

The President's Medal for 2022

Background

In line with other associations (such as CIPR, RIBA, RAEng, etc.) it was decided in 2012 that MRS would introduce a President's Medal to be awarded each year at the MRS Awards Dinner.

This paper details the criteria and the candidates for consideration for 2022.

Criteria

The President's Medal is awarded, annually to an organisation or individual that has made an extraordinary contribution to research. This is a broad criterion and this is purposeful to allow for the widest range of individuals and organisations to be considered. It is particularly designed for those who do not have the institutional framework to be recognised in normal recognition models. The key factor is that they must have done some 'extraordinary' –achieving something beyond the ordinary. The shortlist of candidates is selected by the President's Medal Panel which consists of the CEO, Chair and President of MRS. The Award is decided by the President.

This year's shortlist

1. Professor David Gadd for research that shaped domestic abuse policy and practice

Professor David Gadd has spent more than two decades conducting and analysing in-depth qualitative interviews with offenders and has written extensively about domestic abuse, masculinities and crime, racial harassment, offender motivation and desistance from crime.

Currently he is working on three funded research projects: the ESRC-funded Perpetrators of Modern Slavery Offences project; the NIHR-funded ADVANCE (Advancing theory and treatment approaches for males in substance misuse treatment who perpetrate intimate partner violence) Programme; and a VAHMN-funded feasibility study looking at how best to measure the long-term support needs of sexual assault survivors. David has previously led a number of major projects, including the ESRC-funded From Boys to Men Project, which looked at what can be done to stop young men becoming perpetrators of domestic violence in later life.

His research has had a significant impact on UK and international responses to domestic abuse, in three key areas:

1. Improving practice through the development of school-based preventative strategies for domestic abuse in the UK and three other European countries.
2. Developing interventions for men who use violence against partners

3. Influencing domestic abuse policy at national and local level, accreditation standards in the UK and the UK government's This is Abuse social marketing campaign.

Source 1: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UbuKkAGz6IO>

Source 2: <http://www.boystomenproject.com/>

Source 3: <https://www.stylist.co.uk/health/women/how-to-talk-to-men-about-violence-against-women/615443>

2. GAMAAN for their innovative commitment to discovering what Iranians really think - WINNER

Between 2019 and 2022, GAMAAN (Group for Analysing and Measuring Attitudes in Iran) conducted a number of online surveys that ensured anonymity to potentially fearful participants. They describe the process as a 'cat-and-mouse game,' in which a major survey application was blocked and at least one of their surveys was targeted with bots, not to mention the challenge of gathering data from participants who support the current Iranian regime.

In particular, following the death in custody of Mahsa Amini in September – who suffered fatal injuries resulting from an arrest and beating by the country's hijab police – GAMAAN used its data to demonstrate that there was wider support for the protests about Mahsa's treatment than the regime wanted the world to believe. Protesters caught the world's attention by chanting the revolutionary slogans: "zan, zendegi, azadi" (woman, life, freedom) and: "An Islamic Republic, we don't want, we don't want."

GAMAAN's 2022 survey on political systems indicated that about 67% of the target population of literate adults are against a political system governed by religious law. Women, younger people and university-educated people living in cities are the groups most opposed to the idea of an Islamic regime.

Source 1: <https://gamaan.org/about-us/>

Source 2: <https://theconversation.com/iran-protests-majority-of-people-reject-compulsory-hijab-and-an-islamic-regime-surveys-find-191448>

Source 3: <https://www.thebubble.org.uk/current-affairs/world-affairs/mahsa-amini-a-catalyst-for-change-or-a-sign-of-worse-to-come/>

3. The Refugee Studies Centre for their project 'Refugee-Led Social Protection During COVID-19'

The Refugee Studies Centre has drawn international attention to the key role played by refugee-led organisations (RLOs) during the COVID-19 pandemic, prompting a rapid change in global policy, new funding of over USD 50 million, and the provision of vital assistance to more than 100,000 of the most vulnerable refugees.

Prior to COVID-19, the Refugee Studies Centre's project, which was ESRC-funded through the Global Challenges Research Fund programme, had already identified RLOs

as effective, efficient, and legitimate providers of aid. When the pandemic worsened and international aid workers were forced to withdraw from refugee camps, RLOs stepped in to fill the gaps by distributing supplies, disseminating public information and serving as community health workers.

By offering evidence-based, policy-relevant insights into how to recognise, finance and increase the capacity of effective RLOs to the UN, governments and funding organisations, the research team attracted innovative forms of finance from philanthropic foundations, new government funding and support for RLOs' life-saving work.

Source 1: <https://www.socsci.ox.ac.uk/refugee-led-social-protection-during-covid-19>

Source 2: <https://www.fmreview.org/sites/fmr/files/FMRdownloads/en/issue64/betts-eastoncalabria-pincock.pdf>

Source 3: <https://theconversation.com/why-refugees-are-an-asset-in-the-fight-against-coronavirus-136099>

Recommendation

To be decided by President, the Chair and CEO of MRS.