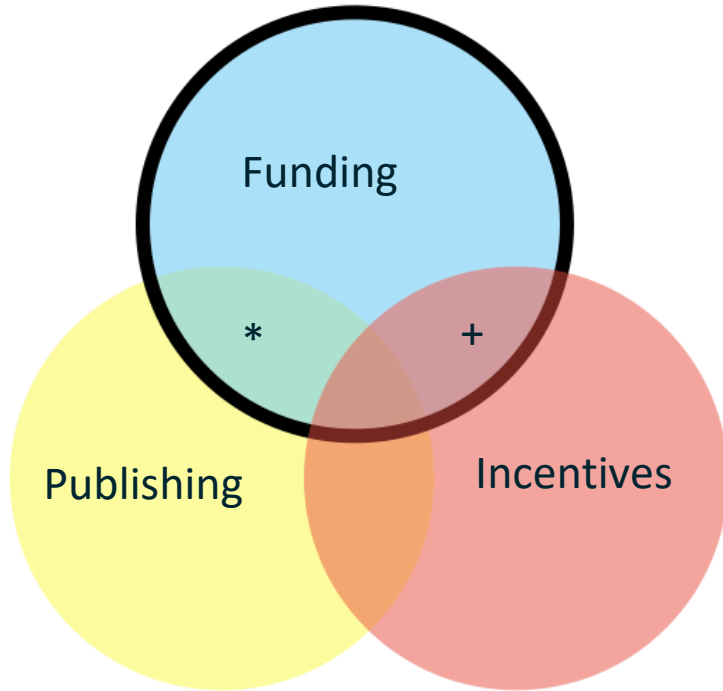
Academic rules and incentives

Publication and dissemination



Joint and/or coordinated actions

Focus on funding and its intersections



Funding Issues:

- Funders agenda setting processes
- Funding modalities
- Eligibility criteria

* Intersection with publishing issues:

- Funding available for publications (if any)
- Expectations of open access

+ Intersection with incentives issues:

- Funders notions of excellence
 - Assessment criteria used for funding
-

“The ultimate aim of actions in these three spaces for change is to produce impactful and socially relevant research that improves lives and livelihoods, especially of those excluded and marginalised. This means having a direct impact on how research is done, used, disseminated, valued, and funded.

Paying attention would strengthen agency of Global South actors in design and implementation of the research process, increase value recognition of Southern knowledge, and support sustainability of Southern research institutions.”

<https://southernvoice.org/three-spaces-of-change-for-reorienting-north-south-research-partnerships/>

“Achieving this aim requires collective action and joined-up efforts shaped by contextual realities, and underpinned by power-aware, reflective, and action-oriented thinking.

Such collaborative efforts can be achieved – through actions and accountability - by building coalitions, aggregating efforts and evidence, and steering the discourse, particularly toward priorities from the Global South”

<https://southernvoice.org/three-spaces-of-change-for-reorienting-north-south-research-partnerships/>

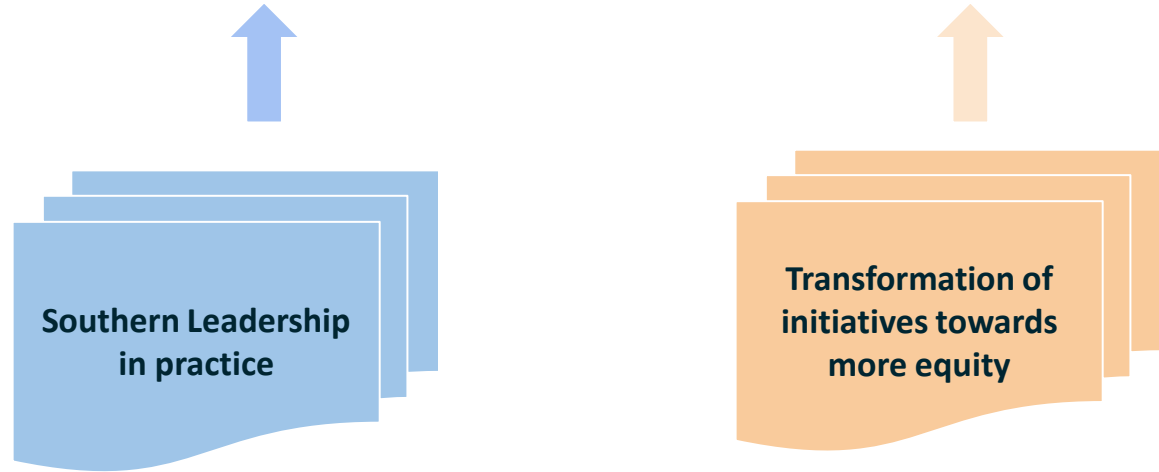
3. Moving forward - joint and coordinated actions

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Stories



We need to step up ourselves, and to work with others:

- IDS is committed to enduring and equitable partnerships. We want to self-assess where our policies and processes, approaches and structures help or hinder our institutional and individual commitment to equity in our research partnerships, identify actions we can take to ensure we work more equitably, and identify metrics to strengthen our accountability to others in this area.
- We are using the “three spaces of change” to explore our own approach and to help us ensure we “walk the walk”
- **What are others doing along similar lines?**



4. Potential areas for greater collaboration

- Equity in research framework: for Global South and North institutions respectively to assess their experience and alignment with equity practices in the research ecosystem, and to help strengthen downward accountabilities
- “Mind the gap” scale that supports a self-analysis of the gaps in the implementation of equitable partnerships across global North institutions (funders, and research institutions)
- “Resilience for equity” framework: developing a reflective tool for global South research institutions to reflect on their resilience and agency to incentivise and empower researchers in seeking equity in research
- Learning and promoting systemic change, identifying outcomes and sharing knowledge to strengthen lessons for improving equity and transforming the research for development ecosystems

Thank you

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