Climate Justice Now: Social Work at the Frontlines of Climate Change, Disasters, & Environmental Justice

11–12 January 2027 - The University of the West Indies, Mona Campus, Jamaica

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CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

The world is in crisis. Sea levels are rising, storms are intensifying, communities are being displaced, and the environmental burdens of industrial progress continue to fall hardest on those who contributed least to causing them. These are not abstract policy problems. They are lived realities felt in the bodies, homes, and futures of people already navigating poverty, racism, displacement, and inequality.

Social work has always stood at this intersection. We work with the people most exposed to harm, most often left out of recovery, and most in need of advocates who understand that environmental justice and social justice are inseparable. This symposium is a space to name that clearly — and to think together about what it demands of our practice, our research, our teaching, and our collective action.

We invite submissions from social work practitioners, researchers, educators, students, community organisers, activists, policymakers, and interdisciplinary colleagues who are grappling with these questions. We are especially interested in work that centres the perspectives and knowledge of those most affected by climate change and environmental injustice, including Caribbean and Global South communities, Indigenous peoples, and marginalised groups whose voices are too often absent from dominant environmental conversations.

Climate Justice and Social Work

Submissions that explore climate change as a social justice issue, the relationship between environmental and human rights, and the particular vulnerabilities of communities facing climate-driven displacement.

- How are social workers responding to the social and human rights dimensions of climate change?
- What does climate-responsive practice look like in Caribbean and Global South contexts?
- How do we support climate migrants and displaced communities?

Disaster Preparedness, Response, and Recovery

Submissions that examine trauma-informed approaches to post-disaster recovery, the psychosocial dimensions of disaster response, and the lessons communities and practitioners are drawing from lived experience with hurricanes, floods, and other climate-related emergencies.

- What roles are social workers playing in disaster readiness and humanitarian response?
- How do we build community resilience before crisis hits?

Environmental Racism, Inequality, and Structural Justice

Submissions that engage with environmental racism and structural inequality, the role of Indigenous and local knowledge systems as alternatives to dominant environmental frameworks, and the intersecting health disparities produced by environmental injustice.

- How are environmental burdens distributed along racial, class, and gender lines?
- What are the health consequences of toxic exposure and environmental neglect in marginalised communities?

Innovations in Practice, Policy, and Education

Submissions that document innovative models, share practice wisdom, and reimagine what social work education and advocacy can contribute to a just and sustainable future.

- What does eco-social work or green social work look like in practice?
- How are educators integrating climate justice into social work curricula?
- How is field education responding to the growing presence of climate-related need in communities?
- What are agencies, supervisors, and students learning from being placed at the frontlines of disaster response, environmental advocacy, and community resilience work?
- What cross-sector collaborations are producing meaningful change at the community level?

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Abstracts should be 250–300 words and include the title of the proposed presentation, the names and institutional affiliations of all contributors, and a clear statement of the key argument, practice example, or research question being addressed. Please also indicate your preferred format and the symposium track most relevant to your submission.

We welcome submissions in the following formats:

- Individual paper presentations
- Panel presentations (three to four presenters)
- Interactive workshops
- Posters

Submissions are welcome from academics, practitioners, students, and community-based contributors. We encourage writing that is accessible across professional boundaries and that speaks honestly about what the work demands of us.

SUBMISSION DETAILS

Abstract Submission Deadline: 31 August 2026

Notification of Acceptance: 1 October 2026

Abstract Length: 250–300 words

Submission Format: Individual paper, panel presentation, poster, or interactive workshop

Submit to: mona-socialworkclimatejusticeconference@uwi.edu

ABOUT THE PARTNERS

The Katherine A. Kendall Institute for International Social Work Education/Council on Social Work Education

The Katherine A. Kendall Institute for International Social Work Education (Kendall Institute) strives to prepare educators, researchers, students, and practitioners for an increasingly global community through its programmes and initiatives. Established through contributions to an endowment in honour of international social work icon Dr. Katherine A. Kendall, the Kendall Institute promotes standards of

excellence for international social work, integrating related concepts into social work curricula, and seeks to enrich perspectives, understanding, collaboration, and networking within the social work community.

The North American and Caribbean Association of Schools of Social Work (NACASSW)

NACASSW is a regional body of the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) that promotes collaboration and the sharing of educational resources among social work schools in Canada, the Caribbean, and the United States. It encourages cross-country collaboration, promotes faculty development, and fosters networking among social work educators in the region.

The Faculty of Social Sciences, The University of the West Indies, Mona Campus, Jamaica

The Faculty of Social Sciences, UWI, is committed to advancing socially responsive teaching, research, and practice across the Caribbean. The UWI nurtures a community of scholars and practitioners dedicated to equity, ethical engagement, and culturally grounded social work education that speaks to the region's histories, challenges, and possibilities.

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), USA

Founded in 1952, the CSWE is the US national association representing social work education in the United States. Its members include more than 900 accredited baccalaureate, master's, and practice doctorate degree social work programs and their affiliated social work educators, students, and staff, as well as practitioners and agencies dedicated to advancing quality social work education. Through its many initiatives, activities, and centers, CSWE supports quality social work education and provides opportunities for leadership and professional development so that social workers are empowered to play a central role in achieving the profession's goals of social and economic justice.

CONFERENCE CHAIRS:

Dr. Sharon E. McKenzie
The University of the West Indies, Mona, Jamaica

Prof. Golam Mathbor
Chair, Kendall Institute / Monmouth University

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Members of the Executive Board of NACASSW

- **Dr Itunu Ilesanmi**: University of Northern Iowa, Vice Chair, Kendall Institute
- **Dr Julie Drolet**: University of Calgary
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- **Dr Debra Joseph**: The University of the West Indies, Cave Hill, Barbados
- **Ms. Shawna-Kae Burns & Ms. Tameka Claudius:** The University of the West Indies, Mona, Jamaica

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For enquiries, please contact: mona-socialworkclimatejusticeconference@uwi.edu

We look forward to welcoming you to Jamaica for this vital conversation.