



EAST AFRICAN REGIONAL SOCIOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY SYMPOSIUM 2026

Organised by the Uganda Sociological and Anthropological Association (USAA) in partnership with the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Makerere University, and supported by the International Sociological Association (ISA)

29–30 September 2026 | Makerere University Main Hall, Kampala, Uganda

Theme: "Strengthening Sociology and Anthropology in Eastern Africa: Building Professional Identity, Networks and Social Relevance"

Are You In?

Are you a first- or second-year student wondering whether sociology or anthropology could be your future? A practising sociologist or anthropologist navigating real field challenges? An employer unsure what a "Sociologist" job title should actually require? A curriculum developer or teacher asking whether training matches the workplace? A scholar wondering whether African sociology is visible on its own terms? A development partner wanting local social-science capacity you can rely on? This symposium is built for you.

About USAA and This Symposium

The Uganda Sociological and Anthropological Association (USAA) is Uganda's professional home for sociologists and anthropologists, founded in 2006 and based in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Makerere University. Together with the Department and with support from the International Sociological Association (ISA), USAA is convening the East African Regional Sociology and Anthropology Symposium on 29–30 September 2026 in Kampala.

The situation

Sociology and anthropology occupy a foundational position in understanding human societies, yet their professional visibility and institutional standing in Eastern Africa remain under-recognised. In Uganda specifically, job adverts for "Sociologist" positions in ministries, infrastructure and extractives projects and NGOs frequently accept and are filled by graduates of social work, human resource management, gender studies, development studies, psychology or community-based rehabilitation. The result is a discipline whose name is everywhere in the labour market but whose professional identity, standards and accreditation are contested. Meanwhile, students are dropped into sociology and anthropology as unfamiliar university course units with almost no prior exposure, since the subjects are largely absent from the secondary curriculum (unlike in the international curriculum education systems).

This symposium convenes Sociologists, Anthropologists and stakeholders from Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, South Sudan, Ethiopia, DRC and Burundi to confront these gaps directly. To define what professional identity should mean, to build networks that make the profession stronger together and to demonstrate the discipline's social relevance.

Who should be in the room and why?

This is not a symposium only for academics. It is built for people who seek to answer the question “What is sociology and anthropology actually for, in Uganda and Eastern Africa region, today?”

You are...	Why this symposium is worth two days of your time
Students (Year 1 exploring the course unit; Year 2 choosing a major)	A real look at where a sociology/anthropology degree can take you, straight from people doing the job before you decide.
Practising sociologists & anthropologists (needs assessments, Social-cultural Impact Assessments (SIAs), gender & social safeguards, qualitative M&E, policy analysis, resettlement planning etc)	Peer exchange on practice standards, plus a direct conversation on what "being professional" should mean and how USAA can back you.
Employers of "sociologists" (Public service , MDAs, infrastructure & extractives projects, NGOs) who hire people from a wide range of social-science backgrounds	A frank conversation on the competencies you actually need, whether you're getting them and how a professional association (USAA) could help you recruit and quality-assure staff.
Curriculum developers & tertiary teachers	Evidence on the fit (or gap) between what is taught and what the labour market and secondary-curriculum pipeline require and a chance to shape a response.
Scholars, researchers & PhD students	A live debate on the visibility of Southern scholarship, Ugandan sociological thought and publication pathways, plus networking toward the special journal issue.
Development partners (e.g. World Bank, UNESCO, Cities Alliance) with social-risk and safeguards frameworks	Direct feedback on how well local social-science capacity is meeting your safeguards and social-assessment requirements and a look at how partnering with USAA advances your own objectives.

Symposium objectives

1. **Clarify Professional Identity:** Define what it means to be a professional sociologist/anthropologist in the Eastern African context and what accreditation or standards should follow, including for people currently doing "sociologist" jobs without sociology training.
2. **Bridge Practice and Employment:** Surface direct evidence from employers and development partners on the competencies they need, whether they are getting them and how a professional association can help.
3. **Strengthen Curriculum and Career Pathways:** Examine whether education, from the near-total absence of the discipline at secondary level to university programme design, prepares graduates for the labour market, using tracer-study evidence where available and give students a genuine career-guidance experience.
4. **Elevate Southern Scholarship:** Debate the visibility of Southern/African sociological scholarship and profile Ugandan and regional scholars, journals and research.
5. **Build Regional Networks:** Provide a high-quality regional platform and consolidate cross-border professional networks among practitioners, researchers, academics and the institutions that employ, teach, fund and regulate them.
6. **Deliver Concrete Outputs** — adopt a set of Symposium Recommendations, lay the foundation for a special journal issue and launch USAA's digital platform as lasting infrastructure for the profession.

Structure of the symposium

Discussions will run across three sub-themes; **Professional Identity, Networks, and Social Relevance**. These will be delivered through formats built for engagement, not just delivery of papers. Alongside invited presentations, five sessions anchor the practical, cross-sector conversation:

See the attached Detailed Symposium Programme for the full schedule, session rationale and discussion questions.

How to participate

- Participation is by invitation, both in-person and virtually, upon registration.
- Ugandan participants pay a registration fee, **which also covers one-time or annual USAA membership subscription.**
- Non-Ugandan participants are exempted from fees but cover their own travel and accommodation.
- Presenters attend free of charge, whether in person or online.

Registration fees

- Professionals: Ugandans in employment (physical attendance): UGX 50,000
- Students: Ugandan undergraduate students (physical attendance): UGX 30,000
- All Ugandans (online participation): UGX 10,000
- Non-Ugandans (physical or online): Free
- Presenters (physical or online): Free

Registering and payments will be done online at www.usaa-ug.org/events.

Call for presenters

Expressions of interest are now invited on a rolling basis. Presenters interested in the proposed topics (see the Detailed Programme) or a closely related angle should send a short outline (max. one page) to info@usaaug.org as soon as possible and no later than **15th September 2026**. Limited modification of proposed topics is permitted upon review by the technical panel.

Language

The symposium will be conducted in English only; no translation services will be provided.

Logistics and support

- Tea breaks, lunch, water and a documents pack are provided to physical participants over both days.
- Participants from outside Uganda fund their own travel, accommodation and dinner; USAA provides administrative and information support on request.

Expected outcomes

Immediate: Adopted Symposium Recommendations; compiled proceedings; a stronger, wider professional network; a visibly launched digital repository with new member registrations; improved institutional visibility for USAA as a bridge between the discipline and its stakeholders.

Medium-term: A special-issue publication in a peer-reviewed journal; a regional action plan with country focal persons; the start of a regional curriculum and accreditation dialogue.

Long-term: A more visible, professionally cohesive sociology and anthropology community in Eastern Africa, with greater uptake of its evidence in policy and development programming and the foundation of a formal Eastern Africa Sociological and Anthropological Network.

Key dates at a glance

Date	Milestone
By 15 th September 2026	Rolling call for presenters (expressions of interest)
By 18 September 2026	Confirmed presentation slides/extended abstracts
By – 20 September 2026	Online registration window
24 September 2026	Registration confirmation and final programme circulated
28 September 2026	Arrival of external presenters; check-in to accommodation
29–30 September 2026	SYMPOSIUM
31 October 2026	Deadline for submission of revised papers for publication consideration

Contacts

Ms. Christine Kulabako, General Secretary, USAA | info@usaaug.org | +256 779 688 004

Mr. Titus James Twesige, President, USAA | president@usaaug.org | +256 772 525 487

USAA | Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda

Website: www.usaaug.org

We look forward to welcoming you. Together, let us build the sociological and anthropological voice that Eastern Africa deserves.