Recommendations from parallel sessions during Science Engagement days March 2023
Theme: Equitable partnerships in development research

From discussions on 'Equitability in authorship'

Key Points for researchers starting or engaged in ongoing research partnerships:

1. Ensuring co creation and equitable authorship
   - Encourage more researchers in the South to be in deserved authorship positions (first/last author) and ensure their participation in output framing/knowledge creation.
   - Those with ideas/motivation should bring others on board early to allow for co-creation - then distribute responsibilities and authorship roles accordingly
   - Encourage junior team members (e.g., PhD students) to become first and corresponding authors and coach them throughout the process (through e.g. training and support).
   - Ensure equitable acknowledgement of publication leadership within the team.
   - Ensure open discussion within teams to agree collaboratively on authorship order.
2. Aligning interests across partners:
   - Recognize different publication interests across partners.
   - Take into account South vs. North issues and career-based differences (early vs. senior):
     - South vs. North issues: Different levels of publication expectations for promotion, aim to support regional journals/knowledge, some universities discount merits for publications with many co-authors
     - Career-based (Early vs. Senior) - academics with tenure may have less pressure to publish than early-career scholars
3. Capacity building and resource availability:
   - Build projects around PhD students to foster their interests in first authorship.
   - Allocate funds for coaching and capacity building.
   - Ensure availability of resources like funding for open access publication in the project budget, and sufficient time after project completion for deep writing.
   - Lessen teaching load for junior colleagues to create more research time.
   - Build capacity of junior/part-time lecturers to enable them to support colleagues in the field/doing research
   - Include language editing in grant (publication) budgets for Southern academics facing language barriers.
4. Inclusive integrity and Vancouver Principles[1]
   - Follow the Vancouver Principles and integrate them into grant agreements.

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[1] https://www.lib.chalmers.se/en/publish-and-analyse/publish-research/authorship-guidelines-and-ethical-standards/: The Vancouver recommendations include defining the role of authors, contributors and non-author contributors. They also cover responsibilities in the submission and peer-review process, conflicts of interest/competing interests, protection of research participants, etc.

The Vancouver recommendations define an author of a scientific publication as a person who has:

1. Contributed substantially to the conception or design of the work; or the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data for the work;
2. Drafted the work or revised it critically for important intellectual content; and made a final approval of the version to be published;
3. Agreed to be accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.

- Uphold merit-based authorship and open discussion within teams to agree collaboratively on authorship order.
- Address power dynamics and potential usurpation of authorship. For example by having senior members of the team or involved institutions support those in less power such as PhD students, and by drawing on university guidelines for PhD graduation to defend PhD students' claim on first authorship.
- Establish formal policies in the partnership, and support PhD students in asserting their claims on first authorship.
5. Academic vs. community/practice outputs:
    - Involve private and community partners early in the project.
    - Produce outputs that are relevant to the local community.
    - Ensure budget for open access to publications, and allow for sufficient time after project completion to pay for open access fees.
    - Seek partnerships with the private sector for dissemination and funding.
6. Challenges in dissemination and policy impact:
    - Seek to overcome language barriers for Southern academics to publish in high-ranked international journals.
    - Address misalignment between university/teaching priorities and research priorities.
    - Enhance the accessibility of outputs to Southern academics and local communities.
    - Engage policymakers and technocrats from the beginning to make research policy relevant.
    - Translate scientific outputs into policy-relevant formats.
    - Increase political relevance through embassy involvement and outreach to politicians.

Key Points for Funders:
- Encourage donors to ensure integrity in authorship.
- Align donor priorities with local political priorities.
- Support training of journalists on scientific issues.
- Foster cooperation between donors, research institutions, and universities.
- Allow for open access fees to be covered by grants.

From discussions on 'Setting the research agenda'

Key Points for researchers starting or engaged in ongoing research partnerships:

1. Building trust and respect:
    - Use the time available in the application process to build a trusting relationship and develop the project idea grounded in a local context.
    - Encourage tough negotiations and clear expression of concerns during project design. All partners should express clear demands and explicit concerns at the time of project design and decisions on what should and what should not be in the budget. Conflicts and tensions are good for establishing trust, as long as acceptable compromises are built on mutual understanding and respect.
    - Foster trust in the knowledge and expertise of partners and challenge old assumptions. Be aware of theoretical binary oppositions: South-North, quantitative-qualitative methods, and hard and soft sciences. Very often, there are other intersectional and interdisciplinary divisions that are more central to the project. Be open to paradigm shifts and truly new knowledge fostered by breaking the barriers created by our trust in old paradigms.

2. Ensure active participation by both south and north partners:
   - Make sure to include researchers from both southern and northern partners in all the work packages
   - All actors need to come together to frame the question to ensure inclusivity of all interests.
   - Ensure gender balance
3. Fight the disparity in knowledge, competencies, and resources:
   - Address the disparity in knowledge and competencies among partners and stakeholders, by recognizing disciplinary differences, especially among academic and non-academic partners.
   - Provide capacity development opportunities for all research partners and encourage participation of all team members in activities, including budget management and data analysis.
   - Foster mutual learning and interdisciplinary collaboration, for example through group conferences including all partners from student assistants to PIs about content, methodologies from different disciplines, and how they can complement and enhance each other.
4. Ensure transparency:
   - Ensure access to all relevant information (pre-proposal, during proposal development, and post-award) throughout the project.
   - Facilitate continuous information sharing through regular meetings and open dialogue. For example use zoom meetings for long distance.
   - Articulate reasons for changes within the project and budget.

Key Points for Funders:

- Seed money should be advanced to facilitate the pre-proposal engagement with all partners, preferably in the intended implementation areas, to allow for mutual decision making on budgets, methodology etc.
- Allow sufficient time between the call for proposals and the expected response/deadline for applications.
- Encourage active participation in the entire process of project development by all involved partners.

From discussions on 'Mutual learning'

Key Points for researchers starting or engaged in ongoing research partnerships:

1. Ensure co-production of knowledge: understand the importance of mutual learning and co-production of knowledge between partners, particularly between scholars from the North and South.
2. Recognize the challenges in co-production: Hierarchical structures, language and trust limitations, and the need for long-term partnerships and flexibility.
3. Emphasize open-mindedness and the importance of free speech and abilities to gain knowledge in the South.
4. Control expectations: Address expectations of donors and ensure they align with the capacities and work descriptions of the involved actors.

5. Community involvement and ownership: Engage communities as part of the solution, not just the problem, and create teams with key stakeholders to discuss project findings and analysis.
6. Frame the problem: Recognize context and differences, indigenous knowledge, and the importance of understanding local communities.
7. Capacity building: Build stakeholders, address cultural differences, and promote local-driven projects.
8. Politics and power dimensions: Address power imbalances, recognize and value local knowledge, and promote interdisciplinary collaboration.
9. Funding and transparency: Discuss funding challenges, equal partnerships, and the need for transparency in cooperation between universities.
10. Time for reflection and joint learning: Balance demands for outputs and results with time for joint reflections, mutual learning, and co-production of knowledge.
11. Power inequalities and genuine mutual learning: Critique hierarchies of knowledge, promote decolonization efforts, and equal partnerships in research.
12. Change and contextualization: Reflect on local contexts, understand cultural differences, and challenge Eurocentric views in academia, for instance by making sure to draw on relevant local and national literature and debates for theory and methodological developments. Attention in applications also to referencing locally relevant literature (rather than alone global north derived publications)
13. Linkages between practitioners and academics: Explore how mutual learning and co-production of knowledge can strengthen research capacity building and foster collaboration between development practitioners and academics.

Key Points for Funders:
14. Allow for budget allocation for dissemination purposes and for regular discussions of how to deal with power imbalances and inclusion of different knowledge systems.

From discussions on 'Financing and institutional setup'

Key Points for researchers starting or engaged in ongoing research partnerships:

1. Ensure budget transparency.
2. Ensure equal negotiation and agreement prior to contract signing.
3. Partnership development:
    *   Strengthening South – South – North nexus.
    *   Building effective network of east, west, north and south partners.
4. Ownership and sustainability:
    *   Scaling up funds for continuity assessment.
    *   Enhance private sector involvement.
    *   Involvement of university top management.
    *   Establish project service support centre at the University.
5. Equity:
    *   Recognise southern partner capacity and resources.
    *   Promote genuine co-creation of knowledge and theories.
    *   Reduce southern dependency on funds from the north.
6. Support from government and other stakeholders:
    *   Better communication of relevance of research to all stakeholders.

- Engagement and representation of relevant government departments in all phases of research.
7. Budget for open access publications and access to e-resources.
8. Capacity building support for project development and implementation.

Key Points for Funders:

9. Prefer phased approaches to funding (e.g. phase 1 full funding, phase 2 partial/in-kind support for follow up project)
10. Flexibility of budget and Managing budget in shocks e.g., hyperinflation, COVID-19 etc:
    - Consider recalibration of project outputs.
    - Allow flexibility of budgets during the project period.
11. Strengthening engagement and dissemination funds.