



LSTM
LIVERPOOL SCHOOL
OF TROPICAL MEDICINE

—
Since 1898

Equitable Partnership Strategy and Principles

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What did we do and why?



Aim:

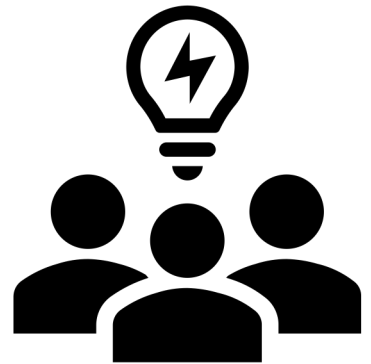
To co-develop an equitable partnership strategy to support meaningful and equitable engagement

- Survey (based on domains from research fairness initiative) – sent out to LSTM partners (n=21)
- Qualitative interviews (n=12) – mostly from senior partners
- Participatory workshop
- Follow up discussions on principles/ open access resources



What does Equitable Partnership mean to you?

Please write your suggestions on the sticky notes/easyretro



Collaboration with LSTM



Collaboration between partners and LSTM has evolved over time:

- Joint membership in advisory panels
- Informal interactions in conferences and multi-country research networks

The nature of collaboration takes different forms:

- **Research**
- **Capacity building and teaching**
- **Research uptake, advocacy and publication**

Power dynamics

- Not always explicit

*“I think [of LSTM] as our parent, we take ourselves as, as the brainchild of the LSTM... over the years, we've seen LSTM supporting staff from [partner name] with education opportunities, master's degrees, PhDs ... So...they've seen us through thick and thin. And that's why I use the term - like a baby, LSTM as a parent... And... you know, **there reaches a point whereby a child is grown and wants to walk alone. And I know that's very hard for the parent to let go. But sometimes you do have to let go and just watch from afar. So maybe that's where LSTM and [organization] are”** (Senior, male, Southern Africa, Key Informant Interview)*

Agenda setting



- **Defined mutually** & often a **participatory process (in country)**
- Decision making felt to be **fair** and **respectful**
- **Long term engagement** in country means LSTM able to respond to local needs
- Rotating chairs, clear organograms have helped to **minimise power dynamics** - linked to University ability to secure funding and funding streams

Response to local needs:

- Agenda setting **underpinned by global funding calls and global agenda setting**
- **Balance of local priorities & funders** Noted that **UK funding landscape is shifting** to allow broader focus

But, you know, over time, it's been more inclusive, though. That's the one term I use. Okay. And respect. You know, there's respect for opinions. (Senior female, East Africa, Key Informant Interview)

Space for innovation from LMIC partners - a gap as partnerships are focused on executing research via traditional methods

Capacity strengthening



Should be viewed as multidirectional

Strengths:

- **Individual capacity strengthening** through MScs, PhDs
- **Long term projects and projects with non-hierarchical structure** may have particular benefits for Early/Mid Career Researchers
- **Encouragement to hire local staff**

...projects that are two years you just getting into the momentum. And then it's like see you later, goodbye, wrap up... But is that when you have a longer term project, I mean, colleagues come and go, but the few that you can see them grow in terms of their skills. And I think that's very good. (Senior, female, South Asia, Key Informant Interview)

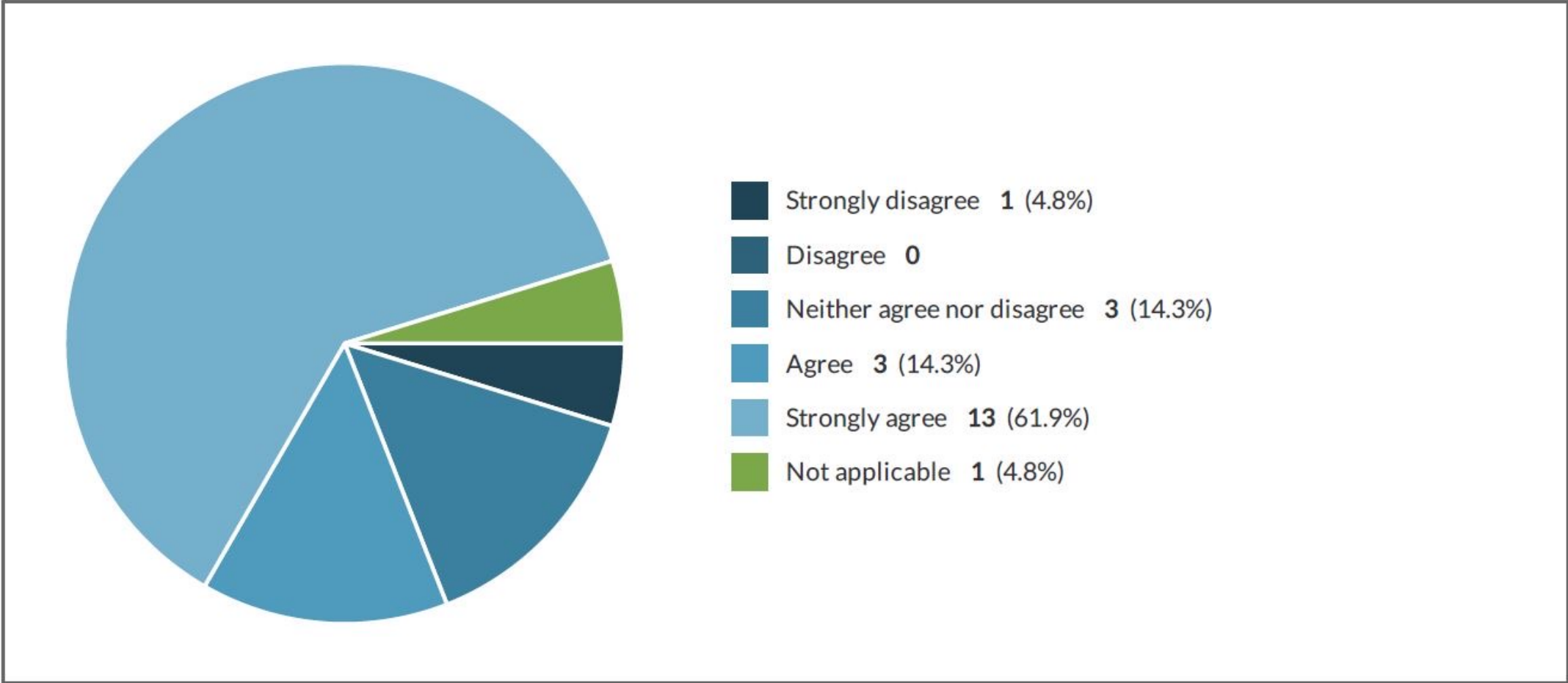
Unmet needs:

- Support from LSTM to build institutional capacity of partner organizations in research management - **financial management, budgeting projects etc**
 - COVID disrupted plans for Capacity Strengthening in several partnerships
 - Funding to support institutional capacity strengthening
- It was noted that **Capacity Strengthening impacts on the sustainability** of the partnerships – and more effort should be put into ensuring **this is done at ALL levels from Research Assistants to PIs**

Capacity strengthening



The partnership with LSTM provides resources for capacity building of project staff - Please select one response



Funding streams



‘Our finance systems and use of software improved through working with LSTM Finance department
(Senior, female, North Africa, Key Informant Interview)

‘Partners in Global North dominate in the selling process’ (Senior, female, South Asia, Key Informant Interview)

‘[LSTM] are the ones who deal with the donors, because that's just how our funding is arranged. So, there will always be more power for the people at LSTM, in terms of taking charge of the project... And all the projects that we've done, they have always been prime’ (Male, Southern Africa)

- Budget allocations are discussed **collaboratively and transparently**. Partners reported LSTM supported with **financial management capacity**, technical and liaison support when engaging with funders
- Partners reported that most projects in the partnerships were funded from sources within the UK. The UK government was the predominant source of funding.

Funding cuts

- All partners were affected by funding cuts. Some activities had to be dropped. Other activities were deferred to the FY 2022/23
- Partners reported having open and transparent discussion on how to work with limited funds after the 2021 funding cuts

Impacts and outputs



- **Research uptake is country led by partners** especially at local and national level.
- **Strong relations with Ministry of Health** have helped, **raised visibility through international consortia**
- **Authorship is fair and transparent**, decided at start of write up, **follow journal protocols.**
- However, **publication process usually led by LSTM and UK partners**– institutional capacity strengthening required for partners & shaped by funding
- **Language around data ownership** is a key issue

‘Authorship decisions with LSTM was seamless and equitable, this is very commendable as it is different from what I have experienced before’ *(West Africa, survey respondent)*

‘To be honest, I can't afford \$5000 to published in maybe in BMJ or so, in terms of publication’ *(Senior, male, West Africa, Key Informant Interview)*

‘Legal language in contract that data is owned by LSTM, data should be owned by researchers with right to publish. Promotes lack of ownership.’ *(Survey respondent, East Africa)*

Future of partnership: Recommendations



Capacity building - innovative methods, publication for high impact journals, project management, budget and reporting, quality control systems in institutions, support staff often overlooked

Showcasing extent of collaboration, e.g webinars, institutional networking meetings to expand collaborations

Faculty exchange and mentorship

Joint authorship

Promotion and tenure opportunities for overseas academic staff

Need for data sharing agreement

UK funders directly engage with LSTM - LSTM to facilitate dialogue with partners, funders to understand context & partners to understand funding landscape

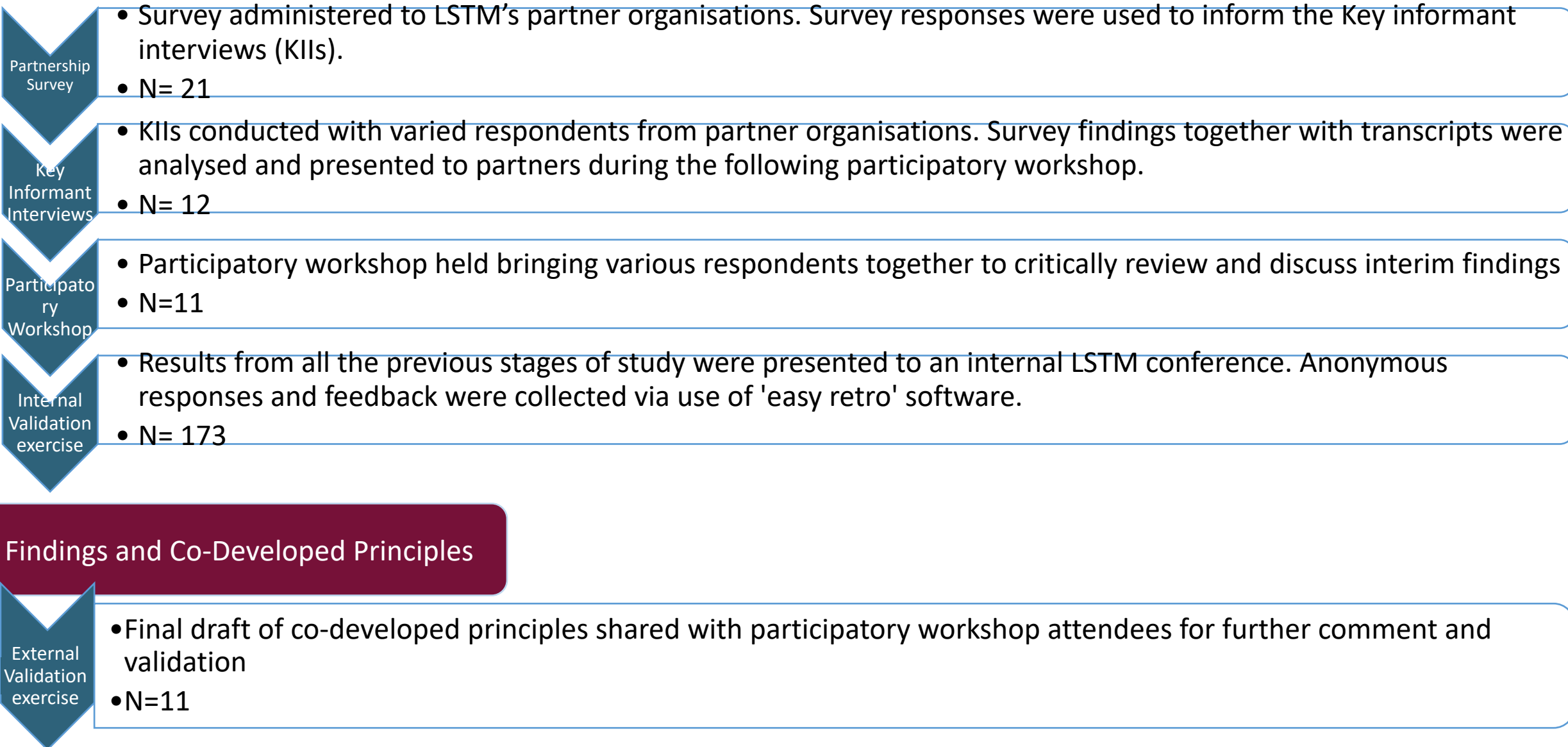
Decide on clear reporting templates that align with the partners at start of projects

Beyond attending conferences, be part of technical groups



Co-Developing Principles

Process of Co-Developing Principles





UKCDR definition:

Partnerships in which there is **mutual participation, mutual trust and respect, mutual benefit and equal value** placed on each partners contribution at **all stages** of the research process

Values/Principles of Equitable Partnerships



From research findings and participatory workshop:

Transparency

Multiway capacity
strengthening

Mutual respect

National relevance

Evidence
Acknowledgement

Knowledge/skills
transfer

Early engagement

Honesty

Inclusive decision
making

Collaboration

Collegiality

Financial
independence

Co-developed principles and associated actions – for your feedback



All partners have equal opportunities to input into research design, agenda setting and lead in development of **outputs** to ensure it reflects the priorities and needs of LMIC partners



Transparency to guide all stages of the partnership from agenda setting, budgeting, data ownership, authorship and education.

Establishing processes of review to track progress to equitable partnerships



Recognise that relevance is key to shaping agendas and conducting research that is **appropriate and impactful** in research settings

Stakeholder or community mapping

Theory of change that is responsive to change & regularly reviewed

Collaborative proposal writing workshops



Acknowledgement that professional development at all levels/cadres requires mutual, multidirectional capacity strengthening based on development needs assessed & identified by all partners at the outset.



Commitment to deliberate and strategic promotion of leadership of Southern partners (when appropriate) in collaborations with LSTM (e.g., grants, capacity strengthening)



Commitment and adherence to a multi-centric model of partnership - not necessarily LSTM at centre – no centralized power, shared responsibilities.



Set mechanisms and platforms to **translate individual collaborations to institutional collaborative frameworks**

LSTM to facilitate networking opportunities among Majority World partners outside of project specific opportunities

4

Embed four values of the Global Code of Conduct into all collaborations: **Fairness, Respect, Care, Honesty** and pay attention to institutional values



What other actions can support principles?

Broader reflections on principles?





Thank You

