



# **KNOWLEDGE E'S 2022 SDG PROGRESS REPORT**



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 03** Introduction
- 04** Message from our CEO
- 05** Priority SGDs
- 05** Towards a sustainable carbon-neutral office
- 07** KnE Foundation initiatives
- 12** Diamond Open Access publisher
- 14** Zesty & the accessibility of scientific research
- 17** Next steps
- 18** Conclusion

# INTRODUCTION

The SDGs were set up by the United Nations in 2015 to “provide a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future”. The aim is for everyone, including governments, organisations, companies, and individuals, to work towards achieving these 17 goals by 2030.

The SDG Publishers Compact was launched in 2020 with the aim of encouraging publishers to take steps to work towards the SDGs in their own way. Knowledge E signed the Publishers Compact in July 2021, becoming only the fifth organisation in the Middle East to do so.

Knowledge E is committed to helping researchers in emerging economies disseminate their research. To do this, we publish the articles of researchers from these countries and provide training and support services to help them conduct their research and share their results with as wide an audience as possible. We also provide Open Access research that communities can use to help tackle the SDGs themselves, for example by working on addressing diseases and conditions particularly affecting people in low- and middle-income countries, fostering women’s empowerment in local communities, and developing environmental health, food security, and alternative energy strategies.

Another area we are focused on is improving the quality of, and access to, education – especially in low- and middle-income countries. In addition to the services provided by our corporate arm, we have the Knowledge E Foundation which aims to improve the accessibility, availability, and inclusivity of research and education for everyone, everywhere.

Lastly, as a member of the SDG Publishers Compact, KnE’s Corporate Social Responsibility policy is designed to ensure the business is aware of its social, economic, and environmental impact and in line with its mission, that it contributes positively to the environment and communities worldwide.



# MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO



"Knowledge E was founded with a simple, yet ambitious vision of a more knowledgeable world. We firmly believe in the power of education and the direct and indirect benefits it brings on an individual and global scale.

When we first learned about the 2030 Agenda, it was easy to identify how Knowledge E can contribute to many of its goals. Along with our philanthropic arm, Knowledge E Foundation, we keep stretching the boundaries of our reach.

Signing the SDG Publishers Compact in 2021 has highlighted new ways in which we can make a difference, both through our company and our foundation.

While we reflect and celebrate the result of our efforts in 2022, we look toward the future in which we continue our drive to contribute to the realisation of sustainability for societies across the world."

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kamran Robert Kardan', written over a horizontal line.

**Kamran Robert Kardan**  
**Chief Executive Officer**

# PRIORITY SDGs

At the heart of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are an urgent call for action by all countries. We recognise that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, and reduce inequality – all while tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests. In 2022, we have focused our efforts on the below SDGs.



**END POVERTY IN ALL ITS FORMS EVERYWHERE**



**ENSURE INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE QUALITY EDUCATION AND PROMOTE LIFELONG LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL**



**ACHIEVE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWER ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS**



**REDUCE INEQUALITY WITHIN AND AMONG COUNTRIES**



**MAKE CITIES AND HUMAN SETTLEMENTS INCLUSIVE, SAFE, RESILIENT AND SUSTAINABLE**



**TAKE URGENT ACTION TO COMBAT CLIMATE CHANGE AND ITS IMPACTS**

# SUSTAINABLE CARBON-NEUTRAL OFFICE

In 2022 Knowledge E worked towards reducing the carbon footprint of its main offices in Dubai. Due to the geographic location of the building, the measures taken reflect the specific challenges facing sustainability efforts in the Middle East and specifically targeted SDG 11 and SDG 12 to promote sustainable communities and responsible consumption within an office environment. These efforts included placing blinds as well as a tint film to shield the office from the sun and reduce the need for AC. Timers were added to the AC controllers to limit unnecessary consumption of energy. The office was also redecorated in 2022, making predominant use of daylight rather than overhead lighting and promoting a green environment with plants (SDG 11). Bulbs were also changed to provide LED-only lighting.



Other 2022 initiatives included the use of eco-friendly cleaning products; reusable mugs, plates, and cutlery in the kitchens instead of paper, plastic, or styrofoam ones; switching to ‘bean to cup’ coffee machine and recycling Nespresso pods; semi-recycled paper is now used in the printers and rechargeable batteries are used when possible. Office equipment such as phones and laptops are recycled through re-use and/or donation. A new flexible work from home policy has meant commuting to the office has decreased, contributing to reduced Co2 emissions. In order to involve staff in everyday efforts towards a more sustainable office, Knowledge E also instituted ‘Tuesday Tips’, an in-house sharing of sustainable behaviour suggestions amongst colleagues.

# KNE FOUNDATION INITIATIVES

Founded in 2018, the Knowledge E foundation was created with the aim of directly impacting people's lives with a focus on improving the conditions for research and education worldwide. From disaster relief to building schools in remote areas, KnE contributes a proportion of its profits to worthwhile causes where we can make a difference. Through these causes, the foundation promotes equitable and inclusive access to education (SDG 4), notably for girls (SDG 5), and joins the fight against inequality worldwide (SDG 10).

The foundation was extremely active in 2022, sponsoring a range of efforts. Below are some of its key initiatives:

## UWS Fellowship Program

The Knowledge E foundation sponsored a Fellowship program of United World Schools. The Fellowship is aimed at Nepali students looking to acquire experience in teaching, community action, and international development. The scheme aims to improve the quality of teaching in UWS Nepal Schools, whilst providing an opportunity for young Nepali graduates to gain valuable experience and make a real impact on the lives of remote and marginalised communities. With Knowledge E's support, one fellow has been placed in a UWS community school. The UWS Fellowship programme has enrolled a total of 42 individuals to date. These fellows undergo a rigorous selection process and extensive training to equip them with the necessary skills to enhance the educational standards of UWS Nepal schools.



## Girls' Education

For the second year in a row, Knowledge E has also supported United World Schools' Girls' Education project. Attending school can prevent early marriage and promote job opportunities, breaking the cycles of illiteracy and poverty and empowering women to participate in civic and political life. The programme provides targeted support for out-of-school children and at-risk girls in Myanmar, Madagascar, Cambodia, and Nepal. It equips teachers with the skills to deliver an inclusive, quality education and delivers a range of interventions and advocacy that tackles specific barriers to girls' education at the school, household, community, and education system levels.



## CréACTIONS

2022 also saw Knowledge E support CréACTIONS, an organisation that aims to accompany participants on their life path, be it on the educational, social, or family level. CréACTIONS offers a framework for exchange, dialogue, and development of self-esteem while respecting others. Knowledge E Foundation's contribution paid for defrayals to 10 secondary school aid volunteers and allowed 20 young people to go and see a play, thereby giving them access to culture. It also enabled the opening of an additional alpha-Fle training group for 12 women, the preparation and distribution of meals to 100 refugees and enabled work on the CréACTIONS website.



# School adoption

Since 2017, the Knowledge E Foundation has partnered with [Dubai Cares](#), the UAE-based global philanthropic organisation to adopt and sponsor schools in developing countries in order to increase access to quality primary education and adult literacy. Back in 2017, the Foundation pledged to adopt at least one school per year until 2020. As part of this pledge, schools were adopted in Malawi (as shown in the photo below), Senegal, Cambodia, and then Malawi again in 2020.

In 2022, the Foundation adopted a school in Nepal, which is expected to be completed in 2023. The three-classroom primary school will be equipped with furniture and separate ventilated improved pit latrines for girls and boys and will accommodate up to approximately 90 students.

The project is also set to help increase adult literacy rates for 40 women in rural Nepal and train three adult literacy facilitators who will be equipped with the ability to teach the fundamentals of literacy to both men and women within the community.



# Spring of Hope School

The foundation sponsored the Spring of Hope School, enabling the purchase of four new laptops to help students with computer literacy. It also enabled the purchase of more time for students to use their cell phones, which are their primary means of connecting to the electronic world. Funds from Knowledge E foundation are also helping support Spring of Hope School teachers with additional resources such as hiring private tutors to help students prepare for the national high school exams (a prerequisite to enter college) and continuing education in such areas as computing, teaching English as a second language, and pedagogy.



# FORM

The Forum for Open Research in MENA (FORM), established by Knowledge E Foundation, is a non-profit membership organisation supporting the advancement of Open Science policies and practices in research communities and institutions across the Arab world.

A catalyst for positive action, FORM works with key stakeholders to develop and implement a pragmatic programme to facilitate the transition towards more accessible, inclusive and sustainable research and education models in the Arab region. FORM's goal is to empower libraries, higher education institutions, research councils and policy makers across the Arab world to collaborate on activities, projects and resources that promote engagement with, and the generation of, open research.

The 2022 Annual Forum was held on the 26th-27th of October to coincide with the global Open Access Week initiative in Cairo, Egypt (with the support and endorsement of UNESCO and the Egyptian Knowledge Bank). The event was a huge success, with 50 speakers and over 1100 delegates from 48 countries across the globe.

The 2023 Annual Forum will offer a series of carefully tailored presentations and panels addressing key themes and topics related to the advancement of Open Science policies and practices in research institutions and research communities throughout the Arab world. This year's conference theme is: Democratizing Knowledge: The evolution of open science ecosystems and communities in the Arab World.



# Mangrove planting

Finally, Knowledge E colleagues actively participated in an eco-friendly team-building activity with mangrove planting and kayaking. The day started with an awareness session, highlighting the importance of mangroves to the local ecosystem, after which colleagues planted some seedlings and toured the stunning Mangrove plantation.



# DIAMOND OPEN ACCESS PUBLISHER

One of the key ways in which Knowledge E supports the SDGs is through our publishing activities. We operate as a diamond Open Access publisher (KnE Publishing), and we provide a comprehensive and flexible portfolio of infrastructure, production, hosting, promotion, and consultancy solutions and services designed to empower researchers and research communities across the Global South.

The publishing services division launched in 2016, and due to strong demand we have grown steadily ever since. We have worked with over 20,000 researchers from over 60 countries. Our globally recognised Open Access platform hosts publications from over 30 countries and has over 2mn visitors a year, from 193 countries across the world. A member of [ALPSP](#) (Association of Learned and Professional Society Publishers) and [OASPA](#) (Open Access Scholarly Publishing Association), we also work closely as a regional partner and ambassador for leading non-profit organisations promoting accessible, sustainable research (including [Crossref](#), [DORA](#) and [ORCID](#)). We are also one of the first diamond Open Access publishers in the region.

We believe that community collaboration and accessible research are more important than ever, in order to facilitate the sustainable transition to open scholarship across the world. We seek to support this movement by helping independent journal owners and universities to develop, launch and manage community-led and scholar-run open-access publications. Our goal is to advance the democratisation of knowledge through the production and dissemination of globally accessible content in all countries and languages, by empowering researchers to produce, publish and promote their work.

**Knowledge E is a regional partner and ambassador for leading non-profit organisations promoting accessible, sustainable research**

The fifth publisher in the region (and first in the UAE) to sign the UN's SDG Publishers Compact, we support collaborative, community-driven open-access publishing both by providing low-cost high-quality publishing services to lower-income countries and by helping research institutions and scholarly societies develop their own open access publishing infrastructures. In addition, we work closely with non-profit solutions providers looking to enhance open-access publishing and support all their activities in the region by organising free awareness-boosting events, and by providing Arabic translations where required – helping to build a network of open science champions across the wider region and increase the development of a more sustainable, inclusive scholarly communications ecosystem.

However, inevitably, the expansion of open-access publishing has resulted in a disturbing rise in predatory practices as growing pressures to increase individual and institutional research impact have seen many researchers succumb to the lures of pay-to-publish journals and pay-to-present-and-publish conferences, many of which are predatory and prioritise profit over scholarly communications and academic rigour. The uptick in predatory conferences in particular has been further exacerbated by Covid.

To help combat this problem, we, therefore, founded Think. Check. Attend. (TCA). A sister initiative to Think. Check. Submit. (designed to combat predatory journal practices), TCA was developed to raise awareness about predatory conferences and stop researchers from losing money, wasting time, and missing out on valuable career development opportunities by choosing to attend the wrong conferences. And during 2022, we collaborated with the Interacademy Partnership (IAP) to help promote awareness about this troubling issue across the MENA region, hosting a series of events on the topic and contributing to their recent report.



# ZENDY & THE ACCESSIBILITY OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

A product of Knowledge E, Zendy is an online platform founded in 2019 to provide individuals with easy, reliable, and affordable access to scholarly research and literature. Originating from the notion of building a more knowledgeable world, Zendy is a mission-driven product focused on contributing to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, notably SDG 4 and SDG 10.

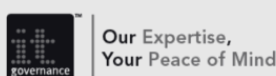
Zendy strives to build a world where scholarly discovery lives barrier-free and individuals across the world can take evidence-based steps towards building a better tomorrow.

Current scholarly databases exist behind crippling paywalls or require university-facilitated access, which is a challenge for individuals across the globe not affiliated with institutions. Access to scientific publications is particularly troublesome in developing countries, where many universities cannot afford the subscription databases required for advancing research and studies.

Via its two main offerings (Zendy Open and Zendy Plus), Zendy is working to remove barriers to scholarly discovery to make academic literature affordable and accessible to all academic and non-academic professionals, students, and knowledge enthusiasts.

The logo for Zendy, featuring a stylized 'Z' icon followed by the word 'ZENDY' in a bold, sans-serif font.

Partnering with leading global publishers such as Wiley, Taylor & Francis, and specialised organisations such as IEEE, Zesty Plus provides access to paywalled content of the highest quality, both books and journals, enabling individual users to pay a small subscription fee each month to access all of the premium resources. Through this B2C model, cutting-edge publications are available at a fraction of the cost for users, contributing both to SDG 10 and enabling new revenue streams for partner publishers.



Alongside Zesty Plus, Zesty Open provides all individuals worldwide with access to top-tier peer-reviewed content across all disciplines on an open-access basis, ensuring that every user across the world has access to academic research and literature and can join the global academic and policy debate. This content is globally available to anyone and is strongly marketed towards the specific audiences Zesty targets to enhance discoverability in these regions.

In 2022, Zesty has worked to significantly increase its user base. Zesty Plus saw a 500% growth and Zesty Open a 200% growth in user sign-ups, highlighting how this model can work to support both SDG 4 and SDG 10. Zesty content includes leading resources across all subject areas and is relevant to all SDGs, from good health and well-being to promoting peaceful societies.

**Zesty Plus provides access to paywalled content of the highest quality, both books and journals.**

**200%**

Growth in Zesty Open sign-ups

**500%**

Growth in Zesty Plus trials



Alongside its growing user numbers, Zendy has also been actively hosting and attending SDG-related events. In October, the Zendy team attended the Frankfurt Book Fair; as a signatory to the [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Publishers Compact](#), they also participated in the [International Publishers Association - IPA's Sustainability Summit](#) (see photo below) which took place during the Frankfurt Book Fair.



Later in October during Open Access Week, Zendy was delighted to co-host a [webinar on open science and climate change](#) with OAPEN.

Discussions highlighted both SDG 10 and SDG 13, exploring how Open Access research and publications raise awareness and support the movement toward climate justice, particularly in African and Middle Eastern regions, and explored the challenges associated with knowledge exchange in open science as communities around the world rally to understand and tackle climate change.



WEBINAR

## Empowering Discoverability:

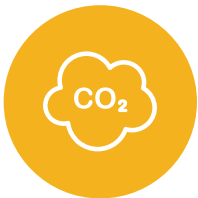
Increasing open climate research access in MENA



# NEXT STEPS

As we reflect on 2022, we look forward to building on what we have achieved and continuing to contribute towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. To learn more about the SDG Publishers Compact and what Knowledge E is doing to support the SDGs, take a few minutes to read our [blog](#).

While the SDGs we focus on will remain the same, we plan to expand our reach where possible and further contribute in the following ways in 2023:



## Further reduce our CO2 footprint

In 2023, we plan to work on actively measuring our CO2 footprint and strive towards reaching net zero.



## Continue to support democratisation of knowledge

Removing barriers to scholarly discovery and making academic literature affordable and accessible to everyone will remain one of our main focus areas in 2023.



## Increase our efforts in reducing poverty

Knowledge E Foundation will continue to extend its reach to countries and communities that require help the most.



## Continue to support gender equality

We will continue enabling access to education, particularly girls' education and empowerment.

# CONCLUSION

Working at the heart of the knowledge industry has enabled us to make an impact on many different levels, particularly in emerging economies.

Through Knowledge E Publishing, we work toward facilitating the sustainable transition to open scholarship worldwide, whether through our own initiatives or by being a partner and ambassador for leading non-profit organisations promoting accessible, sustainable research. In 2022, we hosted a series of events, in collaboration with the Interacademy Partnership (IAP), to help promote awareness about predatory journal practices in the MENA region.

Knowledge E Foundation, as an extension of what we do as a company, saw many of the causes it supports come to fruition in 2022. Apart from supporting education and disaster relief, we took action in aiding climate change, broadening the areas in which we can make a difference.

At the operational level, we understand how big of an impact being conscientious about our energy consumption, carbon footprint, and sustainability can have. With that in mind, we took different steps to achieve an inspiring office environment that directly contributes to different SDG goals, which we plan to build on in 2023 and beyond.

Our work towards a more knowledgeable world does not stop there. Zesty was founded to provide all individuals worldwide with access to top-tier peer-reviewed content across all disciplines on an open-access basis, ensuring that every user has access to academic research and literature and can join the global academic and policy debate. In 2022, Zesty saw significant growth in its user base, highlighting how we can support both SDG 4 and SDG 10. With Zesty, we look forward to growing our collaborations with researchers, students, institutions, and publishers to facilitate the democratisation of knowledge, believing that discoverable, reliable, and trustworthy sources of information are crucial to learning and ultimately, a better quality of life for all.

# CONTACT



[info@knowledgee.com](mailto:info@knowledgee.com)



+971 4 422 7043



[www.knowledgee.com](http://www.knowledgee.com)



KnEGlobal



KnowledgeEGlobal



KnowledgeEGlobal



KnowledgeEGlobal