



Call for Papers

For the 2nd Workshop of the EASWR Special Interest Group (SIG)
on 'Solidarities and Social Work`

'Concepts and Practices of Solidarity and Social Work`

at the 15th European Social Work Research Association Conference (ECSWR)
15th of April 2026, Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen, Scotland

In daily life, solidarity is commonly understood as people 'standing for each other`, whether as individuals, social groups, communities, or nations, and even regarding the global dimension. Practices of solidarity are not inherently contingent upon physical proximity. They can occur over considerable distances, often unilaterally, particularly during wars or other crises. However, they can also evolve into reciprocal, mutually focused practices later.

So far, concepts of solidarity have received little attention as a focus of empirical research in the social sciences. Solidarity has often been viewed as a normative and political concept. However, since the turn of the millennium, the importance of solidarity as an analytical tool has grown within social sciences, particularly in domains such as family, work, and civil society, as well as in debates about welfare state developments. Among other things, concepts of solidarity explain the cohesion of increasingly disaggregated social groups and societies and serves as an imagined or actual basis for ongoing and sustained social relations and ties. Examples include collective identities and welfare state structures in modern societies.

Solidarity is conceptualized as a distinct form of moral commitment among individuals. It involves providing direct or indirect support based on a sense of normative obligation and commitment towards political, social, and cultural relations. Solidarity bonds and boundaries emerge at various levels and in different contexts, such as among individuals or social groups, within families, in neighbourhoods, within nations, in national and international social movements, and in global settings.

A notable strand of solidarity studies explores solidarity with nature, which is understood to be shaped by socio-biological and ecological conditions. Discourses and practices of solidarity appear in many forms in contemporary societies, spanning multiple domains including care work, healthcare, social inclusion, and sustainability. These practices may manifest informally within families, social groups, and social movements, but they can also become institutionalized and legally regulated by the state. When informal support is inadequate, specialized professions, such as educators, care workers, and social workers, assume a role in providing services. On the other hand, it has been observed that civil society assumes the

responsibilities of professionals and welfare state institutions during periods of neoliberal policies, crisis, war, or natural disaster when societal demands exceed these institutions' capacity.

During periods of social upheaval when people face new challenges and existing relationships of solidarity weaken or become ineffective, the need for solidarity becomes apparent. Individuals are called upon to provide personalized support and assist community members in a spirit of solidarity. Individuals and social groups increasingly take the initiative to do so. However, when the foundations of solidarity erode at the political or moral level, institutional regulations may become vulnerable, which could compromise their existence and functionality.

In this context, we encourage proposals combining empirical findings and policy implications to enrich the discourse on solidarity within social work. The committee welcomes submissions reflecting interdisciplinary thinking and empirical research in relational solidarity, especially by using research methods with a focus of co-production and co-creation, such as participative action research, community-engaged fieldwork, and applied research projects conducted together with social work practitioners and organizations.

Accordingly, the following subjects should be explored during the SIG-Workshop from international perspectives:

- What processes of emergence and change can be observed in solidarity bonds and boundaries in the face of the current crises around the world?
- What is the significance of these processes for conceptualizations of solidarity in different fields of social work? In what ways do these processes contribute to these conceptualizations?
- What structural and cultural changes are occurring in informal and institutional solidarity? What are the consequences for social work?
- What questions and priorities arise for social work research?
- Which theoretical connections are important for understanding solidarity in social work?
- How can concepts of solidarity be distinguished from other forms of support in the context of social work?
- In what ways can field-based research inform the design of practice models or support systems that reduce inequalities, promote social justice, and strengthen social cohesion?
- In fields adjacent to social work, how is the concept of solidarity interpreted and studied? What interdisciplinary connections support the development of integrated, research-informed responses to contemporary social challenges?
- In what ways can theoretical frameworks and empirical insights on solidarity inform the daily practices of social workers who are dealing with conflict, social disparities, or crises?

The proposal for a presentation should be assigned to one of the following categories:

1. Theories and concepts of solidarity.
2. Empirical solidarity research.
3. Conceptual or theoretical analyses with implications for practice and policy.

Submission and format of the proposal

- Proposals can be submitted via email to thomas.geisen@fhnw.ch or mariabernadetta.jastrzebska@fhnw.ch
- The proposal may not exceed 500 words and must include the title of the presentation, a short biography (full sentences and a link to a personal website, max. 5 lines), and contact details (email, telephone and postal address).
- Respondents are requested to specify which category their contribution belongs to.
- Workshop language is English

Deadlines**Submission of the proposal: December 1, 2025****Feedback will be provided by January 1, 2026.**

General Information: The proposals submitted will be peer-reviewed.

Organizers

SIG convenors: Prof. Thomas Geisen (CH), Pat Cox (UK), Prof. Nuzha Allasad Alhuzail (IL)

Venue

Robert Gordon University (Aberdeen, Scotland)

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Contact and information

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Participation as a speaker at the workshop

There is a fee for speakers participating in the workshop. After receiving positive feedback regarding acceptance of contributions, authors will be asked to register for the conference or workshop at their own expense. Only registered speakers will be included in the program. We are planning to publish an edited book or special issue with the workshop-contributions.

Save the date

2025 Oktober, 24 1st International Solidarity Research Conference (ISRC),
Focus 'Relational Solidarity and Interdisciplinary Perspectives'
<https://solidarity-research.ch/conference/>