



# ***Equity and Inclusion in the Journal Ecosystem: Access, Discovery and Exploration***

*Attaining global equity in Research publishing. A Pan-Africa  
Non-Profit Organization's perspective*

Fiesole Retreat, Cape Town, May 2-24

Susan Murray, AJOL Executive Director



**Global talent is needed  
to address global  
problems**

Researchers in the global  
South are often in the best  
position to address the world's  
biggest challenges

# Challenges for Southern Journals

Southern journals face many challenges in terms of being respected internationally which can limit the perceived credibility of the published research

Usually stand-alone journals; not commercially published

Online accessibility was the first challenge, but also:

Under-represented in **commercial** indexes and rankings

Lack of familiarity with international publishing standards

Legitimate journals wrongly labelled as low quality or “predatory”

Lack of institutional, financial and structural support, and a multiplicity of African CONTEXTS

Lack of respect and perceived credibility of Southern journals

**THESE & bad incentives push research to the North & can shift the global research agenda**





# AJOL was started 25 years ago to increase global equity in research sharing

- Journals publishing in all research disciplines
- All or in multiple languages
- Published from an African country
- Peer-reviewed and quality controlled



## Welcome to African Journals Online (AJOL)!

Researchers and policy-makers need access to contextually-relevant quality research publications from Africa in order to develop solutions to address the continent's challenges in health, education, climate change & under-development.

AJOL, the world's largest and preeminent platform of African-published scholarly journals, is a Non-Profit Organisation that (since 1998) works to increase global & continental online access, awareness, quality & use of African-published, peer-reviewed research



## Promoting access to African Research:

For 25 years, AJOL has been increasing global access to research published in African journals. Millions of African research articles (over 50% by repeat users from Africa) are downloaded from AJOL each month, increasing the African and global reach of African research.

AJOL offers a unique [Journal Publishing Practices and Standards \(JPPS\)](#) system to assess each partner journal, based on relevant best practices, informed by globally-, regionally- and nationally-accepted standards and the input of hundreds of journal editors from developing countries.

AJOL also offers high-quality free technical and training services to African journals, promoting protocols that encourage ethically sound research and publishing practices and peer-to-peer learning.

AJOL supports and encourages Open Access and fee-free publication models, and provides access to a wide range of free resources to assist African researchers, authors, editors and journals.

## AJOL features journals from 39 Countries:





Journal Publishing  
Practices and Standards

**Reassures readers and authors** that journals meet international standards to a particular level\*

\*Including DOAJ, SciELO South Africa, Clarivate, Scopus, WAME, FAME, COPE

**Guides journal editors** on improving publishing processes

**Acknowledges journals** that have attained internationally recognized publishing standards

**Allows relevant research by, for and from Africa** to be reliable and readable by Africans!



# Proving Publishing Quality – the JPPS process

**Application Assessment  
and ongoing  
Re-Assessment**

**Report**

**Display**

**Official list**

by application from  
a journal  
and annual checks

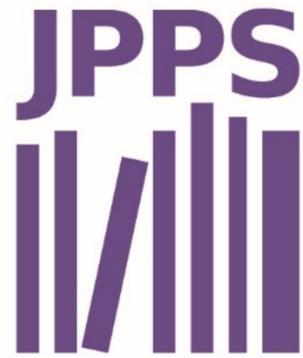
provided to editor,  
highlighting areas  
to improve

display of JPPS  
level added to  
each journal's  
page

of assessed  
journals available  
only at

[www.journalquality.info](http://www.journalquality.info)





After assessment, each journal is assigned to a JPPS category:



**One star** - has met the basic inclusion requirements for at least two years



**New title** - has been publishing for less than two years, but meets basic inclusion requirements



**Two stars** - compliant with additional publishing practice quality criteria



**Inactive** - has not added new content to the JOL platform in over one year



**Three stars** - consistently excellent in the technical and editorial publishing best practices set out in the JPPS framework criteria



**No stars** - not currently meeting the basic criteria for inclusion on a JOL platform

# Moving away from systems that entrench the inequitable status quo



# DORA

Improving research assessment

Signed by over 24,700 people and organizations

[sfdora.org](https://sfdora.org) • @DORAssessment on most social media platforms

## Supporting organizations

Visionary



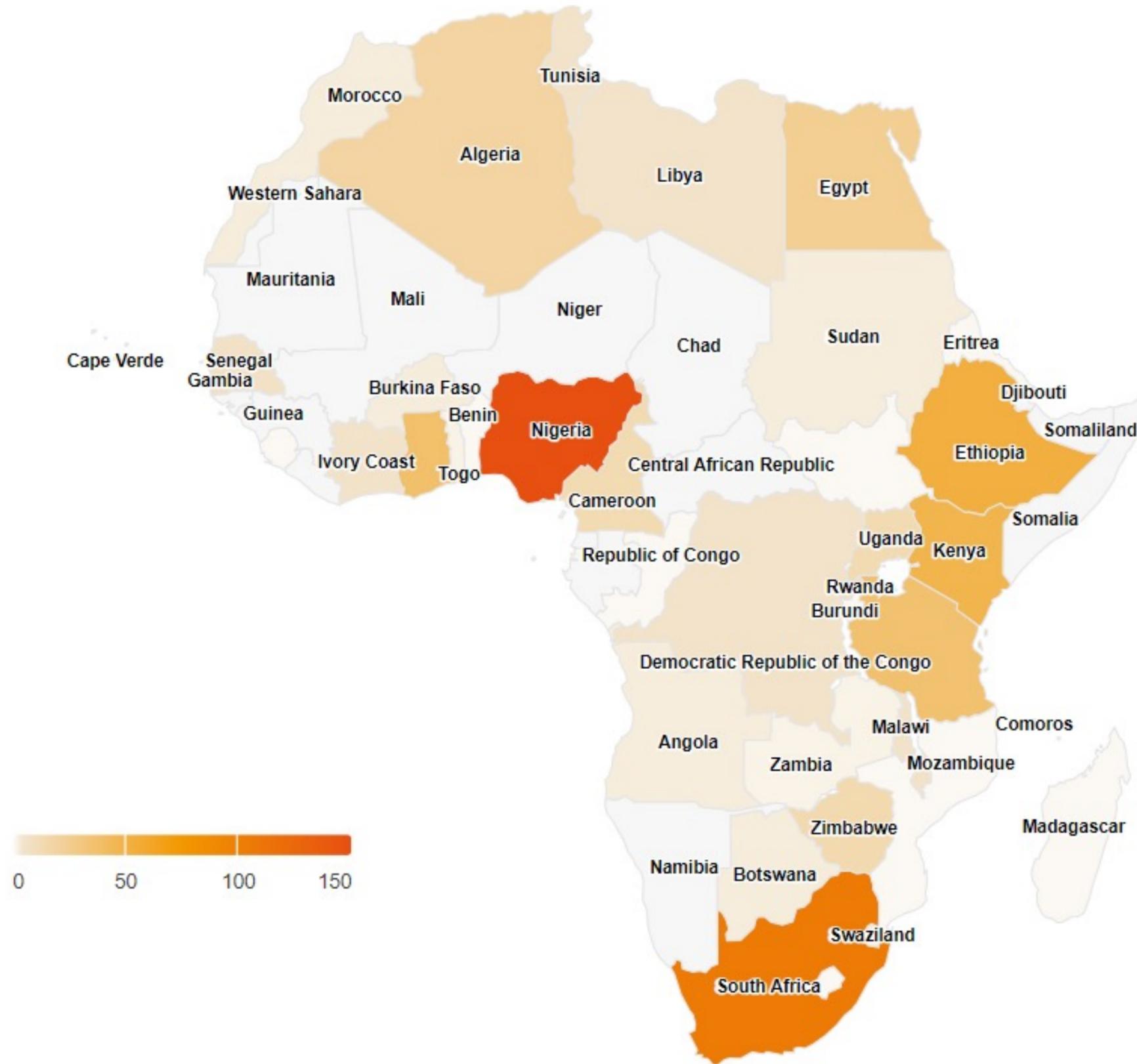
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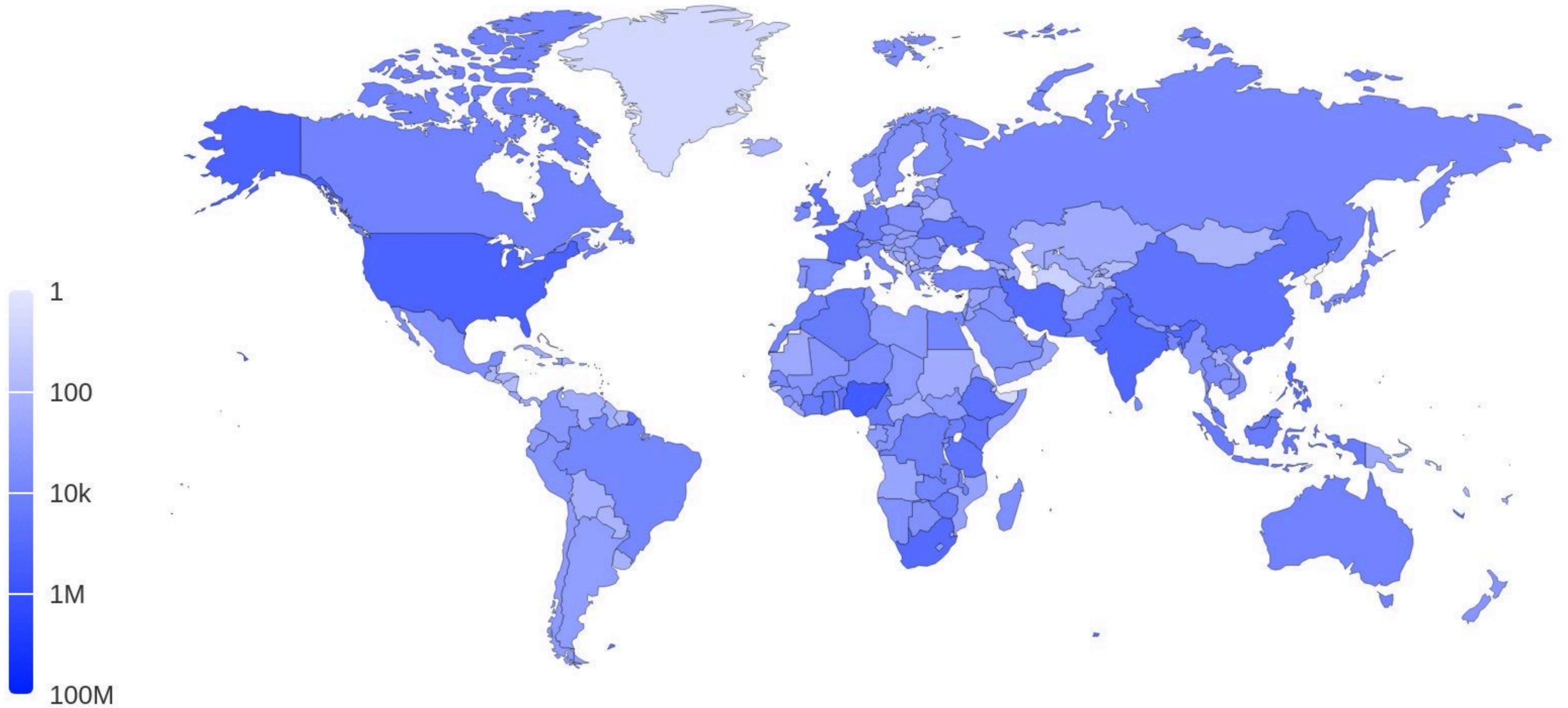
Contributor



# AJOL features journals from 39 Countries:

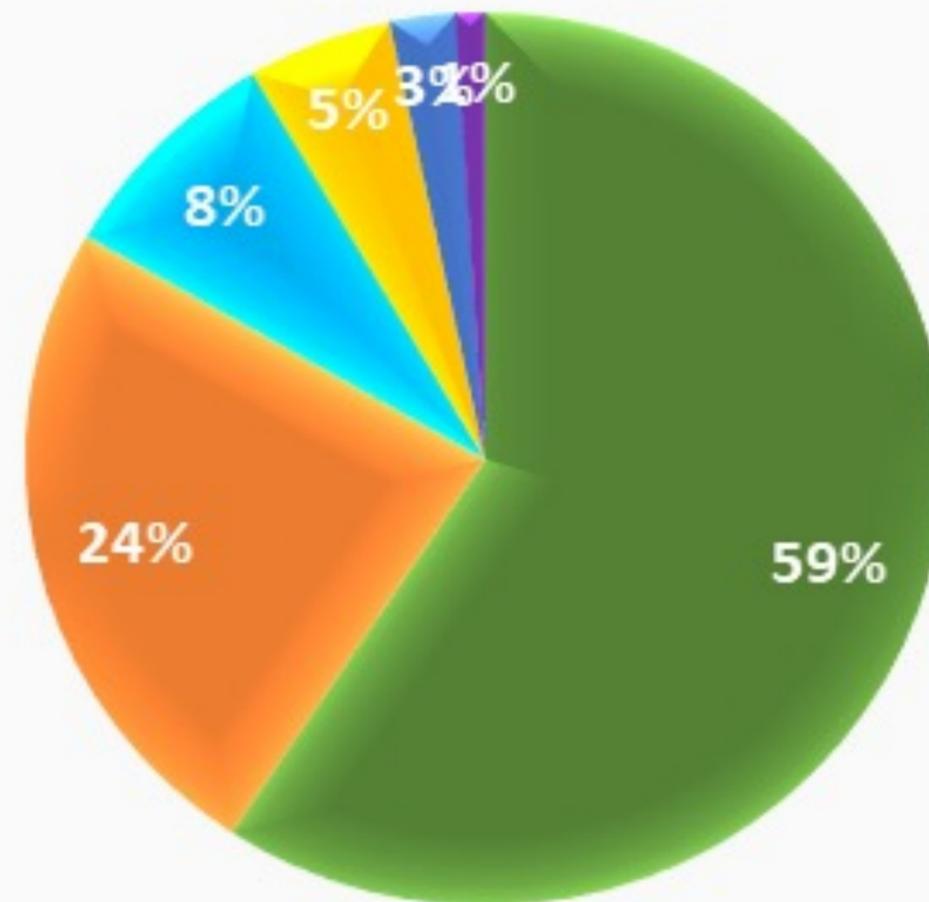


AJOL article downloads by country  
June 2023



## REPEAT AJOL USERS BY CONTINENT TOTAL 968 440 IN 2022

■ Africa   ■ Asia   ■ Europe   ■ Northern America   ■ Latin America   ■ Oceania



With respect to “Connecting Global North and Global South” theme, **CONNECTING**

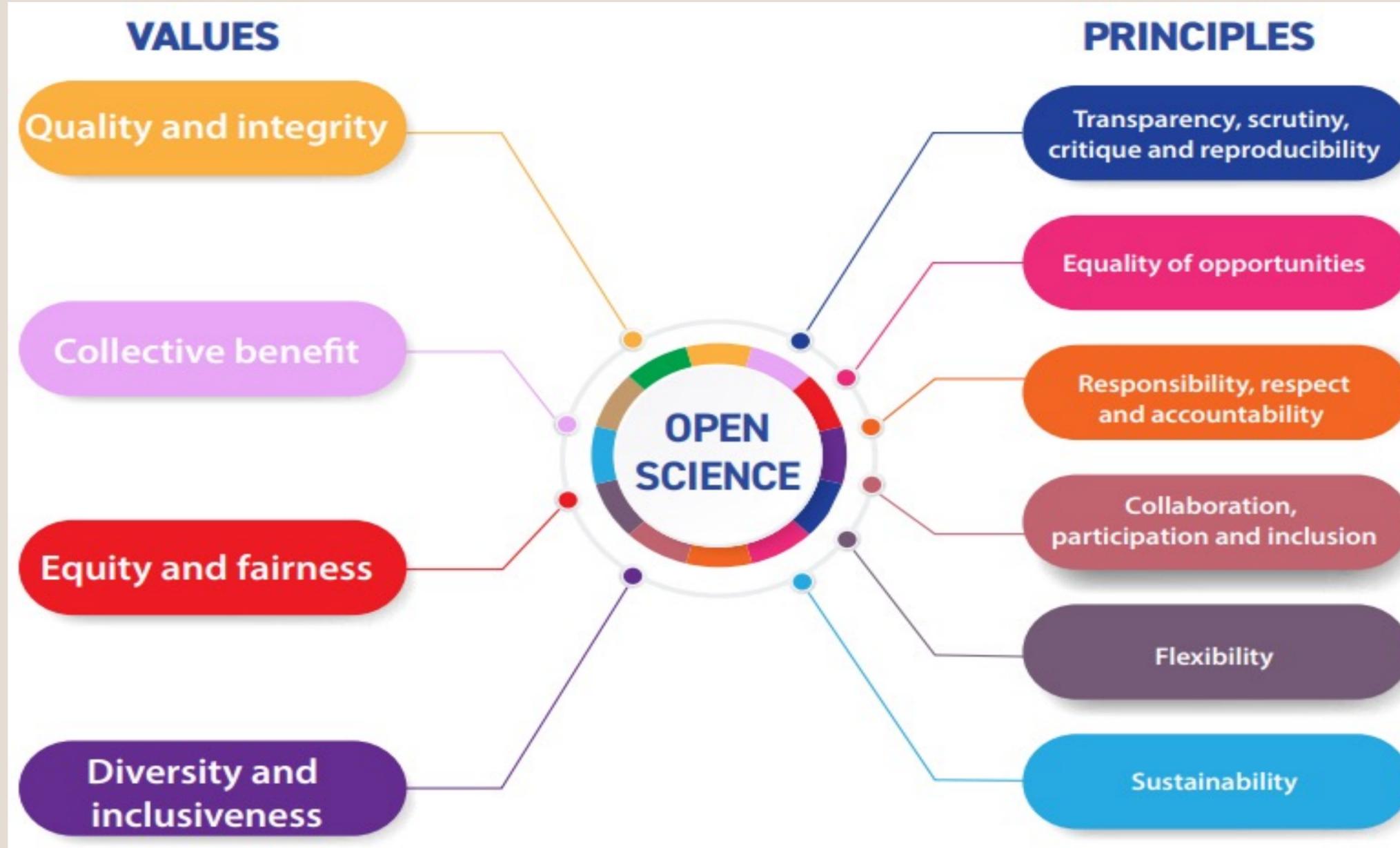


# **Southern infrastructures need to be well-resourced for Southern research to play an equitable role globally**

- Re-purposing existing public funds in the global scholarly ecosystem can do so much more for the public good
- Southern NPO platforms (like in Latin America and AJOL in Africa) need technically robust and sophisticated open publishing services of every kind, as good (if not better) than those provided by commercial profit-taking entities
- As public resources shift away from “the big deals” optimal re-allocation of funds needs to be put into platforms and the foundational open infrastructures they are built with (as per



# Global South Platforms have been Open Science Commons for decades:



<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000379949.locale=en>



# The way forward for Open Infrastructures is part of the way forward for Equitable Open Science

- Platforms like AJOL need to walk the talk, and share our context-relevant amendments to FOSSs
- Surface and advocate for the development of Non Profit infrastructure innovation needs, eg. an **Open African languages API**
- Open infrastructures need to collaborate towards interoperability (repositories and journal platforms software talking to each other)
- Most importantly, for equity and inclusion, Southern platforms need to be financially sustained, which currently is insufficiently supported.



# Over 25 Million Article Downloads per Annum

*“The AJOL platform has been a respectable outlet of scholarly work coming from Africa. Your medium serves the needs of many researchers who have interests in the progress of scientific research and scholarship in Africa.*

*From Africa myself, it has been a challenge to assess the awesome work our home-based African researchers are doing and AJOL has come a long way in helping to alleviate this challenge.”*

Feedback from a researcher now based in the United States, 2023.



# Thousands of African-published stand-alone journals need AJOL's support

- The massive international and African accessibility and use of the platform adds enormously to the visibility and use of African research outputs
- The various types of training, mentoring, technical services and economies of scale savings are needed by African journals
- There is a waiting list of 500 journal applicants to AJOL
- New Diamond OA project in partnership with EIFL and WACREN
- There are over a 1000 more which qualify for inclusion, and would add to language and regional representivity in the global scholarly



# Sustainability for Equity



## Small Institutes

**Aloe Supporters**

per annum: 4,000 Euro 4,500 USD 3,500 GBP



## Medium Institutes

**Acacia Supporters**

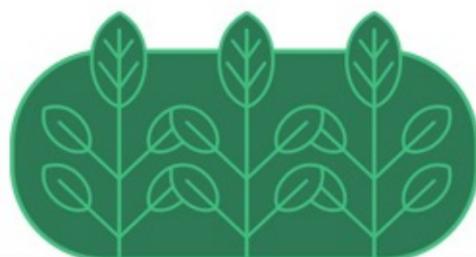
per annum: 10,000 Euro 11,000 USD 8,500 GBP



## Large Institutes

**Baobab Supporters**

per annum: 20,000 Euro 22,000 USD 17,000 GBP



## Consortia & Donors

**Rain Forest Supporters**

Please approach the AJOL CEO, Susan Murray, directly at [susan@ajol.info](mailto:susan@ajol.info).

Our 2024 target tree:

— Support already secured for 2024



**Thank you Graças Obrigado Merci Na gode**

**Asante**

**شكرًا لك**

**Galatoomaa**

**Ngiyabonga**

**Enkosi**

Main AJOL website: [www.ajol.info](http://www.ajol.info)

JPPS Assessment Framework: [www.journalquality.info](http://www.journalquality.info)

Contribute towards AJOL's sustainability:

<https://www.ajol.info/index.php/ajol/supporters-AJOL>

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