

Opportunities for Funders to Support Equitable Research Partnerships

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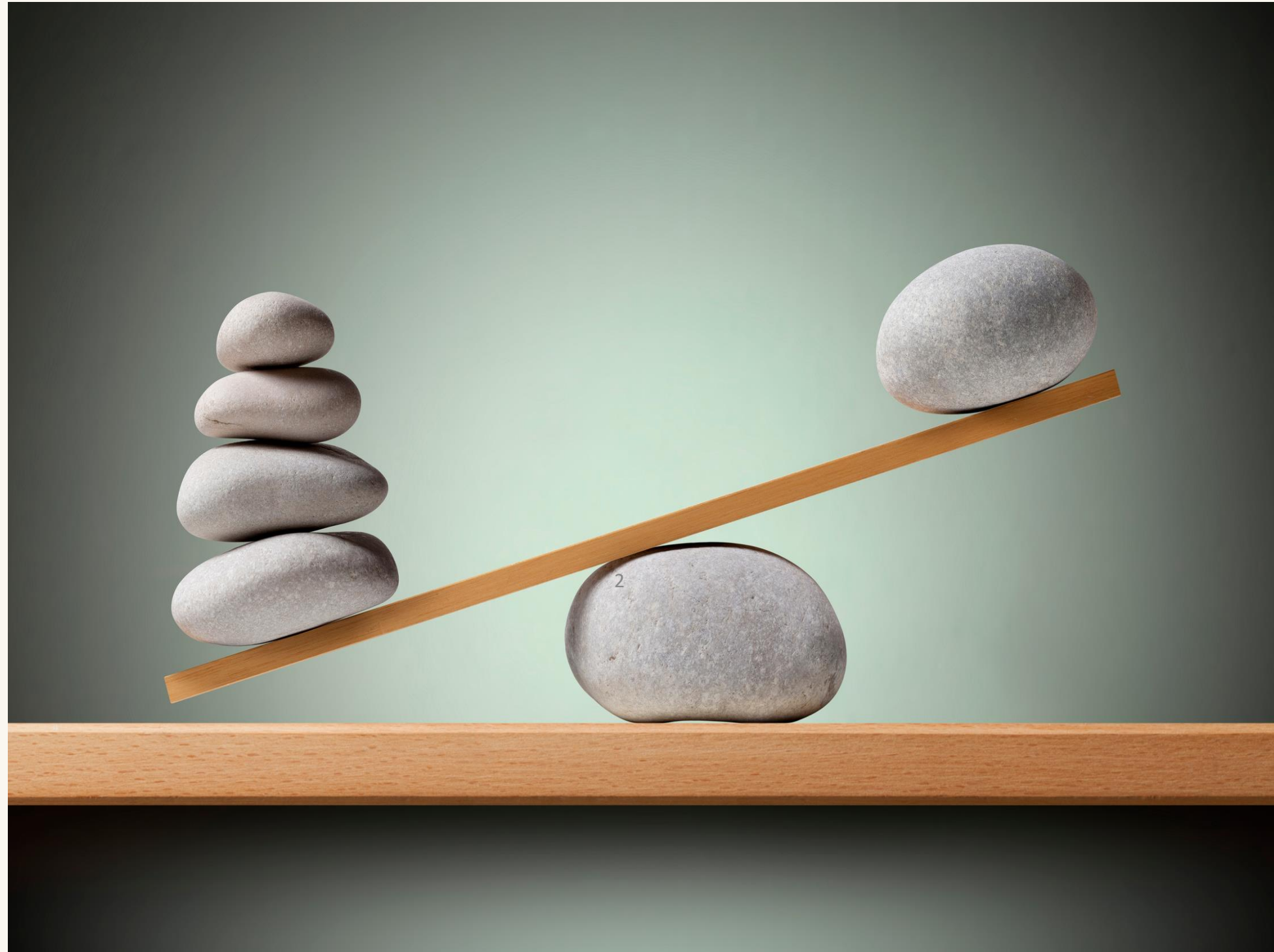
Global Forum on Bioethics in Research

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The Persistent Problem: Structural Inequities



Focus on Funders

1. *Shape global health agenda*
2. *Funders set the “rules of engagement”*
3. *Communicate normative viewpoints*
4. *Moral Responsibility*

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EDCTP



National Institutes of Health
Turning Discovery Into Health



Sida



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Gates Foundation

NIHR | National Institute for
Health and Care Research





RESEARCH BASIS

Scoping Review



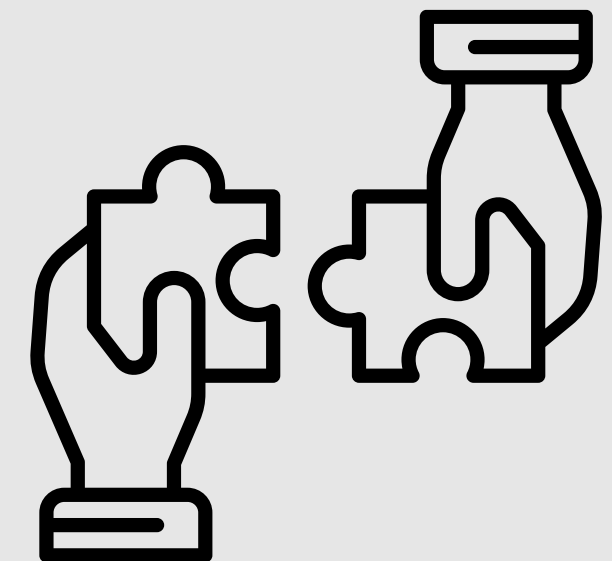
Mapping existing frameworks and toolkits aimed at guiding funders in advancing equity in global health research partnerships.

Discourse Analysis



Document review and discourse analysis of publicly available three U.S. funder documents

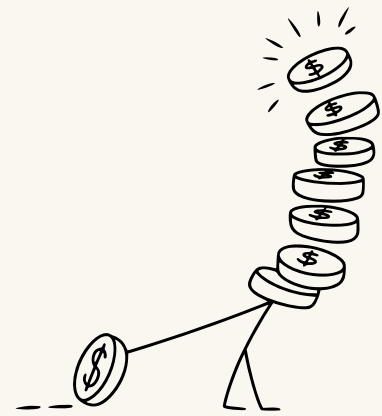
Qualitative Case Study



Examined the partnership between Makerere and Johns Hopkins to reveal practical insights and lessons learned.

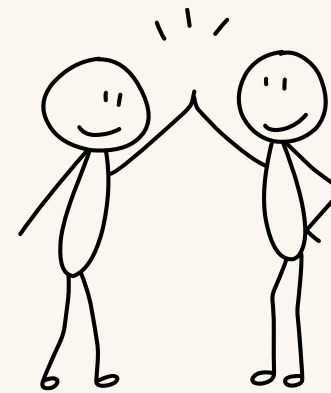


THREE OPPORTUNITY SPACES FOR FUNDERS



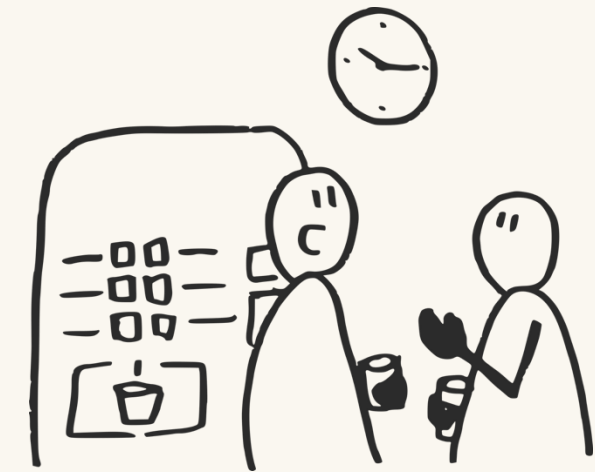
FINANCING

Equity requires balanced resource allocation for all partners.



GOVERNANCE

Shared leadership fosters collaborative decision-making and trust.



ACCOUNTABILITY

Mutual accountability builds ethical resilience within partnerships.

FINANCING: EQUITABLE RESOURCE ALLOCATION

Indirect Cost Disparities

8% vs 60%

LMIC Indirect Cost Rate Compared to HIC



Direct Funding of LMIC Institutions

USAID had committed to directing

25% of its
funding to local
partners

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Uncertainty of Global Health Funding

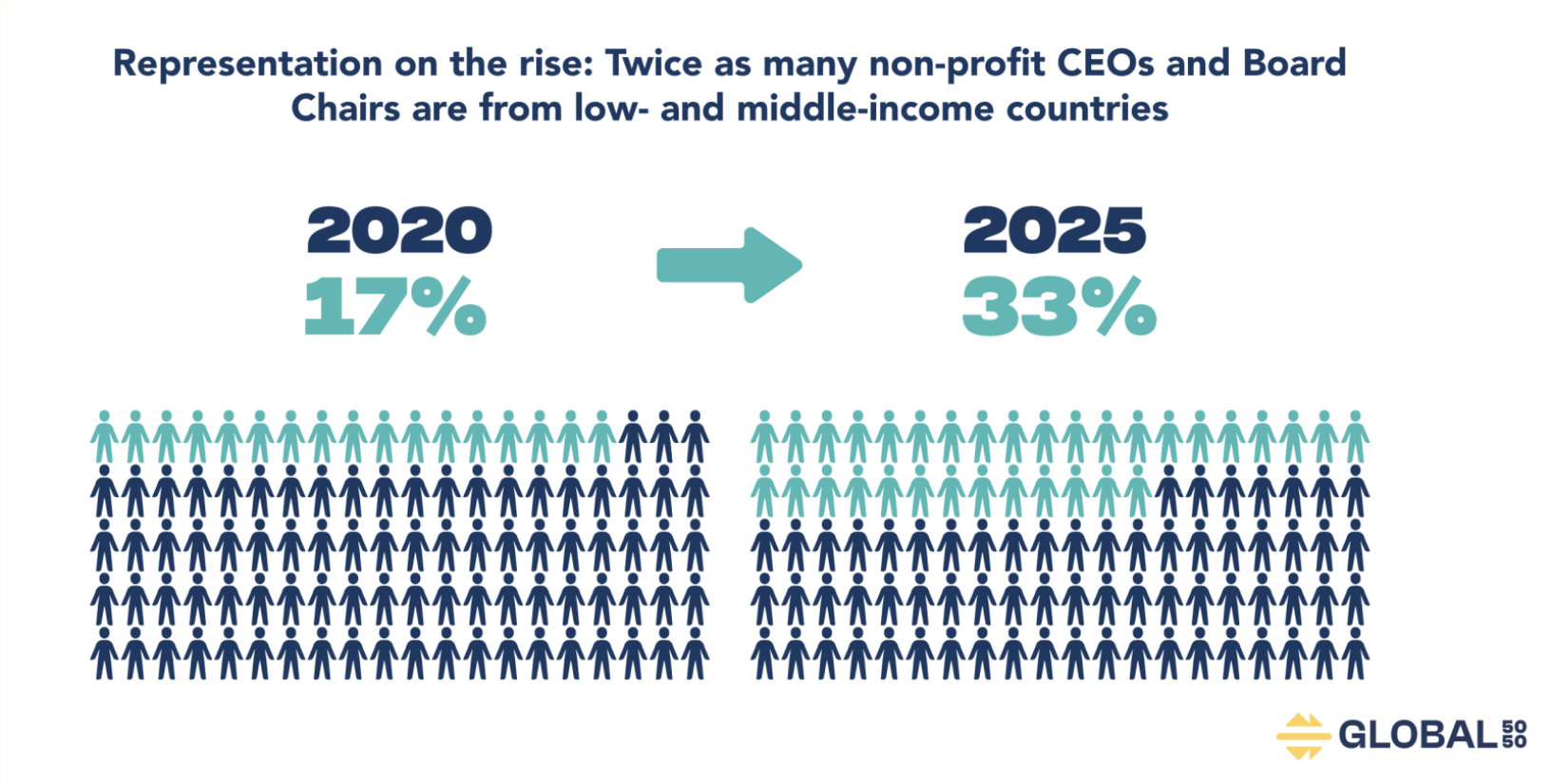


GOVERNANCE: SHARED LEADERSHIP AS THE NORM

The Current Challenge

Board inequalities differ by sector				
	NONPROFIT ORGANISATIONS			
	For-profit companies (n=598)	Funders (n=110)	NGOs, Faith-based, Research bodies (n=1006)	Public-private partnerships (n=266)
% Seats held by HICs	89%	80%	67%	55%
% Seats held by MICs	11%	39%	29%	39%
% Seats held by LICs	0.2%	3.6%	4.4%	6.8%
% Seats held by HIC men	58%	46%	35%	32%
% Seats held by LIC women	0.2%	0.9%	2.3%	2.3%

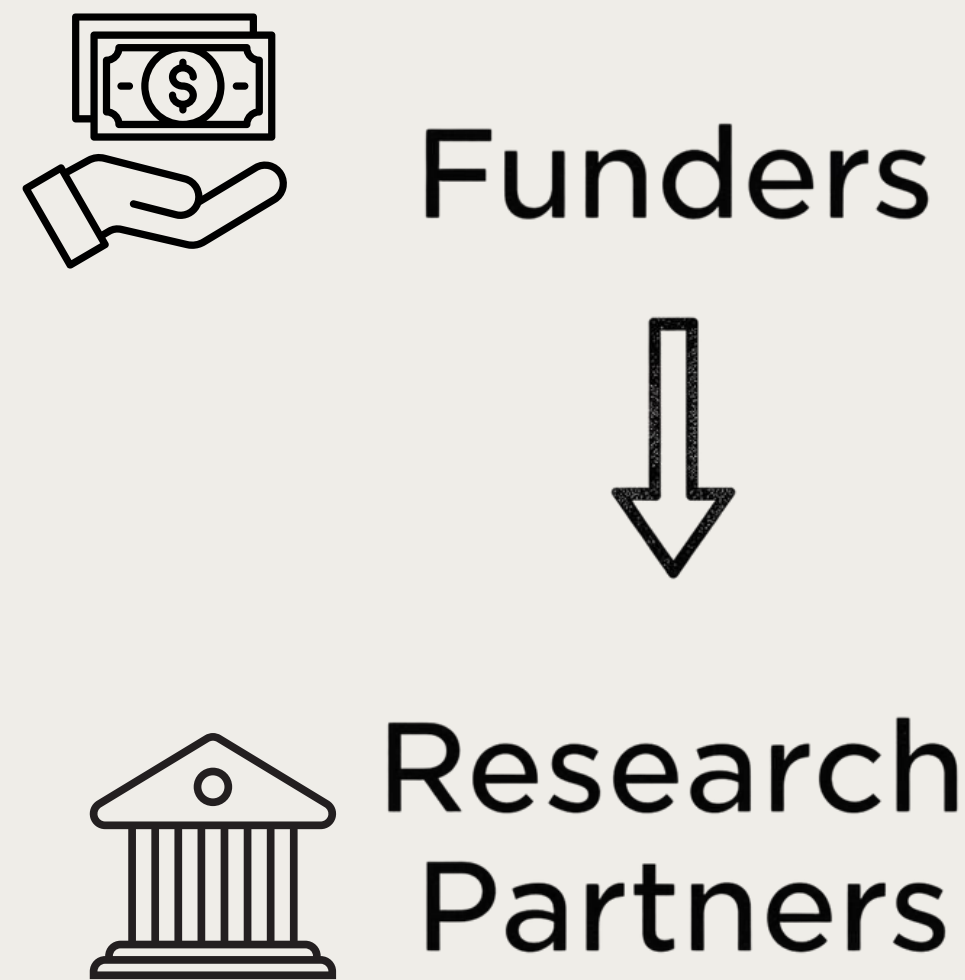
Emerging Shifts



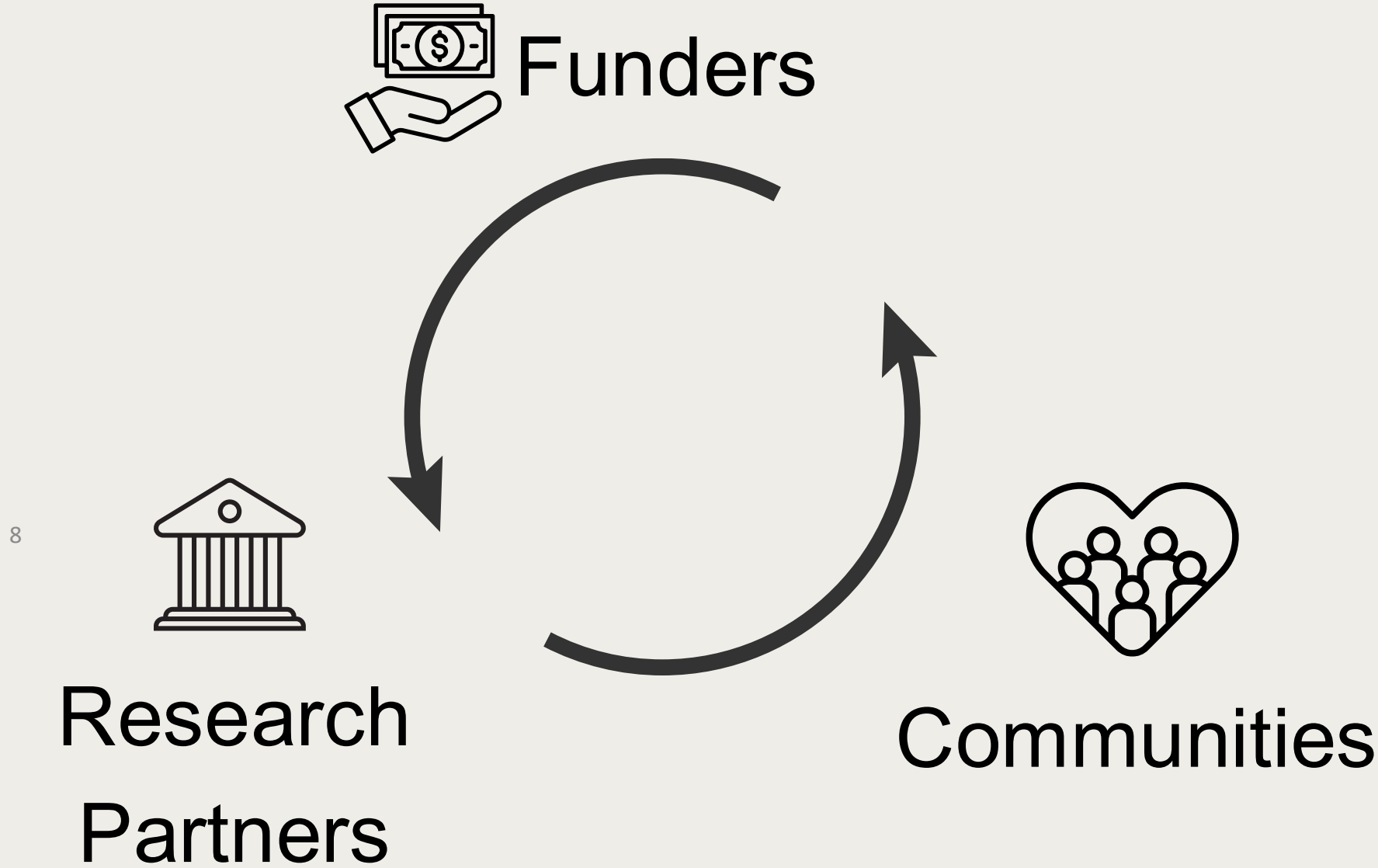
- ❖ NIH Fogarty: R25, D43, G11 grant mechanisms encourage multiple PIs with LMIC co-leads; leadership has transitioned from HIC to LMIC
- ❖ EDCTP funded trials led by LMIC investigators

ACCOUNTABILITY: FROM COMPLIANCE TO RECIPROCITY

Current Dynamic:
Unidirectional Accountability



Future Vision:
Mutual Accountability



Key Recommendations

Priorities for Funders and Partners

Embed Equity Structurally

Funders must **embed equity** in financing and governance structures, ensuring parity in overhead costs, increasing funding of LMIC institutions and priorities directly, and establishing co-leadership mandates for sustainable partnerships.

Institutionalize Reciprocal Accountability

It is essential to **institutionalize reciprocal accountability**, implementing bidirectional evaluations and including community-level insights to strengthen trust and resilience in partnerships. This includes mechanisms such as metrics, mutual reporting frameworks, and peer review that evaluates funder performance on equity.



Vision for the Future

- Funders as moral actors, not neutral financiers
- Transform funder practices from voluntary commitments to structural expectations
- Move from encouragement to mandate: shared governance and mutual accountability
- Equity can't rely on goodwill, it must be built into the system through rules, incentives, and accountability



Thank you!

QUESTIONS OR REFLECTIONS?

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