



Faculty of Education
North-West University

Conference
2025

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

Important dates to take note of:

Conference dates: 19 – 21 November 2025

Closing date for call for papers: 16 June 2025

Outcome of review of abstract: 31 July 2025

Final day for conference registration: 20 October 2025

Hosted by:

**Education and Human Rights Education in Diversity
(Edu-HRight) Research Unit
&
Community Based Educational Research
(COMBER) Research Focus Area**

**In the Faculty of Education
North-West University**

CONFERENCE THEME

Transforming education for social justice, human rights, and sustainable development in communities

VENUE

The Royal Marang Hotel, Rustenburg, North-West Province



In the 21st century, change is constant and occurs at a rapid pace. These changes are multifaceted, encompassing social, technological, environmental, economic, and political shifts. As a result, education needs to transform as it plays a central role in facilitating change. Furthermore, education can also act as a catalyst for social justice, human rights, and sustainability.

Social justice emphasises identifying systemic barriers that prevent equal opportunities and highlights the importance of addressing power imbalances affecting marginalised groups, including the poor, disabled, and historically oppressed (Law 2007, Mbembe 2017). An intersectional approach (Crenshaw 1989) is essential to understanding how overlapping identities, such as gender, sexuality, race, socio-economic status, and demographics, impact inequality. Social justice theory also advocates for redistributive justice, aiming to rectify resource imbalances by directing support to marginalised communities (Francis, Mills & Lupton 2017).

Change often has a significant impact on **human rights**, frequently exacerbating the challenges faced by marginalised groups, who are particularly vulnerable to violations. In this context, education must evolve to play a pivotal role in promoting and fulfilling human rights, and contributing to a more just and sustainable world (Hantzopoulos & Bajaj, 2024). Education can play a role in fostering critical awareness and empowering marginalised communities to navigate change and challenge systemic inequalities.

Sustainability is closely linked to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (United Nations, 2015). The agenda is structured around 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) which serve as action plans to promote prosperity, peace and partnerships, with the overarching aim of enhancing the well-being of both people and the planet. As action plans, sustainability has become the neoliberal discourse inhibiting radical change beyond measurable economic growth. For education, sustainability education should rather invoke the “ideas, tools, and skills of all participants” in diverse and collaborative ways, fostering the creation of innovative knowledge that speaks to sustainability as the multiple connections between people and the more-than-human world (Le Grange, 2017:30).

Engaging with **communities** in research is crucial for advancing education that prioritises social justice, human rights, and sustainable development. This approach highlights the importance of collaborating with communities as equal partners in generating knowledge, ensuring that research is conducted with them rather than about them (Wood, 2020). Recognising the lived experiences and expertise of community members fosters equitable research partnerships that drive meaningful educational change. This collaborative approach empowers communities, challenges traditional power dynamics in knowledge creation and ensures research is relevant, contextually grounded and impactful (Zuber-Skerritt, 2013).

We invite papers reflecting on (but not limited) to the following sub-themes:

- Leading and managing for transformation and sustainability
- Bridging law, policy, and practice for educational transformation
- Embracing inclusivity and diversity within communities
- Fostering psychosocial interconnections and holistic wellbeing
- Exploring perspectives on human rights and education
- Integrating indigenous knowledge systems
- Decolonising education
- Nurturing sustainable Early Childhood Education for holistic development
- Harnessing art as a catalyst for transformation and environmental sustainability in education
- Cultivating lifelong learning and professional development for social change
- Exploring innovations in language, literature and literacy in education for social justice, equity and sustainable futures.

Social justice, human rights and sustainability are central to transforming education in ways that invigorate new directions towards imagining a more just, inclusive, and sustainable world. This interdisciplinary conference encourages researchers and practitioners to put forward and engage with creative possibilities for transforming education in ways that are socially relevant, ethically responsive, and morally significant within communities. This conference welcomes diverse research methodologies that contribute to educational transformation. Recognising the importance of lived experiences, contextual expertise, and local agency, we encourage research that meaningfully engages with these sub-themes. Contributions that explore innovative methodologies, partnerships, and interventions that promote inclusive, relevant, and sustainable educational change are particularly encouraged.

References

Crenshaw, K. W. (1989). Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory, and antiracist politics. *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, 1989, 139–167.

Francis, B., Mills, M., & Lupton, R. (2017). Towards social justice in education: Contradictions and dilemmas. *Journal of Education Policy*, 32(4), 414–431. [https://doi.org/\[DOI if available\]](https://doi.org/[DOI if available]).

Hantzopoulos, M., & Bajaj, M. (2024). Mapping our dreams and rooting our futures: Possibility trees as essential pedagogy and praxis in peace, social justice, and human rights education. *International Journal of Human Rights Education*, 8(1). Retrieved from <https://repository.usfca.edu/ijhre/vol8/iss1/2>.

Law, S. (2007). *Philosophy*. Dorling Kindersley Limited.

Le Grange, L. (2016). Sustainability education and (curriculum) improvisation. *Southern African Journal of Environmental Education*, 32, 26–36.

Mbembe, A. (2017). *Critique of Black reason* (L. Dubois, Trans.). Duke University Press.

Pavlish, C., & Pharris, M. (2012). *Community-based collaborative action research*. Jones & Bartlett.

United Nations. (2015). *Transforming our world: The 2030 agenda for sustainable development*. Retrieved from <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/21252030%20Agenda%20for%20Sustainable%20Development%20web.pdf>.

Wood, L. (2020). *Participatory action learning and action research: Theory, practice and process*. Routledge.

Zuber-Skerritt, O. (2013). Transformational community development through emergent learning. *Action Learning Action Research Journal*, 19(2), 5–24.

ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

- A maximum of two (2) abstracts per delegate
- Access conference call here: <https://education.nwu.ac.za/edu-hright/edu-hright-conference-2025>
- Submit an abstract here: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdSDL3wE44NTQ7j_-UeSRgNka2Uc5Q3iWMCWQKAWMh_UOGelQ/viewform

Oral paper presentation	Poster presentation	Panel discussion
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abstracts should be 200 – 250 words (excluding any references) • Font type: Times New Roman size 12; Line spacing: Single • Aim of the paper • Theoretical/conceptual framing • Research processes and results • Contribution of the paper • Four to six keywords • Duration of the presentation is 15 minutes and 10 minutes for interaction and question time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depict work-in-progress using text and graphics • Be concise and thought-provoking • Provide 4-6 keywords • Prepare a one-page handout for the poster session • Be prepared to discuss your poster and answer questions from viewers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abstracts should be 1,000 words (references included) <p>Outline:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abstract of panel topic, panel chairperson, names of panel participants, affiliation and email addresses of participants • Four to six keywords • Duration of the presentation is 90 minutes

DEADLINE FOR REGISTRATION / PAYMENTS 20 October 2025

Delegates must submit proof of payment to Nthabiseng.Mohobe@nwu.ac.za on or before the due date to ensure attendance/presentation at the conference.

CONFERENCE MODE AND VENUE

The conference will be fully face-to-face

The venue is **The Royal Marang Hotel, Rustenburg, North-West Province**

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FEES

Full registration: - R5 500

Two-day registration: - R3 500

Accommodation options:

IMPORTANT: All costs (travel, accommodation or subsistence) related to participation in the conference must be covered by the participant, regardless of the proposal acceptance. Edu-HRight and COMBER are not making any bookings for accommodation, thus are not responsible or liable for any of these arrangements or costs.

See list of possible accommodation:

The Royal Marang Hotel	- 0145374100	- info@royalmarang.com	- https://www.royalmarang.com/
Kings Palace Hotel	- 0101090947	- sales@kingspalacehotel.co.za	- https://kingspalacehotel.co.za/web/
Road Lodge Rustenburg	- 0145373088	- rlrustenburg.gm@citylodgehotels.com	- https://citylodgehotels.com/hotels/368/Road-Lodge-Rustenburg

FOR CONFERENCE RELATED INQUIRIES EMAIL

Nthabiseng.Mohobe@nwu.ac.za