



Sefydliad Ymchwil Cymdeithasol  
ac Economaidd a Data Cymru

Wales Institute of Social and  
Economic Research and Data

# INSIGHT

2022 ANNUAL REPORT





WISERD hosts the UK-wide WISERD Civil Society Research Centre, a major investment by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)

The Wales Institute of Social and Economic Research and Data (WISERD) is a national, interdisciplinary, social science research institute.

We have been designated by the Welsh Government as a national research centre. Using innovative approaches, our research spans the fields of economics, sociology, geography and political science.

We are a collaborative venture between the universities of Aberystwyth, Bangor, Cardiff, South Wales and Swansea – working together to improve the quality and quantity of social science research in Wales and beyond.

Our research effects change by influencing the development of policy and practice across a range of sectors.

At Aberystwyth University, WISERD includes the Centre for Welsh Politics and Society.

WISERD also hosts ADR Wales (Administrative Data Research Wales) – a collaboration between Welsh Government, Swansea University Medical School and WISERD at Cardiff University. ADR Wales is part of the ESRC funded ADR UK (Administrative Data Research UK).

WISERD publications data on page 10 provided by Elsevier: [www.elsevier.com](http://www.elsevier.com).



## Director's report

I am delighted to report that 2021 has been a really productive year for WISERD. While recognising the challenges faced by everyone in recent months, we have continued to focus on addressing the complex societal problems associated with responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. Through maintaining our strong partnerships in the UK and internationally, WISERD remains well-placed to make a valued contribution to society as an important national research centre, and our work has continued to inform policy and practice in Wales and beyond.



Given many of our own recent experiences of remote working, we're pleased to be leading the way in research about working from home during the pandemic and what this means for flexible working going forwards. Cardiff University Professor Alan Felstead's report with Darja Reuschke (University of Southampton) on *Homeworking in the UK: Before and During the 2020 Lockdown* has been cited in a 2021 government consultation on making flexible working the default. Professor Felstead's new book, *Remote Working: A Research Overview* will be published by Routledge in the coming year.

In addition to our Cardiff team's ongoing work with the *Productivity of Outcomes of Workplace Practice, Engagement & Learning (ProPEL) Hub*, Professor Mike Woods, co-director at Aberystwyth University, has joined the *Wales Productivity Forum* (UKRI Productivity Institute), a UK-wide research organisation exploring what productivity means for business, for workers and for communities – how it is measured, and how it truly contributes to increased living standards and well-being.

Just as working from home remained very much 'the norm' in 2021, so was home schooling. We discovered more about pupils' experiences of this in the eighth and ninth sweeps of our *WISERD Education Multi-Cohort Study (WMCS)*. You can find out more about what pupils reported to us this year by looking at the latest two sets of postcards we've produced, which can be viewed on our website, [www.wiserd.ac.uk](http://www.wiserd.ac.uk), or ordered via email: [wiserd@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:wiserd@cardiff.ac.uk).

Further education research is progressing within our *WISERD Education Data Lab*, including the ESRC-funded *School Exclusions* project and analysis of the *Hwb Learning Platform* data, including the development of a

data dashboard. We also participated in the international *Children's Worlds* Covid-19 research project, by contributing a sample of over 800 children from primary and secondary schools across Wales.

Without the possibility of holding our usual WISERD Annual Conference in 2021, we decided to host an online Summer Series, which comprised four online events and the launch of two new research networks: the Well-being Network and the Migration Research Wales Network. We're grateful to Dr Gwennan Higham from Swansea University, for her excellent keynote address: *International migration in Wales: nation of sanctuary in a hostile environment*.

Another strand of our data infrastructure and data integration work is our *Understanding Welsh Places* website, launched in 2019, funded by the Carnegie UK Trust and Welsh Government, and managed by the Institute of Welsh Affairs. A recent update in December included the addition of a new section on place 'connectivity'. This enables users to explore how connected one place is to another and whether it is likely to be self-sufficient or reliant on services and assets within other places. The team have released a useful webinar to help you learn how to use the site, which you can watch on our website: [www.wiserd.ac.uk](http://www.wiserd.ac.uk). Being able to access reliable evidence about places in Wales will be crucial to post-pandemic recovery plans.



Our annual foundational economy conference, *Foundational renewal: Transforming reliance systems in the wake of COVID-19*, was also unable to go ahead in person, but that did not stop over 100 researchers, practitioners and policymakers from across the globe coming together online to discuss how the foundational economy can be rebuilt, enhanced and sustained in response to new and old challenges magnified by the pandemic. We were also joined by Lee Waters MS, Deputy Minister for Climate Change. You can read his speech in full on our website: [www.wiserd.ac.uk](http://www.wiserd.ac.uk)

In addition to our conferences, we hosted a varied programme of online events in 2021. This has allowed us to welcome a wider audience of stakeholders than ever before, from across the UK and beyond. You can read more about these on page 12.

Aberystwyth University's annual Centre of Welsh Politics and Society Lecture, *Showing true colours: the changing politics of race equality in Wales*, was delivered by Professor Charlotte Williams OBE and watched online by over 130 people. The lecture explored race equality across 20 years of devolution and discussed preparations for a de-colonising agenda within education. The Centre for Welsh Politics and Society also held the second *Graduate Conference* for postgraduate students conducting research on Wales.

With our latest civil society research programme well underway and some changes to our Cardiff-based hub team, we have welcomed many new colleagues to WISERD in 2021 and, of course, said goodbye to some valued

team members too. Our most recent WISERD Away Days event (also held online) brought together colleagues – both past and present – at a special session with Emeritus Professor Huw Beynon (WISERD Director 2008-2010) on *The Shadow of the Mine: Coal and the End of Industrial Britain*.

Our Executive Group has also changed, and existing members have expanded their capacity to offer leadership and guidance to external organisations, whose areas of work they care about deeply. Dr Anwen Elias, WISERD co-director at Aberystwyth University has been appointed Commissioner to the new Independent Commission on the Constitutional Future of Wales. Furthermore, continuing the earlier theme of work and labour markets, Professor Jean Jenkins, WISERD co-director at Cardiff University has been appointed to lead an independent commission, established by the Wales TUC, into the future of employment rights and devolution in Wales.

We're pleased to welcome Dr Mitchel Langford to the role of WISERD co-director at the University of South Wales (USW), following the phased retirement of Professor Steve Smith, who will continue to lead our new Well-being Network. Dr Langford has been involved in WISERD for over a decade and is an excellent addition to the WISERD Executive Group.

Last year, Dr Langford completed a *Senedd Research Academic Fellowship Scheme* project looking at access to banking services in Wales. In February this year, alongside fellow USW co-director, Professor Gary Higgs, he was invited to present evidence from this report to the Senedd's Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee meeting. Following this, the Committee

called for the Welsh Government to protect and improve access to cash, and to map the gaps in banking services overall, a recommendation that has been accepted in principle. The team at USW has also recently published research on the 'geography of volunteering in Wales' – another civil society theme that has been brought to the fore during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ongoing work by WISERD colleagues at Bangor University involves supporting research and knowledge exchange with the youth justice sector across north Wales. WISERD co-director at Bangor University, Professor Martina Feilzer, provides research support to Youth Offending Services. Professor Feilzer has also been involved in the Cumberland Lodge Annual Policing Conference, *Towards Justice: Law Enforcement & Reconciliation*, with the report planned to be launched in Parliament in the coming year. Professor Feilzer is also the Bangor University lead for a new Aberystwyth-Bangor Research Leadership Programme, which started in November 2021.

It's been great to see the completion of the Wales Living Lab work in 2021 – part of the *Rural-Urban Outlooks: Unlocking Synergies (ROBUST)* project based at Aberystwyth University, in collaboration with the Welsh Local Government Association. The 'Rural Vision for Wales', which has been the primary focus of the Wales Living Lab, was finalised at the start of the year and launched with an online public event and publication of a bilingual evidence report. The work has attracted lots of media coverage and is even the focus of a new podcast series, commissioned by Business News Wales and hosted by former First Minister, Carwyn Jones.



Finally, I'm delighted to be able to congratulate colleagues at ADR Wales who have been awarded almost £17m to continue their work until 2026 as part of the £90m UK-wide ADR UK investment funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), part of UKRI.

*Established in 2018, ADR Wales unites research expertise from Swansea University Medical School and WISERD with analysts from within Welsh Government.*

Already this partnership has enabled the Welsh Government to understand more about the relationship between different

areas of public service delivery and gain a better understanding of people's experience as they move through different services.

I hope this report has given you a glimpse into our research activities throughout 2021 and that you'll continue to follow and engage with our work over the coming year, which looks set to be a busy one. In Cardiff, we are preparing to move to sbarc I spark this year. Based in the world's first social science research park, we'll be cohabiting with other social science researchers and external collaborators so we can work together on finding solutions to society's pressing problems.

There are developments taking place at Swansea University too, where a

new School of Social Sciences is being formed and where WISERD researchers will now be based. We look forward to working closely with other researchers in the new School and for WISERD's projects to become a central part of their research agenda.

This will be my last Director's report, as Professor Ian Rees Jones will be stepping back up as WISERD Director in 2022 – which is wonderful news for WISERD. If you are interested in finding out more about our research plans for the coming year or would like to collaborate with us on a project, please don't hesitate to contact Ian or me – we would love to hear from you.

*Sally Power,*  
WISERD Director



# Research funding data

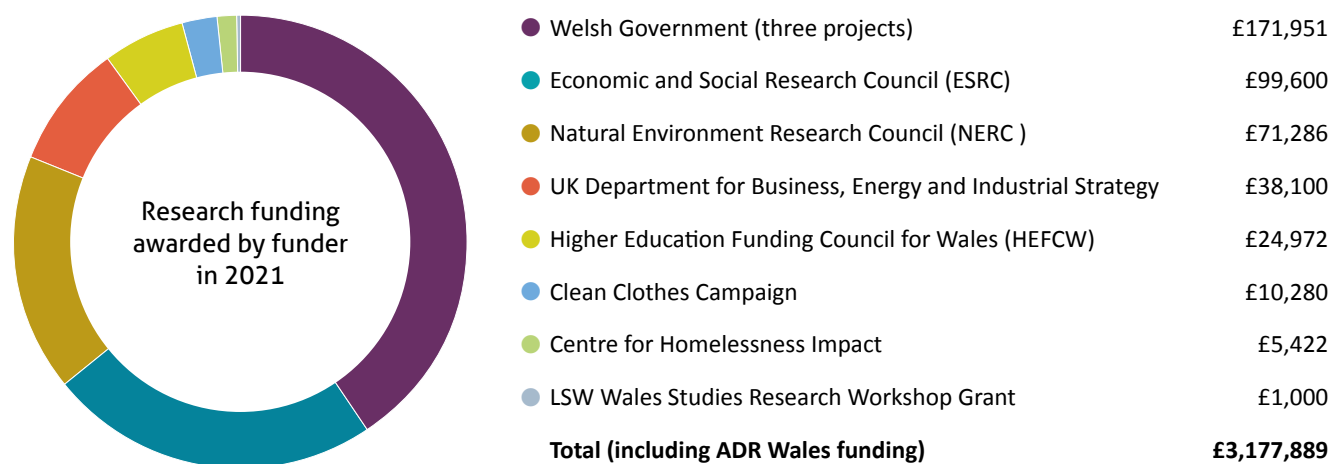
During 2021, WISERD applied for **24 research grants** across all five partner universities and was involved in research bids including those led by other organisations to the value of **£39.8m**.

WISERD's total research grant capture amount for 2021 was **£3.2m**.

## New funding in 2021

Over **£2.7m** of this funding is from the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) for the Cardiff node of the ADR Wales (Administrative Data Research Wales).

Other new funding is from the following funders:

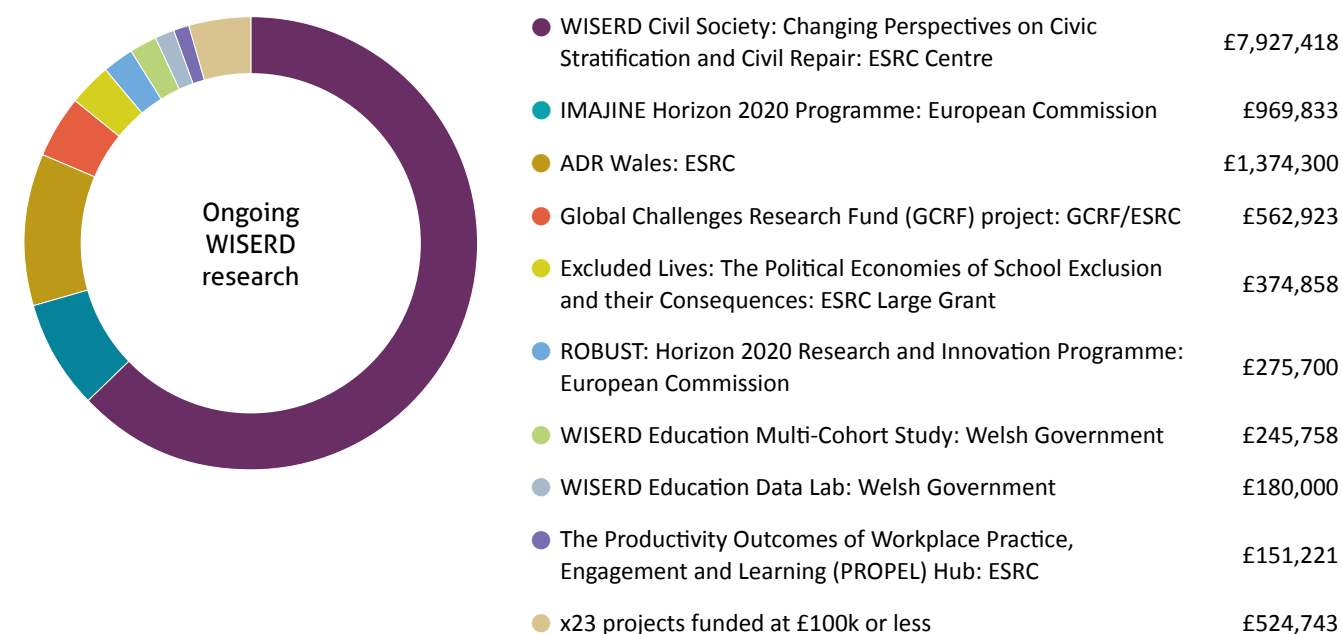


WISERD has an outstanding track record of winning competitive research funding. In 2021 we successfully secured new funding from organisations in the public and third sectors:



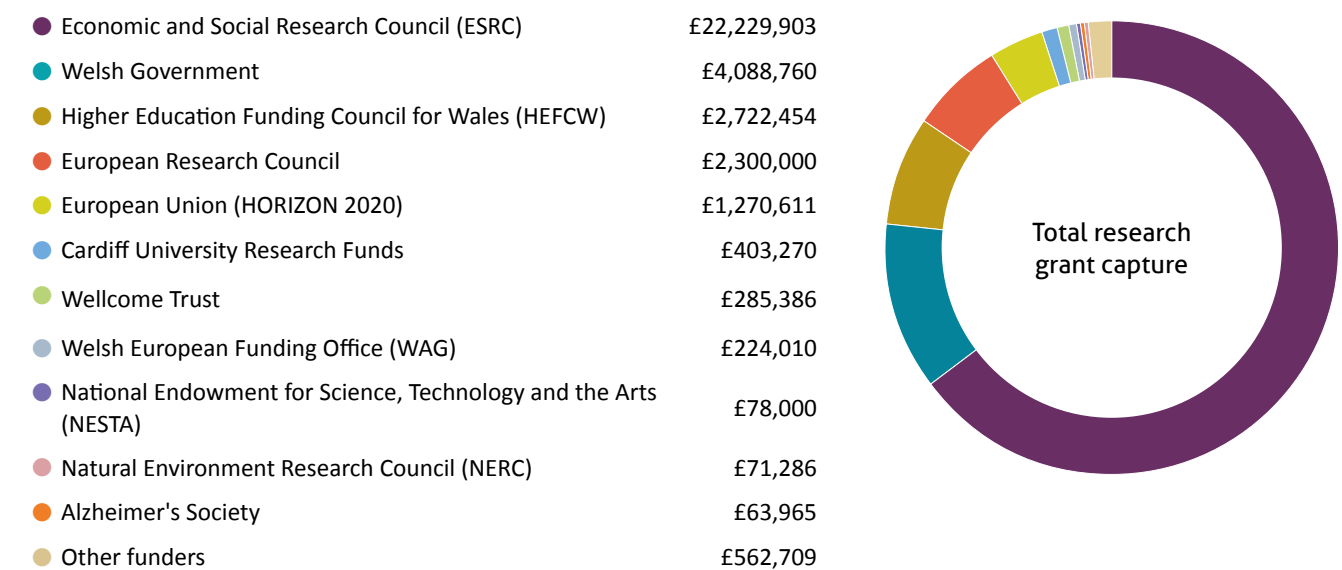
## Current WISERD research

The value of ongoing WISERD research in 2021 was **£12.6m** across **32 research grants**.



## Research grant capture 2011-21

Since 2011, WISERD has submitted **265 research funding bids** across the WISERD partner universities, with a **success rate of 55%**. WISERD's total research grant capture since 2011 is **£34.3m**.



# International links

WISERD is proud to have continued to establish many international links, despite the challenges associated with travel due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Collaborative research projects and events have continued online and some examples of these are highlighted below.

## Basque Country

Led by Dr Igor Calzada, Cardiff University colleagues held a meeting with 4GUNE (the Basque Cluster for Engineering, Science and Technology). The main aims of the Wales and Basque Country cooperation project are to share good practice in relation to university engagement, and business and society, and to work towards an exchange programme in the 2022-2023 academic year. Also, at Aberystwyth University, an online workshop was held as part of a SCoRE Cymru networking grant with the Basque Country, on minority languages and sustainable development.

## Santiago de Chile

Based on ongoing work in collaboration with urban Mapuche organisations in Santiago de Chile, Dr Dana Brablecova from Bangor University presented a lunchtime seminar on the leadership trajectories of female organisational 'presidentas'. Dr Brablecova also recently provided an insight into the political landscape prior to the Chilean presidential elections, on the BBC's *Newshour* radio programme.

## Zürich

Following WISERD's involvement in the Children's Worlds international survey, a research paper in collaboration with the Children's Social Care Research and Development Centre (CASCADE), on the relative subjective wellbeing of children in care, was presented online at an international conference. *The Perspective of the Child* was hosted by the European Scientific Association on Residential and Family Care for Children and Adolescents (EUSARF).

## Munich

Dr Giada Laganá at Cardiff University was awarded the prestigious Simone Veil Visiting Fellowship at the Project House Europe, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München, where she spent the summer in residency, for her research on the European Union and peacebuilding. Dr Laganá has also completed a book in 2021, published with Palgrave MacMillan, entitled *The European Union and the Northern Ireland Peace Process*.

## Italy

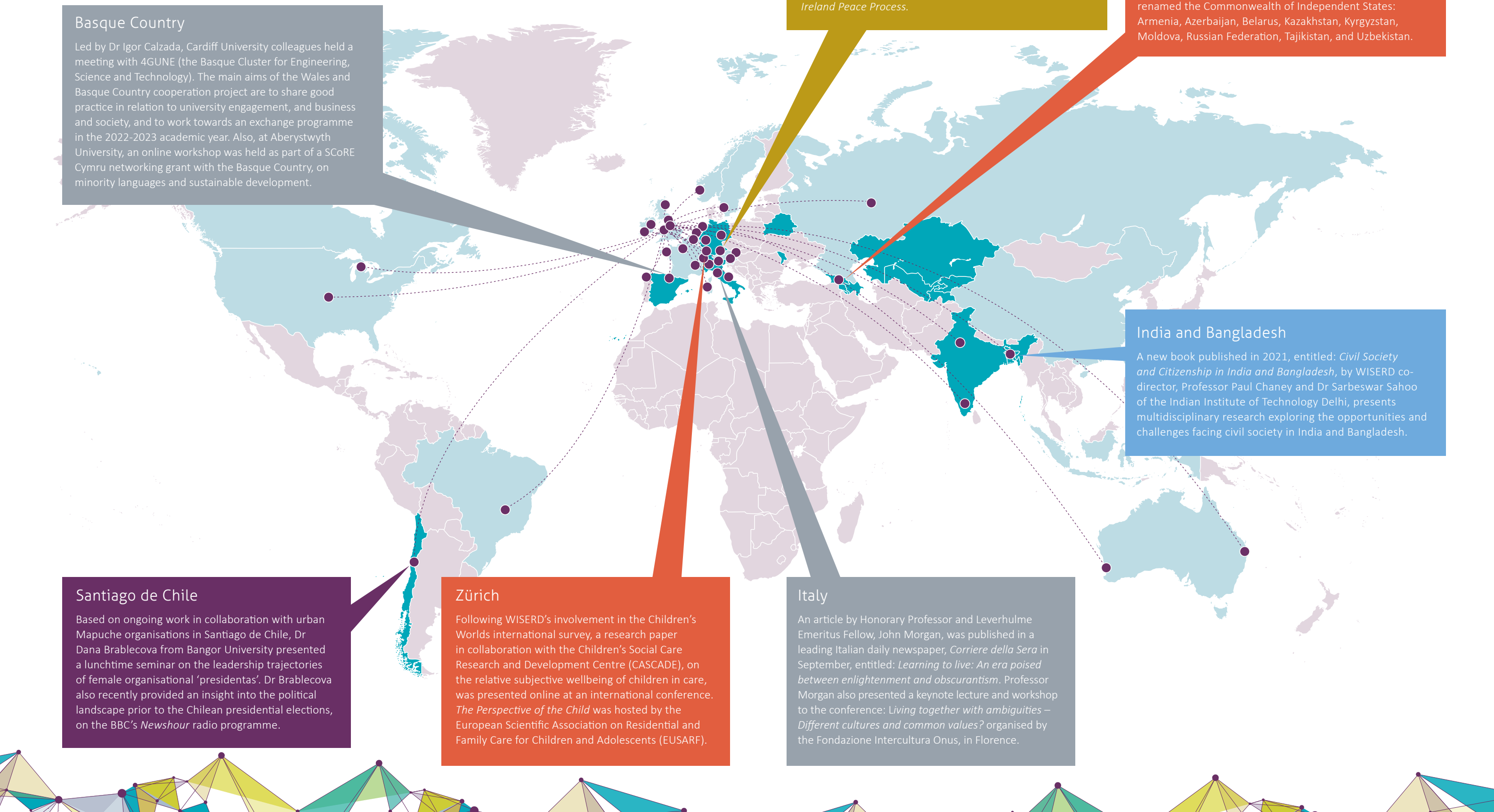
An article by Honorary Professor and Leverhulme Emeritus Fellow, John Morgan, was published in a leading Italian daily newspaper, *Corriere della Sera* in September, entitled: *Learning to live: An era poised between enlightenment and obscurantism*. Professor Morgan also presented a keynote lecture and workshop to the conference: *Living together with ambiguities – Different cultures and common values?* organised by the Fondazione Intercultura Onus, in Florence.

## Commonwealth of Independent States

New research on civil society, welfare and the rights of persons with disabilities in the former Soviet Union by WISERD co-director, Professor Paul Chaney, was published in 2021 in the *Europe-Asia Studies* journal by Routledge. The research analyses civil society organisations' perspectives on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in nine former Soviet republics, renamed the Commonwealth of Independent States: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russian Federation, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.

## India and Bangladesh

A new book published in 2021, entitled: *Civil Society and Citizenship in India and Bangladesh*, by WISERD co-director, Professor Paul Chaney and Dr Sarbeswar Sahoo of the Indian Institute of Technology Delhi, presents multidisciplinary research exploring the opportunities and challenges facing civil society in India and Bangladesh.



# Publications

WISERD produces a range of publications for academic, policy and practitioner audiences, including newsletters, reports and blog posts.

In 2021, WISERD published over **77** academic publications, including:

- Journal articles **39**
- Books and book chapters **21**
- Reports and briefings **11**
- Other **6**

In 2021, WISERD published **39** blog posts.

You can read these on our website: [www.wiserd.ac.uk/blogs](http://www.wiserd.ac.uk/blogs).

Since 2008 WISERD has published over **800** academic publications, including:

- Journal articles **550+**
- Books and book chapters **136**
- Reports and briefings **137**

## Journal articles published since 2016

**17.4%**

Outputs in top citation percentiles  
**Publications in top 10% most cited journals worldwide**

**18.1%**

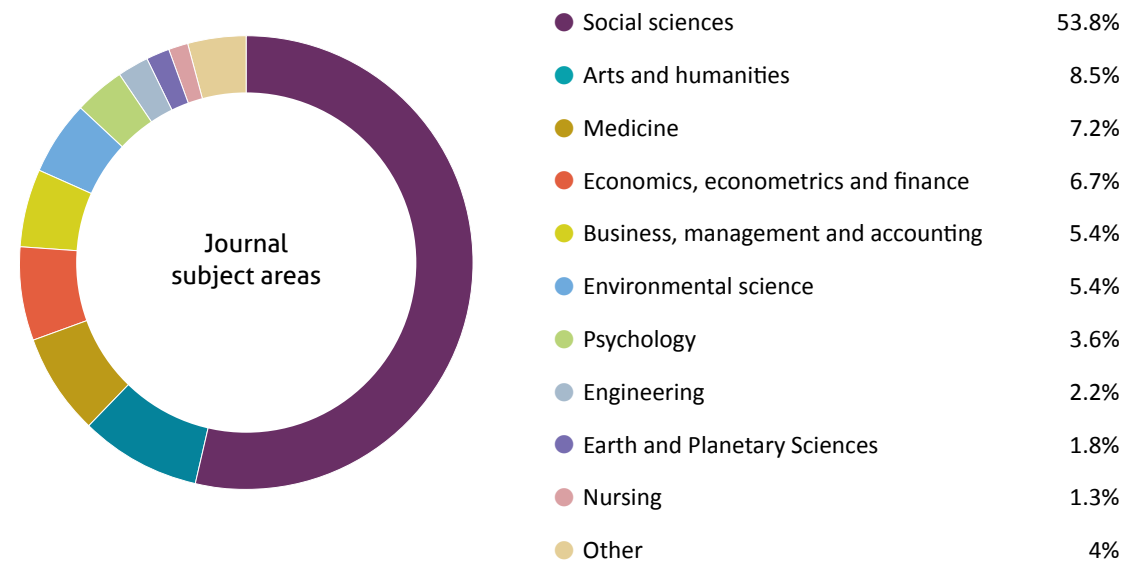
International collaboration  
**Publications co-authored with institutions in other countries**

**37.8%**

Publications in top journal percentiles  
**Publications in top 10% journals by CiteScore Percentile**

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WISERD journal articles between 2016 and 2021 covered a range of subject areas:



# WISERD Civil Society and Social Change book series

Further titles in the WISERD book series were published by Policy Press in 2021.

Series editors are Professors Ian Rees Jones and Paul Chaney, Cardiff University and Mike Woods, Aberystwyth University. The series comprises a core set of edited volumes reporting on research findings from across the ESRC-funded WISERD Civil Society Research Centre. Selected titles in the series will be available open access.

The following titles were launched in 2021:

Upcoming titles for 2022:



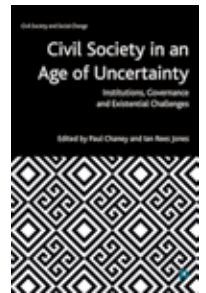
**City Regions and Devolution in the UK**  
By David Beel, Martin Jones and Ian Rees Jones



**Local Civil Society**  
By Robin Mann, David Dallimore, Howard Davis, Graham Day and Marta Eichsteller



**Analysing the Trust-Transparency Nexus**  
By Ian Stafford, Alistair Cole and Dominic Heinz



**Civil Society in an Age of Uncertainty: Institutions, Governance and Existential Challenges**  
Edited by Paul Chaney and Ian Rees Jones

The series was launched in October 2020 with the following titles:



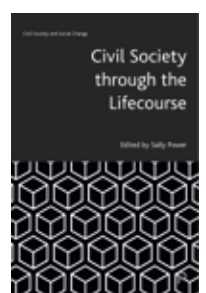
**The Foundational Economy and Citizenship**  
Edited by Filippo Barbera and Ian Rees Jones



**Putting Civil Society in its Place**  
By Bob Jessop

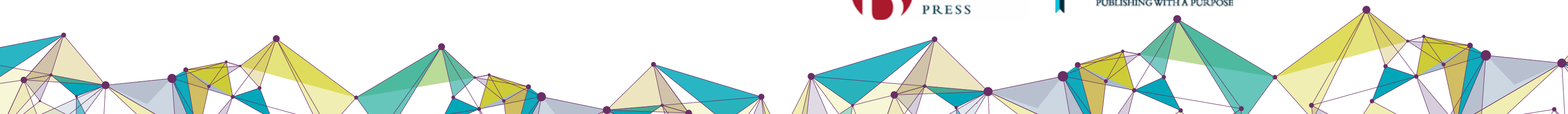


**Civil Society and the Family**  
By Esther Muddiman, Sally Power and Chris Taylor



**Civil Society through the Lifecourse**  
Edited by Sally Power

See more publications on our website: [www.wiserd.ac.uk/publications](http://www.wiserd.ac.uk/publications).





# Events and engagement 2021

## Department of Work and Pensions areas of research interest workshops, March 2021

WISERD hosted two workshops on behalf of the Department of Work and Pensions where Cardiff University researchers were invited to present research that aligns with the DWP's areas of research interest.

## WISERD and Future Economies Book Launch, May 2021

With the Future Economies University Research Centre based at Manchester Metropolitan University, we held an online event to launch *City Regions and Devolution in the UK* (the latest in the WISERD Civil Society and Social Change series with Policy Press) and *The Political Economy of Industrial Strategy in the UK*.

## Centre for Welsh Politics and Society Annual Lecture 2021: 'Showing true colours: the changing politics of race equality in Wales', June 2021

Racial equality in Wales was the focus for this year's Centre for Welsh Politics and Society (CWPS) Annual Lecture, presented by Professor Charlotte Williams OBE, and attended by over 200 people online. You can read the WISERD report, WISERD Research on Race and Ethnicity, on our website: [www.wiserd.ac.uk](http://www.wiserd.ac.uk).

You can watch the recordings of some of our events online: [www.wiserd.ac.uk/events](http://www.wiserd.ac.uk/events).

## WISERD Summer Series, July 2021

In place of our Annual Conference, we held a Summer Series this year, comprising four online events:

- Roma civil society organisations in Europe: Navigating uncertainty in times of Brexit and COVID-19
- The foundational economy of food under COVID-19 – The contribution of developing food networks
- Well-being and social participation: education, cultural engagement, and health
- Migration Research Wales Network launch and inaugural keynote by Dr Gwennan Higham, Swansea University

We also hosted our annual PhD Poster Competition, kindly sponsored by the Learned Society of Wales and the ESRC Wales Doctoral Training Partnership. The 2022 WISERD Annual Conference will take place at Swansea University and the theme is *Civil society and participation: issues of equality, identity and cohesion in a changing social landscape*.

## Foundational renewal: Transforming reliance systems in the wake of COVID-19, September 2021

WISERD's third foundational economy conference brought together, online, over 100 researchers, practitioners and policymakers from across the globe. We were also joined by Lee Waters MS, Deputy Minister for Climate Change.

## ESRC Festival of Social Sciences, November 2021

WISERD researchers hosted three ESRC Festival of Social Science events, covering youth unemployment and civil society under devolution, local community food systems and a citizen science project exploring air quality monitoring.

## Online seminar series

We have delivered 29 online seminars in 2021, covering a wide variety of subjects presented by WISERD researchers and guest speakers, and shared with some of our external partners.

## Training and capacity-building (TCB)

We have delivered five sessions in 2021:

- Introduction to QGIS
- Participatory action research
- Social network analysis
- Group concept mapping
- How to write blog posts

## National Centre for Research Methods (NCRM) sessions

WISERD is among the nine partner centres who are working with the National Centre for Research Methods (NCRM) to deliver a new phase of innovative training and capacity-building activities. These will be in the application of core and advanced research methods techniques.

We have delivered four sessions in 2021:

- Using UK data portals to find and evaluate data for social science research
- Analysing and presenting mixed methods research
- Co-production in research
- Automating map production in QGIS

## Media coverage

### Mapping access to banking services

Research on mapping access to banking services by Professor Mitch Langford at the University of South Wales was covered in an article on the Senedd Research website in February.

### There's a new centralism in London... we'll have Union Jacks instead of the Brussels stars

Professor Kevin Morgan, an expert in governance and development from Cardiff University's School of Geography and Planning, was interviewed as part of a series on the impact of Brexit on different sectors in South Wales, which was covered in the *Western Mail* and *South Wales Echo* in September.

### Wales is having a rethink about its place in the UK – could it lead the way for everyone else?

Constitutional Futures: the project, led by Anwen Elias has been piloting innovative ways of engaging citizens with debates about Wales's constitutional future. This work has informed articles in *The Conversation*, the *Western Mail* and *The Welsh Agenda* in 2021.