

## **Transcending boundaries on unequal ground: A critical reimagination of global North-South cooperation on social work practice and the Sustainable Development Goals**

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### **Abstract**

Using collaborative autoethnography, this article encapsulates the rich discourse that unfolded during a symposium titled: "Human Rights, The Sustainable Development Goals and Social Work Practice in Germany and Africa". The symposium was a testament to the collaborative synergy between Fachhochschule Dortmund in Germany, Midlands State University (MSU) in Zimbabwe, the University of Johannesburg, and the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) in South Africa. This scientific event was an academic convergence where researchers and postgraduate social work students shared research, experiences and insights from the Global North and South, offering a mosaic of perspectives on critical issues. It illuminated shared challenges that transcended geographical boundaries. Poverty, climate change, and social injustice were common but contextually unique across the three countries. In this paper, we employ critical and world systems theories to reflect on the symposium. The discussions and reflections underscore social work's strategic position to inform context-specific anti-poverty, climate change discourse, anti-racism and collaborative efforts to combat economic disparities. This paper encourages the power of sustainable partnerships, dialogue, and shared learning across geographical and socio-economic boundaries. Collaborative efforts between Global North and South universities provide a platform for cross-cultural learning and mutual capacity building amongst postgraduate students.

**Keywords:** transcending boundaries global North-South social work practice Sustainable Development Goals