

[Name of WASH researcher],

I'm writing to see if you'd be willing to participate in a project on Decolonizing WASH Research. All I need at this time is a response to 3 brief questions below about if/how you'd like to participate, with estimated time commitments (highlighted below). Note that honorariums will be provided for participation to avoid taking up your already stretched time for little direct benefit!

The plan for the project is to:

1. Interview WASH researchers in LMICs to understand the challenges they face due to colonialism, racism, sexism, etc.
2. Interview key individuals at WASH research funders to understand their perceptions of the challenges LMIC researchers face, then to understand organizational initiatives underway and barriers they've faced
3. Present findings to both groups together to allow for a set of principles or a joint declaration or something else TBD based on what the group determines would be most effective
4. Proceed with future work to analyze with more detailed qualitative studies and/or more representative quantitative studies to continue to build the evidence base to understand the situation, determine which steps will be most effective in addressing these challenges, and advocate for taking those steps.

In general, the idea is not to shame any specific donors, but rather to gather those who are starting to push for Decolonizing WASH research to understand the situation better and to organize to advocate for change. Most aspects will be intellectually led by LMIC researchers, with HIC researchers/donors/others playing a role where helpful to provide resources (not taxing the already limited time of LMIC researchers) and to provide anonymity where needed by LMIC researchers.

I've attached a brief describing the initiative, as well as the draft questionnaire so you have some idea of the current plan.

The following are some key ways you can be involved (suggestions/feedback welcomed):

1. **Participate in an interview and/or refer others to participate (Estimated time requirement: 1 hour)**

We are currently planning to interview about 20 people to start- ideally, a male and female early career researcher (*defined as: researchers who have not received a PhD more than five years ago*) and a Senior PI (*defined as: researchers who have received a PhD at least 10 years ago, managing at least three other research staff members, including students, and are leading at least one research grant*). If you would be willing to introduce me to others involved in WASH research (from social scientists to microbiologists to engineers and everything else you can imagine), especially meeting the three categories of sex/seniority above outside the one you fit into, that would be very helpful. We're not looking for any kind of systematic sampling- at this

point, just trying to get a range of viewpoints as a starting point for future work. We will also be interviewing donors in parallel.

We have a team of RAs, all women of color, who will be conducting interviews from Wednesday, Feb 24th to Friday, March 5th. I have attached the interview guide, which is a semi-structured way of exploring racism, colonialism, and discrimination in WASH research—but the main point is to understand experiences and perceptions from LMIC researchers, early career and senior and male and female.

If you are willing to participate in this aspect, please reply with at least 3 1-hour slots that you are available from Feb 24th-26th or March 1st-5th, ideally during your workday and not too early US Eastern time (where the RAs are based), but for those with time zones in Asia or other more extreme time differences, we will be as flexible as possible to accommodate your schedule.

2. **Participate in a panel discussion at the Colorado WASH Symposium (Estimated time requirement: 3 hours)**

We have a 45-minute slot to present at the Colorado WASH Symposium March 11th or 12th (TBD). We are looking for any interested to share their experiences, live or pre-recorded and/or answer questions from the audience. This represents the first chance to take some of the ideas emerging from this research public.

3. **Participate in consensus-building meetings and/or publications (either substantially involved down to just being copied on draft materials for any feedback you desire to give) (Time requirement: 3-10 hours)**

While it's unclear exactly what form this will take, mostly because we want even the format of these discussions to be driven by LMIC researchers, there will certainly be some opportunity to be involved further to the degree you're interested.

So, could you let me know if you're interested in:

1. **Participating in interviews and/or referring others (please provide some times you are available from Feb 24th to Mar 5th and/or names and emails of others):**
2. **Participating in a panel discussion (time will be limited, so no pressure, but I'd love to know if you're interested):**
3. **Participating in further activities of the project (and some idea of the degree to which you'd like to be interested):**

Thanks,

[Name of research team member]