

# Improving Equity and Inclusivity in Research Mentorship in Low- and Middle-Income Countries



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This summer I traveled to London, England to study research mentorship and ways to improve equity with mentorship in low- and middle-income countries. The project I was working on was with Dr. Joe Tucker and Dr. Eneyi Kpokiri at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM). We wanted to hear ideas from people living or working in low- and middle-income countries, so decided to conduct an open call. In an open call study, an organizing group asks people to send in their ideas for ways to solve a certain problem.

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London, UK



Traditionally, there is some kind of incentive, like a monetary prize, for people to submit their ideas. We released the open call a couple weeks before I went to London. When I arrived, we were primarily focused on promotion for the open call. In the first couple weeks, I sent out a lot of emails to different networks to advertise the study and ask them to share with people who might be interested.

When the open call closed on June 15th, we moved to the judging phase. In order to prepare for the judging phase, we prepared the materials and submissions and then I sent everything to the nine judges. This was the most stressful part of my work this summer because we were under a deadline to get all the submissions scored and notify the finalists. We ended up with three finalists who received between \$1500 and \$2000. We had a total of 64 submissions, so it was difficult to narrow it down to just three finalists, but we chose them based on feasibility and



quality of their submissions. It was very rewarding to notify the finalists and hear their excitement and appreciation for the work we had been doing. The money they received will allow them to pilot mentorship programs at their home institutions.



Outside of my internship I spent hours walking in Hyde Park, exploring different food markets, and swimming in the Hampstead Heath Ponds. It was amazing to see London in the summer as it felt like everyone was squeezing every drop out of the good weather. The restaurants and pubs were overflowing into the streets and the parks were full of people picnicking. I explored a lot of neighborhoods of London I had never seen before including Acton in West London. My friend was an au pair for a family in Acton and I loved getting a glimpse into the life of a typical London family. On the rainy days, I spent time in library's, bookstores, cafes, and art

museums. I tried to fully embrace all the amazing productions London has to offer so went to a salsa class, West End plays, comedy shows and live music performances. I had such an amazing time in London and felt like confidence and independence grow throughout the summer.



I learned so much from this project over the summer but one of my main takeaways is how much I enjoy working with people from all over the world. It was so interesting to be on calls where one person was calling in from Colombia, one from the Philippines, one from Geneva, etc. Another takeaway from my summer was how much I gained from having a really good mentor. I worked on this whole study focused on mentorship so thought a lot about the subject and so appreciated my own mentors, Joe and Eneyi, so much more. After this summer I have a much better understanding of research studies and everything that goes into them. It is certainly a lot of work, and I can't imagine juggling multiple studies at a time like Joe and Eneyi but I am really fortunate to have had this experience with them.

