

Building Equitable Scientific Partnerships in Practice

Brazilian Insights from the Pasteur International Joint Research Unit

Raquel Martins Salviati

Research Manager at Fiocruz Paraná

President of Brazilian Research Administration and Management Association (BRAMA)

British Academy Conference on Equitable Partnerships

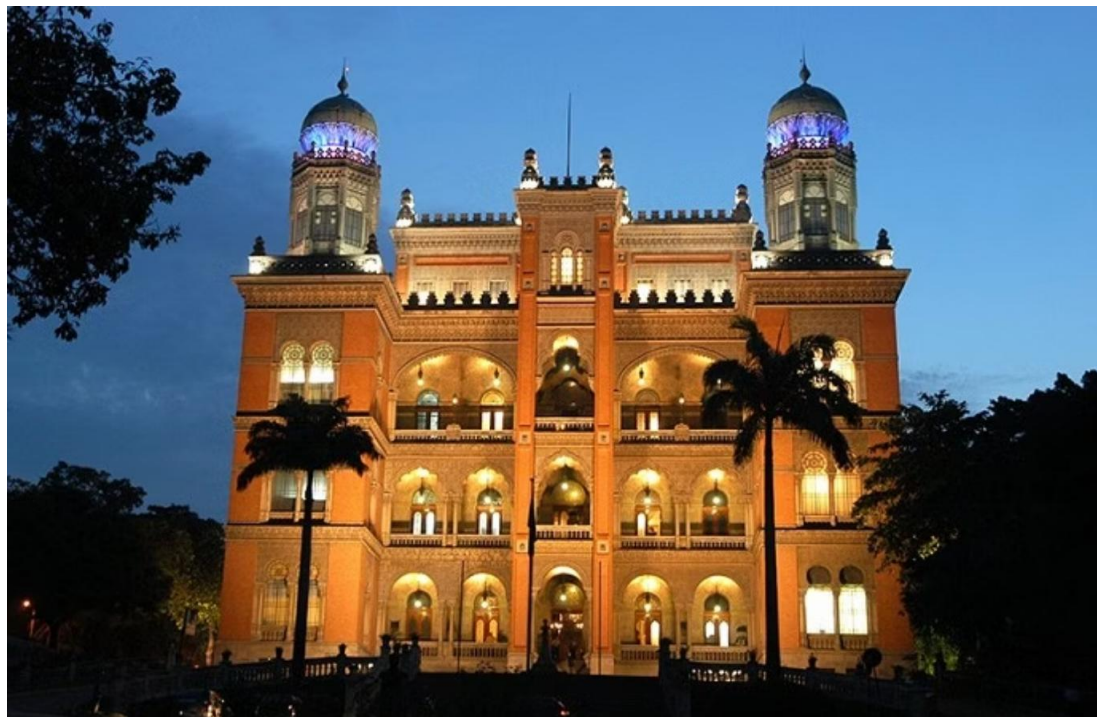
Pretoria, South Africa



Fiocruz: Institutional Commitment to Equitable Partnerships

Oswaldo Cruz Foundation (Fiocruz)

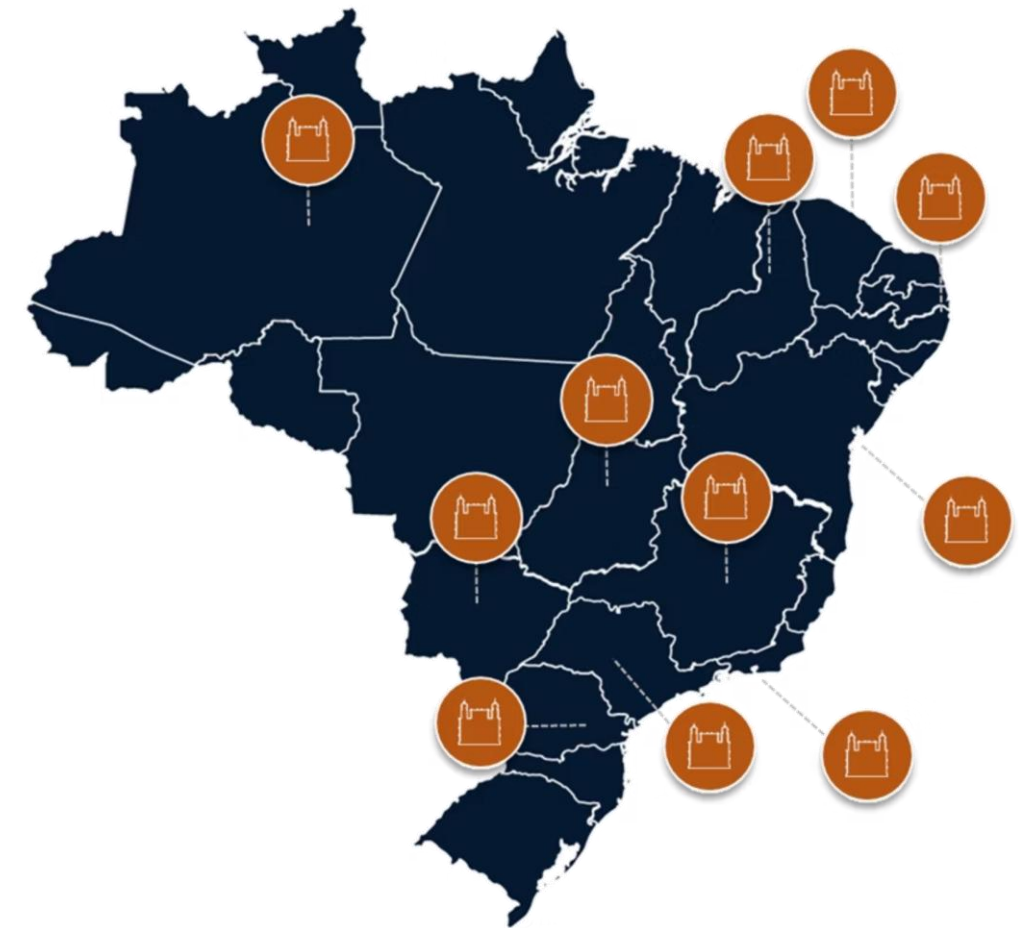
A public strategic institution in Health and STI
Ministry of Health and Brazilian National Health
System (SUS)



local R&D initiatives and communities;
institutional Public Health and STI goals
reduce local and regional inequities

Expanding Our Reach: National and International Presence

- over 14,000 workers and 16 Technical Scientific Units across 11 Brazilian states,
- International cooperation stands as a core institutional pillar: offices being implemented in Mozambique, Ethiopia, and Portugal.



When Good Intentions Meet Structural Inequalities

Leadership Concentration

PI roles consistently default to Global North institutions:
power imbalances in scientific governance.

Capacity Building Myths

Traditional "training" models frame:
Global South as recipients X recognizing mutual learning opportunities.

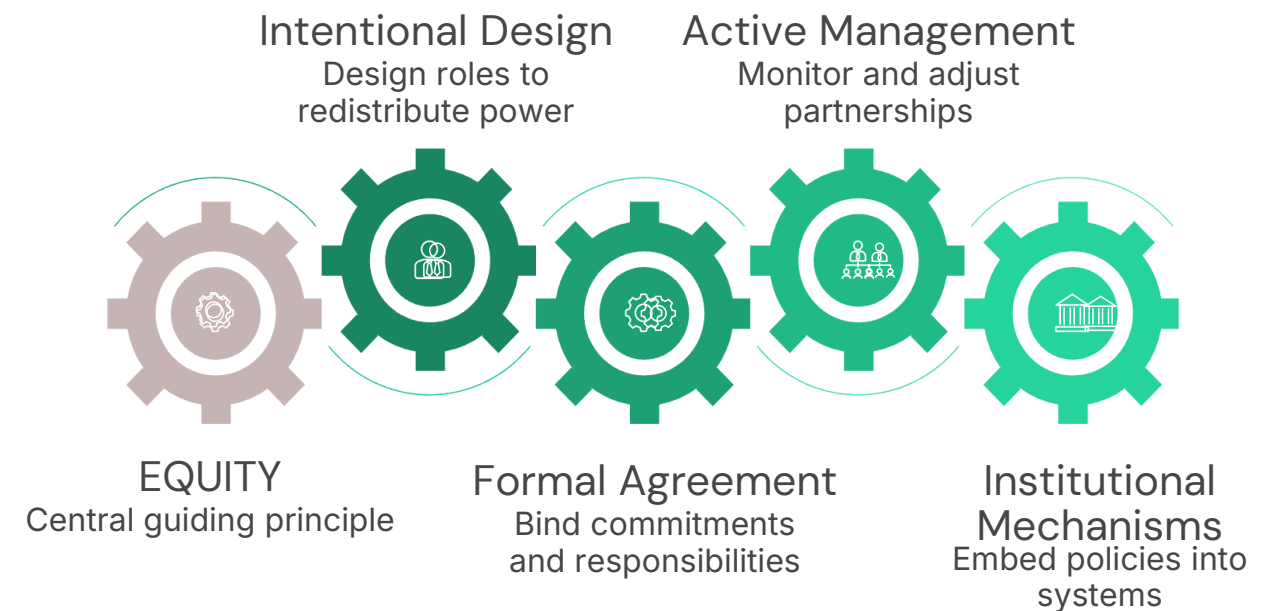
Authorship Inequities

Unequal authorship distribution and visibility:
limit recognition for Southern researchers' contributions.

Resource Dependencies

Financial flows that reinforce X dismantle structural
dependencies between North and South.

Equity is not automatic



Why Equitable Partnerships Matter

Co-construction

Joint development of research agendas and methodologies from inception

Shared Leadership

Equal authority in strategic decisions and scientific directions

Mutual Capacity Strengthening

Reciprocal learning and institutional development

Systemic Impact

Transforming governance, resources, visibility, and sustainability



The PIU Model: Equity by Design

Pasteur International Joint Research Unit (PIU)

A 'Virtual Unit' bringing together research teams from Institut Pasteur (or affiliated institutes) and international partner institutions in a groundbreaking model for equitable collaboration.

1

Long-Term Commitment

5-year partnership structure, moving beyond short-term project cycles to enable sustainable collaboration and trust-building.

2

Equal Co-Leadership

Mandated equal co-leadership from ALL partners, ensuring shared decision-making authority and scientific responsibility.

3

Financial Equity

Equal institutional financial commitment (€15,000/year per partner) creates mutual investment and shared accountability.

4

Structural Obligation

Equity built into the governance structure—not voluntary goodwill but formal institutional commitment.



PIU Fungal Extracellular Vesicles (2023–2028)



Dr. Marcio L. Rodrigues

Carlos Chagas Institute/Fiocruz – Brazil
Co-coordinator with equal standing



Dr. Guilhem Janbon

Institut Pasteur – France
Co-coordinator with equal standing



Prof. Robin C. May

University of Birmingham – UK
Co-coordinator with equal standing

Integrated Research Focus

- ❑ **PIU Goal:** Associate three of the most advanced teams in this field to collaboratively tackle these fundamental questions and advance the science together.

Governance: True Co-Leadership in Practice

Tripartite Governance Model



Brazil ↔ France ↔ United Kingdom

Research Strategy

- Research priorities and directions
- Methodology selection and protocols
- Scientific approach and innovation

Resource Management

- Budget allocation across teams
- Equipment and facility access
- External funding applications

Knowledge Dissemination

- Publication strategy
- Authorship order decisions
- Conference presentations

Capacity Development

- Student exchange programs
- Training initiatives
- Career mentorship

Consensus requirement: All strategic decisions require agreement across all three institutional partners, ensuring no single institution dominates the partnership.



Early Results

Rapid outcomes demonstrate the transformative power of intentional equitable design in scientific partnerships.





Brazilian Researcher Leading Global North Funding

National Institutes of Health (NIH), USA

\$650,000 over 5 years (2024-2029)

Dr. Rodrigues (Fiocruz) as Principal Investigator

Failsafe Programme, United Kingdom

£74,800 over 1 year

Dr. Rodrigues (Fiocruz) as Principal Investigator

Transformative Significance: A Brazilian researcher successfully competing for—and leading—major grants from US and UK funding agencies. This reverses typical patterns where Global North institutions lead funding and control resources, demonstrating how equitable partnerships enable Southern researchers to access and direct international research funding.

OUTCOME #2



Methodological Innovation from Shared

Expertise Balanced Authorship in High-Impact Journals:

Coregulation of extracellular vesicle production and fluconazole susceptibility in *Cryptococcus neoformans*

mBio • Article • Open Access • 2023 • DOI: 10.1128/mbio.00870-23

Rizzo, Juliana^{a,b}; Trottier, Adèle^a; Moyrand, Frédérique^a; Coppée, Jean-Yves^a; Maufrais, Corinne^{a,c}; +12 authors

^aUnité Biologie des ARN des Pathogènes Fongiques, Institut Pasteur, Paris, France

18 90th percentile
Citations

2.39
FWCI

The multiple frontiers in the study of extracellular vesicles produced by fungi

Microbes and Infection • Short Survey • Open Access • 2024 • DOI: 10.1016/j.micinf.2023.105233

Rodrigues, Marcio L.^{a,b}; May, Robin C.^c; Janbon, Guilhem^d

^aCarlos Chagas Institute, Oswaldo Cruz Foundation (Fiocruz), PR, Curitiba, 81310-020, Brazil

8 77th percentile
Citations

1.31
FWCI

Characterizing extracellular vesicles of human fungal pathogens

Nature Microbiology • Article • Open Access • 2025 • DOI: 10.1038/s41564-025-01962-4

Rodrigues, Marcio L.^{a,b}; Janbon, Guilhem^c; O'Connell, Richard J.^d; Chu, Thi-Thu-Huyen^{d,t}; May, Robin C.^e; +17 authors

^aInstituto Carlos Chagas, Fundação Oswaldo Cruz, Curitiba, Brazil

12 99th percentile
Citations

13.22
FWCI

Standardized Protocols

Developed comprehensive protocols for fungal EV research

Global Impact

Protocols now serve the international research community worldwide

Brazilian Leadership

Brazilian science contributing to setting international standards

- Equitable recognition, breaking the pattern where Global North researchers dominate first and last author positions and ensuring fair recognition and career advancement for researchers from Brazil, France, and the United Kingdom.

OUTCOME #3

Career Advancement for Young Brazilian Researchers



Dr. Juliana Rizzo's Trajectory: Equity in Action



Student Participation

Started as graduate student participating in PIU exchange program



International Mobility

Conducted research in France through PIU-facilitated mobility opportunities



High-Impact Publications

Published in prestigious journals including mBio and STAR Protocols



Faculty Position Secured

Appointed as independent faculty member in 2025



Adjunct Professor

Now Adjunct Professor at Federal University of Rio de Janeiro



Transformative Equity: Genuine career advancement. The PIU didn't merely produce papers; it launched careers, strengthened Brazilian institutions, and contributed to building a more diverse global research community.



Ministério da Saúde

FIOCRUZ
Fundação Oswaldo Cruz



📅 NOVEMBER 17-18, 2025

International Scientific Meeting on Fungal EVs – Brazil



Brazil as Convener

Brazil serving as host and convener, not merely participant
- demonstrating leadership in global scientific discourse



International Visibility

Strengthening visibility of Brazilian science on the global stage
and regional research excellence



Global North Travels South

Reversing typical patterns where conferences happen in
the North and Southern researchers bear travel costs



Local Access

South American researchers accessing international
expertise locally, reducing barriers to participation

What Made This Work? Brazilian Perspective

Key Success Factors for Equitable Partnerships

01

Formal Equity Mandate

Agreement that mandated equity through formal mechanisms, not voluntary goodwill

03

Fiocruz Leadership Support

Strong institutional backing from Fiocruz leadership enabling researcher participation

05

Clear Policies

Explicit policies governing authorship, visibility, and decision-making processes

02

Equal Financial Commitment

Financial parity created mutual investment and shared accountability from all partners

04

Long-Term Commitment

Five-year timeframe allowed genuine trust development beyond short-term projects

06

Partner Commitment to Equity

Northern partners genuinely committed to equity principles and willing to share power

Challenges & Ongoing Vigilance

Equity requires constant attention and active management—success is not automatic even with good structures in place.

Patience and Trust-Building

Time investment in developing genuine mutual understanding over months and years

Explicit Conversations

Regular discussions about equity:
making invisible power dynamics visible

Addressing Imbalances

Willingness to name and correct imbalances when they arise, not ignore them

Mutual Respect

Good faith commitment from all partners to equity principles in practice

Operational Challenges

- **Time zone coordination:** Scheduling across Brazil, France, and UK requiring flexibility from all partners
- **Institutional bureaucracies:** Navigating different administrative systems and approval timelines
- **Language dynamics:** English as working language may inadvertently privilege some voices
- **Funding landscapes:** Different national funding systems creating complexity in joint applications

Lessons Learned & Transferable Insights



Co-Construction Works

When intentionally designed from inception with shared authority and decision-making



Authorship Policies Matter

Balanced recognition policies essential for long-term sustainability and researcher career advancement



Reciprocal Strengthening

Capacity development must flow in multiple directions, not one-way "training" models



Long-Term Commitment

Extended timeframes enable genuine transformation beyond short-term project outputs



Professional Management

Dedicated research management infrastructure essential for coordination and success

These lessons are transferable to other international partnerships seeking to build more equitable and sustainable collaborative relationships in science.

Acknowledgments

PIU Co-coordinators and Fiocruz Fungal Laboratory Team



Dr. Marcio L. Rodrigues
Fiocruz, Brazil

Thank you for your attention.
Questions and discussion welcome.

Contact: raquel.salviati@fiocruz.br

