

Editors as Allies: Reimagining Global Health Journals

Catherine Kyobutungi and Julia Robinson

10 June 2025

Reflexivity statement



Introducing *PLOS Global Public Health*

PLOS GLOBAL PUBLIC HEALTH

EDITORIAL

PLOS Global Public Health, charting a new path towards equity, diversity and inclusion in global health

Catherine Kyobutungi, Julia Robinson*, Madhukar Pai

PLOS Global Public Health, San Francisco, CA, United States of America

PLOS GLOBAL PUBLIC HEALTH

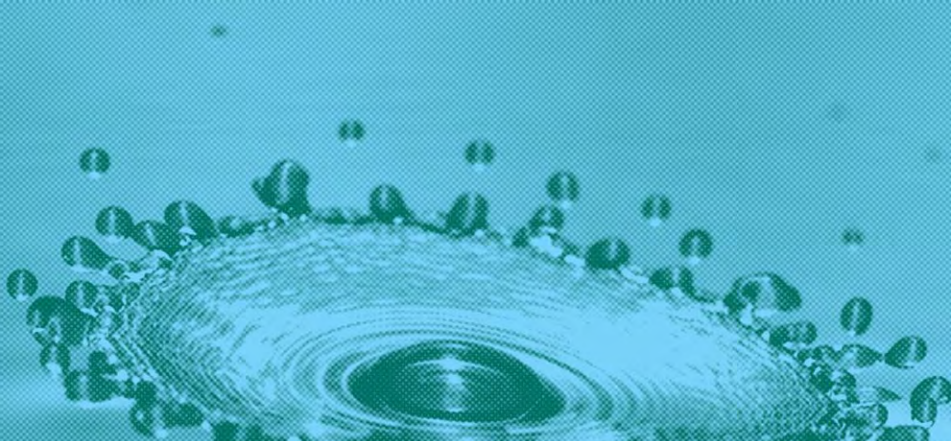
EDITORIAL

Editors as allies: Our two-year experience at *PLOS Global Public Health*

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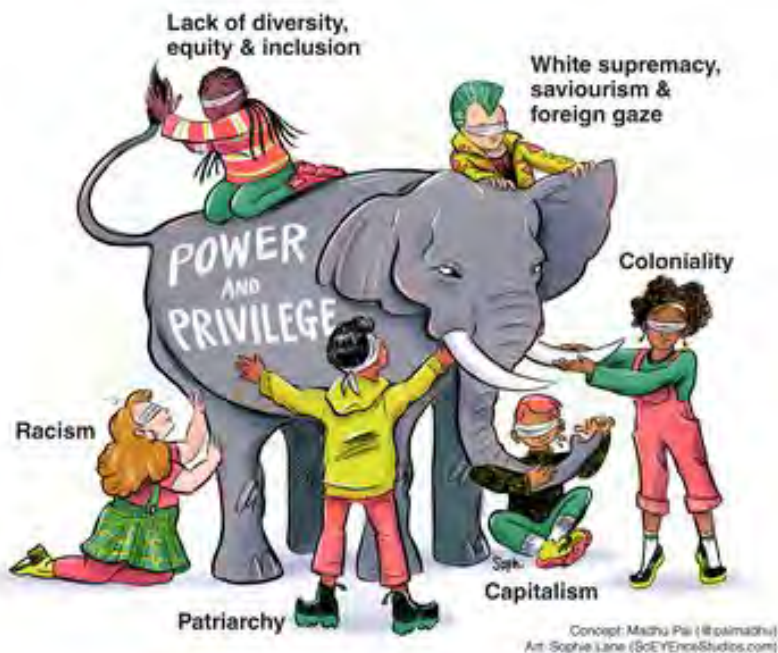


Why do we need a new
global health journal?



Context

- The Covid-19 pandemic, the Black Lives Matter and Women in Global Health movements, as well as ongoing calls to decolonize global health have all created space for uncomfortable but important conversations that reveal serious asymmetries of power and privilege that permeate all aspects of the field
- In particular, lack of diversity at all levels in global health journals, and lack of affordability for authors from low and middle-income countries are key concerns that journal publishers must address.



Feedback from communities...

*I am absolutely thrilled to see PLOS Global Public Health come into existence! This journal coming to fruition is another testament to [Prof Pai's] and the other editors-in-chief putting into action one of the steps they've been saying needed to happen to **decolonize global health** and ensure equity.*

*Global south today is a crossroad. It is changing rapidly: both epidemiologically as well as demographically. **More research focus is required to explore indigenous knowledge**, and find solutions that are cost-effective.*

*I am excited about the new offering from PLOS, especially as Jenna Davis will be one of the Editors in Chief. Too often this area of work tries to fit in to other journals to ensure a high profile and wide audience. **I particularly like the format of specialist PLOS journals and the ethos behind PLOS** so it is great to hear that this journal is starting up soon.*

*I am also strongly **in favor of PLOS' scope and publishing principles** as it is the necessary response to the traditional flawed system of publication in the peer-reviewed journal sector.*

*I am aware of the challenges that researchers in LMICs face and the kind of guidance they would benefit from -- particularly from reputed journals such as the PLOS family of journals. **I am also aware of the imbalance in power that exists between researchers in LMICs and those working as gatekeepers** of knowledge in high-income countries (primarily journal editorial boards). I see PLOS Global Public Health as an excellent opportunity to do whatever little I can in order to change this landscape.*

*I am an advocate of strong research coming from LMIC by LMIC researchers. I **support the high standards of PLOS journals** and their mission to make science openly available.*



Journals in general, and GH journals in particular, lack diversity & are dominated by Global North actors



How are we building PLOS GPH?

- **Intentionally diverse and representative** at all levels - including editors, peer reviewers, authors and readers
- Break down silos between different subject areas and **drive inter- and multidisciplinary research** (including geography and institution)
- **Focus on ethical and methodological rigor**, and the importance of the research question, not the perceived impact of the results
- **Open Science** embedded in the journal's ways of working and identity
- Moving beyond **Open Access** with new business models to make the journals accessible and affordable for all

Scope: 21 Sections, 43 Section Editors

- Global Health Ethics
- Global Mental Health
- Injuries, Trauma, & Global Surgery
- Global Health Security
- Diagnostics & Laboratory Medicine
- Maternal, Newborn & Child Health
- Sexual & Reproductive Rights and Health
- Planetary & Environmental Health
- Social, Behavioral, and Qualitative Research
- Global health governance
- Evidence-based Public Health
- Indigenous Health
- Non-communicable Diseases
- Infectious Diseases
- Global Health Delivery
- Emergencies and Humanitarianism
- Nutrition
- Racism and Health
- Nursing and Midwifery
- Policy and Finance
- Gender and Health

Publication Criteria



Novelty is not a publication criteria. Research must contribute to the base of scientific knowledge.



Methods must be reported completely and research must be reproducible.



Data must be available and follow our Open Science policies.



Research must be original & must adhere to strict methods & ethics criteria.

<https://journals.plos.org/globalpublichealth/s/criteria-for-publication>

A background image featuring a teal and blue color scheme. The top half shows a close-up of water splashing, with numerous droplets and ripples. The bottom half shows a single drop falling into a pool of water, creating concentric ripples. A vertical yellow bar is on the left side of the text area.

How's it going?

- More than 3,300 publications
- Submissions from 160 countries
- Publications from 113 countries
- 626 Editorial Board members from 81 countries
- Indexed in many places, including PubMed and Scopus

Diverse Editorial Board

Original Paper | [Published: 16 March 2023](#)

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion on Editorial Boards of Global Health Journals

[Muhammad Romail Manan](#) , [Iqra Nawaz](#), [Sara Rahman](#), [Areeba Razzaq](#), [Fatima Zafar](#), [Arisha Qazi](#) & [Kiera Liblik](#)

[Asian Bioethics Review](#) (2023) | [Cite this article](#)

1502 Accesses | **122** Altmetric | [Metrics](#)

Study of 43 journals found PLOS GPH to have the highest diversity index (along with 'Global Mental Health') –PLOS Global Public Health scored the maximum geographic diversity score



Source: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s41649-023-00243-8>

Our blog, Speaking of Medicine and Health

The screenshot shows the PLOS Blogs website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the PLOS logo, links for 'Publish with PLOS', 'Research Communities', 'Open Science', 'Resources', and 'About PLOS', a search icon, and a hamburger menu icon. Below this is a large purple banner with a world map background. The banner contains the text 'PLOS BLOGS' and the title 'Speaking of Medicine and Health'. A sub-header reads: 'Providing an informal venue for readers, authors, editors and friends of the PLOS medical journals to discuss global health topics and issues that are important to the community.' At the bottom of the banner are links for 'About This Blog', 'Contact', 'Author Guidelines', and 'Browse all PLOS Blogs'.


CALL FOR PAPERS

Towards Sustainable Health Care

April 24, 2023 / By PLOS

PLOS Note: Maya's blog is especially timely because PLOS Global Public Health and PLOS Climate are inviting you to submit your original...

[Read more](#)



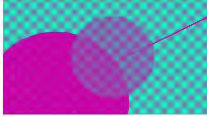
GLOBAL HEALTH

Time to build back equal in global health leadership

April 19, 2023 / By PLOS Global Public Health


By guest contributors Roopa Dhatt, Ann Keeling and Rachel Thompson (Women in Global Health) This is part 2 of a two-part series...

[Read more](#)



GLOBAL HEALTH

Time to build back equal in global health leadership



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YEAR

All years ▾

CATEGORY

Show all ▾

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VIEW STYLE

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10 things editors & journals can do to be better allies

1. Diversify editorial boards at all levels (Editors-in-Chief, Section Editors, and Academic Editors)

Original Paper | [Published: 16 March 2023](#)

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion on Editorial Boards of Global Health Journals

[Muhammad Romail Manan](#) , [Iqra Nawaz](#), [Sara Rahman](#), [Areeba Razzaq](#), [Fatima Zafar](#), [Arisha Qazi](#) & [Kiera Liblik](#)

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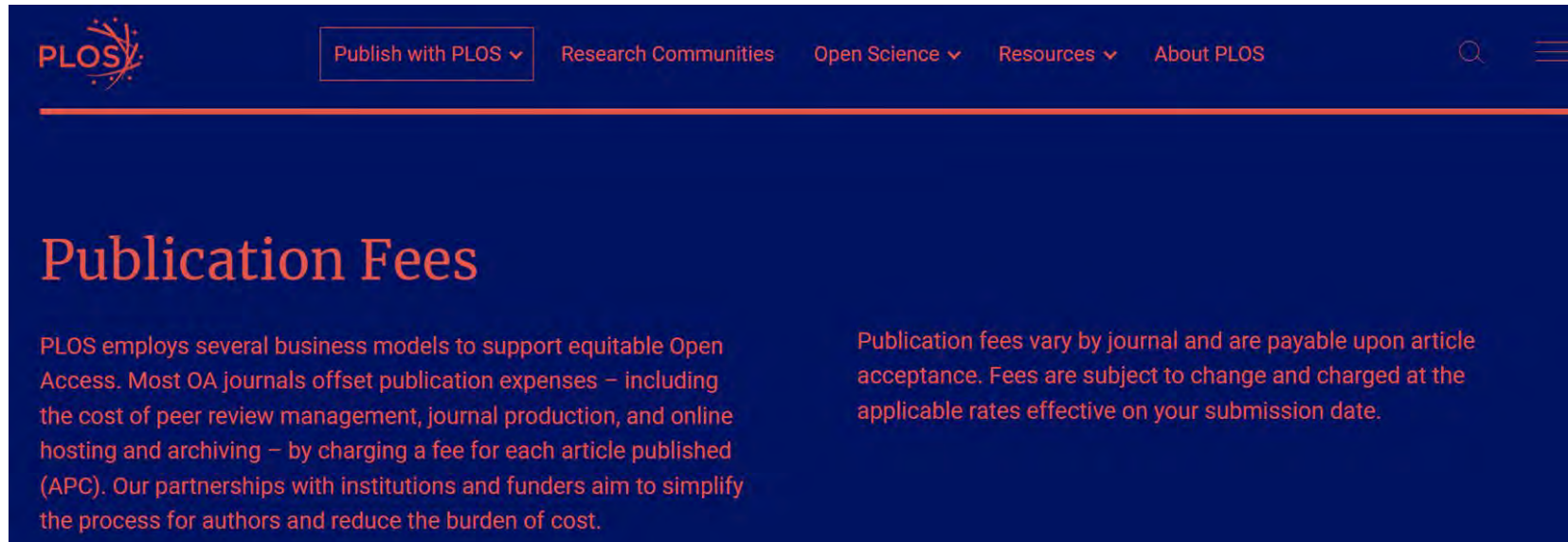
10 things editors & journals can do to be better allies

2. Tackle the **paywall problem** for low- and middle-income countries and ensure open access to all research



10 things editors & journals can do to be better allies

3. Address the **article processing charge** (APC) barrier for low- and middle-income countries (and others!)



The screenshot shows the top navigation bar of the PLOS website. The PLOS logo is on the left. The navigation menu includes 'Publish with PLOS' (highlighted with a red box), 'Research Communities', 'Open Science', 'Resources', and 'About PLOS'. A search icon and a hamburger menu icon are on the right. Below the navigation bar, the page title 'Publication Fees' is displayed in a large, bold, red font. The main content area has a dark blue background with white text. The text explains that PLOS uses various business models to support equitable Open Access, including charging APCs for each article published. It also states that publication fees vary by journal and are payable upon article acceptance, and are subject to change based on the submission date.

PLOS

Publish with PLOS ▾ Research Communities Open Science ▾ Resources ▾ About PLOS

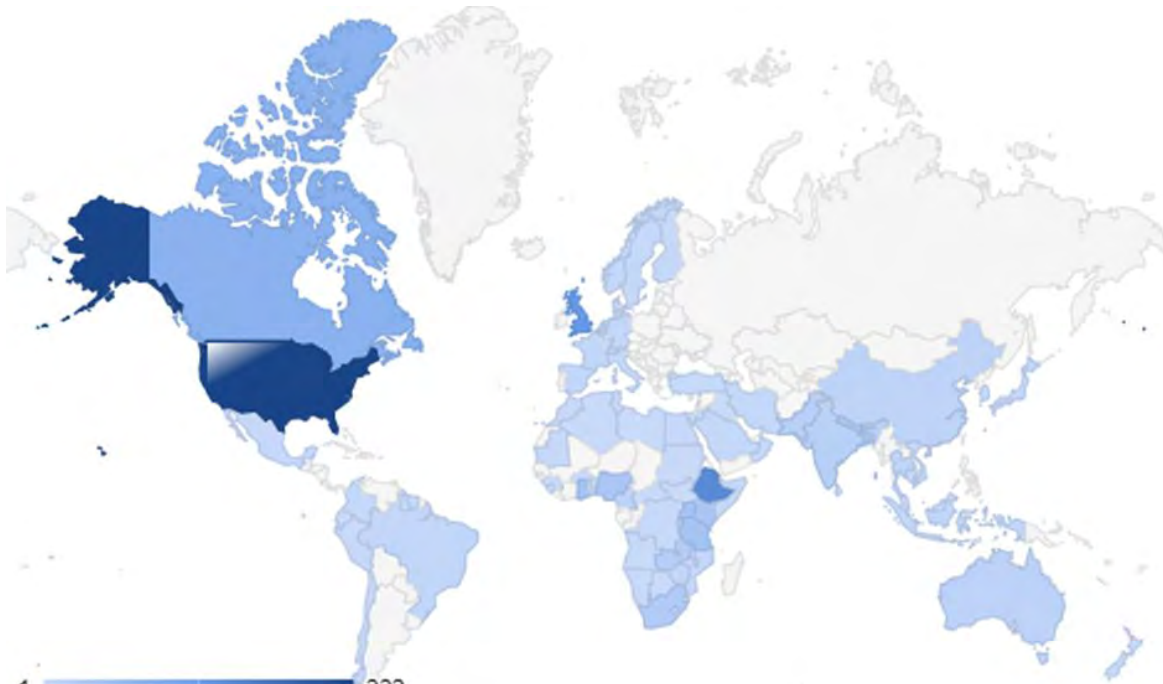
Publication Fees

PLOS employs several business models to support equitable Open Access. Most OA journals offset publication expenses – including the cost of peer review management, journal production, and online hosting and archiving – by charging a fee for each article published (APC). Our partnerships with institutions and funders aim to simplify the process for authors and reduce the burden of cost.

Publication fees vary by journal and are payable upon article acceptance. Fees are subject to change and charged at the applicable rates effective on your submission date.

10 things editors & journals can do to be better allies

4. **Check** who we are platforming and commit to genuine diversity of authors



10 things editors & journals can do to be better allies

5. **Intentionally seek out** and commission articles from Black, Indigenous, and People of color (BIPOC) experts, especially people from the Global South, Indigenous scholars, and individuals/activists with lived experience

PLOS GLOBAL PUBLIC HEALTH

OPEN ACCESS
OPINION

Towards authentic institutional allyship by global health funders

Samuel Oji Oti

Published: March 18, 2024 • <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pgph.0003024>

Article	Authors	Metrics
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PUBLISH ABOUT BROWSE

PLOS GLOBAL PUBLIC HEALTH

OPEN ACCESS
OPINION

Health care is the new battlefield for anti-DEI attacks

Oni J. Blackstock, Jessica E. Isom, Rupinder K. Legha

Published: April 24, 2024 • <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pgph.0003131>

PLOS GLOBAL PUBLIC HEALTH

OPEN ACCESS
OPINION

Community-friendly diagnostics: Who are tests for?

Fifa A. Rahman, Kenly Sikwese

Published: March 11, 2024 • <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pgph.0002915>

Article	Authors	Metrics	Comments	Media Coverage
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10 things editors & journals can do to be better allies

6. Explicitly **discourage parachute** research

- Take a stand
- Inform
- Check
- Enforce

7. Support **authorship models** that are more inclusive, equitable, and self-reflexive

PLOS GLOBAL PUBLIC HEALTH

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Catherine Kyobutungi, Julia Robinson*, Madhukar Pai

PLOS Global Public Health, San Francisco, CA, United States of America

PUBLISH ABOUT BROWSE

PLOS GLOBAL PUBLIC HEALTH

OPEN ACCESS

OPINION

Equity in global health research: A proposal to adopt author reflexivity statements

Sepeedeh Saleh, Refiloe Masekela, Eva Henz, Seye Abimbola

on behalf of the Equitable Authorship Consensus Statement Group, Ben Morton, André Vercueil, Lisa Reimer, Chisomo Kalinga, Maaiké Seekles, Bruce Biccard, Jeremiah Chakaya, Angela Obasi, Ndekyia Oriyo

Published: March 30, 2022 • <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pgph.0000160>



10 things editors & journals can do to be better allies

8. Address barriers to access related to **language** and **publication criteria**



Publication Criteria



Novelty is not a publication criteria. Research must contribute to the base of scientific knowledge.



Methods must be reported completely and research must be reproducible.

<https://journals.plos.org/glob>

10 things editors & journals can do to be better allies

9. **Shift power** to regional/country colleagues; support Global South journals, conferences, and initiatives

-Opportunities beyond the editorial work

-Visibility



Reimagining Global Health
ONLINE ONLY | JUNE 9-13, 2025

McGill

Course directors
Madhukar Pai
McGill School of Population and Global Health

Shashika Bandara
McGill School of Population and Global Health

Register at: <https://www.mcgill.ca/summerinstitute-globalhealth/>

Lioba Hirsch	Grace Umutesi	Seye Abimbola	Catherine Kyobutungi	Thirusha Naidu	Fatima Hassan
Vikram Patel	Themrise Khan	Ananya Banerjee	Yap Boun Il	Himani Bhakuni	Anant Bhan
Anna Stewart Ibarra	Luchuo Engelbert	Julia Robinson	Renzo Guinto	Samuel Oji Oti	Rochelle Burgess
Maju Brunette	Christine Ngaruiya	Ngozi Erondú	Ijeoma Opara	Stephanie Nixon	Daniel Krugman

10 things editors & journals can do to be better allies

10. Publish **brave content** that challenges status quo in global health!



PLOS GLOBAL PUBLIC HEALTH

OPINION

It won't end with COVID: Countering the next phase of American antivaccine activism 2025–29

Peter Hotez

Texas Children's Hospital Center for Vaccine Development, Departments of Pediatrics and Molecular Virology and Microbiology, National School of Tropical Medicine, Baylor College of Medicine, Houston, Texas, United States of America

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PLOS GLOBAL PUBLIC HEALTH

OPEN ACCESS

REVIEW

Global health and the elite capture of decolonization: On reformism and the possibilities of alternate paths

Daniel W. Krugman

Published: June 29, 2023 • <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pgph.0002103>

PLOS GLOBAL PUE

OPEN ACCESS

OPINION

Epistemic disobedience—Undoing coloniality in global health research

Thirusha Naidu

Published: April 23, 2024 • <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pgph.0003022>



10 things editors & journals can do to be better allies

- **Systems** and structures -- > including policies
- **Intentionality** about diversity and inclusion
- **Measure** success – not just of the journal but the equity in the process
- See the **bigger picture** on the community the Journal belongs to

Thank you!

- Thank you for having us here!

jrobinson@plos.org

- Follow us on Bluesky →
- Submit your research!



A screenshot of the Bluesky profile page for PLOS Global Public Health. The profile banner features a dark background with a glowing blue and red network of lines and dots, resembling a globe or data visualization. The text "A catalyst for better" is centered on the banner. Below the banner is a circular profile picture with a red and white abstract design. To the right of the profile picture are buttons for "Edit Profile" and a three-dot menu. The profile name "PLOS Global Public Health" is displayed in bold, followed by the handle "@plosglobalpublichealth.org". Below this, it shows "3.3K followers 3 following 87 posts". The bio text reads: "Supporting a mission to make work of the highest methodological and ethical rigor openly available to the researchers, policy experts, and clinicians who depend on it to tackle urgent health crises and advance health equity."

