

# BEYOND BORDERS

Advancing the SDGs Through Transdisciplinary Action

2027 Conference Prospectus



Join global scholars shaping social welfare beyond 2030.

January 14 – 17, 2027

LUSAKA, ZAMBIA

Organised by





## Contact

For inquiries, please contact: [swwb2027@bu.edu](mailto:swwb2027@bu.edu)

For more information, please visit:

<https://www.bu.edu/ssw/about/strategic-plan/global-engagement/social-work-beyond-borders/>

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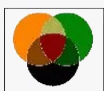
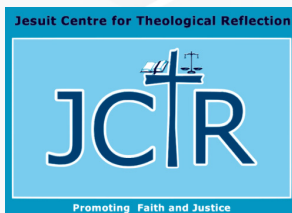


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# Beyond Borders: Advancing the SDGs Through Transdisciplinary Action

*A global conference grounded in  
social work and cross-sector collaboration*



LUSAKA, ZAMBIA



JANUARY 14-17, 2027

CONFERENCE HOSTED BY



Boston University  
School of Social Work



**REGISTER NOW**



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# About the Conference: Beyond Borders: Advancing the SDGs Through Transdisciplinary Action

This conference is an international conference jointly organized by Boston University School of Social Work, The Catholic University of East Africa, and The Zambia Catholic University. The conference is envisioned as a high-level academic and practice-oriented convening that brings together a multidisciplinary team (MDT) of social commentators/professionals from diverse fields including social work and social science educators, researchers, practitioners, policymakers, and civil society leaders from across Africa and the global community, to engage in an action-oriented dynamic process with the goal of reviewing existing interventions and setting an agenda for addressing complex social problems targeted by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

As the world approaches the 2030 target date for the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), this conference provides a timely and strategic platform to reflect on the role of

multidisciplinary teams (MDT) of professionals including social work and the social sciences in advancing sustainable development, to critically examine progress and challenges to date, and to engage in forward-looking dialogue about the future of global social welfare beyond the SDGs framework. By situating the conference in Zambia, the organizers intentionally center African leadership and perspectives while fostering global collaboration and multidisciplinary and cross-border learning.



## Background and Rationale

Multidisciplinary teams (MDTs), including social workers, play a critical role in global development by operating at the intersection of individual well-being, community systems, and policy environments. Across Africa, they are central to translating global frameworks like the SDGs into locally grounded action, often under challenging conditions such as limited resources, political complexity, and overlapping crises. contribute to the shaping of future social development agenda With less than five years remaining to the SDG deadline, progress has been uneven. While gains have been made in areas like healthcare, education, and energy access, major challenges persist—particularly inequality, climate displacement, conflict, poverty, hunger, and digital exclusion. As a result, global discourse is shifting toward both consolidating SDG achievements and addressing gaps, while also shaping a forward-looking, post-2030 agenda grounded in social justice, human dignity, and human rights.



This conference is positioned as a timely response, providing a platform for social workers and allied professionals to share evidence, reflect on implementation challenges, and define a transformative vision beyond 2030. Through collaboration across North America, East Africa, and Southern Africa, it promotes mutual learning, solidarity, and collective leadership, with the potential to guide Africa toward inclusive and action-oriented development pathways.

## Goals and Objectives

The primary goal of the conference is to advance global dialogue on the role of multidisciplinary teams on the SDGs agenda, by fostering meaningful exchange between community, research, policy, and practice. The conference seeks to strengthen professional networks across regions, elevate African and Global South perspectives within international social development discourse, and contribute to the shaping of future the social development agenda ‘beyond-2030’.



### Specific Aims of the Conference

- 1. Knowledge Sharing and Dissemination:** Facilitate the sharing of community-driven research findings, practice innovations, and policy approaches related to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- 2. Critical Analysis of Progress and Challenges:** Examine both successes and barriers in advancing the Sustainable Development Goals across diverse contexts.
- 3. Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration:** Support collaboration among universities, civil society organizations, and policymakers.
- 4. Institutional Capacity Building:** Build institutional capacity for sustained global partnerships.
- 5. Advancing Social Work Education and Training:** Contribute to discussions on the future of social work education and training, particularly within Catholic and faith-based higher education networks.

# Conference Themes and Subthemes for Paper Presentations

We invite proposals that engage with the conference theme from local, regional, or global perspectives. Suggested subthemes include, but are not limited to:



## **Climate Justice and Environmental Sustainability:**

The role of social work in climate adaptation, disaster response, and ecological justice.



## **Migration, Displacement, and Human Rights:**

Protecting and empowering refugees, asylum seekers, and internally displaced people.



## **Health and Well-being Across the Lifespan:**

Advancing mental health, physical health, and community well-being through the SDGs.



## **Protection and Inclusive Societies:**

Addressing gender equity, gender-based violence, child protection, and equity across social institutions with attention to the inclusion of all marginalized identities.



## **Human Security:**

Tackling various forms of insecurity and building community resilience through social work practice and policy.



## **Digital Transformation and Innovation for Social Change:**

Leveraging technology and generative artificial intelligence in an ethical and inclusive ways to support social work and sustainable development

As the overall scope of the conference continues to evolve, and in order to remain responsive to emerging discussions on the Sustainable Development Goals beyond 2030 and cross-border collaboration, additional subthemes may be refined or introduced. These adjustments will be done to reflect the range of submitted papers and the panel discussions to be established.

# How to Submit Your Abstract

We invite submissions that critically engage with the evolving role of social work within the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) framework and beyond. Contributions are particularly encouraged to address:

- Conceptualizations and evidence of success in advancing the SDGs within social work practice and policy
- Strategies employed by social workers to navigate structural barriers, resource constraints, and competing development priorities
- Forward-looking perspectives on the post-2030 agenda, including the role of social work in shaping future global development frameworks

## Proposal Formats

Submissions may be made in any of the following formats:

- Individual Papers / Presentations: Oral presentations of 15–20 minutes
- Panel Discussions: Sessions comprising 3–4 speakers addressing a shared theme
- Workshops / Skills-Based Sessions: Interactive sessions of 60–90 minutes focused on practical engagement
- Poster Presentations: Visual presentations of research findings, case studies, or practice-based models

## Submission Guidelines

Applicants must adhere to the following:

- Abstract Length: 250–300 words
- Submission Content:
  - Title of the presentation
  - Preferred format
  - Relevant conference subtheme(s)
  - Names and institutional affiliations of all presenters

## Eligibility

Submissions are welcomed from a broad range of stakeholders, including:

- Social work professionals and practitioners
- Academics and researchers
- Policymakers and development practitioners
- Community and civil society leaders
- Students and interdisciplinary collaborators engaged in sustainable development and social justice

Abstract Submission Website:  
<https://shorturl.at/4HVhW>



## Why participate in this conference?

This conference brings together academic scholars from multiple continents to advance a shared agenda on social welfare and sustainable development. This conference offers a rare opportunity for attendees to engage in critical discussions and to be exposed to cutting-edge research and policy discourse aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Participants will benefit from interactions that bridge theory, practice, and policy, positioning the conference as a dynamic space for knowledge generation, professional networking, and the advancement of globally informed yet locally grounded solutions.

**REGISTER NOW**



# Mulungushi International Conference Centre - Conference Venue

Address Plot #8025, Great East Road,  
Lusaka, Zambia



## Conference schedule at the venue

The Conference will commence with an opening ceremony and keynote addresses that set the tone for the conference theme, followed by plenary sessions featuring leading scholars and practitioners. Subsequent days will include parallel sessions for paper presentations, panel discussions, workshops, and poster exhibitions organized around the thematic areas of the conference.

Dedicated time will be allocated for regional panel discussions, networking engagements, and collaborative dialogues to foster partnerships across institutions and regions. The programme will conclude with a closing session reflecting on key insights, future directions beyond 2030, and opportunities for continued collaboration and planned tourism.

**LIMITED SPOTS – REGISTER NOW!**

# Conference Slots Available!

*Join our diverse and dynamic gathering!*



**Over 200**

**Local Participants  
(Zambia)**



**Over 100**

**Regional  
Participants**



**100+**

**From  
Global North**

## Conference Fees and Slots



### Conference Participation Slots

The conference will bring together a diverse and multidisciplinary community of participants from local, regional, and global contexts, reflecting its commitment to inclusive dialogue and cross-border collaboration.

- 200+ Zambia based participants: Engaging national stakeholders, including academics, practitioners, policymakers, and civil society leaders
- 100+ Africa based Participants: Strengthening regional networks and knowledge exchange across East and Southern Africa.
- 100+ International Participants (From all other countries)
- Promoting global partnerships, mutual learning, and transdisciplinary collaboration

Category	Fee per person (Before October 2026)	Fee per person (Regular Pricing)	Fees Per Person One Day Pass
Zambian Residents / Local NGOs / Community Organizations	ZMW 1100	ZMW 1400	ZMW 900
African Participants (Global South)	\$120	\$150	\$70
Global South (Outside Africa)	\$150	\$175	\$80
Global North Academics/ Practitioners	\$275	\$325	\$150
Government Officials / Multilateral Agencies	\$325	\$375	\$200
Students (Africa)	\$30	\$40	\$25
Students (Global North)	\$60	\$75	\$40
Virtual attendance	\$30	\$50	\$10

# Important Dates and Accommodation

## Important Dates to Remember

- Notification of Acceptance: July 31, 2026
- Submission of Full Paper: September 1, 2026
- Early Registration Deadline: September 30, 2026
- Start of Late Registration: October 1, 2026
- Deadline for Exhibit Booth reservations: December 1, 2026

## Accommodation Reservation

The conference organizing team has secured specially negotiated discounted rates at selected nearby hotels, lodges, and furnished apartments for conference attendees, speakers, and partners. Accommodation within the designated room block will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis. As availability within the discounted block cannot be guaranteed, participants are strongly encouraged to make their reservations as early as possible. The deadline for booking within the conference room block is Thursday, December 31, 2026, or earlier if the allocation is fully reserved.

Reservation prices range from: **\$45 - \$350 per night**

For inquiries or reservations, please contact: [swwb2027@bu.edu](mailto:swwb2027@bu.edu)

## Some of the Conference Suggested Venues



## Promotional and Sponsorship Opportunities

Promotional and sponsorship opportunities are available to organizations and institutions seeking to engage with a high-level, multidisciplinary, and international audience. These opportunities are structured to provide meaningful visibility and strategic positioning across a range of sponsorship tiers and investment levels.



### Tiers of Sponsorship

Tier	Cost	Package	Impact Statement
Catalyst Partner	\$10,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Lead sponsor recognition</li> <li>•Logo on conference website and materials</li> <li>•Opening session acknowledgment</li> <li>•3 complimentary registrations</li> <li>•Exhibition table</li> </ul>	Catalyst Partners make the conference possible. Their support helps fund travel scholarships and ensures that African scholars, students, and community practitioners can participate in global conversations that shape research, policy, and practice.
Collaborating Partner	\$5,500	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Logo on website</li> <li>•2 complimentary registrations</li> <li>•Exhibition table</li> <li>•Program recognition</li> </ul>	Collaborating Partners expand access by supporting reduced registration for practitioners, early-career scholars, and NGO partners from across Africa, helping ensure diverse voices are represented in the conference dialogue.
Supporting Partner	\$1,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Logo on website</li> <li>• 1 complimentary registration</li> <li>• Exhibition table</li> <li>• Program recognition</li> </ul>	Supporting Partners help create inclusive participation by enabling student attendance and supporting conference programming that fosters learning, collaboration, and knowledge exchange.
Community Partner	\$750	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mention on website</li> <li>• 1 complimentary registration</li> <li>• Exhibition table</li> <li>• Program recognition</li> </ul>	Community Partners help ensure local participation by supporting Zambian students, practitioners, and community organizations to attend and contribute to the conference.

## Why Sponsor this Conference

Sponsors and exhibitors will gain strategic visibility and meaningful engagement with a high-level, multidisciplinary audience by:

### BECOME A SPONSOR

**1. Showcasing innovative solutions aligned with sustainable development and social welfare**

**2. Participating in exhibitions, demonstrations, and knowledge-sharing platforms**

**3. Engaging directly with academics, policymakers, practitioners, and civil society leaders**

## Impact of Your Sponsorship

Your support will contribute to:

- Advancing research and dialogue on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- Strengthening regional and global collaboration networks
- Enabling inclusive participation, particularly from under-resourced contexts
- Enhancing conference outcomes, community engagement, and knowledge dissemination.



For inquiries, please contact us:  
email: [sswb2027@bu.edu](mailto:sswb2027@bu.edu)

Website: <https://www.bu.edu/ssw/about/strategic-plan/global-engagement/social-work-beyond-borders/>



## Panel Discussions

The conference will feature a series of regional panel discussions aligned with the core thematic areas, designed to foster contextualized dialogue and comparative learning across regions. These panels will bring together experts, practitioners, advocacy groups, and scholars to share insights, experiences, and evidence-based practices, complemented by formal presentations that contribute to advancing discourse on social welfare and sustainable development. Each panel will be guided by a designated institutional moderator to ensure structured, inclusive, and impactful engagement.



### Panel Moderators by Region:

No	Panel Chair	Region
1	Boston University	West Africa
2	Catholic University of East Africa	East Africa
3	The Zambia Catholic University	Southern Africa
4	University of Zambia	Central Africa



# Conference Publications

## Conference Program and Abstracts Summary

The conference will produce an official Conference Program and Abstracts Booklet, which will be issued to all registered participants in November 2026 in advance of the event. This booklet will serve as the primary reference document for the conference, providing a comprehensive overview of the program structure, session schedules, and the range of contributions aligned with the conference theme.

The booklet will include detailed information on keynote addresses, panel discussions, workshops, poster sessions, and regional dialogues, organized in accordance with the conference subthemes. It will also contain the titles and abstracts of all accepted submissions, along with the names and institutional affiliations of presenters, thereby enabling participants to identify sessions of interest and engage more effectively in scholarly exchange.

The abstracts component of the booklet will function as a concise repository of the intellectual contributions to the conference. Each abstract will reflect the scope, methodology,

and key insights of the respective paper, workshop, or presentation, offering participants an opportunity to familiarize themselves with emerging research, practice innovations, and policy perspectives in advance of the sessions.

To enhance accessibility and usability, the booklet will be made available in both digital and print formats. The digital version will allow participants to access the content on various devices, while the printed version will be included in the welcome package at the registration desk, distributed upon registration at the conference venue.

## Expected Outcomes and Impact

The conference is expected to result in:



## CONFERENCE PUBLICATIONS

Knowledge. Impact. Influence.



### CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

All accepted papers and selected presentations will be published in the official Conference Proceedings.



#### REFEREED & PEER-REVIEWED

All submissions undergo a rigorous peer-review process.



#### GLOBAL VISIBILITY

Proceedings will be indexed and widely disseminated.



#### OFFICIAL PUBLICATION

ISBN-assigned proceedings for academic and professional use.



#### KNOWLEDGE INTO ACTION

Contributing to policy, practice, and future research.

### WHY IT MATTERS



#### ADVANCES SCHOLARSHIP

Showcasing innovative research and practice in social development.



#### INFORMS POLICY & PRACTICE

Providing evidence to shape inclusive, sustainable solutions.



#### STRENGTHENS NETWORKS

Connecting global voices for greater collective impact.



#### SUPPORTS BEYOND 2030

Building the knowledge base for future global development agendas.



BE PART OF THE KNOWLEDGE MOVEMENT.

SUBMIT. SHARE. SHAPE THE FUTURE.

Accepted contributions to the conference will be compiled into official conference proceedings, which will serve as a formal scholarly record of the knowledge generated and shared during the event. Authors of accepted papers, presentations, and selected posters will be invited to submit full papers or extended abstracts for inclusion, subject to editorial review and compliance with the conference formatting and quality standards.

All submissions included in the proceedings will undergo a structured review process to ensure academic rigor, relevance to the conference theme, and alignment with the advancement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Authors will be required to adhere to established guidelines on originality, proper citation, and ethical research practices, including appropriate acknowledgment of sources and, where applicable, evidence of ethical clearance.

The conference proceedings will be published with an ISSN and made accessible through recognized academic and research dissemination platforms. This will ensure that all accepted and published papers are citable and discoverable across multiple indexing services, including Google Scholar, thereby enhancing the visibility, accessibility, and academic impact of contributors' work.

By contributing to the conference proceedings, authors acknowledge and grant the conference organizers the right to publish and disseminate their work while retaining intellectual ownership. Authors are encouraged to further develop their papers for submission to peer-reviewed journals, and edited books with the understanding that any subsequent publication should appropriately reference the original conference proceeding.

# Conference General Guidelines

## Professional Conduct:

All participants of the conference are expected to conduct themselves in a professional, respectful, and courteous manner at all times. Engagements should reflect a commitment to constructive dialogue, even where differences in opinion arise, and any form of harassment, discrimination, or inappropriate behavior is strictly prohibited. The conference upholds a zero-tolerance policy on misconduct to ensure a safe and respectful environment for all attendees.

## Respect for Diversity and Inclusion:

Participants are required to respect diversity in all its forms, including differences in culture, nationality, gender, religion, and professional background. Interactions should be guided by principles of inclusivity and equity, with careful attention to the use of respectful and non-discriminatory language, particularly when engaging with individuals or communities that may be marginalized or vulnerable.

## Participation and Engagement:

Active and meaningful participation is encouraged throughout the conference. Attendees are expected to be punctual for sessions, minimize disruptions, and adhere to session protocols, including respecting allocated speaking times and contributing to discussions in a relevant and constructive manner that advances the objectives of the conference.

## Accreditation and Access:

All individuals must be duly registered and accredited to participate in the conference and are required to wear their identification badges visibly at all times within the conference venue. Access to specific sessions or areas may be regulated based on registration categories, and participants are expected to comply with these access controls without exception.

## Intellectual Property and Academic Integrity:

Participants must uphold the principles of intellectual property and academic integrity by properly acknowledging all sources of information and avoiding any form of plagiarism or misrepresentation. Recording, photographing, or distributing presentation materials should only be done with prior permission from the respective presenters and in accordance with ethical standards.

## Media, Photography, and Recording:

The conference organizers may conduct official photography and videography for documentation and promotional purposes; however, participants are expected to respect the privacy and consent of others when capturing or sharing any media. All use

of images, recordings, or related materials must adhere to ethical considerations and professional standards.

## Use of Conference Spaces:

All conference facilities, equipment, and spaces must be treated with care and respect. Participants are expected to follow all instructions provided by conference staff and volunteers and to refrain from any actions that may damage property, disrupt sessions, or interfere with the smooth running of the event.

## Health and Safety Compliance:

Compliance with all health and safety regulations is mandatory. Participants must adhere to guidelines issued by the organizers and venue management, promptly report any hazards or emergencies, and follow all established safety and evacuation procedures to ensure the well-being of everyone present.

## Environmental Responsibility:

In line with the conference's commitment to sustainability and the advancement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, participants are encouraged to adopt environmentally responsible practices, including minimizing waste, reducing the use of printed materials, and supporting eco-friendly initiatives throughout the event.

## Conflict Resolution and Reporting:

Any concerns, grievances, or violations of these rules should be reported to the conference secretariat for appropriate action. The organizing committee reserves the authority to investigate reported issues and to take necessary measures, including the removal of individuals who fail to comply with the established standards of conduct.

# ABOUT THE SDGs



## BEYOND BORDERS 2027 CONFERENCE:

Advancing the SDGs Through Transdisciplinary Action

For inquiries, please contact us:

email: [sswb2027@bu.edu](mailto:sswb2027@bu.edu)

Website: <https://www.bu.edu/ssw/about/strategic-plan/global-engagement/social-work-beyond-borders/>

