

Editorial:

Why The African Nexus Quarterly?

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African Nexus Quarterly’s core wager is that an **Africa-centered** editorial lens—hosted in **Türkiye**[1] yet oriented to the continent’s priorities—can help correct enduring asymmetries in how knowledge about **Africa**[2] is produced, validated, indexed, and circulated. That wager is not merely normative: it is strongly supported by measurable gaps in (i) research capacity and publication output, (ii) the visibility and indexing of Africa-published journals, (iii) agenda-setting dynamics in international collaborations, and (iv) structural features of the global publishing market that systematically disadvantage Africa-based scholars and institutions. [3]

Structural limits on research output

A first pillar of the journal’s rationale is an empirically documented **capacity gap** that constrains the volume and continuity of Africa-based academic production, especially in **Sub-Saharan Africa**[4]. A UN SDG extended report (custodian: UNESCO-UIS) shows that in 2020 Sub-Saharan Africa spent **0.32% of GDP on R&D**, well below the world average and far below high-R&D regions. [5]

The same SDG report shows that Sub-Saharan Africa had **98 researchers (FTE) per million inhabitants** in 2020, compared with a world figure of **1,342 per million**—a scale difference that directly restricts the “supply side” of manuscript production and the density of disciplinary communities that sustain peer review and journal ecosystems. [6]

This capacity gap is mirrored upstream in global publication shares. A WHO Africa-affiliated viewpoint reviewing bibliometric evidence notes that Africa’s share of world publication output rose from **1.5% (2005) to 3.2% (2016)**—growth, but still a low share in global terms. [7]

The same source illustrates how these structural limits surface during global crises: African-affiliated contributions to indexed COVID-19 publications **10 months into the pandemic** were about **3.0%** in one cited analysis. [7]

Taken together, these indicators support your first and sixth themes: (a) knowledge production is constrained by measurable R&D and human-capital limitations, and (b) the need for locally relevant, policy-connected knowledge remains high—precisely because capacity constraints and external agenda pressures can leave priority problems under-studied or under-published. [8]

Mobility, diaspora, and the missing “connective tissue”

Your argument also foregrounds how outward mobility can reduce Africa-centered publication output when scholars remain abroad, shift topic priorities, or lose access to Africa-based research

infrastructures. OECD analysis using DIOC data explicitly notes that for poorer origin countries, tertiary-educated individuals have the highest likelihood of residing abroad—and that **many obtain their education in OECD countries and stay in the host country afterward**. [9]

The same OECD report provides a quantitative anchor: the **overall emigration rate of highly educated individuals toward OECD countries was 16% (2015/16)**, and it gives illustrative cases where some African countries (e.g., Mozambique, Somalia) have high-skilled emigration rates of **roughly 30%**. [10]

This is the structural condition underneath your seventh theme: even when a large pool of highly trained scholars exists, scholarly impact depends on **durable platforms** that (i) keep Africa-centered research programs legible and attractive, (ii) connect diaspora scholars to Africa-based agendas and collaborators, and (iii) provide credible peer-reviewed outlets aligned with those agendas. The need for such platforms becomes more visible when coupled with data on student mobility: the OECD reports that in 2023, tertiary-educated students from China and India were the two largest origin groups in OECD countries, while **Nigeria** completed the top five countries of origin. [11]

Your second theme (diaspora scholarship's emphasis on identity, belonging, rights, visibility) is consistent with how migration/diaspora literature is frequently framed—often foregrounding identity, belonging, and citizenship within transnational contexts—yet this framing does not automatically translate into sustained Africa-based research capacity or Africa-priority knowledge production. [12]

The gap African Nexus Quarterly can credibly target is therefore not “diaspora studies vs. Africa studies,” but the **missing connective tissue** between (a) diaspora intellectual capital and (b) Africa-based research ecosystems—especially in multi-disciplinary areas (politics, development, environment, health, technology) where problem selection and evidence needs are locally specific. [13]

Under-representation of Africa-published journals in major indexes

A central empirical justification for launching a new journal is that Africa-published journals are numerous enough to matter locally, yet remain systematically under-represented in the infrastructures that govern global scholarly visibility (indexing databases, citation systems, metadata pipelines).

A bibliometric study of journals “published in Africa” compiled from Ulrich’s and AJOL found that **Web of Science and Scopus covered less than 8%** of the identified Africa-published journals (while Crossref covered over 40%, reflecting different inclusion logic). [14]

This is a decisive statistic for your third and eighth themes: local journals exist, but the **visibility layer** that turns journals into globally legible scholarly venues is weak, uneven, or externally controlled. [15]

The same study also shows that Africa’s footprint inside a flagship indexing system remains extremely small: the **number of Africa-published journals in Web of Science increased from 19 (2002) to 166 (2020)**—important growth, but still modest in a global comparison. [16]

That comparison becomes stark when placed against the size of the indexing universe itself. **Clarivate**[17] states that the **Web of Science Core Collection**[18] indexes **22k+ peer-reviewed**

journals. If only 166 Africa-published journals were indexed in WoS as of 2020 (per the Africa-journals study), then Africa-published journals would represent **well under 1%** of WoS’s journal set (a derived ratio, using the cited counts). [19]

Likewise, **Elsevier**[20] reports that **Scopus**[21] includes **30.2 active serial titles**, indicating the scale of the competing global visibility environment. [22]

Within Africa-focused infrastructure, there is clear evidence of both achievement and constraint. **INASP**[23] documents that **African Journals Online**[24] currently hosts **over 500 African journals** and that (as of 2017) it hosted **520 peer-reviewed journals** from **32 African countries**, with **over 127,000 full-text articles** and **nearly 60% open access**. [25]

However, visibility is not only about hosting; it is also about discoverability by mainstream search and indexing systems. A 2025 study of 1,116 journals from AJOL and Sabinet reports that **63.2% were neither discoverable by Google Scholar nor included in Scopus**, and only **11.8%** were both discoverable by Google Scholar and included in Scopus. [26]

This finding speaks directly to your third theme (few local journals; limited impact/visibility) while also sharpening its mechanism: the limiting factor is less “absence of journals” than **absence of globally interoperable, quality-signaling infrastructure** (metadata standards, indexing pathways, editorial governance visibility, and inclusion in trusted registries). [27]

Agenda-setting in collaboration and the persistence of “parachute” dynamics

Your fourth theme—externally funded collaboration skewing toward funder agendas—matches a well-documented critique in global research ethics: unequal partnerships can reproduce inequities in authorship, agenda-setting, and credit allocation.

A detailed equity-focused global health publication defines “parachute (helicopter) research” as research conducted by external researchers (often from high-income countries) with little local engagement or acknowledgement, and it notes that imbalance in HIC–LMIC partnerships is linked to power asymmetries including funding constraints, limited infrastructure, and reduced local influence in agenda-setting and conceptualization. [28]

A complementary 2022 editorial on parachute science emphasizes that because researchers in high-income countries often have greater access to funding, they can **dictate research agendas**, with host-country priorities not being prioritized—framing this as an ethical and epistemic problem, not merely a collaboration style choice. [29]

The UNESCO regional data point you identified is also crucial: a UNESCO Science Report figure shows an **average share of publications with foreign co-authors in Southern Africa of 85% (2017–2019)**. High international co-authorship can be beneficial, but at this magnitude it also signals vulnerability to external agenda-setting and external gatekeeping of publication pathways (journals, reviewers, citation networks). [30]

What this implies for African Nexus Quarterly is strategic: an Africa-centered journal is not simply “another outlet,” but potentially a **counterweight institution**—a venue that can (i) normalize Africa-led framing of research questions, (ii) reward locally anchored conceptualization and evidence needs, and (iii) make partnership equity part of publication-level quality rather than an optional ethical add-on. [31]

North-dominant publishing economics and access barriers

Your fifth theme—that the global publishing environment is structurally North-dominant—has strong empirical support in the economics of academic publishing, and it interacts with Africa’s constrained research funding in predictable ways.

A landmark bibliometric analysis of publisher concentration finds that the top five most prolific publishers accounted for **more than 50% of all papers published in 2013** (within the Web of Science-indexed universe), documenting a mature oligopoly structure that shapes submission incentives, prestige hierarchies, and pricing power. [32]

This market structure becomes especially consequential under fee-based open access, where publication costs can shift from readers/libraries to authors. A Nature news analysis (2022) reports that open-access papers have drastically fewer lead authors from low-income regions than paywalled articles, consistent with the interpretation that **open-access publishing fees pose a barrier** for researchers in low- and middle-income countries (even when waivers exist). [33]

A 2025 analysis focused on APCs in low-income settings provides concrete cost ranges: it reports APCs for early-career researchers can range **from \$1,356 to \$5,200**, framing these costs as a material barrier that affects venue choice, visibility, career progression, and can contribute to brain drain pressures. [34]

This is the financial mechanism behind a key part of your argument: even when Africa-based scholars produce high-quality work, the combination of (i) limited R&D budgets, (ii) concentrated prestige journals, and (iii) APC-driven publishing can systematically push Africa-centered research toward lower-visibility channels—reproducing the same under-representation observed in indexing studies. [35]

Importantly, there is a globally recognized normative framework aligned with your proposed solution space. **UNESCO[36]** emphasizes open science as a route to improve quality and accessibility and to bridge STI gaps, and UNESCO’s open-science implementation materials explicitly frame open science as equity-relevant global infrastructure. [37]

Relatedly, UNESCO and its partners increasingly highlight **Diamond Open Access** (no fees for readers or authors) as an equity-oriented model for journals rooted in research communities. This gives African Nexus Quarterly a well-cited policy rationale if it chooses to avoid APC barriers and build sustainability through institutions, partnerships, or consortia rather than author payment capacity. [38]

Türkiye’s bridging position and the case for an Africa-centered venue

Your ninth and tenth themes emphasize a strategic opening: a Türkiye-based venue can harness expanding Türkiye–Africa ties while avoiding a Türkiye-centered epistemic framing.

The **Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Foreign Affairs[39]** documents that Türkiye’s diplomatic presence in Africa rose from **12 embassies (2002) to 44 (as of 2022)** and that Türkiye’s Africa engagement is positioned as multi-dimensional. The same source notes that Africa’s expanding geopolitical weight attracts “a vast number of countries and investors,” underscoring your point that many external agendas exist, often limited by the networks and priorities of their originating states. [40]

The Ministry also reports that total Türkiye–Africa trade volume increased from **\$5.4 billion (2003) to \$34.5 billion (2021)** and that Türkiye has awarded **more than 15,000 scholarships** to African students (graduate and postgraduate, including doctorates) since 1992—evidence of expanding social and educational ties that can become scholarly ties if supported by appropriate publication infrastructure. [40]

On the “platform capacity” side (your seventh theme), domestic doctoral production is one relevant indicator because it expands the pool that can participate in editing, peer review, and Africa-related scholarship. A 2024 report citing Türkiye’s higher education authority states that the number of PhD graduates rose from **11,290 (2022) to 13,561 (2023)**. [41]

Meanwhile, Türkiye has become an education node for students from Africa: an international education sector analysis reports **over 60,000 African students** studied in Türkiye in 2023 (up from roughly 40,000 in 2019), many on scholarships—conditions that can generate durable research networks if matched with journals, conferences, and collaborative editorial communities. [42]

The strategic implication is that Türkiye can function as a **bridge geography**—not because it replaces Africa-centered venues, but because it can host an Africa-centered venue that is structurally positioned to convene (i) Africa-based scholars, (ii) diaspora scholars, and (iii) researchers working across Türkiye–Africa and broader Global South–North interfaces—while explicitly prioritizing African research questions and African authorship leadership. [43]

Synthesis: what problem African Nexus Quarterly uniquely solves

When your ten themes are tested against evidence, they converge on one core diagnosis: **the global knowledge system about Africa is not primarily missing “interest” or “topics.” It is missing durable, Africa-centered scholarly infrastructure with credible global visibility.** [44]

The strongest evidence-based rationale for launching African Nexus Quarterly can therefore be stated as follows:

Africa-centered research is constrained by low R&D intensity and low researcher density (especially in Sub-Saharan Africa), while migration dynamics and high-skilled emigration rates create discontinuities in locally anchored knowledge production; at the same time, Africa-published journals remain severely under-represented in the dominant indexing systems that govern global scholarly legibility; international collaborations can reproduce agenda-setting asymmetries (including parachute dynamics) when funding and publication gatekeeping are concentrated outside Africa; and the publishing market’s oligopolistic structure—combined with APC-based open access—creates material barriers that disproportionately limit Africa-based researchers’ capacity to publish in high-visibility venues. [45]

Within that diagnosis, African Nexus Quarterly can claim a **distinct niche** (and defend it empirically) by positioning itself as:

An Africa-centered, multidisciplinary journal that prioritizes African problem selection and interpretive frames; that acts as connective infrastructure between Africa-based and diaspora scholars; and that builds publication practices aligned with equity-focused open science norms (e.g., lowering financial barriers and strengthening the visibility pipeline through indexing readiness, metadata standards, and transparent editorial governance). [46]

Finally, your eighth theme (limited African-origin journal portfolio) is not just a count argument but an ecosystem argument. The evidence shows that African journal infrastructures like AJOL can host hundreds of journals, yet mainstream discoverability and indexing remain weak, and a very small fraction of Africa-published journals appear in the most globally decisive indexes. This means a new journal does not have to “outnumber” existing journals to matter; it has to **operate as a high-credibility, high-visibility bridge**—one that increases the density of Africa-centered venues inside the global indexing and citation ecology while protecting African agenda-setting and authorial leadership. [47]