

HuCom Thesis Prize 2023 Jury Report

Welcome, everyone, especially to our esteemed nominees,

Once again, we gather for our Biennial Humanitarian Communication Thesis Prize. This Prize aims to recognize original and impactful research in the specialized field of humanitarian communication or the representation of international cooperation.

In assessing the theses, the jury considered three criteria :

1. Academic quality and originality;
2. Societal relevance and urgency; and
3. Writing style and argumentative structure of the thesis.

Achieving high standards in any of these criteria is already commendable, and even more so to excel in all of them.

This year's candidates were no exception. Among the many theses submitted to the competition, we had to carefully consider the six final nominees that you saw presenting here. As you have noticed, their work is fascinating.

On behalf of all the jury members, let me share some observations on each of them (in alphabetical order):

Gabriela Anderson's ethical and innovative approach to how some migrants use creative means in South Africa and countries of origin to handle racism is eye-opening.

Hannah Bailon's understanding of the framing of disasters in Malawian local digital media managed incredibly well to bridge the theoretical and empirical dimensions of the case.

With a sharp critical analysis of how recent Dutch filmmakers of documentaries set on the African continent, **Ditte Blankert** was able to analyse an impressive collection of documentaries.

Ashleigh Dunstan's methodological and theoretical dexterity to navigate the discourse on international solidarity with Palestine through representations of trauma is admirable.

The thesis of **Adrian Jonathan Pasaribu** on the Afro-Asian Film Festival history surprised us with a nice integration of diverse disciplinary perspectives into an elegantly written historical narrative.

And **Emma van der Westen** managed an impressive data collection effort to study the representation and perception of the first Surinamese film among the Surinamese diaspora in The Netherlands.

With this breadth and depth of good quality work, you can imagine that our work as jury was not easy. In fact, we ended up deciding to have one prize winner and one special mention.

The special mention highlights a thesis that showed the power of framing when it comes to humanitarian crises. Not only does it engage well on theoretical levels with the subject matter, but the methods used are particularly innovative and the clarity on how information was presented, exceptional. Focusing on understanding the framing of disasters in Malawian digital media, you can already guess that this year's special mention goes to... **Hannah Bailon!** Congratulations, Hannah.

This year's Thesis Prize goes to a thesis that stimulated our intellectual curiosity and surprised us by the depth of its analyses. Not only is the topic particularly relevant, but many times also overlooked, as it focuses on more everyday practices of people affected by humanitarian crises. This year, the prize highlights the study on how migrants use creative means as a representational and spatial medium of communication and being in South Africa and countries of origin by **Gabriela Anderson!** Congratulations.

Gabriela, your thesis brings in a rich variety of theories, building a convincing theoretical framework, combining artistic, traditional, and diverse methods in a well-orchestrated manner. On top of that, the author is able to present a critical and self-reflective perspective on the analysis of the topic.

As we said, all the candidates presented great work and contributed to the study, understanding, and addressing of humanitarian crises, international cooperation, disasters, and these fields that are of great importance for us but also for the people affected. All the theses, in this regard, are worth reading to expand our understanding.

We greatly thank all the participants for their work and especially for the quality shown in it. Please, everyone, join me in a round of applause for everyone!

Rodrigo Mena Fluhmann
Clara Egger
Floris Paalman
Femke van Heun