



University of the Arctic:

Thematic Network on Social Work

Newsletter

No.1/2026

We are celebrating 20 Years of Thematic network on social work!



From right: *Debbie Gonzalez (Humboldt University), Mary Dallas Allen (University of Anchorage), Sandra Jervås (Nord University), Nicole Ives and Wanda Gabriel (McGill University), Lars Uggerøy (Aalborg University), and Bonnie Jensen (University of Greenland).*

We are proud to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Thematic Network on Social Work this year. This milestone marks a long-standing commitment to advancing shared values, strengthening common interests in social work, and improving both education and practice across the Arctic.

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We are also pleased to announce continued project funding from UiT for an additional two years, enabling us to further develop our work and collaborations.

Looking ahead:

- 2026- 2027: Thematic Network on social work presents: A new Anthology: *Social Work*
- Autumn 2026- Open webinars on Social Work in the Arctic for students and trained social workers
- Two upcoming research papers on decolonizing Academia
- Conference presentations and international collaboration



UArctic Congress Ocean Connectivity Conference at the Faroe Islands, May 26–29, 2026

The Network participated in the UArctic Ocean Connectivity Conference in the Faroe Islands, the largest conference ever held there, with approximately 1400 participants and 90 presenters. The Congress demonstrated our active

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role in internationally engaged Arctic research, bridging science and policy while creating new networking opportunities for local and global researchers all over the world.

Key messages from the conference emphasized the importance of strengthening collaboration to address Arctic climate challenges, while highlighting that Indigenous knowledge is essential for responding to global crises. The role of Inuit participation in both political processes and research was underlined as crucial for meaningful knowledge production, alongside a growing recognition of the need to protect communities and living resources under increasing pressure. As Mayor of Tórshavn, Elsa Berg, stated, “Never underestimate the resilience of small societies.” Equally important were the moments between sessions, which created opportunities to build new connections, engage in strategic networking, and strengthen both new and long-standing collaborations.

The network facilitated a workshop on “*Decolonizing Academia through Social Work*” on May 27.2026

Thanks to highly engaged participants, the session generated meaningful and insightful discussions that will inform our future work in this field. The workshop resulted in strong engagement and dialogue, the development of new perspectives for future research, and strengthened collaboration across our institutions.



Different perspectives on decolonizing academia were shared during the network’s workshop on 27 May 2005. Here is a photo of the participants and the network members who led the discussions.

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