



Exploration Week 2026: SUINSO-Working Life

"A Sustainable, Innovative, and Solidaric Working Life!

Interdisciplinary and Global Perspectives on Solidarity and Sustainability"

Overview

How will we work in the future—and how can working life become more sustainable, innovative and solidaric? This FHNW Exploration Week module invites students to explore these questions from interdisciplinary and global perspectives. It focuses on the future of work and examines both the opportunities and the challenges involved in shaping sustainable, innovative and solidarity-based forms of working life.

What participants will do

Students work in international teams on current 'glocal' challenges, identified and specified by companies and organisations in the fields of New Work, Future Health and Zero Emission. The module combines research-based learning with practical collaboration: participants analyse real-world problems, explore them in depth, and develop, test and implement concrete solutions together with practitioners.

Why this module matters

The module looks at working life not only in standard employment settings, but also in many different other contexts shaped by new individual and social challenges related to health and illness, difficult access to the labour market, or the need for further training and qualification due to the transformation of the labour world. Proposed solutions are examined through the connected lenses of sustainability, innovation and solidarity, helping students link these dimensions systematically and apply them to real-world questions. In this way students contribute to real change in companies and organizations with a local and global – glocal – impact!

What students gain

Participants strengthen their intercultural competence, deepen self-reflection in an international context, and contribute to innovative solutions for new challenges related to the transformation of the world of work by developing new professional competences in innovation, sustainability and solidarity.

Context

This module is part of the FHNW School of Social Work, FHNW ChallengeEU initiative, and FHNW Exploration Week 2026, an interdisciplinary week launched for FHNW's 20th anniversary. The first Exploration/Challenge EU Week will take place from 31 August to 4 September 2026.

Read more: <https://www.fhnw.ch/plattformen/explorationweek/a-sustainable-innovative-and-solidaric-working-life/>



Module content

This module addresses and discusses topics related to solidarity in social work from an interdisciplinary perspective. The focus is on work areas and activities, examining their contexts regarding current challenges related to new work, future health, and zero emissions. These topics serve as a foundation for linking theoretical and empirical perspectives on social practices of solidarity within local, regional, national, and global contexts. Solidarity is examined in relation to challenges associated with social modernization, the transformation of the world of work, and the welfare state. The various levels are systematically linked, with a particular emphasis on the global level and its connection to local challenges and approaches to action.

The module will present concrete forms of international cooperation developed and implemented at the HSA FHNW within the framework of sustainable global social work. The module will be conducted in English, and colleagues from international partner universities will be invited to participate. The module will be offered in a blended learning format to enable access for students from partner universities, especially those from the Global South. Additionally, students and practice organizations will be involved in developing a sustainable, innovative, interdisciplinary course.



Didactic concept

During the Exploration Week, we will further develop, and supplement established teaching and learning formats that contribute to the development of professional competence based on the acquisition of specialist knowledge, technical and methodological skills, and social and personal skills. To this end, the module will focus on creating spaces for experimentation, where new approaches to selected future fields can be developed and experienced innovatively. This will be achieved by challenge-based-learning: initiating collaborative group processes in which students work with university partners, practitioners, and international guests on real-world issues. Specific didactic formats, such as dialogue-based settings, and low-threshold creative approaches (e.g., mapping and visual work), will help identify and address intercultural and interdisciplinary "limits to learning" (Mergner) and overcome them to broaden perspectives. To this end participants can learn about and from their different personal, social, and cultural experiences and backgrounds.

Key facts



Initial Competencies: None

Requirements: It is important that you accept the MS-Teams invitation from the module coordinator in good time and regularly check your messages on MS-Teams. All materials and results will also be uploaded here. During the block week, you must have access to a laptop or tablet to be able to work.

Module Language: English

Competence Acquisition:

- **Social competence:** Students develop the ability to act interculturally.
- **Self-competence:** Students strengthen their ability to reflect on themselves and expand their knowledge in an international context in a self-regulated manner.
- **Professional competence:** Students apply their knowledge to innovation, sustainability and solidarity in the working world.

Module Duration:

- **Preparation:** 27 May 2026 and 01. July 2026, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., online (MS-Teams) and on-site in Olten, Switzerland
- **Main course:** 31 August 2026, 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m., 1 to 3 September 2026, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., 4 September 2026, 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 a.m.: on-site across MuttENZ, Olten and Brugg-Windisch, Switzerland and online (MS-Teams)
- **Follow-up:** 21. October 2026, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and 20. November 2026, 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., online (MS-Teams) and on-site in Olten, Switzerland

Module Scope: 3 ECTS

Grading: pass/fail

Transcript of Records: compulsory attendance (online or on-site), preparatory literature, a learning diary and presentations

Module Coordinators: Prof. Dr. Thomas Geisen, Maria Jastrzebska, M.A. Social Work

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Involved Lecturers and Students: Prof. Dr. Thomas Geisen (co-module director, HSA FHNW), Maria B. Jastrzebska (co-module director, HSA FHNW), Dominique Zehntner (MA student and research assistant, HSA FHNW), Verena Ramseier (MA student, HSA FHNW), Kate Schmidt (BA student, HSA FHNW), Richie Pfister (BA student, HSA FHNW), Salome Glaser (BA student, HSA FHNW), Prof. Dr. Guy Ochsenbein (HSW FHNW), Anna Radvila (lecturer, HSW FHNW), Prof. Pieter J. Perrett (HSW FHNW), Dr. Ralf Michel (lecturer, HGK FHNW), Susanne Käser (lecturer, HGK FHNW), Lena Breitenmoser (research assistant, HLS FHNW), André Affendranger (EcoSolidar, Basel), Michèle Fehlmann (Oeko Service GmbH, Zurich), Assoc. Prof. Dr. Neşe Şahin Taşğın (Maltepe University, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Istanbul, Turkey), Ass. Prof. Dr. Öğretim Üyesi Nurdan Bürüngüz (Maltepe University, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Istanbul, Turkey), Prof. Dr. John Selander (Mid Sweden University, Östersund, Sweden – ChallengeEU member), Dr. Poppy Masinga (South African College of Applied Psychology, Johannesburg, South Africa), Muriel Dlamini (South African College of Applied Psychology, Johannesburg, South Africa), Prof. Nuzha Allasad Alhuzail (Negev Sapir Academic College, Hof Ashkelon, Israel), Roshini Pillay (PhD, Lecturer, Department of Social Work, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa), Dr. Daniel M. Muia (Lecturer, Kenyatta University, Nairobi, Kenya), Prof. Dr. Marcin Boryczko (University of Gdańsk, Gdańsk, Poland)