Towards equitable partnerships?
A frontline staff network examining moral distress

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My background

28 years living and working in rural Kenya

Health systems & empirical ethics
- Patient/staff experience
- Community engagement
- Benefit sharing & data sharing
- Justice
- System responsiveness & resilience

Strong institutional accountability processes built
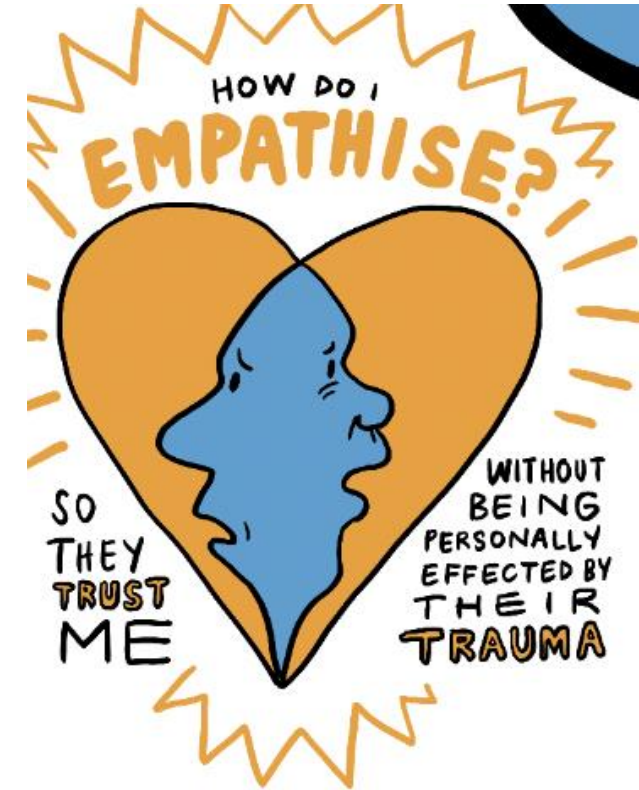
Why frontline staff in research partnerships?

Key & complex roles

Least power & voice in research hierarchies

Inadequate support

What is moral distress?

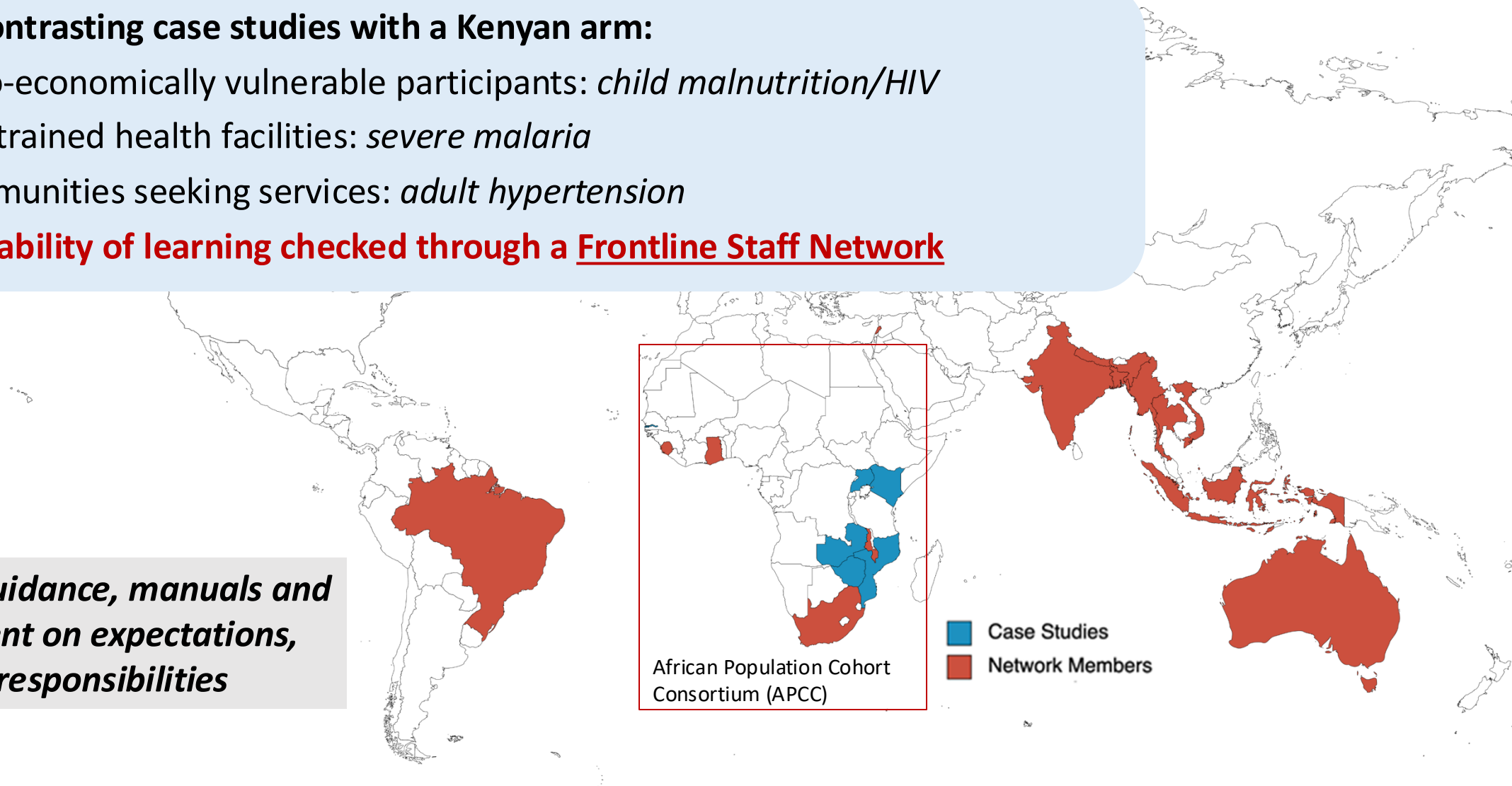Impacts individuals, science & value of work

Initial research plan

Three contrasting case studies with a Kenyan arm:

- Socio-economically vulnerable participants: *child malnutrition/HIV*

- Constrained health facilities: *severe malaria*

- Communities seeking services: *adult hypertension*

Transferability of learning checked through a <u>Frontline Staff Network</u>

Goal - Guidance, manuals and agreement on expectations, rights & responsibilities

African Population Cohort Consortium (APCC)

■ Case Studies
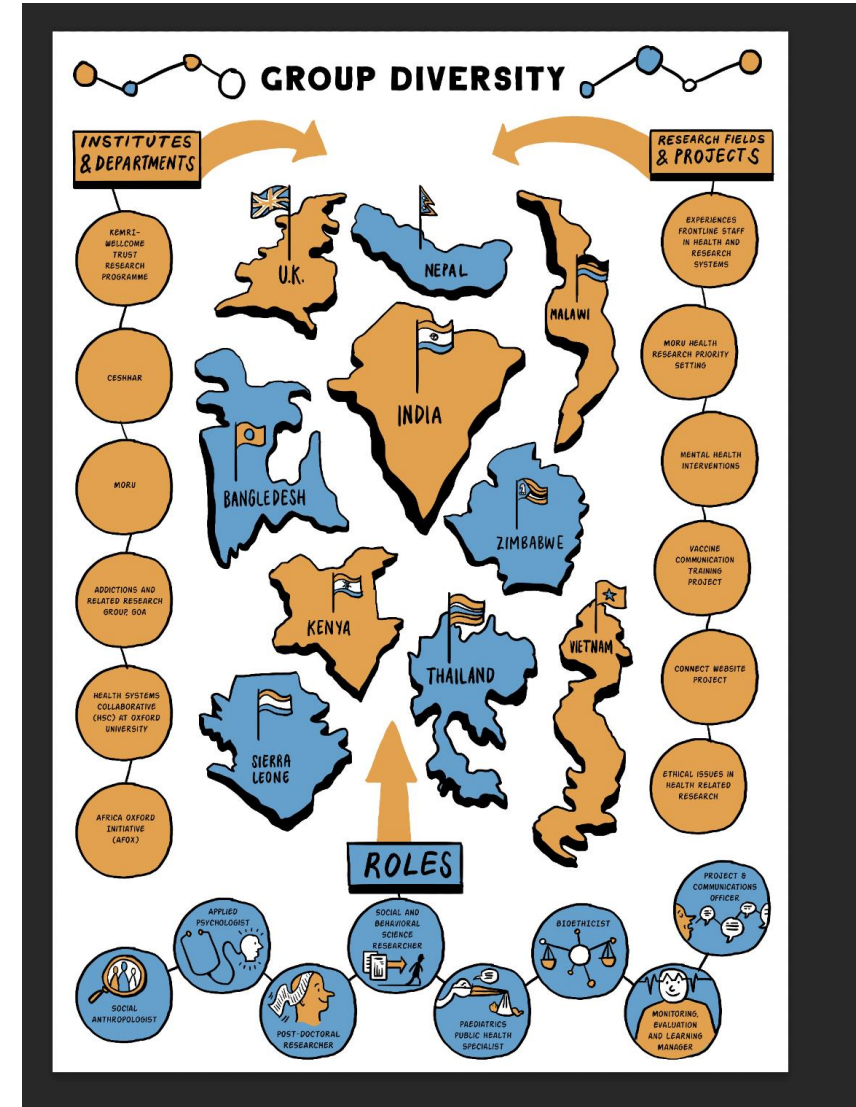■ Network Members

Created with mapchart.net

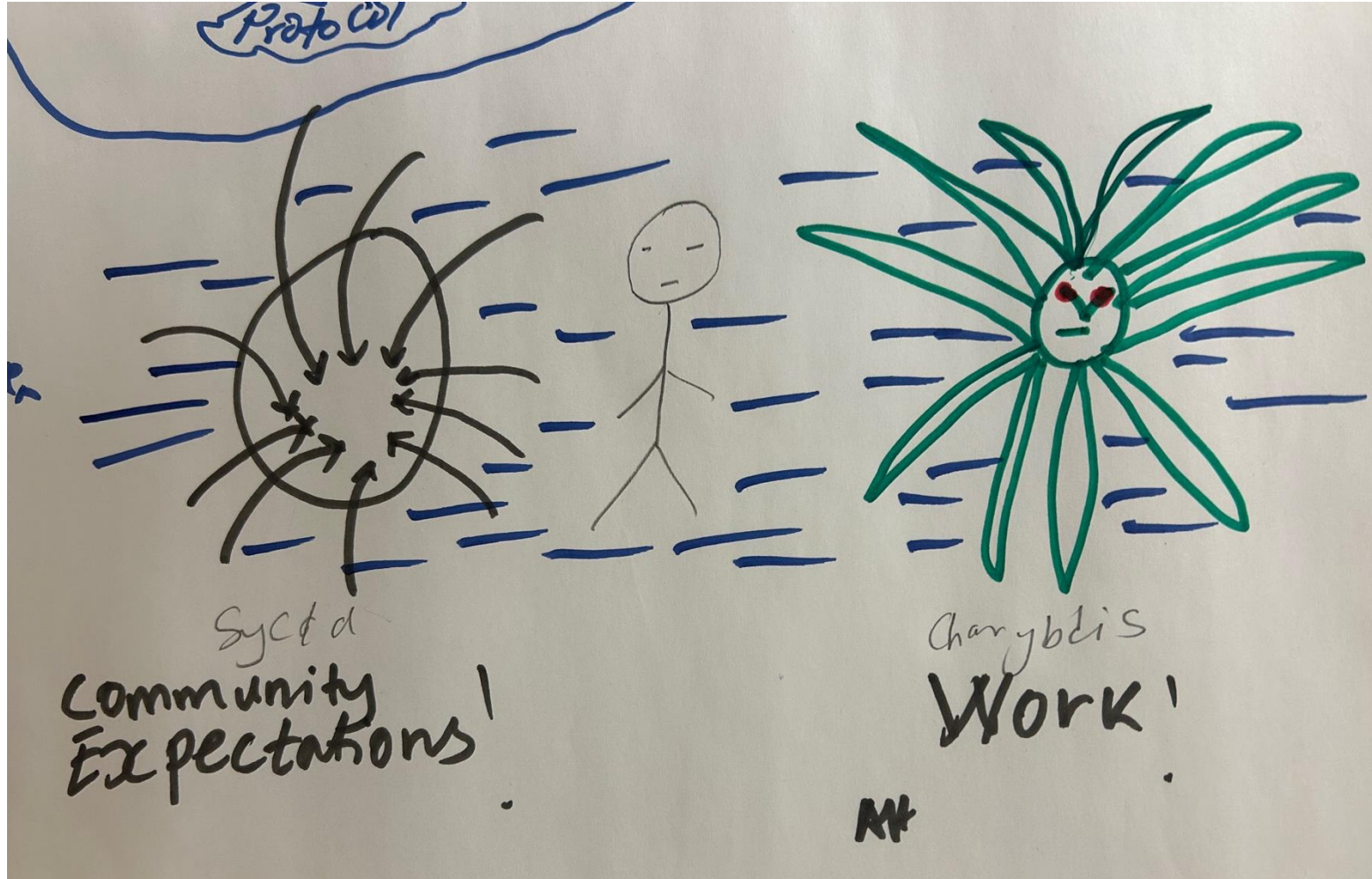# Establishing the frontline staff network

Who to approach?

- Understanding of issues
- Experience across diverse settings
- Willingness and able to share views
- Line manager support & interest

How to organise the first meeting?

- Context - funding cuts
- Share inputs in advance

Visual & participatory methods
to facilitate sharing and discuss complex issues

Burden
To/on the
heart?

A focus on team/organisational processes to build support
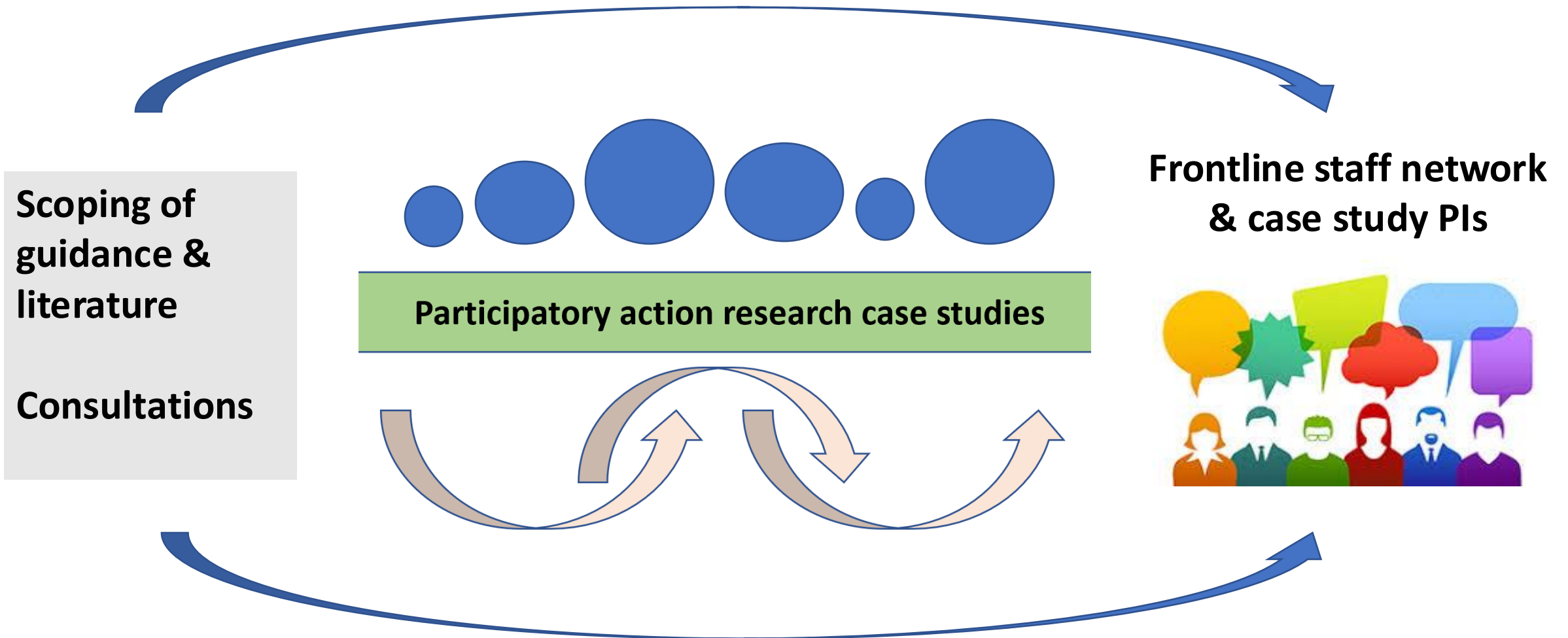
Agreements on what next

- Valued the sharing and learning
- Inspired by the needs & possibilities

ROOTS
MORAL DISTRESS

*Rethinking Organisational Options
to Tackle moral distresS*

- Share resources
- Interest groups
- Training
- Flexible pot – case studies

Redesigned the approach

Scoping of guidance & literature

Consultations

Participatory action research case studies

Frontline staff network & case study PIs

Opportunities & challenges
re equitable partnerships

- **The topic and approach** – appreciate (flexible) funding & PI support

- **Ongoing network engagement** – balancing members' interests in ROOTs vs responsibilities to busy line managers

- **Making a difference** – broader institution support? Research ecosystem pressures – compound pressures

Moving forwards:

- Meetings online
- Webinars and training activities
- Core case studies in Kenya
- Concept notes submitted
  - Vicarious trauma training – Zimbabwe
  - Ethics reflection sessions – Bangladesh
  - Consultations with frontline staff – UK, South Africa, Ghana, Nepal
- Initial outputs

'I wish I'd had this earlier...'

'Tips that go well with managing a team; working with emotions..'

Model for developing context-sensitive responses to vulnerability in research: managing ethical dilemmas faced by frontline research staff in Kenya

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With thanks