

International Course

Peace, Justice and Democracy: The Transformative Power of Global Social Work

10.-12. September 2026

OST – Eastern Switzerland University of Applied Sciences,
Campus St. Gallen, Switzerland



Zürcher Hochschule
für Angewandte Wissenschaften

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HAUTE ÉCOLE DE TRAVAIL SOCIAL FRIBOURG
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SUPSI

n|w

University of Applied Sciences and Arts Northwestern Switzerland
School of Social Work

INTERNATIONAL COURSE

Peace, Justice and Democracy: The Transformative Power of Global Social Work

ABOUT THIS COURSE

Social workers are confronted with multiple crises, including conflicts, global injustices and threats to democracy and the rule of law. This international course provides a platform for exploring the transformative power of social work in promoting peace, justice, and democratic values.

International keynote speakers will facilitate discussion on topics covered in the course, including global ethical principles, the political dimension of social work and social work's role in times of crisis. Through case studies the course will demonstrate how social work can contribute to conflict resolution and peacebuilding at local and global levels, encouraging the exchange of good practice and innovative approaches.

During interactive workshops, Social Work students from Swiss Universities of Applied Sciences and their international partner universities will share their experiences and collaboratively develop new ideas that position global social work as a catalyst for social change. Social Work students will be invited to reflect on their future professional practice, develop new skills, and take a creative approach to shaping a fairer, more peaceful world. Beyond theory and methodology, the international course addresses the fundamental question: what kind of global future do we want, and how can social work help to realise this vision?

THE TARGET GROUPS ARE

Students enrolled in a Social Work program (Bachelor as well as Master) at one of the Swiss Universities of Applied Sciences and Social Work students at their international partner universities. All lectures and workshops will be held in English (an intermediate level is therefore required).

INFORMATION

COURSE REGISTRATION

Detailed Information on the registration process, program and the online link will be sent to the partner universities and participants prior to the course.

REGISTRATION FEE

The international course is free of charge.

ORGANISATION

The international course is a joint project within the framework of the SASSA réseau Thématique Mobilité of the seven Swiss universities of applied sciences offering programmes in social work

Venue: OST – Campus St.Gallen, Rosenbergstrasse 59, 9001 St.Gallen (next to the main train station St.Gallen)

Directions: St.Gallen Campus | OST

Contacts: If you have any questions, please contact your home university or the inviting university:

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PROGRAM

10 September 2026

18:00 – 20:30

Welcome Event & Aperero

11 September 2026

08.30 – 09.00

Welcome Words & Introduction

Dean of Studies Social Work OST, Stephan Schlenker

SASSA réseau Thématique Mobilité, Marie-Christine Ukelo

M'bolo-Merga

Project Coordinator International Course OST, Nadia Baghdadi

09.00 – 10.00

Panel on Peace, Justice and Democracy: The transformative Power of Global Social Work

Countering Anti-Democratic Politics: Lessons from Turkey:

Katharina Bodirsky, OST St. Gallen, CH

Social Work Practice in Times of Multiple Crises: Evidence form a

Two-Year Study in Tyrol: Moritz Reisberger, MCI Innsbruck, AT

10.00 – 10.20

Break

10.20 – 11.00

Transnational and Interdisciplinary Learning and Global Social Work

Competencies for Urban Justice: Swetha Rao Dhananka, HETS

Fribourg, CH

11.00 – 12.00

Panel Discussion & Debate

12.00 – 1.15

Lunch Break

13.15 – 15.30

Parallel Workshops 1 & 2

15.30 – 16.00

Break

16.00 – 16.40

Poster Session

16.45 – 17.00

Observers Summaries

12 September

09.00 – 10.25

Introduction & World Café

10.25 – 10.45

Break

10.45 – 11.00

Summary World Café - Voices from the Tables

10.45 – 11.45

Transformative Intervention

11.45 – 12.00

Closure

PARALLEL WORKSHOP SESSIONS

1. Critical Thinking in Times of Radicalization: Tools for Social Workers

Nina Weimann-Sandig & Clara Bombach
Dresden & Bern

2. Inequality in Participation. Fostering Understanding and Developing Approaches

Johannes Küng & Agnes Blome
Luzern & Potsdam

3. Participative Decision Making & Restorative Justice Approaches

Doris Böhler & Dleštíková Tereza,
Kowolová Iveta
St. Gallen & Ostrava

4. Transformative Social Work and the Systematic Paradigm Approach: Theoretical Pillars & Hands-On-Activity

Michele Wang-Pizzera & Moritz Reisberger
Zürich & Innsbruck

5. Educational Design and Social Justice: The Margins as a Site of Critique and Transformation

Simone Romeo & Lisa Brambilla
Manno & Milano

6. Navigating Political Crisis: Social Work with Migrants and Marginalized Communities and the Struggle for Participation

Melinda Dinca & Nina Jany
Roumania & Fribourg