From inclusion to pluralism: how can we expand the epistemic languages of global health storytelling?

The collection of papers[1] that arose from *The Lancet Global Health*'s previous listening exercise did much to champion inclusivity and representation in global health by exploring authorship, epistemology, and other relevant facets of global health research as they pertain to publication. These papers served as a direly needed reminder that global health storytelling is a language in and of itself, one which is exclusionary in its esoteric nature, imposing structures and conventions drawn from one form of epistemology upon all others.[2]

Although these papers called for the global health community to do more to facilitate the teaching of this language to a broader audience, we believe that rethinking global health storytelling must go one step further. Efforts to introduce the language of publication to a broader audience are laudable, but we propose that publishing will remain a limited and limiting platform so long as the onus remains on knowledge holders to learn this language. Rather, we argue that global health storytelling must go beyond inclusivity to embrace pluralism by accommodating various storytelling languages stemming from a diversity of rich epistemic traditions.[3]

Despite the creation of countless platforms willing and able to host knowledge products in a range of formats in this digital age, we contend that peer-reviewed journals such as *The Lancet Global Health* remain crucial actors within the global health evidence base due to their power to confer legitimacy upon knowledge. However, current journal requirements dictate that knowledge in its raw form must undergo a process of epistemic disciplining such that it becomes suitable for the pages of global health journals, and thus understandable for the broader global health community. What is lost in this process of translation required by the epistemic limitations of global health publications? What can be gained by broadening our ideas of what belongs in journals and expanding the number of epistemic languages we consider in our search for evidence and expertise?

Papers from the previous collection have highlighted the importance of voice, representation, and authorship. In focusing on epistemology, this Correspondence seeks to address these specific questions from *The Lancet Global Health* editorial team:[4] "what should we be doing more, or less, of in terms of our policies and the work we consider? How can we use the power that we have to better advance global health?" We submit that as a fully online journal "committed to addressing the decolonising agenda in global health", *The Lancet Global Health* is well positioned to champion the diversification of not only inputs to the global health evidence base, but of global health evidence bases as a whole, by reconsidering the legitimacy of works of all epistemic shapes and sizes.

We declare no competing interests.

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1 The Lancet Global Health. What is wrong with global health? 2021. https://www.thelancet.com/what-is-wrong-with-global-health (accessed March 21, 2023).
2 Khan SA. Decolonising global health by decolonising academic publishing. *BMJ Glob Health* 2022; **7:** e007811.
3 Mignolo WD. Delinking: the rhetoric of modernity, the logic of coloniality and the grammar of de-coloniality. *Cult Stud* 2007; **21:** 449–514.
4 The Lancet Global Health. The future of global health research, publishing, and practice. *Lancet Glob Health* 2023; **11:** e170.