



---

*Journal of Social Development in Africa*, Vol. 39(2), i-iii

DOI: [10.4314/jsda.v39i2.1](https://doi.org/10.4314/jsda.v39i2.1)

©The Author(s) 2024

Midlands State University, School of Social Work  
Corner Chinhoyi & Grant Street, Harare, Zimbabwe  
<http://www.msu.ac.zw>  
<https://www.ajoi.info/index.php/jsda>  
[managingeditor@jsda.msu.ac.zw](mailto:managingeditor@jsda.msu.ac.zw)

## EDITORIAL:

### Human Rights, the Sustainable Development Goals and Social Work Practice

#### Guest Editors

**Tanusha Raniga (PhD)**

Department of Social Work, University of Johannesburg, South Africa

**Michael Boecker (PhD)**

Department of Applied Social Sciences, Fachhochschule Dortmund

The Global Transformation and Social Work Practice partnership made up of four universities – Fachhochschule Dortmund, University of Johannesburg, University of KwaZulu-Natal and Midland State University aims to build sustainable development goal (SDG) partnerships (United Nations Sustainable Development Goals) between countries of the Global North and the Global South. DAAD is a German academic exchange organisation which has funded a four-year programme between these partner universities. The desire is to increase intellectual capital and research collaborations amongst students and social work academics from the four partner universities. This formed the basis of the main theme of a four-day Postgraduate Symposium on Human Rights, the Sustainable Development Goals and Social Work Practice in Germany and Africa, hosted at the University of Johannesburg in July 2023.

---

**Corresponding Author:** Tanusha Raniga (PhD), Department of Social Work, University of Johannesburg, South Africa, [traniga@uj.ac.za](mailto:traniga@uj.ac.za)

**Cite as:** Raniga, T. & Boecker, M. 2024. Editorial: Human Rights, the Sustainable Development Goals and Social Work Practice. *Journal of Social Development in Africa*, 39(2), i-iii. <https://dx.doi.org/10.4314/jsda.v39i2.1>

This issue of the Journal of Social Development in Africa publishes another seven excellent and diverse papers. The papers in this special edition are an outcome of this Symposium where the contributors share their knowledge and empirical research on Human rights, the Sustainable Development Goals and implications for social work practice from South Africa, Germany and Zimbabwe contexts. The SDGs are consistent with the Global Agenda for Social work and Social Development's (2020-2030) commitment to co-build social and economic development and increase research competencies and networks for the next generation of social work scholars, in a critical transformative phase in higher education institutions. There is urgency for German and African scholars to shape, influence and empower postgraduate students so that the needs of Africa are not marginalized. To that end global transformation of social work is being reshaped by complex contemporary challenges such as the effects of natural disasters, wars, conflicts and civil strife within and between countries. This infers that social work theory and practice must serve a broader agenda that includes critical reflexivity and curriculum and policy innovation. The categorization of the papers in this special issue has been channelled into four broad streams namely, Human rights, impact of climate change, indigenous knowledge systems and food security in households. These demarcations are interconnected and some of the papers straddle two or more SDGs with critical reflections and deliberations on the implications for social work practice. The collaboration between the students who wrote together is commendable and this network enabled deeper analysis, debates and discussions on the sub-themes that form the central premise of this special edition.

Michael and Dorothee Boecker's article set the tone for this special issue as they highlight the importance of international social work as a human rights profession in global society and give us insight into the challenges and formulating mandates for action at macro-, meso- and micro levels for international social work stakeholders. Munoangira, Simango, Mzinyane and Charamba's article follows with an autoethnographic reflection of the four-day symposium held in Johannesburg. The paper provides us with insights into the power of sustainable partnerships, dialogue, and shared learning across geographical, socio-economic boundaries and higher education institutions from Global North and South.

Mzinyane, Ajodhia, Gumbi, Khumalo, Nduli, Mfishi, Lipholo and Funeka is the third article that presents debates on the influence of natural disasters on poverty programs in KwaZulu-Natal and highlight the need for an integration of Afrocentric social work approach to policy and practice. The article by Charamba, Mushunje, Mwapaura, Simango and Risinamhodzi follows in this theme and highlights the implications of climate change for social work practice with vulnerable groups In Zimbabwe. Article 5 is authored by Kudzai Mwapaura, Mildred Mushunje, Sunungurai Charamba, Netsai Risinamhodzi and Tapiwa Simango. In this article the authors present the voices of social work educators and interrogate the relevance of Indigenous Knowledge Systems in Social Work Education and Practice from a human rights perspective in Zimbabwe. Article 6 is authored by Maud Mthembu and Tanusha Raniga who present empirical data from single mother households from a rural community in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa on the cost benefit analysis of state cash transfers on food security and sustaining households during the COVID-19 pandemic. In keeping with the theme on food security, the final article is authored by Matshidiso Sello, Adedini and Odimegwu, where they explore childhood malnutrition and household food security and discuss implications for social development processes in Gauteng and Limpopo, South Africa.

This special issue has borne fruit through the collaborative efforts and commitment of all the contributors who are postgraduate students and academics from the four partner universities. We are proud of your efforts and perseverance while working together to publish your papers in this issue.