Pragmatic steps for inclusivity in modern scholarly research

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Inclusivity in scholarly research is the new buzzword. The general idea is to produce papers/projects that are representative of the people working on the relevant topics at the global level. But there has been very little focus on how to actually implement this pragmatically, and how to overcome the structures often imposed by hierarchical colonialism. Here, we propose a 5-step inclusivity plan to substantiate meaningful and representative participation in research.

1. Make the choice to have inclusivity centered in projects right from the beginning. It cannot be an afterthought; e.g., actively include scientists from non-WEIRD (western, educated, industrialized, rich and democratic) countries as co-leaders.
2. Actively engage leaders in non-WEIRD communities to help you with contacts. Social media networks are extremely helpful here.
3. Determine what the different dimensions of representation look like, including geographic, linguistic, psychographic, gender, class, and non-dominance in dominant cultures at both local and global levels, e.g., Latinx in the USA, African vis-a-vis the Global North.
4. Determine what groups to include logistically: the world is massively diverse and complex. We cannot pragmatically include everyone. Hence, what does good/even/fair representation look like realistically in the context of the research? Determine this collaboratively with non-WEIRD researchers.
5. Access to research will always be linguistically dependent. Although English is the current lingua franca of science, we must still accommodate different languages however possible; e.g., by including abstracts in non-dominant languages, as many non-lingua franca journals already do for English.

Participation in the knowledge creation process is not a right or a privilege but an ethical responsibility. Arrogation of stewardship responsibilities by the global north/west has made collective seeing extremely difficult to accomplish. We hope that the steps proposed here can ignite further discussion about responsible diversity and inclusivity in the future of scholarly research.