

Group membership appears central to human experience and the promotion of social justice. However social work educators, practitioners, researchers, and partners rarely have opportunities to talk together about impacts, joys and demands of groupwork. This proposed session will engage participants with unifying interests in groupwork to enhance and mobilize their future work, individually and in connection. We propose this Workshop for attendees to discuss their group and team related experiences, innovative strategies and research interests. This session is unusual in drawing participants across geographic boundaries, fields of practice, and intervention approaches.

This session will be convened by an international panel of social work leaders participating in the Global Group Work Network, previously funded by the International Association of Schools of Social Work and supported by the International Association for Social Work with Groups. Based on experiences with past workshops and special interest groups, including those in Adelaide, Stockholm, Melbourne and Seoul (2004, 2012, 2014 & 2016 World Social Work and Social Development Conferences), Munich (2006 World IFSW Conference), Parma (2007 European Social Work Conference), and Bonn (2011 United Nations DPI/NGO Conference), such sessions provide less formal venues for participants to focus on their work with groups, and support each other as they share struggles and accomplishments.

Bringing together EASSW-UNAFORIS 2017 Conference attendees with expertise and interests in groupwork can potentially lead to collaborations around groupwork education, practice and research for enhancing social wellbeing, change and justice. The proposed session will include brief presentations and discussion of strategies for enhancing organizational and educational support, cross-national and cross-cultural similarities and differences, and opportunities for professional development and networking. The conveners will follow up with a list of all attendees wishing to participate in further communication, along with a summary of the session's discussion points. Past sessions have been incubators of important international research, practice and education collaborations, including projects published, widely disseminated, internationally adapted, and presented at past international Social Work and Social Development conferences.