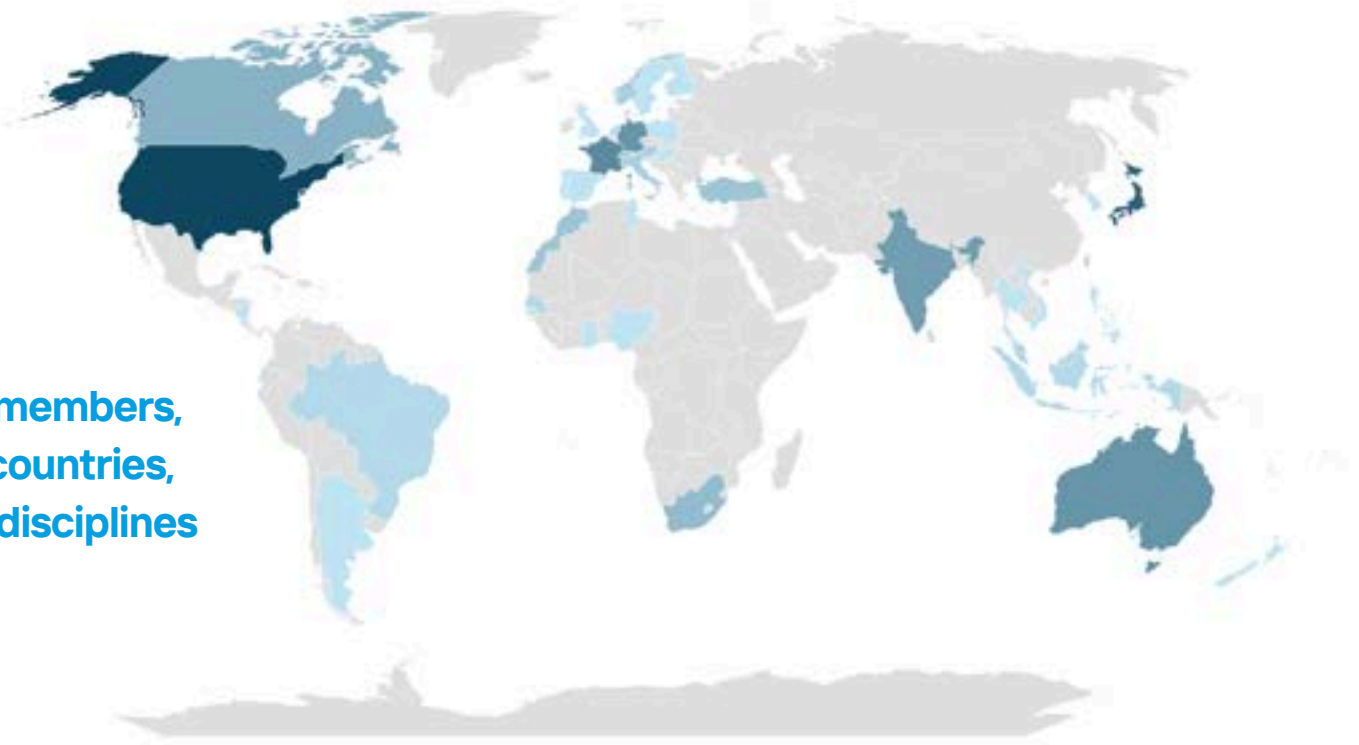


**131 members,  
41 countries,  
20+ disciplines**



RC40 is a Research Committee within the International Sociological Association (ISA) dedicated to the sociology of agriculture and food.

RC40 members have been some of the pioneers in the scholarly advances in agrarian political economy, food regime theory, agri-food standards, financialization of agri-food systems, food democracy, civic food regimes, sociological readings of food security and food sovereignty, rural dynamics and farm labour in global agri-food systems – just to name a few of the contributions from the group.

## Contents

President’s welcome.....	2
Meet the RC40 Exec team.....	4
Secretary/Treasurer’s report.....	5
Financials.....	6
Governance update.....	7
Mentoring.....	8
Meeting details.....	9
ISA XXI World Congress.....	10
RC40 Book Club.....	12
Communications update.....	13
Contribute.....	14

# President's Welcome

Happy spring to those experiencing spring, happy fall to those entering a more wintry season, and to those closer to the equator, happy dry season. Here in the Netherlands we shifted rapidly from some cold and rainy days, and now are in the middle of a record-breaking heat wave. This time of the year, I am always thinking about change and capacities for change.

Here at the RC40, we have also been thinking about capacities—how we support capacities within the committee, and what our role is in supporting capacities of our membership. Mentoring is a way to support people within our community, and it's a cornerstone of the RC40. In the past few years some of our mentoring activities have included writing workshops, PhD workshops, and activities during conferences. These activities provide advice and feedback to those earlier in their careers, but they also create spaces for knowledge exchange, professional insights, and reflection for those later in their careers. Our recently launched membership survey (closes **30 June**), led by our sub-committee with Madeleine Fairbairn, Atakan BÜke, and Cynthia Gharios, is looking to generate insights on mentorship needs and interests in the RC40.

For me personally, this season has also ushered in some changes. I'll be taking a new job that will move me to Western Sydney University in September, and I look forward to continuing work with RC40 from Australia.





We're also considering some changes in the ways we organize, switching from regional clusters of activities for theme-based clusters. Fridah Mubichi-Kut and myself will host an online meeting on **14 July** to get feedback on the appeal of these changes and what themes we might like to pursue. Do we want to have rotating themes? Or calibrate the themes are their timing to the interests of the membership and their availability and interest in involvement? We've been noticing, and appreciate, themes that have been emerging at our conferences including decolonization, technologies, and new methods, and are curious whether the membership also sees there being an opportunity to focus and advance focused discussions within the sociology of agriculture and food. It will also be used as a moment to carry on some reflections on the conditions of our work, how those conditions are changing, and how the RC40 can continue to support and amplifying our work. Please look out for the invitation and calendar invite, and join us in this discussion.

In a pattern all too familiar, we also had some shifting capacities within the committee over the winter. Many on the executive were experiencing high workloads, and experiences of burnout are high. Other capacity shifts are exciting and positive. Cynthia Gharios, executive committee member, was completing her PhD (congratulations Cynthia!), and had limited capacity to produce the digest. As you have probably noticed, we have picked this up again. We hope to see you all at IRSA in Porto Alegre, and hope to see your session submissions for the ISA Congress in Gwangju, South Korea (deadline **25 June**).

We look forward to seeing you all soon!

Katharine



# Meet the Exec

People behind the RC40 Committee

Katharine Legun (President)	Knowledge, Technology and Innovation Group, Wageningen U, Netherlands	Katharine.legun@wur.nl
Kiah Smith (Secretary/Treasurer)	Centre for Policy Futures, The University of Queensland, Australia	k.smith2@uq.edu.au
Cynthia Gharios (EMCR representative)	University of Munster, Germany	cynthiagharios@gmail.com
Angga Dwiartama (Webmaster)	Institut Teknologi, Bandung, Indonesia	dwiartama@itb.ac.id
Madeleine Fairbairn	Environmental studies department, U. California Santa Cruz, USA	mfairbai@ucsc.edu
Atakan Buke	Centre for Studies in Food Security Toronto Metropolitan University	atakanbuke@yerkure.org
Hilde Bjorkhaug	Department of Sociology and Political Science, NTNU, Norway	Hilde.bjorkhaug@ntnu.no
Steven Wolf	Cornell University Ithaca, USA	saw44@cornell.edu
Fridah Mubichi-Kut	School of Applied Economics and Management Cornell University, USA	mfm96@cornell.edu

# Secretary and Treasurer's report



The beginning of 2026 has seen our Executive Committee engaging in a lot of behind-the-scenes activities focused on progressing actions raised by members since we last met at the ISA Forum in Morocco. We have created internal working groups dedicated to:

## **Planning for ISA World Congress 2027 has begun.**

The call for session proposals was sent to members in May. We are also starting discussions regarding potential social events, as well as key process decisions regarding the EC membership elections which will be held during the Congress next year. If you have any ideas for social events or field trips in Gwangju, please reach out to Kiah.

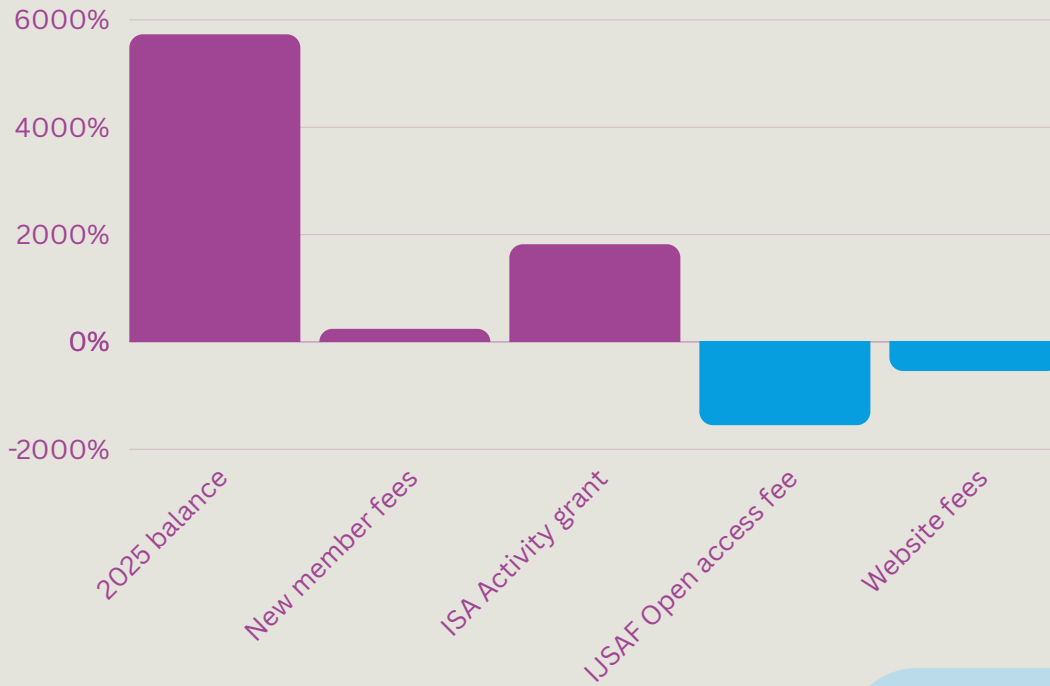
**Development of thematic groups (internal):** In the past, RC40 has established 'regional groups' as a way to encourage stronger inclusion and support for RC40 members from Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East. We are exploring the suggestion that a shift to 'thematic groups' might be more useful way to engage the needs of our diverse membership. This is a question within the member survey, and will be the subject of an online members meeting on **July 14<sup>th</sup>** (09:00 EDT/13:00 UTC). Details on page 9.

**ISA Webinars:** The ReCo Webinar Series enjoyed a successful first year, with strong participation and online visibility. They will continue in 2026.

# Current Financial Position



December 2025 - May 2026



2026 income includes balance transferred from previous year, new ISA memberships, and the ISA Activity Grant (pink). Expenditure includes RC40 website fees and IJSAF costs (blue). All figures in AUD.

Balance \$3766

## Sources

**ISA memberships:** Financial contributions from the ISA are based on member numbers, and are paid every two years. Last year we grew above 100 members, moving RC40 into a higher tier for ISA payments. We have had a 6% reduction in new members, taking us to a new total of 131 members.

**ISA activity grants:** These grants are allocated to the Research Committees to support activities such as conferences, workshops, and/or the production and distribution of the newsletter. We will receive 1120 Euros this year (for 2025 activities).

**ISA registration grants:** The ISA provides RCs with an allocated number of registration grants for members to attend ISA conferences. The next funding round will be for the 2027 ISA World Congress in South Korea.



Registrations reduced by 6% in the first half of 2026



# ‘Good Governance’ update

Last year we held a webinar to discuss our proposed flowchart to formalise the EC’s internal decision-making processes (see RC40 newsletter from December 2025) for when issues arise that involve the reputation and values of RC40 and its members. We appreciate the active involvement of members, and we always seek to build a convivial and constructive dialogue within RC40. For some, however, the communication processes can be overwhelming, and so the EC takes the responsibility to make technical and managerial decisions on behalf of RC40 members. Still, there has never been any written procedure on how these processes are, and should be, conducted to bring balance between transparency and efficiency of decision-making. In sum, if an issue is considered non-strategic, which means that it only needs a technical/managerial response, EC can discuss the issue internally and make a decision accordingly. The decision to consider an issue non-strategic requires a consensus from all EC members. If an issue is considered strategic, EC is obliged to raise this issue to the RC40 members. EC will ask inputs from members through the most effective and preferable formats (e.g., online/offline meetings, surveys, email correspondences, etc.). Our proposal was well received by the members who attended the online meeting, and the EC has not received any adverse indications from the membership (by email, or any other correspondence). We see this process as an important step towards ensuring that the RC30 Executive Committee can be more transparent, accommodative, and democratic in every aspect of our decision-making processes. This is based on the understanding that RC40 members have the rights and responsibilities to contribute their thoughts and ideas in the organization’s strategic decisions and statements, be they political or not.

The below update from the **ISA Research Council** is also relevant to RC40 and our journal, IJSAF. The **ISA RC journals Taskforce** aimed to develop an overview of existing RC-related, journals, including their publishing models, levels of sustainability, and approaches to open access, in order to identify structural challenges and possible forms of institutional support. Based on this work, the Task Force developed three proposals aimed at supporting existing journals. These are intended to strengthen and consolidate existing publication initiatives within the ISA, and will be submitted for further consideration to the ISA Executive Committee in due course. The taskforce suggests:

- Collective bargaining to reduce costs for journal hosting platforms (such as OJS)
- Targeted support for publication activities, through activity grants or dedicated supplements additional to the RC activity grants
- The creation of rotating special sections in ISA journals (e.g. International Sociology or Current Sociology), guest-edited by RCs, WGs, or TGs

# Mentoring Working Group + Survey



RC40 has long served as more than just a professional network; it is a community anchored in solidarity, collective learning, and a shared commitment to critical agrifood scholarship. In an academic landscape marked by global socio-ecological crises, nurturing and strengthening this critical edge is a collective craft. Mentoring is vital to keeping that tradition alive, vibrant, and influential.

Following the discussions at the ISA Forum in Rabat, we have established an informal **Mentoring Working Group** to design a more systematic approach to how we support one another.

Crucially, we do not view mentoring as a top-down, one-way street or a rigid binary between "senior expert" and "early-career novice." Instead, we value the principle of reciprocity: every member of RC40 has unique expertise to share, and everyone has areas where they want to grow. Whether you are a graduate student bringing fresh methodological insights or a seasoned scholar looking for new collaborative perspectives, we all have something to offer and something to learn.

To design a flexible system that maps both our community's needs and our collective, multi-directional strengths, we need to hear from you.

Please take five minutes to fill out our **short survey [HERE](#)** and help shape a horizontal, supportive mentoring culture. Please submit your responses by **30 June**.

If you have any questions, want to share additional ideas, or would like to join the working group, please reach out to Atakan, Madeleine or Cynthia.



# RC40 online Members meeting: 14<sup>th</sup> July 09:00 EDT/13:00 UTC

Research Committees are a core organisational unit within the ISA which function as disciplinary sub-communities within global sociology. RC40 serves as the primary network that supports research, dissemination and professional development in the field of Sociology of Food and Agriculture.

The Executive Board invites all RC40 members to a strategic planning meeting to help identify priority areas that will strengthen the community's ongoing activities.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://cornell.zoom.us/j/98980954071?pwd=Wn6FHdXMMQCIXCAfTZeROocqPxAWZ8.1&from=addon>

Meeting ID: 989 8095 4071

Passcode: 167407

Join by SIP

[98980954071@zoomcrc.com](mailto:98980954071@zoomcrc.com)

Passcode: 167407

## **Meeting times at a glance**

Ø Netherlands – 14:00 CEST → 12:00 UTC

Ø New York – 09:00 EDT → 13:00 UTC

Ø California – 06:00 PDT → 13:00 UTC

Ø Jakarta – 20:00 WIB → 13:00 UTC

Ø Brisbane – 23:00 AEST → 13:00 UTC

# XXI ISA World Congress

## Global Sociology in Turbulent Times

The XXI ISA World Congress of Sociology will take place in **Gwangju, South Korea** from **4 to 10 July 2027**, as a fully in-person event. The World Congress will bring together a global community of researchers driven by the shared conviction that sociology has a crucial role to play in making sense of these turbulent times.

### Call for Sessions - DUE 25 June



#### **Please submit your session proposals to the RC40!**

Sending in a session proposal is a great opportunity to help shape the program and foster international collaboration and discussion. You are welcome to propose a traditional paper session or a non-traditional format as an invited session. This could be an 'author meets critic' session, or a panel discussion session, or an open discussion session with a keynote—the possibilities are open. Please contact the Program Coordinator, Katharine ([Katharine.legun@wur.nl](mailto:Katharine.legun@wur.nl)) if you would like to propose an alternative session format that will not be open to abstract submission.

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### Key dates



3 August - 14 October 2026: Call for Abstracts

4 December 2026: Selection notification

27 January 2027: Deadline for applying for a registration grant

23 March 2027: Registration deadline

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### Find the Call for Sessions [HERE](#)



When you submit sessions for the RC40 program, you shape the kinds of conversations we have at the conference, and the style in which we have them. We appreciate your contributions and your work. So please do send in your session ideas, feel free to ask questions, and we look forward to seeing you in Gwangju!

# XXI ISA

# World Congress of Sociology

## 2027 ISA 세계사회학대회

Global Sociology  
in Turbulent Times

격동하는 시대의 글로벌 사회학

In a world shaped by persistent turbulence and rapid transformations, in a public space dominated by disinformation and polarisation, how can sociology produce knowledge that goes beyond immediate reactions and contributes to a deeper understanding of ongoing changes?

Sociology plays a crucial role in making sense of these turbulent times, by uncovering the social roots of crises and transformations, analysing how inequalities are produced and contested, examining how institutions, democracy and society are reshaped, and understanding how actors, from grassroots movements to global elites, navigate and transform our world.

Global sociology is both an analytical perspective and a project. It invites us to forge a more inclusive discipline by building bridges – between North and South, East and West, academia and society, theory and practice. In the face of climate change, war, rising inequalities, and resurgent nationalism, sociology has become an indispensable tool for living together on a finite planet.

# RC40 BOOK CLUB

Sign up [HERE](#)



Madeleine Fairbairn

## What is the RC40 book club?

The RC40 book club meets twice a year to discuss recent texts with relevance to the sociology of agriculture and food. Our last two sessions were co-organized by Executive Committee members Katharine Legun and Madeleine Fairbairn. The book club has an open format and welcomes participants from all over the world and every career stage. After each meeting we write a book review that summarizes our discussion and is structured around quotes from the meeting discussion. We publish these reviews in the International Journal of the Sociology of Agriculture and Food (IJSAF) with all participants listed as co-authors.

## Why should I attend the book club?

This is an awesome way to stay abreast of recent literature and to meet colleagues from all over the world! It is also a way to gain a new publication. Our recent review of *Real Food, Real Facts: Processed Food and the Politics of Knowledge* by Charlotte Biltekoff has recently been accepted to IJSAF, and we are currently working on writing up a review based on our discussion of *Plantation Worlds* by Maan Barua. Read our review [HERE](#).

## What are we reading next?

We have paused the reading group for now, but will reconvene later in 2026. Add your name to the sign up form to stay informed about our next meeting.

## Are you interested in hosting a meeting?

Have you read a book related to the sociology of agriculture and food that prompted thoughts and questions that you would like to talk about? Do you have a book at the top of your reading list that you won't get to without an incentive? Do you have a colleague in another time zone that you would like to connect with through a small and fun project? You too can host an RC40 book club meeting! We are happy to support anyone who would like to host a meeting as part of the book club series. Please get in touch with Katharine or Madeleine if you would like to host a discussion.

# Communications update

RC40, and ISA more generally, has instituted a number of changes to how we communicate with members. In addition to our twice-yearly newsletters, you can keep up to date with RC40 news and events online:



## Email us

[isa-rc40@isa-sociology.org](mailto:isa-rc40@isa-sociology.org)



## RC40 Digest

Please send items to  
[isa-rc40@isa-sociology.org](mailto:isa-rc40@isa-sociology.org)



## Website

<https://www.isa-agrifood.com/>



## Bluesky

<https://bsky.app/profile/isa-rc40.bsky.social>

# Contribute



Aside from the RC40 Forum where members can submit news directly (although through a moderated process), we are inviting all members to contribute short stories or information about events/conferences via our **Community Blog**. Please send your ideas to Angga.

We are still compiling a list of **books** recently published by our members. If you've had a book come out in the last year (2025/6), please email the title and a cover image to Madeleine,

**Are you sure that you are a full member of RC40?** Some of our friends have active memberships in ISA but have forgotten to renew their membership in RC40. Some of our friends have active memberships in RC40 but have not updated their membership in ISA. Please circulate this invitation to join the RC40 to your networks!

Please check your membership status at <https://members.isa-sociology.org>