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**SOCIAL WORK INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE (SWIC) 2025
“SOCIAL WORK IN A SHIFTING WORLD: RESPONDING TO
TRANSFORMING REALITIES AND THEIR RIPPLE EFFECTS”,
THE 9TH EDITION, BUCHAREST, OCTOBER 29TH-31ST, 2025**

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Bianca-Daniela PAREPEANU¹, Daniel-Mihăiță IVAȘCU²

Abstract

The 9th edition of the Social Work International Conference (SWIC) took place in Bucharest between the 29th and 31st of October 2025. Organized by the Department of Social Work, Faculty of Sociology and Social Work, University of Bucharest, in partnership with the Association of Schools of Social Work in Romania (ASSWR), the conference addressed the theme “*Social work in a shifting world: responding to transforming realities and their ripple effects*”. The event brought together academics, practitioners, and students from Romania and abroad to discuss social work responses to contemporary global and local challenges, such as digitalization, inequalities, professional resilience and social transformations.

Keywords: Social Work International Conference, global social challenges, social work education, social work practice.

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Between the 29th-31st of October 2025 the Department of Social Work, Faculty of Sociology and Social Work, University of Bucharest, in collaboration with the Association of Schools of Social Work in Romania (ASSWR) organized the ninth edition of the Social Work International Conference (SWIC). Researchers, educators and practitioners in the field of social work and other connected fields were invited to contribute to this year's theme "*Social work in a shifting world: responding to transforming realities and their ripple effects*".

The 2025 edition of the Social Work International Conference continued the tradition of creating a dynamic platform for the exchange of knowledge and professional experience. Hosted at the Faculty of Sociology and Social Work, University of Bucharest, the conference gathered participants from 27 countries, including Spain, Israel, the United Kingdom, Italy, Canada, Thailand, and Romania.

The official opening ceremony was chaired by Daniela Niță (Lecturer, University of Bucharest) and included addresses from Marian Preda (Rector, University of Bucharest), Liviu Chelcea (Dean, Faculty of Sociology and Social Work), Florin Lazăr (Vice-President, National College of Social Workers in Romania), Doru Buzducea (President, ASSWR), and Adrian-Nicolae Dan (Head of the Social Work Department, Faculty of Sociology and Social Work and of the organizing committee).

On the first day, a rich series of PhD sessions reflected the diversity of research interests within the field of social work. Under the coordination of professors Doru Buzducea, Florin Lazăr, Mihai-Bogdan Iovu, Corina Cace, and Adrian-Nicolae Dan, doctoral students presented topics ranging from child protection and disability studies to digitalization and intergenerational solidarity. Among the contributions were Adriana Căruntu's exploration of palliative care for social workers, Elena-Mihaela Bujor's study on adolescent motherhood, and Nicoleta Filip's model of integrated community-centered networks. Other papers examined assistive technologies for adults with hearing loss (Monica Florina Zdrite) and perceptions of elderly abuse in care services (Nicoleta Mereș).

International perspectives added depth to these sessions, with research on caregivers' wellbeing in India (*Twinkal Sandhu*), child welfare in Serbia (*Saša Stefanović and Teodora Hrnjaković Stefanović*), and radicalisation management in Romania (*Anastasia Neagu*). The format encouraged critical debate, constructive feedback, and the formation of research networks among early-career scholars. The first day of the conference ended with two workshops. One of them was held by Candice Dumas (Masterson Institute, South Africa) and Sorina Dumitrache (University of Bucharest) in a session on trauma-informed practice and disorders of the self. Also, in a mentoring workshop on academic writing and publishing for PhD students, Richard Ingram (University of Dundee, UK and co-editor of *Social Work Education* – the international journal, edited by Taylor & Francis) held a valuable meeting for both the doctoral students and the other conference participants.

On the second day, SWIC 2025 maintained its interactive dimension through workshops and roundtable discussions. The workshops were presented by Philipp Pilcher and Daniel Roos (Hochschule Koblenz, Germany), Denise MacDermott and Caoimhe Harkin-MacDermott (Ulster University, Northern Ireland), and Alina Lazăr and Bianca Mătășariu (CONCORDIA Academia, Romania), focused on practical approaches in social work, including using virtual reality to explore client perspectives across the lifespan, collaborative peer-led learning methods in community social work practice, and strategies to prevent burnout, regulate emotions, and cultivate professional compassion among social workers. Romanian researchers Ana-Maria Preoteasa and Oana Călugaru presented emotion-focused skills training for parents, while Alexandra Dimofte and Lavinia Bulumac addressed attachment styles and genograms in social work intervention.

Two major keynote lectures framed the conference's intellectual core.

Siobhan Maclean, well-known social work trainer and former Secretary of the International Federation of Social Workers, delivered the first keynote speech. Her presentation, "*Social work and the shifting world: Big trees from little acorns grow*" highlighted how meaningful change in social work often begins with small, consistent actions. In a rapidly transforming world, every initiative rooted in empathy, reflection, and social justice can grow into a lasting systemic impact.

Antonio López Peláez (Spain), Professor at UNED and Executive Director of the International Council on Social Welfare, presented "*Digital social work, AI and social exclusion: strategies to address digital vulnerability in a shifting world*" exploring the ethical and educational implications of technological innovation in practice.

The thematic sessions covered a wide array of subjects: social work responses to inequalities, poverty, and systemic marginalization in times of change, child welfare, aging populations, and intergenerational support systems, social work responses to climate justice, social work responses to digital and AI advancement, social work ethics and professional resilience, social work responses and solutions to current socio-economic changes.

Also, Richard Ingram (UK), Professor at the University of Dundee, engaged participants in "*Artificial Intelligence in social work practice and education: taking stock, keeping up and becoming partners*" emphasizing emotional intelligence and human-centered approaches in the digital era.

Throughout the three days, the conference successfully integrated research, practice, and education, fostering a reflective space for innovation in social work. The organizing committee expressed its gratitude to all participants for reaffirming SWIC's role as an international platform for academic exchange and professional development.

Beyond the academic content, this year's edition of SWIC highlighted the importance of networking and professional exchange among participants. The conference was appreciated for its balanced mix of researchers and practitioners,

which encouraged dialogue between theory and applied social work. The newly introduced PhD Day marked a significant step in the development of doctoral education in social work in Romania, reflecting both the growing maturity of the field and the commitment to nurturing the next generation of researchers. Participants noted that this initiative fostered mentorship, collaboration, and a sense of belonging within the academic community of social work. For more details, see the Conference website: www.swicub.com.

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