

Decoloniality as a pathway to equitable research partnerships

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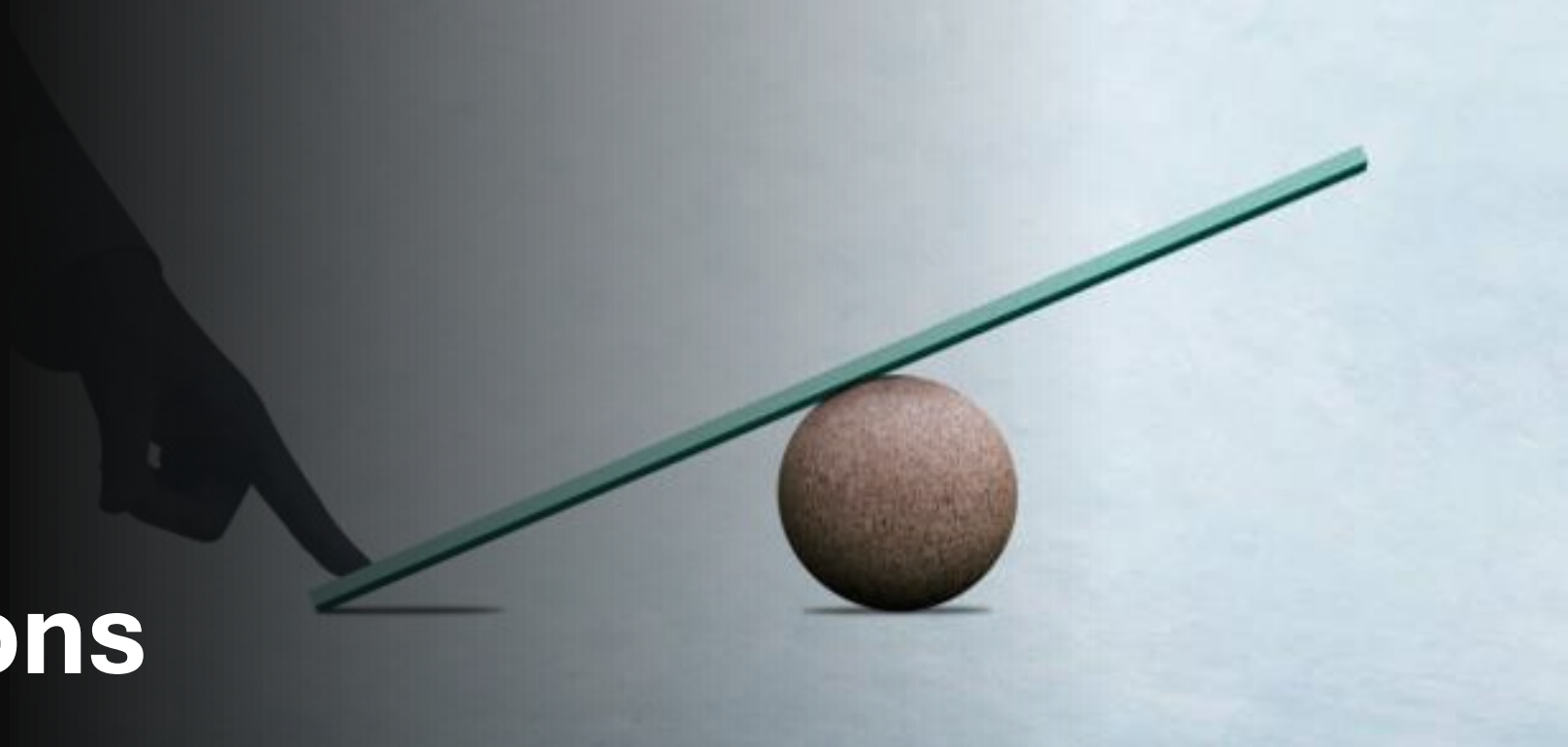
Global Forum on Bioethics Research
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Research partnerships remain essential

- More complex challenges
- Pooling expertise, experiences and resources
- Innovative problem-solving
- Enhanced research impact

Balancing the gains and tensions



DELTA Africa II Launch

Impactful Science for Africa's Development



Ongoing efforts

- South-led partnerships and joint leadership
- Resource allocation quotas
- Mandatory capacity strengthening components
- Increased engagement during research development

Persistent ethical challenges

- Superficial or substantive changes?
- Emphasis on North-South partnerships while overlooking others
- Broader political, economic, and socio-cultural power structures reflected in global health

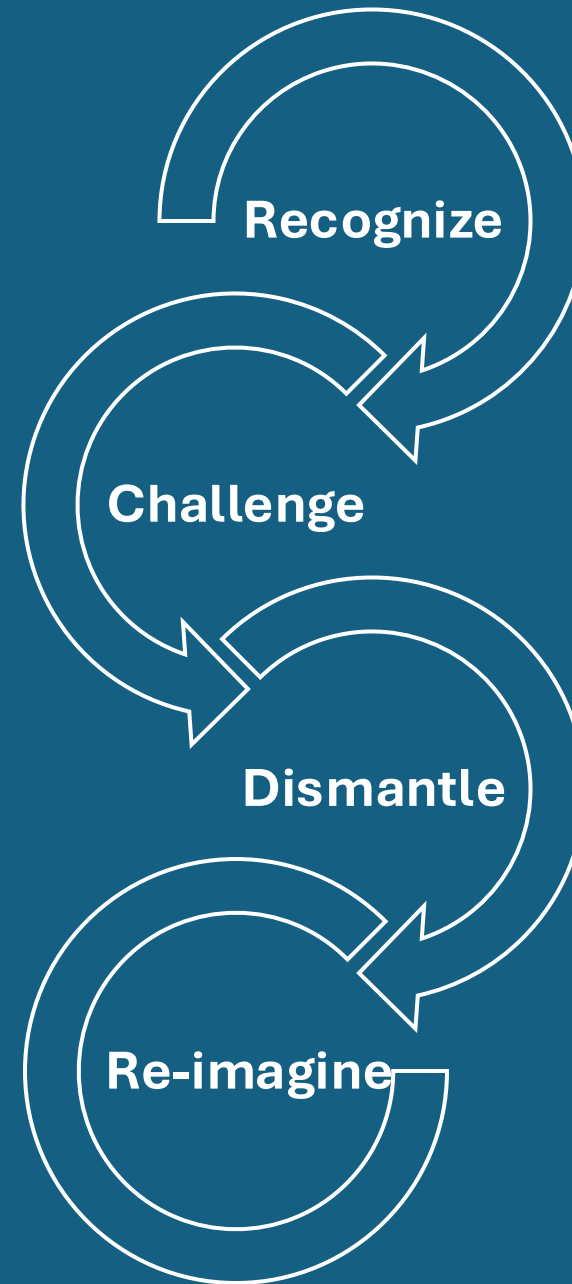
**Equitable research
partnerships cannot emerge
from structures that remain
deeply unequal**



Decolonial lens

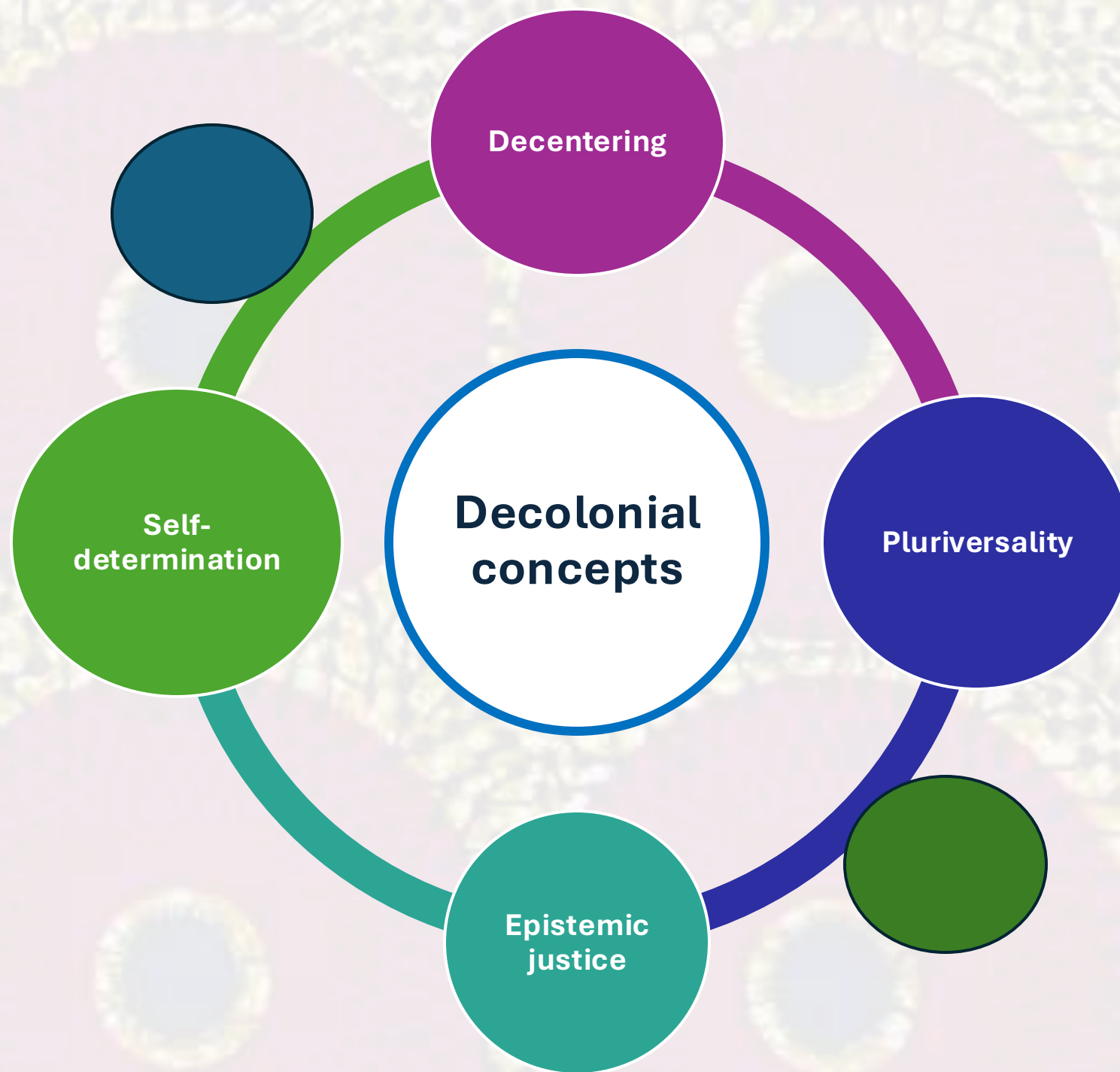
Recognizing the systems, structures, beliefs, narratives, and practices that perpetuate colonial relationships between and within countries and communities

Transformative lens for rethinking equitable research partnerships



Epistemic and cultural sovereignty



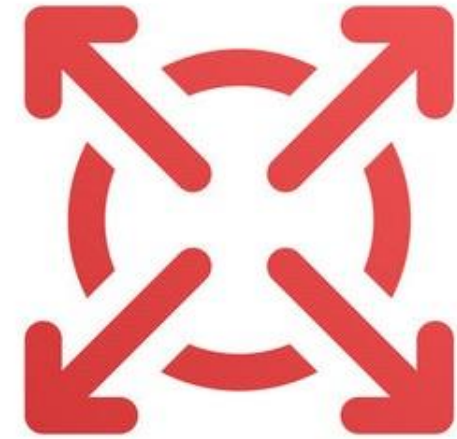


Decentering

- Shifting focus away from one dominant viewpoint
- Challenging dominant epistemologies that claim universality

Reflections

- Which processes help define research collaboration and questions?
- Should our research methodologies be considered universal?
- Which frameworks are centred in analysing lived experiences?



No one group has the power to determine what qualifies as knowledge, which knowers are valued, or which methods are valid

Pluriversality

- Many worlds coexist as equally valid knowledge systems
- Universal → pluriversal epistemologies
- **Diverse ways of being, knowing and doing**

Reflections

- Who is considered a partner?
- Do dominant models guide our partnerships and research?
- Can scientific inquiry exist beyond Eurocentric frameworks?



Epistemic Justice

- The right of all stakeholders to shape the knowledge systems that affect them
- Ensures local knowledge is not undervalued or extracted

Reflections

- Are local knowledge holders true partners from concept to application?
- Are the silenced empowered to exercise intellectual agency?
- Are local communities subjects or authors of the narrative?



Source: Unknown

Self-determination

- The power of beneficiary communities to define their own knowledge needs and solutions

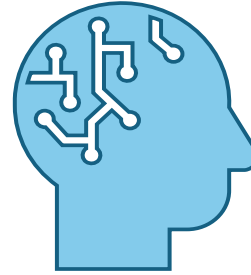
Reflections

- Whose voice carries more weight in setting the partnership's agenda?
- Whose priorities are really centred?
- How should funders and external partners align?

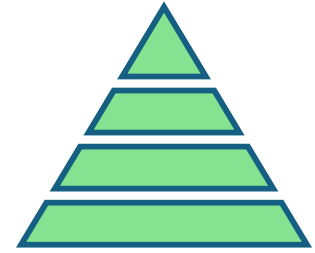


Source: <https://www.bgci.org>

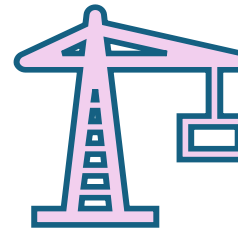
Operationalizing these concepts for equitable partnerships



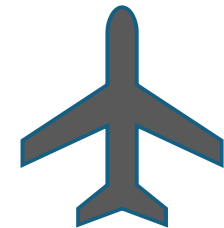
**Understanding
and
applicability**



Multi-level action

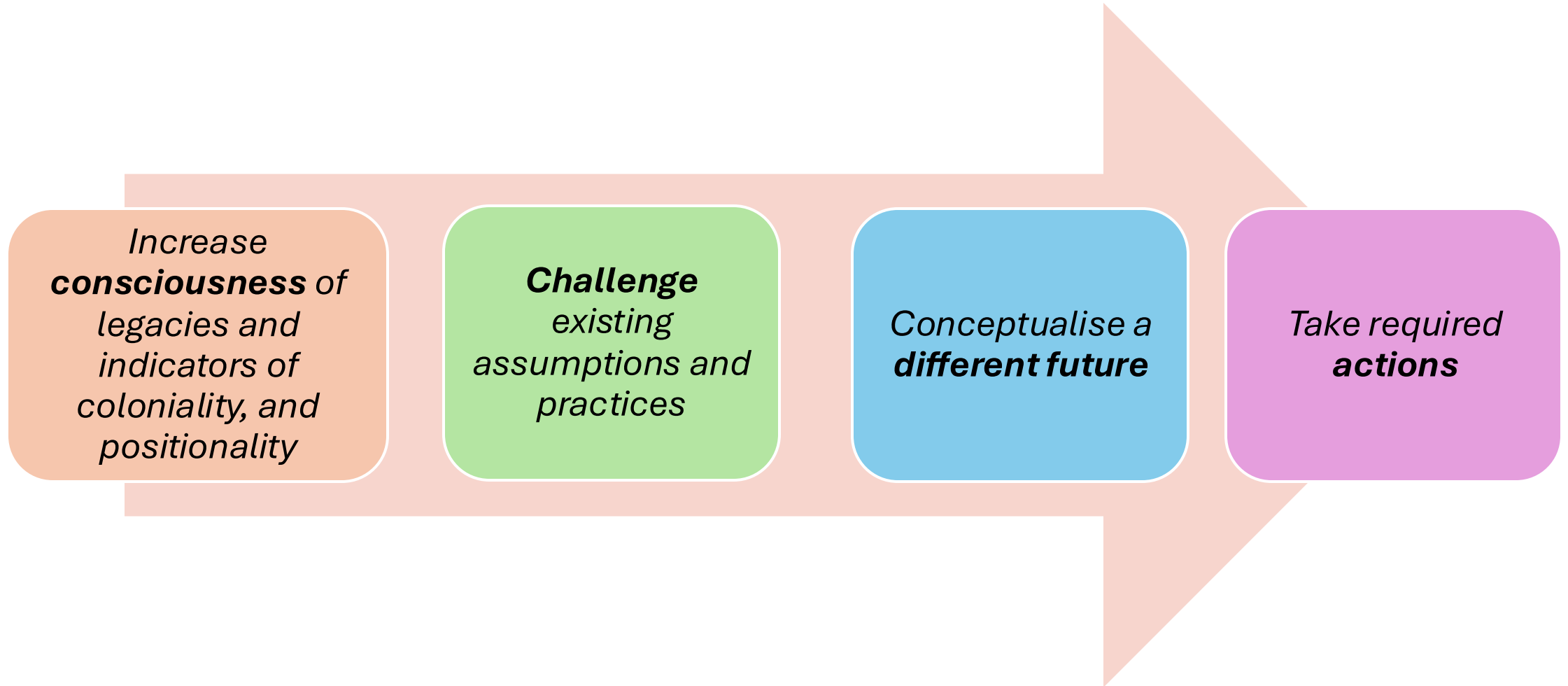


**Incremental
and
radical**



**Bold
and
visionary**

Practical steps for decolonial action



Reflexive and practical frameworks and tools

Awareness

- Reflect on your positionality with the colonial power matrix that keeps modern global societies in a permanently conflictual and destabilised states.
- E.g., what is my (privileged) identity, history, and context, and how do these relate to (oppressed) others?

Deliberation

- While reflecting on your positionality, theorise how you can cont disruption and dismantling of dominant colonial structures.
- E.g., think beyond normative epistemologies and consider 'other' as valid (not deviant).

Action

- Challenge normative theories, methodologies, and outputs in HI
- E.g., use critical theories, cite marginalised authors, publish in p journals, be 'disruptive' in research dissemination.

BOX 2

- Who does this research benefit or harm?
- Does this research topic align with the priorities of participants and Indigenous communities?

Published example: Using Indigenous framing and approaches, and involving Indigenous peoples, to research Indigenous health, for the benefit of Indigenous peoples.¹⁴

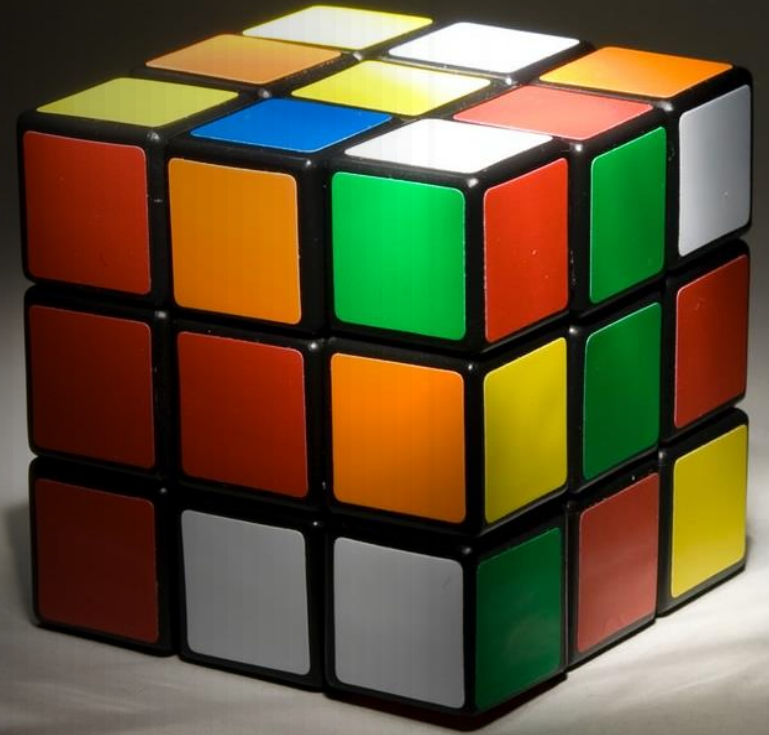
BOX 1

- What is your history of privilege in terms of ethnicity, gender identity, geolocation, etc. (i.e., where do you find yourself in the colonial matrix of power)?
- Is your research team diverse?
- What are the relative positionalities of team members?
- What steps are taken to ensure power is diffuse?
- How are all voices heard and valued?

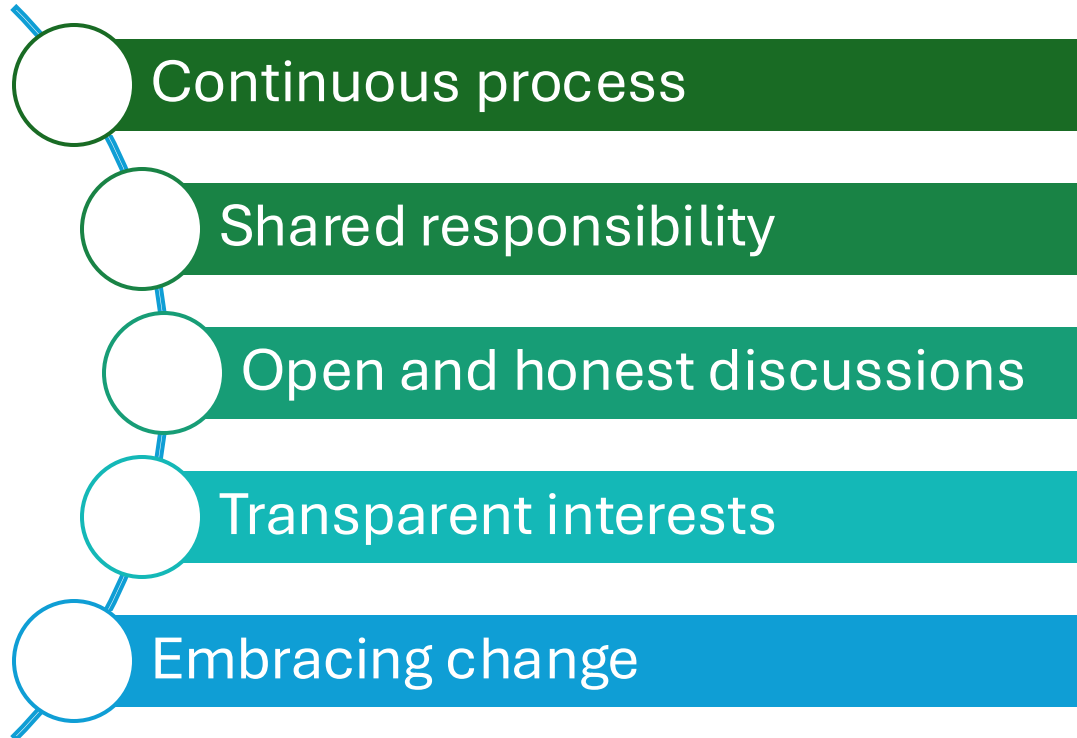
Published examples:


- Students as co-researchers, participating in all stages of the research process, with students acknowledged by name in publications.¹²
- A diverse research team, including an Indigenous scholar, on a research study that explored mentorship experiences of Indigenous peoples in the health sciences.¹³

**Simple in theory,
complex in practice?**



Progress towards transformed futures for partnerships



A herd of elephants is silhouetted against a warm, orange-hued sunset sky. The elephants are standing in a grassy field, with some facing left and others right. In the background, there are large, dark acacia trees and rolling hills. The overall scene is peaceful and evokes a sense of community and journey.

**If you want to go fast, go alone.
If you want to go far, go together.
-African Proverb**



Source: amle.org

Questions or thoughts?

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