



Identifying Opportunities to Promote Equity in Global Health Research in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC)

Fred Hutch
Cancer Center

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BACKGROUND

- Global Health (GH) is historically rooted in **colonialism**.¹
- Helicopter Science** → Collecting samples in low/middle-income countries (LMICs), taking them, and leaving very little behind.
- To achieve equity: **"Come in and ask us what we think is important."** – Dr. Patricia García, Peru's former Minister of Health.¹
- Rationale:** Growing interest among Hutch researchers to decolonize GH research given long-standing partnerships with LAC.

OBJECTIVE

- Understand perspectives of equity in GH research.
- Identify **opportunities to promote equity in GH research** practices led by Fred Hutch and its partners in LAC.

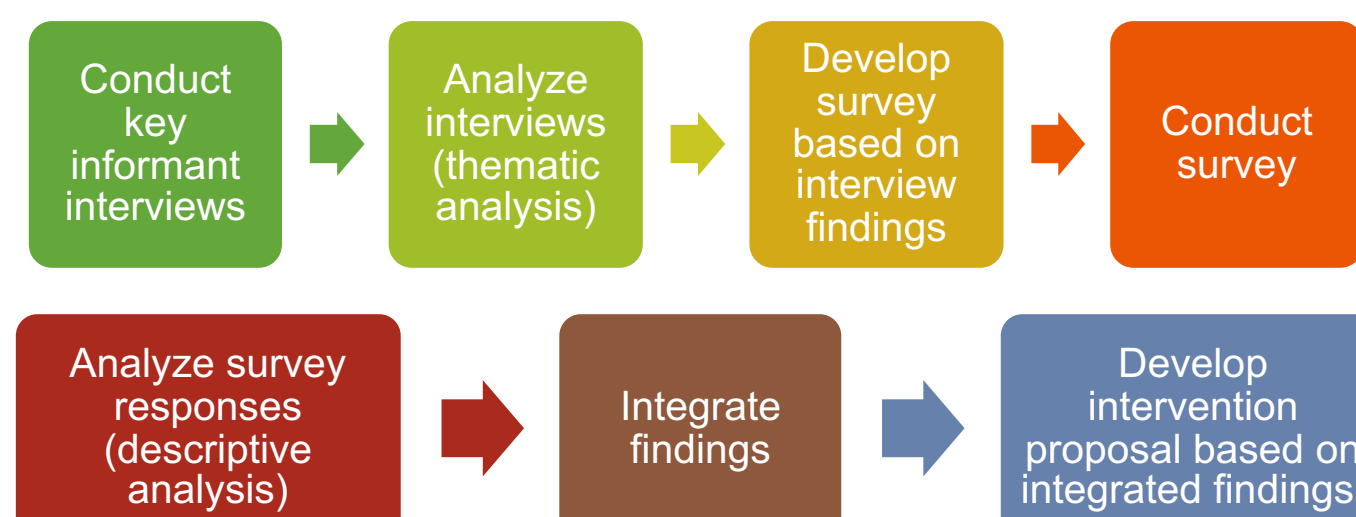
HYPOTHESIS

This is **formative, hypothesis-generating research** to identify current inequities and potential solutions.

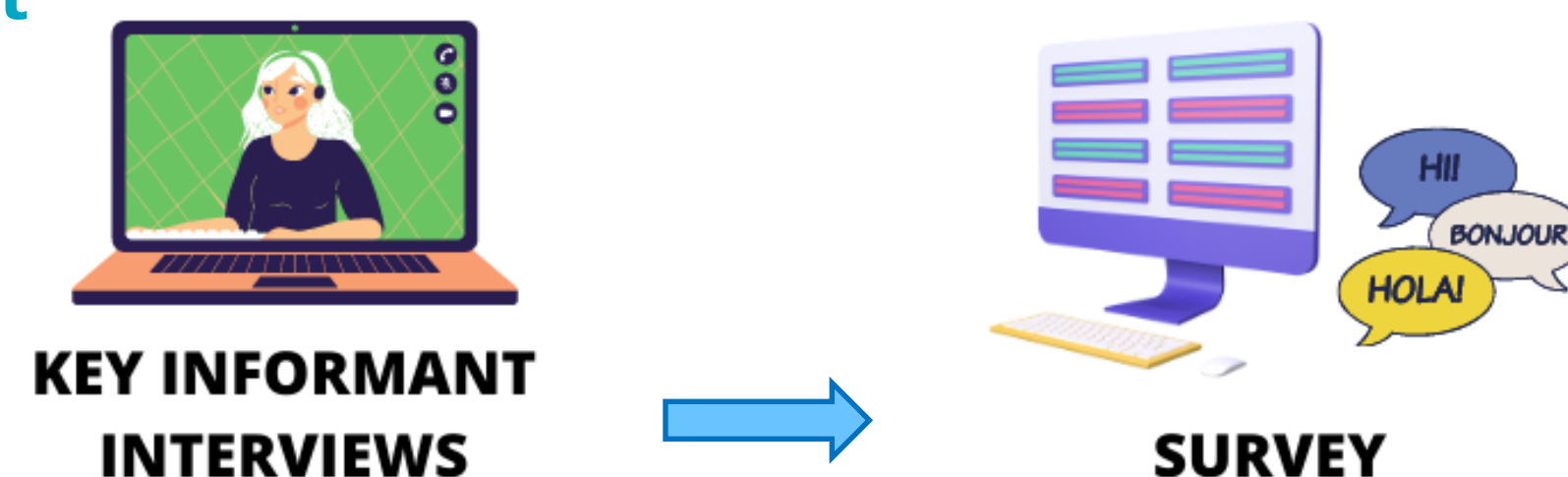
METHODS

Exploratory sequential design (qual → QUAN)
(Mixed methods: Interviews inform survey)

Steps



Content



- Purpose:** Generate ideas
- Audience:** Established PIs: (1) non-US-based researchers in partnerships with the Hutch; (2) Hutch-based researchers in partnerships with LMICs (**purposive sampling**).
- Open-ended, semistructured; hour-long; mostly virtual; recorded; confidential
- 2 guides:**

NUMBER OF QUESTIONS

Sections:	US-based	non-US-based	English US-based	Spanish and French non-US-based
Background	1	1	3	6
Global Collaborations	4	5	6	6
Power Dynamics	3	4	4	4
Future Opportunities	3	3	18	11

EXAMPLE

What opportunities could U.S. partners offer moving forward to improve the fairness of our collaborations?

Rank (1-8) the following training options:

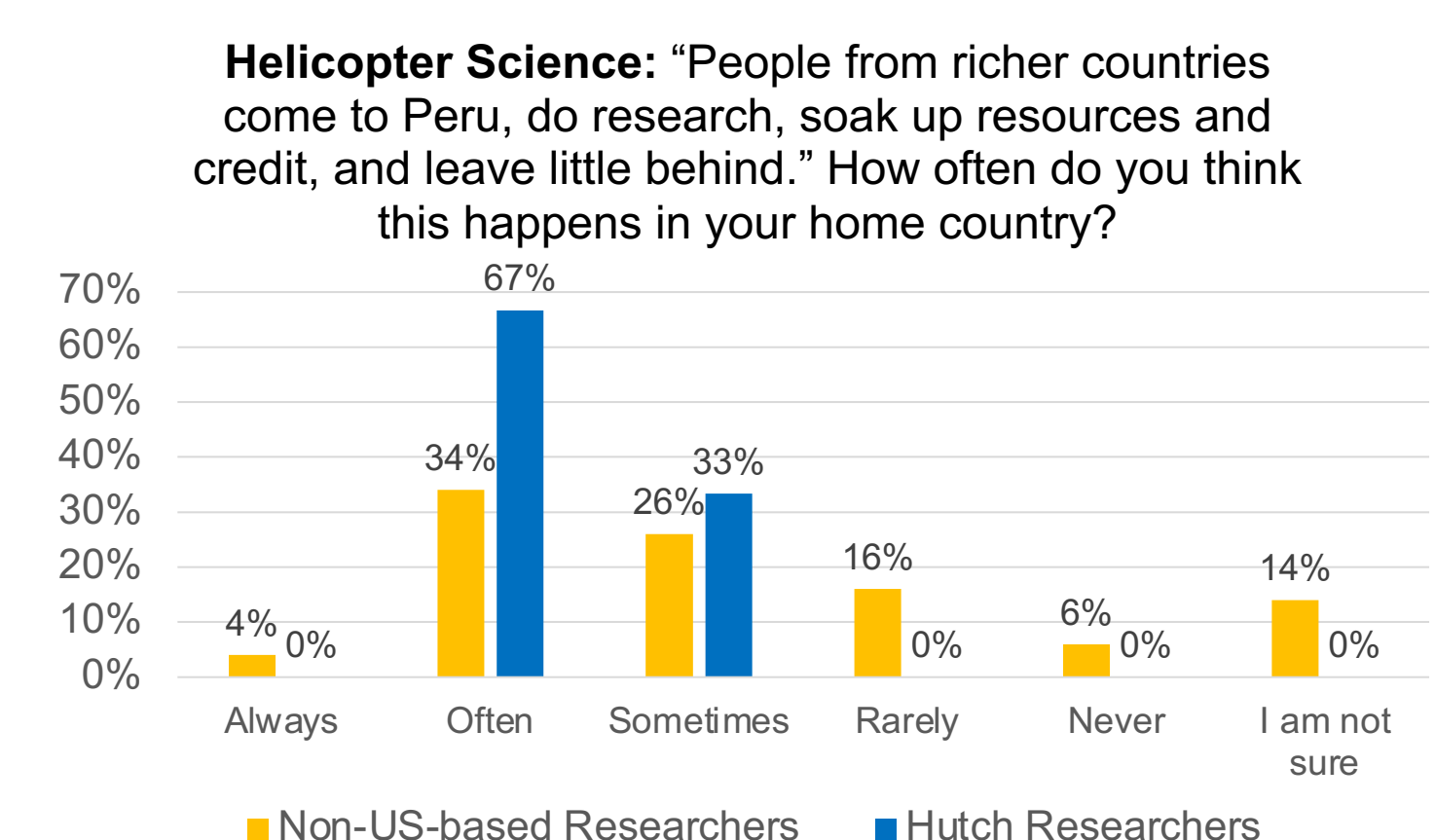
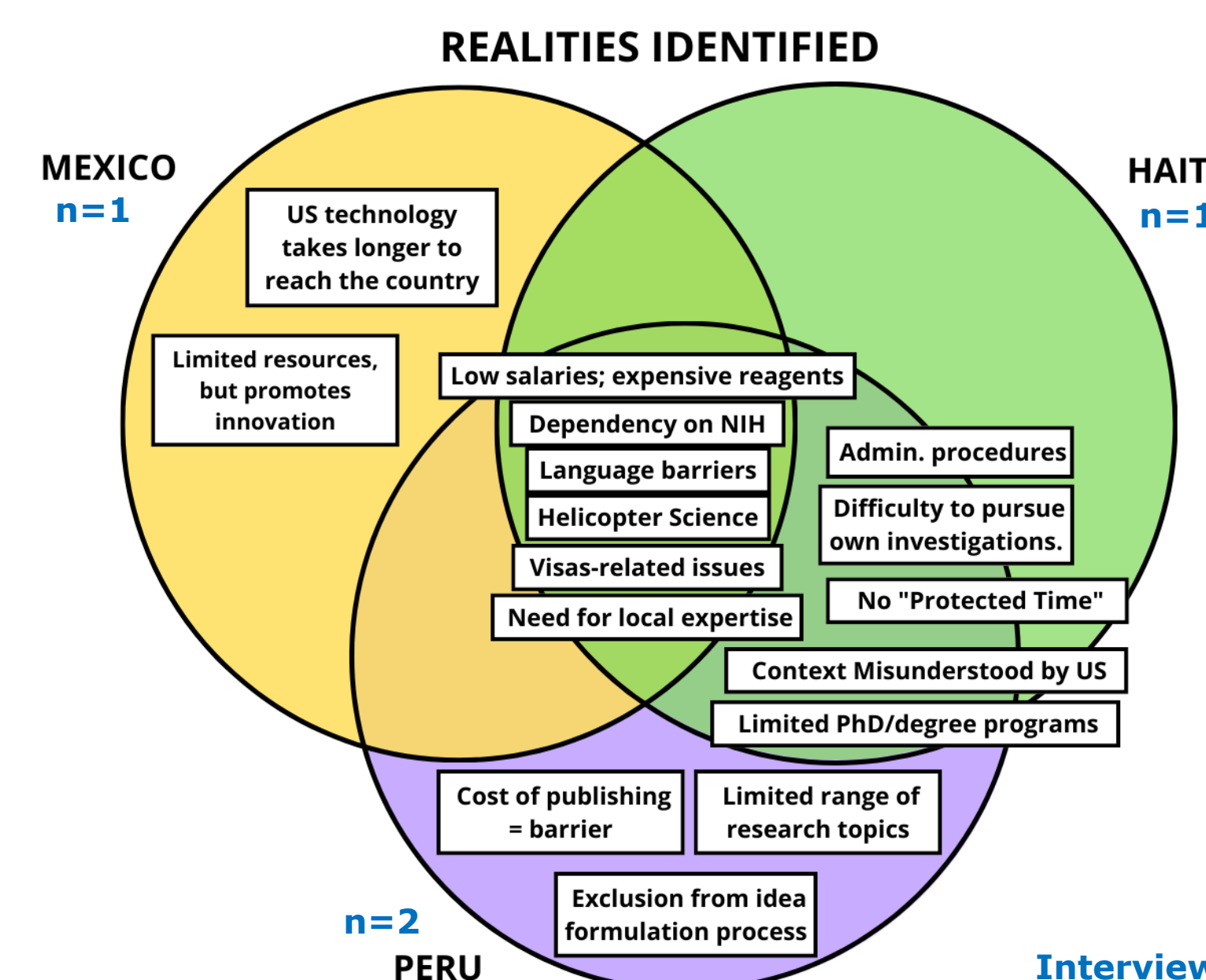
- Basic Science Research (Laboratory Research)
- Clinical Research
- Public Health Research
- Clinical Rotations/Shadowing
- Grant Writing Workshops
- Manuscript Writing and Publishing Workshops
- Career-Focused Mentorship (Pairing US faculty with international trainees)
- Other: _____

RESULTS

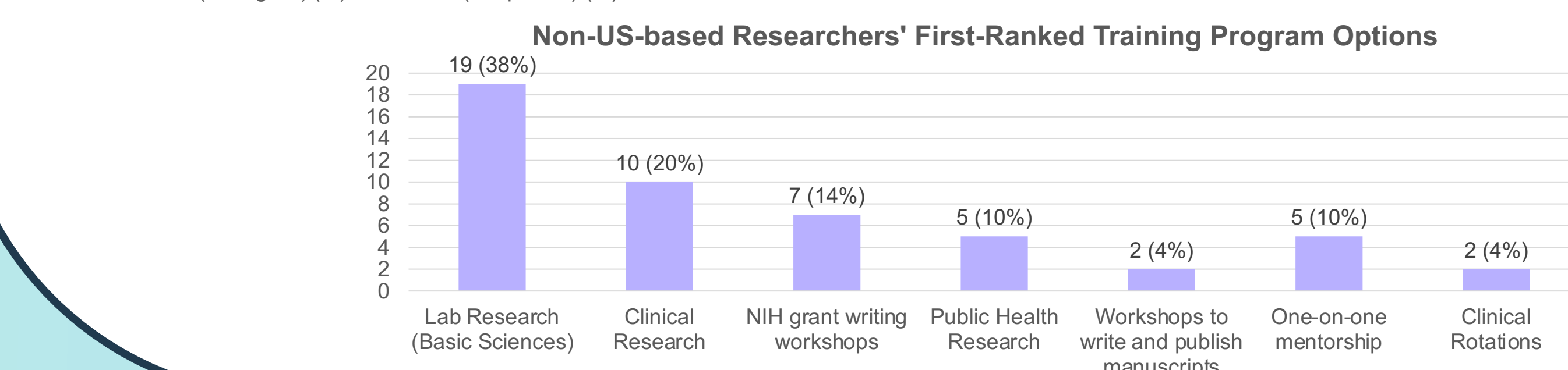
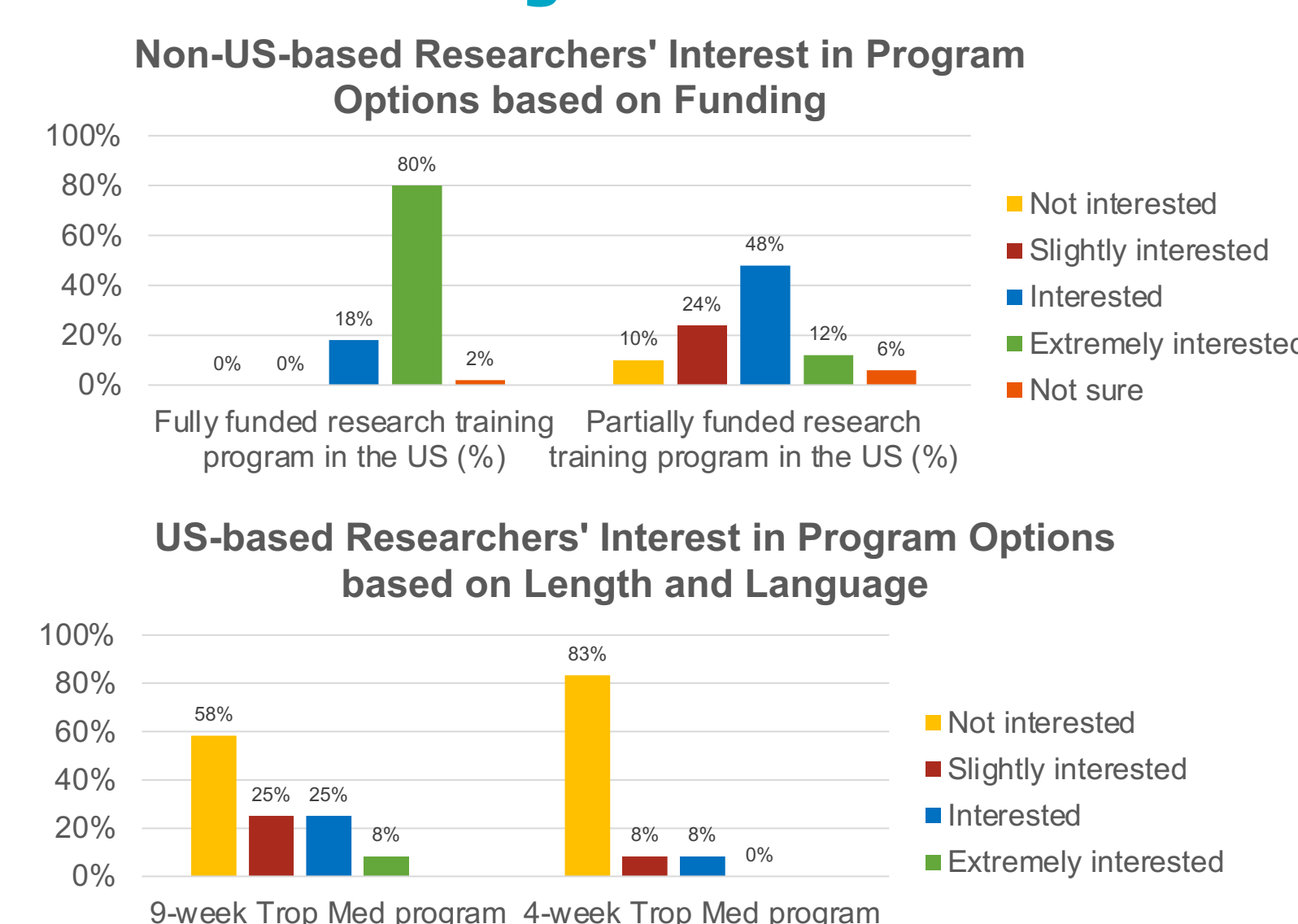
Respondents

- 7 KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS**
4 Hutch-affiliated
3 non-Hutch affiliated (LAC)
- 62 SURVEY RESPONSES**
50 non-US-based
12 US-based (Hutch)

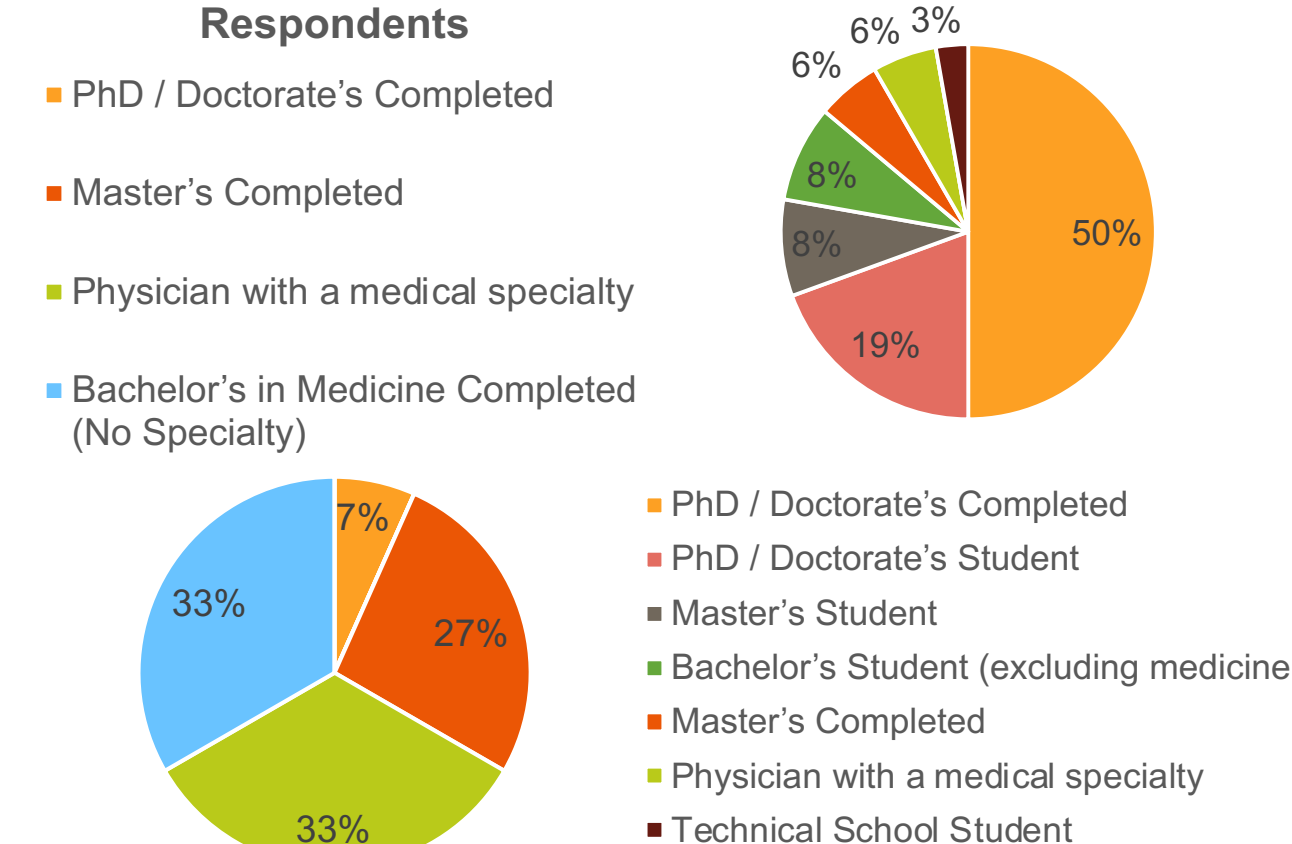
Equity in GH



Possible Programs



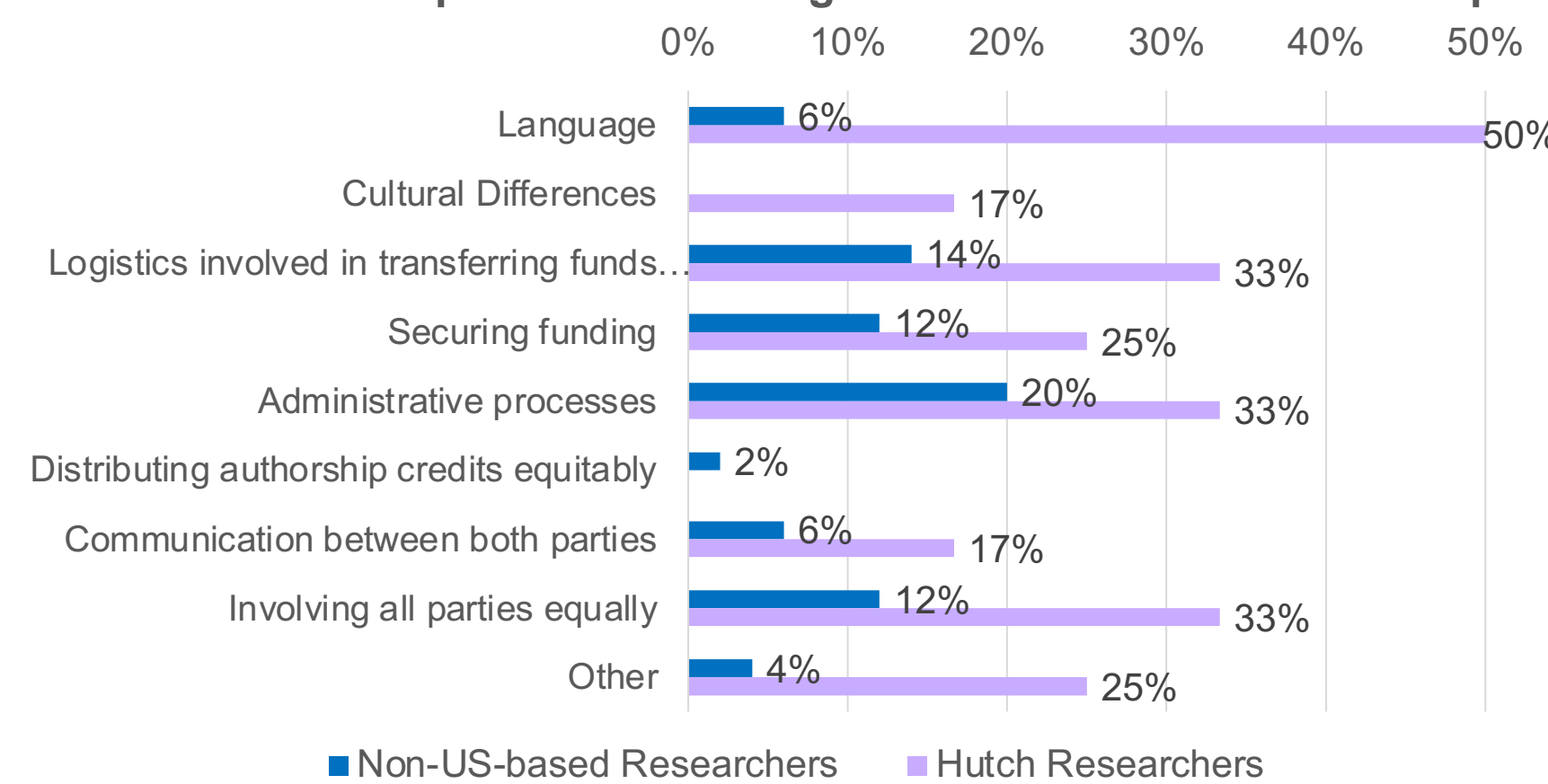
Highest Education Level Among Peruvian Respondents



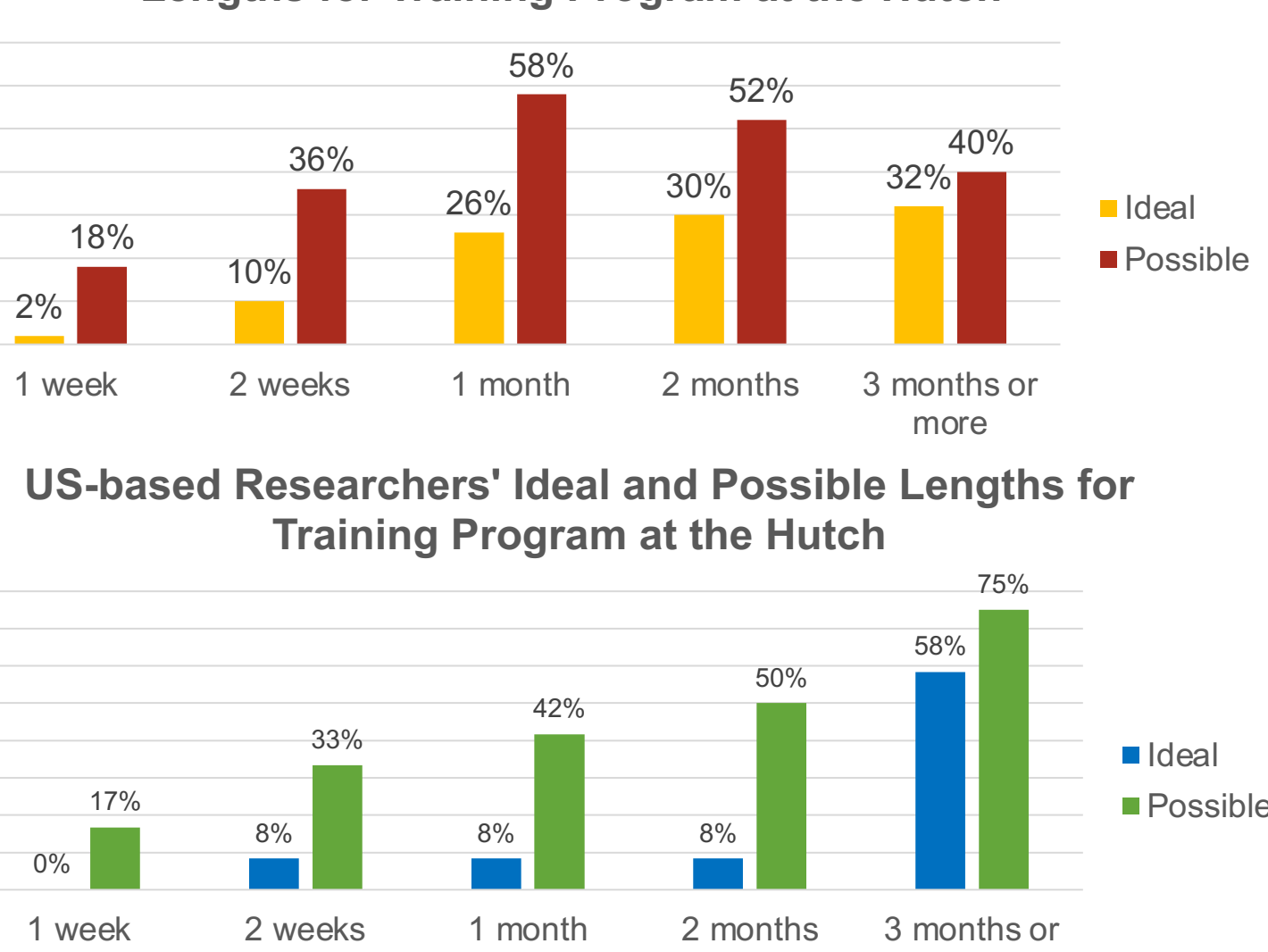
Survey



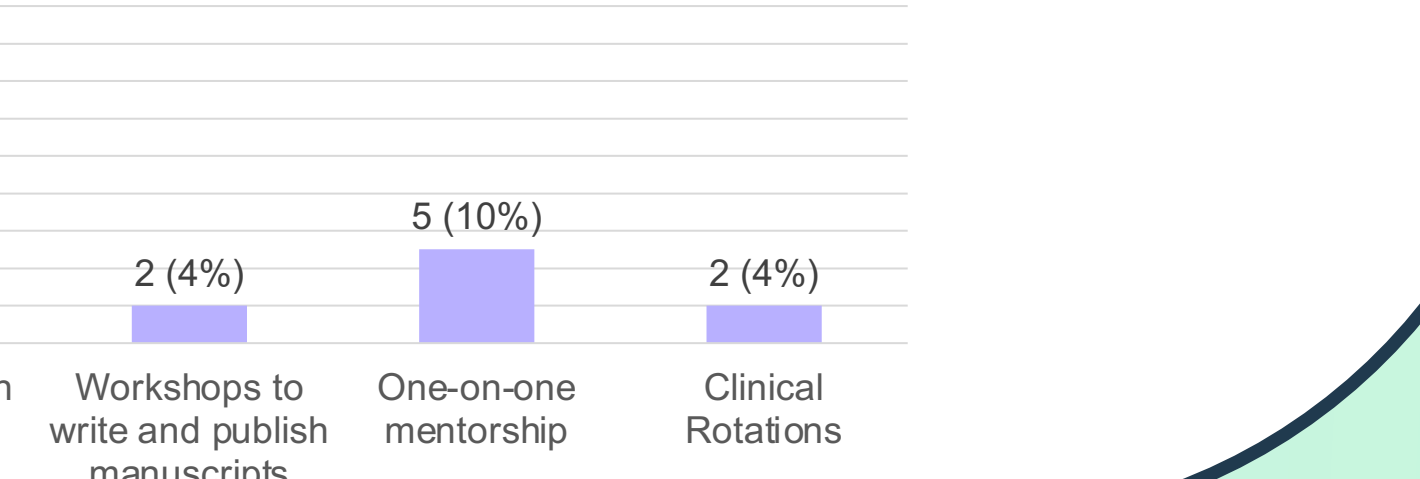
Perceptions of Challenges in International Partnerships



Non-US-based Researchers' Ideal and Possible Lengths for Training Program at the Hutch



US-based Researchers' Ideal and Possible Lengths for Training Program at the Hutch



CURRENT REALITIES & FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

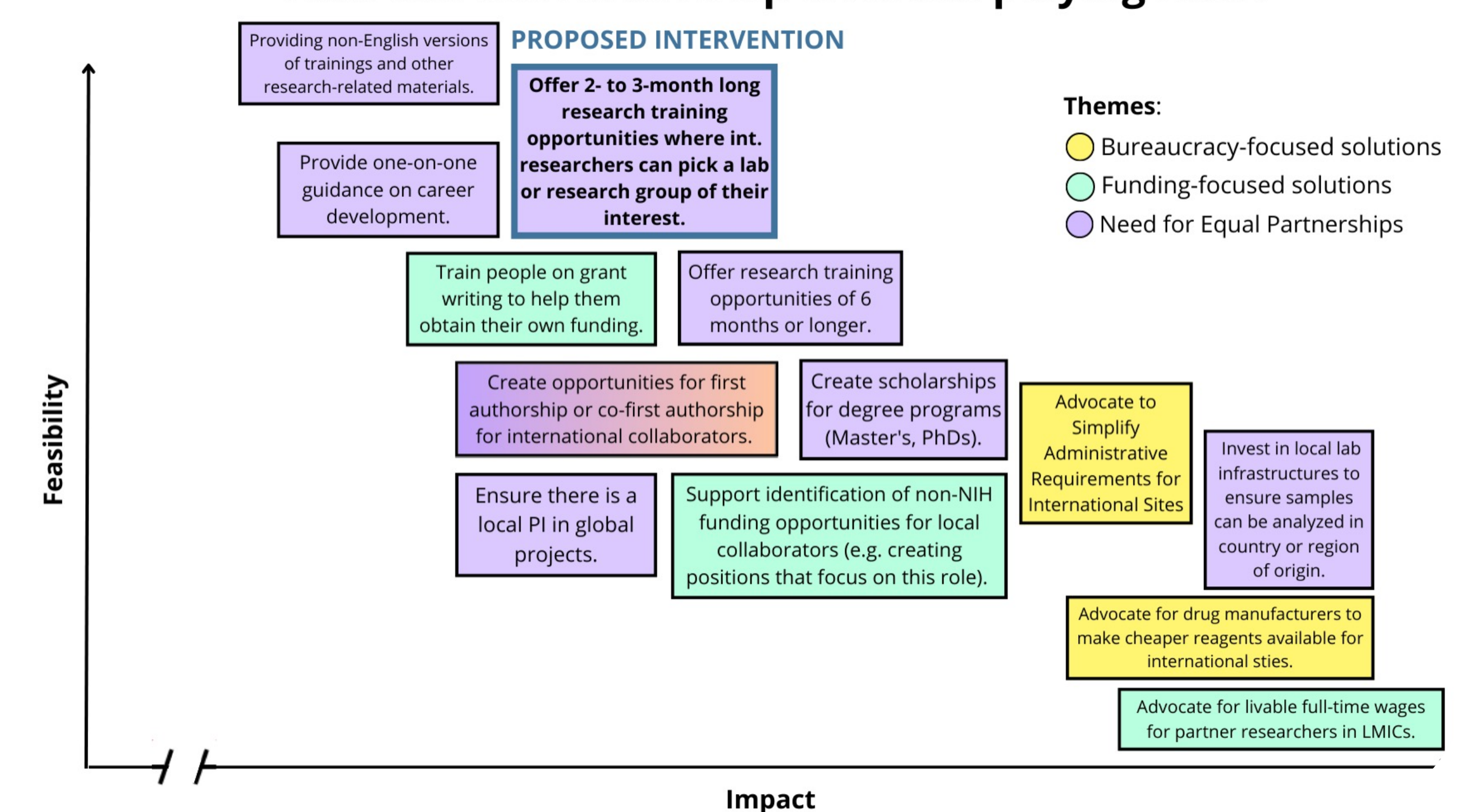
"It took a lot of explanation to have them understand [that] things aren't like in the US."

Theme	Current Reality		Future Opportunities	
	Interview	Survey	Interview	Survey
Bureaucracy hinders research progress in LAC	- Strict, impractical administrative requirements for research sites. - Visas requirements limit travel. - Prohibitive cost of purchasing reagents outside of the U.S. "It's upon us to constantly prove ourselves; that we have the competency and expertise to manage research funds."	42% of non-US-based researchers thought access to cheaper reagents gave US-based researchers an advantage. Only 17% of US-based researchers thought so.	Making administrative processes easier to navigate for international systems. "International collaboration needs to be something institutions want, a part of their mission. [It] creates a mindset where people are more receptive."	24% of non-US-based respondents indicated that help with visa applications and/or costs would be needed to make proposed program more accessible.
Lack of Funding Limits Non-US-based Researchers	- Low wages hinder full-time career as researcher. - Dependency on NIH funds. "US funds, the NIH, it is seen as the only option. If you want to do research, that's where you have to go through."	78% of non-US-based researchers, and 83% of US-based, thought access to more research funding gave US-based scientists more opportunities.	- Diversifying sources of funding. - Offer training on how to write manuscripts and grant proposals. "Teach them how to write a successful proposal [...] so they can advance their careers [...] develop their own lab."	40% of non-US-based respondents ranked "NIH grant writing" as one of the top three training programs they would like to see.
Need for Equal Partnerships	- Limited opportunities for formal research training / Few local PIs. "In American universities, there are opportunities for people to become scholars, fellows, masters, PhD students, develop theses (...). Those opportunities do not exist in Peru." - Dominance of the English language in research field. "Nobody ever says 'why don't we get a French-to-English interpreter so that you guys can speak in French.' Nobody has ever said that to us."	100% of US-based and 88% of non-US-based respondents believe researchers in LMICs have fewer training opportunities than researchers in the US.	Bringing LAC researchers to train in US: - Immersion in competitive environment. - Study areas unavailable in LAC. - Receive dedicated mentorship. "We need mentors that [...] will take [international trainees] under their wing until they can fly on their own." Sending US researchers to teach in LAC: - Less expensive; more people included. - Teach in line with local resources. - Offer research/clinical opportunities to US researchers (win-win relationship).	98% of non-US-based respondents were extremely interested (80%) or interested (18%) in participating in a fully funded research program in the U.S. 16% of US-based respondents were extremely interested or interested in participating in Tropical Medicine training in Peru.

* Interview (n=7); Survey (n=50 non-US-based; 12 US-based)
* All quotes by non-US-based researchers.

DISCUSSION – NEXT STEPS

How can the Hutch help level the playing field?



CONCLUSION

- Proposal:** A 2- or 3-month-long research training program, where scientists from LAC travel to the US and get hands-on experience at Hutch-affiliated labs.
- For benefits to be bidirectional, there is a need to identify population at the Hutch interested in gaining tropical medicine experience.
- Next steps:** prepare written proposal, obtain support from Leadership, secure funding.

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REFERENCES

¹Silberner, J. (2022, April). 4 ways to decolonize global health. Hopkins Bloomberg Public Health Magazine. <https://magazine.jhsph.edu/2022/4-ways-decolonize-global-health>