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Arab Council
for the Social Sciences

Conseil Arabe
pour les Sciences Sociales

ANNUAL REPORT

2018

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I. GENERAL INFORMATION

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- Date of report: March 1, 2019
- Reporting Period: January 1, 2018 - December 31, 2018
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- Some acronyms used in the report:
    - ACSS: Arab Council for the Social Sciences (http://www.theacss.org)
    - ASSM: Arab Social Science Monitor (http://www.theacss.org/pages/assm)
    - ASSR: Arab Social Science Report (http://www.theacss.org/uploads/English-ASSR-2016.pdf)
    - BoT: Board of Trustees
    - BCF: Bassem Chit Fellowship for the Study of Activism
    - CCNY: Carnegie Corporation of New York
    - CSS: Critical Security Studies
    - ECFP: Early Career Fellows Program (http://www.theacss.org/pages/bassem-chit-fellowship-for-the-study-of-activism)
    - FPOS: Foundation to Promote Open Society (a member of Open Society Foundations – OSF)
    - IDRC: International Development Research Centre
    - MoU: Memorandum of Understanding
    - NPF: New Paradigms Factory (http://www.theacss.org/pages/npf)
    - OSF: Open Society Foundations
    - RBM: Results Based Management
    - RGP : Research Grants Program (http://www.theacss.org/pages/rgp)
    - RAP: Research on the Arts Program (http://www.theacss.org/pages/afac-acss-research-on-the-arts-program)
    - Sida: Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
    - SGP: Small Grants Program (http://www.theacss.org/pages/sgp)
    - BSCSS: Beirut School for Critical Security Studies
    - ToC: Table of Contents
    - ToR: Terms of Reference

II. PROJECT ENVIRONMENT AND INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGY

Entering its seventh year of operations, the ACSS is steadily growing in scope and reach and developing new projects and initiatives. The distinctive mission of the ACSS, the flexibility and responsiveness of its structure, and the paucity of similar organizations in the Arab region continues to validate the importance and niche of the organization. As has been stressed in previous reports, the ACSS offers much needed support to, and opportunities for, researchers and knowledge actors in the region and continues to build and thicken networks for knowledge and change. Despite the regional restrictive atmosphere on the freedom of expression, or rather because of it, supporting social science research remains imperative for the production of reliable data, analyses and practical visions for the future. As always, we are pleased to note the resilience of the grantees and their determination to continue pursuing their projects, with the help and understanding of ACSS staff. The numbers of applicants to programs and participants in events continue to rise. The location in Lebanon generally facilitates regional interaction and affords academic freedom. The expanding Focal Point structure also helps ensure regional outreach and more robust local/national engagement.

The ACSS is currently in the middle of the third year of its 5-year Strategy which laid out an ambitious program of institutional and programmatic growth (ACSS 2020 - Appendix 1). The final version of the Strategy was approved by the ACSS Board of Trustees on June 1, 2016 and an action plan was put in place. Within a year, by June 2017, the ACSS had also received a BUILD grant from the Ford Foundation, a major component of which is institutional strengthening. The attached Workplan (Appendix 2) lays out and depicts the progress made on the targets outlined in the 5 Year Strategy as well as on the activities and processes planned as part of the BUILD grant for institutional strengthening. This document frames and guides the institutional and programmatic development of the ACSS and is reviewed and revised at periodic staff meetings and BoT meetings. This report will detail progress made on targets as well as changes in plans due to new perspectives or additional resources, unexpected obstacles such as lack of partners or staffing shortages, or contextual regional developments.

The targets outlined in the 5-year Strategy were the following: Governance, Financial Sustainability, Regional Reach, Institutional Support, Publications and Research Uptake. The below section summarizes progress within each of these targets, with some activities being further detailed in the relevant sections of the report as indicated.

Target 1: Governance **Fully revised & functional charter, by-laws, & internal processes**			
Timeline: 2016-2017		Objective 3	
Aims: Strengthening institutional capacities; smooth BoT elections, leadership transitions, & conflict resolution; effective Board-Director-Staff relations			
Activity	Start Date	End Date	Responsibility
Revisions of the text of Charter and By-laws	May 2016	January 2017	BoT, Director, F&A Manager, & Lawyer
Revision of chart of authority & addition of some internal policies	May 2016	January 2017	BoT, Director, & F&A Manager
Ratification of revised Charter & By-laws by members & associated legal procedures	March 2017	September 2017	BoT, Director, F&A Manager, & Lawyer
Staffing	September 2016	Ongoing	Director & F&A Manager

a) All governance activities been implemented on schedule in 2016 and 2017, namely the revision of the charter and by-laws, the revision of the chart of authority, the updating and development of internal policies and the ratification of the revised charter and by-laws by members;

b) Adequate staffing remains an ongoing challenge for the institution and a work in progress. However, a major milestone has been achieved through the successful recruitment of an Associate Director after a search that lasted 2 years. Dr. Moushira Elgeziri will start as Associate Director at the ACSS in April 2019 and will greatly strengthen and enhance the leadership and management capacities of the institution (See appendix 3)

Target 2 **Financial Sustainability**			
Timeline: 2016-2020		Objective 3	
Aims: Adequate core funding; Long-term co-funding partnerships; Endowment			
Activity	Start Date	End Date	Responsibility
Discussions with donors concerning core funds	June 2016	Ongoing	Director
Financial consultant for endowment	November 2016	April 2017	BoT A&F sub-committee, Director, & F&A Manager
Endowment fundraising	January 2017	Ongoing	BoT, Director, & F&A Manager
Developing 3-4 strategic co-funding partnerships	January 2018	Ongoing	Director & F&A Manager

(a) Core funding has been successfully obtained through the grants from Sida and Ford Foundation. Other current donors are highly unlikely to commit core funds and thus the search for new core fund donors remains a priority.

(b) Co-funding partnerships on a number of grants and training programs have been put in place with: the Fondation Maison des Sciences de l'homme (FMSH) in Paris, The Arab Fund for Culture and Arts, the Rosa Luxembourg Stiftung, Lebanon Support and the Odum Institute of the University of North Carolina (see sections on Grants and Fellowships and on ASSM below for details)

(c) There has been a delay and a change in plans concerning the recruitment of a financial consultant and endowment fundraising. Under the oversight of the BoT's Administration and Finance Committee, ToRs were developed for the financial sustainability consultant and were advertised through ACSS networks. Only 2 applications were received and the A+F committee concluded that neither applicant was suitable for the tasks required. In its September 2018 retreat, the BoT agreed that the Director General will assume this role assisted by the necessary part-time consultants and given support for professional development in this function. Given the recruitment of the Associate Director, it is assumed that the DG will be relieved of many

programmatic duties and can give more time for endowment fundraising starting in the second half of 2019.

Target 3: Regional Reach **Functioning focal points & regionally representative membership pool**			
Timeline: 2016-2018		Objective 2	
Aims: Diversity of regional participation in governance & activities			
Activity	Start Date	End Date	Responsibility
Algeria Focal Point established	June 2016	December 2016	Director & F&A Manager
Targeted membership drive	March 2017	Ongoing	BoT Membership sub-Committee, Director, & PA
Development of two more focal points	January 2018	December 2018	Director & F&A Manager

(a) With some delay from the original plan, the Algeria Focal Point was established in 2017, a voluntary steering committee was established in 2018 and an annual plan was developed for 2018-2019. However, official permissions from the Ministry of Higher Education have been required for university based training workshops and public events. This combined with political unrest in the country has delayed the start of Focal Point activities to 2019 and indicates that working in Algeria will require more time and effort than anticipated due to bureaucratic hurdles.

(b) Applications for individual membership are on the rise and the total number of members as of January 2019 is 67 active (voting) members; 438 associate (non-voting) members and 82 student (non-voting) members and 2 institutional members. The BoT Membership sub-committee has been working on a strategy for a membership drive, with a focus on incentivizing institutional membership, however this work is slower than planned simply due to the committee members already giving a great deal of time for reading and approving in-coming applications. However, the current sub-committee have put guidelines that will be picked up by the new sub-committee that will be appointed following the March 2019 elections of new board members.

(c) The BoT had brainstormed about possible locations for two new focal points during their retreat of September 2018. However, a decision was not taken and the feeling at this point is that it may be premature to decide on a 3rd focal point before 2020, especially given the experience in both Palestine and Algeria that it takes time to put the structure in place and to ensure good communication and coordination with the Beirut office. It has also been noted that with the recruitment of Dr. Elgeziri as Associate Director, she could act as an informal focal point in Egypt. This matter will be discussed further with the new BoT after the March 2019 elections.

Target 4: Institutional Support **Complement the focus on individuals with support & networking for universities & research organizations**			
Timeline: 2017-2019		Objective 2	
Aims: Effective programs & activities designed & implemented in order to achieve the desired balance			
Activity	Start Date	End Date	Responsibility
Development of plan for institutional collaborations & networking	January 2017	June 2017	BoT, Director, & Staff
Develop one new program for institutional support	January 2018	December 2018	Director & BoT
Develop one new program for institutional support	January 2019	December 2019	Director & BoT
Activities for networking institutions at ACSS biennial conference	January 2019	December 2019	Director & BoT

(a) Planning for supporting institutions proceeded on schedule, and includes three aspects: (a) As mentioned in section iii, work has begun on a strategy of incentives to encourage institutional ACSS membership, (b) co-funding programs with sister organizations (mentioned above in section ii and detailed in the relevant sections of

the report), and (c) planning for an "ACSS Fellows" program as an integrated research and training program based at Arab Universities that would support, mentor and network students from their undergraduate years till the post-PhD phase. In January 2019, the ACSS was successful in receiving a 3 year grant from Open Society Foundations (OSF) to pilot this program as will be detailed below.

(b) As scheduled, a new institutional support grants program was developed in 2018 and is ongoing in partnership with the Arab Fund for Arts and Culture (AFAC). In addition, plans are underway to include institutional grants with the Research Grants Program cycle 7 which will be launched in June 2019 (for details see below in the section on Grants and Fellowships).

(c) Other activities in this target are scheduled for 2019

Target 5: Publications **Publications support & development of new dissemination outlets & formats**			
Timeline: 2017-2020		Objective 1	
Aims: ACSS becomes a major source of publishing & disseminating new social science knowledge about the region			
Activity	Start Date	End Date	Responsibility
Fully launch Working Papers, Field Reports & Directory, quarterly e-newsletter	January 2017	December 2017	Publications sub-committee, Editorial Review Board, & Communications staff
Develop 1-2 new web outlets for dissemination	January 2018	December 2018	Publications sub-committee & Staff
Planning the New Social Sciences Journal	January 2019	December 2019	Publications sub-committee, Editorial Review Board, & Communications staff
Launch *Journal of Social Sciences in the Arab Region*	January 2020	December 2020	Publications sub-committee, Editorial Review Board, Director & Staff

(see section on publications for details)

(a) The Working Papers and quarterly e-newsletter are well underway and issued regularly and successfully. The Directory is progressing with some delay while the idea of Field Reports has been abandoned by the Publications sub-committee as unfeasible.

(b) One new web outlet was launched as planned in 2018 – this is the "Beirut Forum" which is the website of the Critical Security Studies Working Group project.

(c) As for 2019 plans, after extensive discussions by the BoT, it was decided that rather than launch a Social Science Journal, the ACSS will launch an Annual "Reviews" publication that will publish reviews of the literature and state of the art articles.

Target 6: Research Uptake **Supporting collaboration between academic & non-academic researchers & institutions for policy & public impact**			
Timeline: 2018-2020		Objective 1	
Aims: Effective programs & activities designed & implemented to enhance policy impact & broader societal engagement			
Activity	Start Date	End Date	Responsibility
Develop one new program for university & civil society collaboration	January 2018	June 2018	Director & BoT
Develop one new program for research & private sector collaboration	January 2019	June 2019	Director & BoT
Develop one new program for research & public sector collaboration	January 2020	June 2020	Director & BoT

(a) In terms of a new program for university and civil society collaboration, the Bassem Chit Early Scholar Career Fellowship was launched in 2018 in collaboration with Lebanon Support (a research NGO) and with co-funding from

the Rosa Luxembourg Foundation. An MoU with RLF will be signed in 2019 to continue this program for 3 cycles.

(b) The remaining activities are slated for 2019 and 2020.

III. RESULTS BASED MANAGEMENT (RBM)

A. Overall and Specific Objectives and Logframe

Since 2013, the ACSS has been implementing a Results Based Management (RBM) approach and has developed a Logframe (see Appendix 4) to monitor and measure projects and activities in terms of how they meet the Overall and four Specific Objectives of the institution.

The Overall Objective is:

To achieve a functioning institutional structure that identifies and supports improved social science in the region

The Specific Objectives are:

1. ***To improve and expand production and use of social science research to address regional issues;***
2. ***To achieve a new and larger generation of social scientists integrated into regional networks;***
3. ***To achieve institutionalization of ACSS as a credible recognized network of researchers; and***
4. ***To promote and implement good governance within the ACSS (this was added in 2016 based on the external evaluators' recommendations).***

In addition to internally documenting and monitoring activities, as of 2015, the ACSS has conducted an annual survey of grantees (sent out every January/February) that requests updates on outputs and publications as well as solicits their opinions on their experience with the ACSS (survey is attached as Appendix 5). The annual survey has been developed for gathering data for the Logframe and as an important input for planning and monitoring. In 2017 we adopted a new questionnaire which focuses particularly on the impact and the uptake of the research produced through ACSS grants. The 2018 survey was sent out on February 15, 2019 to collect data for the 2018 Logframe and elicited a 33% response. This feedback shows progress in the overall experience and satisfaction of the grantees. Overall, the results displayed in the Logframe are satisfactory and show a steady improvement in performance indicators across all four objectives. It is to be noted that 2017 witnessed the 3rd ACSS Conference which results in increased numbers

of proposals, presentation and country representation. As such, some results need to be compared to the 2016 results to reflect realistic performance comparisons.

The Logframe reflects the following:

- A 50% increase in the number of joint projects and initiatives;
- An improved percentage of 13% for regional and international social science networks diversity;
- A remarkable increase in the number of researchers using the research ethics tool (+128%);
- An increase of 216% in the number of junior scholars presenting at the ACSS Research Forum, ;
- An enhanced gender balance of researchers (54% females vs. 46% males) and members (+7.8% of female members)
- Accepted publications (+31%),
- Other positive indicators: international presentations (+90%), social media outreach (+38%) and ACSS membership (+10%).

As the ACSS Biennial Conference was not scheduled to be held in 2018, the number of proposals/applications received for the conference was compared to the 2016 figures, showing an increase of 8% in numbers received. In general, there are fluctuations in the numbers pertaining to certain activities by year depending upon the timing of events. For example, there were a large number of dissemination events in 2016 and 2017 due to the publication of the first ASSM Report, whereas there is a drop of such activities in 2018 which will pick up again in 2019 since the second Report has been published.

As discussed in the concluding remarks, tools and processes for Monitoring and Evaluation, including the application and uses of the RBM Logframe, is a priority for 2019 and we expect that future reports will show enhanced institutional capacity in this regard.

IV. ACTIVITIES AND DEVELOPMENTS IN 2018

A. Institutional Development

Funding for developing institutional capacities is spread across all ACSS grants through both direct and indirect support budget lines. Core funding from Sida and Ford is essential for this component.

As summarized in the section above, the ACSS has been working to strengthen its institutional infrastructure

by improving governance and administrative practices as well as expanding its programmatic initiatives. This section will provide additional details of specific activities undertaken in 2018.

Administrative and Financial Systems and Processes:

The Administration & Finance (A&F) sub-committee of the Board of Trustees (BoT) has three members and meets every 6 months or as needed (occasionally meeting virtually) to oversee, review and recommend further action in the area of administration and finance. One of their main roles is to assist the Board of Trustees in setting a fundraising strategy in addition to reviewing and recommending to the BoT approval of annual budgets, work plans, salary reviews, policies and procedures as prepared by the Secretariat.

Based on the recommendation of the financial consultant who evaluated the ACSS financial systems in 2017, the ACSS purchased a new accounting Microsoft Navision Dynamics system which will be implemented as of January 2019. Also, as recommended by various donors, the Board of Trustees has approved a change of Auditors and approved RSM Lebanon as the ACSS auditing company for the forthcoming 5 years (2019-2023).

Staffing*:*

Although turnover has decreased and has certainly slowed down, 2018 did witness some changes as well as expansion of staff as described below.

- Efforts in recruiting an Associate Director (AD) were finally successful and Dr. Moushira Elgeziri will join the ACSS as of April 2019. Since a major proportion of the AD's time will be dedicated to managing the grants and fellowships programs (see Appendix 6 – Division of Labor for DG and AD), and given the increasing number and diversity of program offerings, the plan is to develop a Grants and Fellowships Unit at the ACSS. This unit will be managed by the AD, with the current Grants and Fellowships Coordinator, Ms. Farah Alsouri, becoming dedicated full-time to this task and relieved of her additional current function as Executive Assistant to the DG. A Program Assistant will also be recruited to complete the staffing of the Grants and Fellowships Unit.
- A full-time Program/Executive Assistant will be recruited to work with the Director General on the programs that she manages as well as the focus on endowment fundraising in the coming phase.
- In Fall 2018, the Communications & IT Manager, Mr. Kassem Kaouk, who had been with the ACSS since June 2013 resigned. The decision was to replace him with a new Manager and also an IT officer, noting the increasing IT related tasks (databases, increased online application processes etc.) and the difficulty of finding a person who was equally competent in both Communications and the IT functions. Mr. Wassim Alam was recruited as IT Officer to start on February 25, 2019. The search for a Communications and IT Manager is still underway.

- The Director General decided not to renew the contract for the current Program Manager, Mr. Issam Khoury, as of October 2018 and recruitment is underway for a new Program Manager who will have major responsibility for the "New Generation ACSS Fellows" OSF-funded program as well as Training activities.
- Additional hires in 2018 include: Mr. Elie Rahme as Accountant starting March 19, 2018; Mr. Rami Ofeiche as Data Analyst (with ASSM) starting March 26, 2018; and Mr. Elias Kattar as Senior Editorial and Publications Officer starting August 1, 2018.

Despite obstacles of finding the right talent and experience as well as restrictions by the Ministry of Labor on the hiring of non-Lebanese, the ACSS has been growing and staff capacities are increasing. Between full time and part time staff, the office will include 17 employees as of April 2019: 15 Lebanese, 1 Egyptian, 1 Jordanian, and 1 Palestinian out of which 11 are females and 6 are males. In addition, the Focal Points are considered staff even though they are part-time and include 2 senior consultants and 2 administrative/program coordinators. This adds 2 Palestinians and 2 Algerians and makes the gender balance 12 females and 9 males.

The ACSS continues to rely on consultants for programmatic work, in the absence of appropriate full-time staff. For 2018, these included:

- Dr. Jamil Mouawad – Part time consultant as of April 28, 2016 on the Research Ethics initiative.
- Dr. Deema Kaedbey – Part time consultant as of February 1, 2018 and continuing through 2019, coordinating the "Critiques of Power" working group as well as the new cycle of NPF.
- Dr. Francois Farah as Senior Part-time Consultant for the Arab Public Data Archive (a sub-grant from UNC) from June 1, 2018 until December 31, 2018. Dr. Farah also continues to be the Lead Technical Advisor for a part-time consultancy on survey methodology of individual social scientists for the Arab Social Science Monitor until March 15, 2019.
- Dr. Lamia Moghnieh – Part time consultant as of October 1, 2018 until March 31, 2019, working on the "Health, Livelihoods, and Well-being" working group and research grants project.
- Ms. Rana Osman started working in February 2017, and continued through 2018, as a Research Assistant for the ASSM project on a part time basis.

Focal Points:

To ensure more robust regional outreach and networking, the ACSS decided to establish focal points in different countries. The structure of the focal point comprises:

- An agreement with a local NGO for administrative and financial support;

- A consultancy agreement with a senior researcher to oversee functions of the focal point on a part time basis;
- A small advisory committee of 4-5 prominent researchers serving on a voluntary basis.

The basic role of the focal point is to disseminate funding opportunities and assist potential applicants in applying to them; receiving financial reports and receipts from grantees and disbursing payments (when and if required especially where there are banking restrictions in place) to local ACSS grantees; the planning of training and networking events; providing feedback to ACSS secretariat and Board of Trustees on local/national thematic and programmatic priorities.

Palestine Focal Point

The Palestine Focal Point is working according to an annual plan that has been approved by the BoT. In addition to the basic administrative functions mentioned above, this includes:

- Meetings to identify research agendas specific for Palestine;
- School visits to promote social sciences;
- Proposal and academic writing skills workshop;

Algeria Focal Point

Although the Algeria Focal Point was established in 2017, work progress has been slow affected by the delay in forming the Academic Advisory Committee and some impeding political issues. A concrete plan will be submitted and implemented in 2019.

Membership:

Applications for individual membership are steadily increasing. As outlined in the strategy, the ACSS will be working on recruiting and incentivizing institutional membership. In 2018 ACSS received 246 membership applications for various categories of which 147 were accepted. By January 2019 the ACSS members represented the following numbers: 67 active (voting) members; 438 associate (non-voting) members and 82 student (non-voting) members and 2 institutional members. During 2018, the membership committee finalized the work on the ***Code of Ethics and Conduct*** that pertains particularly to members but generally to all participants in ACSS structures and activities. This was ratified during the January 2019 BoT meeting.

Funding:

The ACSS has been able to secure more funding in 2018 for current and future projects and other funding opportunities are being actively pursued.

Funds received in 2018 include:

- A new grant from the Ford Foundation for launching a Small Grants Program for the amount of US$ 200,000 for one year extending from October 1, 2018 until September 30, 2019;
- A supplement from Sida to the original grant (July 1, 2017 until December 31, 2021) amounting to SEK3,000,000 (US$327,000) to cover any deficits due to the delay in receiving the IDRC grant;
- A new grant from Carnegie Corporation NY amounting to US$1,500,000 for 2 years extending from October 1, 2018 until September 30, 2021.
- A new grant from IDRC amounting to CAD988,100 (US$760,000) from October 1, 2018 until September 30, 2022.
- A sub-grant from University of North Carolina (UNC) for the total amount of US$204,000 (January 1, 2018 – December 31, 2019)

Other:

As stated in BUILD workplan, both a Staff and a BoT retreat were organized in July and September, 2018 respectively (Appendices 7 & 8 – Agendas for Staff and BoT retreats). The staff retreat included a workshop on "Professional Conduct" provided by a trainer/life coach, Mr. Johnny El Ghoul as well as an internal discussion of work culture and employee satisfaction. The BoT retreat provided an opportunity for in-depth discussions of the current and future programs of the ACSS, the drafting or ratifying of various new key documents including the Code of Ethics and Conduct as well as BoT guidelines on their roles, responsibilities, expectations and conflict of interest.

B. Convening

Funding for these activities are drawn from the Sida grant, with grantees' participation expenses covered by their respective programs, including Sida, IDRC and Carnegie Corporation

The ACSS organizes a Biennial Conference and a biennial Research Forum on alternate years in addition to other public events. Below is a description of the major convening events that took place in 2018.

ACSS Third Research Forum – April 4-7, 2019:

The ACSS held its Third Research Forum on April 4-7, 2018 in Amman, Jordan. The Forum hosted 84 participants from the following programs: Research Grants Program (Cycles 4 & 5), Early Career Fellows Program (Cycles 3 & 4), Small Grants Program (Cycles 2017 & 2018). In addition to the current ACSS grantees, the Research Forum was attended by BoT members and selection committee members who acted as chairs and moderators of the various panels and roundtables.

The Research Forum serves as an important venue for the ACSS community in the following ways:

- The Forum is an opportunity for grantees to present, discuss, and receive feedback on their ongoing research.
- The Forum aims to be a productive space for collaboration across the Arab region and across disciplines.
- The Forum is an intensive learning experience for general academic issues through sessions and roundtables on topics such as research methodologies, writing and publishing, research ethics, career opportunities and so on.
- The Forum is an occasion for participants to get to know other researchers in the region, to thicken their networks, create new relationships, and increase dialogue.
- The Forum is an important vehicle for working together towards a more dynamic and cooperative research culture, for bettering the overall quality of produced research from the region and for increased regional and global publications and dissemination.

In addition to the grantees' research presentations, the event included roundtables on research ethics in the social sciences; careers, research and action; funding opportunities in the Arab region; critical reengagement with Arab theories; writing and publishing in Arabic; and ways of involvement with the ACSS. The Forum was concluded with a trip to touristic sites in Amman guided by our partner organization Turath, headed by Dr. Rami Daher, chairman of the Board of Trustees.

In conjunction with the Research Forum, the ACSS organized a public session showcasing the Arab Social Science Monitor (ASSM), one of the major projects of the ACSS. Titled "Arab Social Sciences: Where, What and Who?", the panel aimed to introduce the ACSS and the ASSM to the Jordanian public, and present an overview of the objectives and content of the Arab social science reports, which are one of the key ASSM publications. Please see appendix 9 for the full program of the Forum.

The ACSS Annual Lecture: The Hanna Batatu Lecture Series:

In 2015 the ACSS inaugurated its Annual Lecture event. Each series of four lectures will be named after a prominent Arab social scientist and the first series is named after the Palestinian political scientist and historian, Dr. Hanna Batatu. In this way, the Annual Lecture celebrates prominent social scientists from the Arab region and encourages research along the paradigms and perspectives that they developed.

Three annual lectures were held in 2015 (Beirut), 2016 (Amman), and 2017 (Tunis). Please see videos at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qULX9qM0lyw).

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xk0tK8kdzz4).
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AQN1_JALB5E).

Instead of a fourth individual lecture, it was planned to convene a special event in Baghdad in October, 2018 (given the focus of Hanna Batutu's work on modern Iraq). The plan was to invite all three lecturers to present summaries of their lectures to be followed by 2-3 discussants on the relevance of Batutu's work to contemporary conditions in Iraq. While all the plans for this event were put in place, in fall 2018, the political situation in Iraq became unstable and it was reluctantly decided not to go ahead with the planned event. Instead, the event will constitute the final plenary event of the ACSS 4th conference. To accompany the plenary, a publication is under preparation (please see in the section on publications)

Partners and Donors Meeting:

Proceeding with its plan to help establish a forum for regional consultation on needs and trends in social science research, as well as to achieve donor coordination and synergies, the ACSS organized its fourth "Donor's and Partners' Meeting" on April 4th, 2018 in conjunction with the Third Research Forum of the Arab Council for the Social Sciences). The meeting was entitled "Knowledge at Risk: Conflict, Collaboration and Ethics" and focused on the Arab regional context within which knowledge production and research takes place. What impact do contexts of conflict, violence and population displacement, have on civil society and on research communities? How do different organizations (universities, NGOs, donors etc.) help create and protect spaces of innovation and creativity? How can collaboration, mutual learning and cross-regional interconnections be enhanced? How are increasingly complex legal and financial landscapes to be navigated? What is the current state of freedom of expression and research in the region today? What ethical considerations come into play both on individual and institutional levels?

The meeting included 21 participants representing 17 institutions (foundations, NGOs, research centers and universities) in addition to members of the Board of Trustees and ACSS staff. The minutes of the meeting are attached in Appendix 10. It is planned to regularize this meeting as an annual event and several of the participants volunteered to act as a planning committee for this series of meetings.

Preparations for the 4th Biennial Conference:

The year 2018 also saw the preparations for the ACSS 4th Conference which will be held on April 12-14, 2019. In its January 2018 meeting, the BoT formed the conference preparatory committee, including 3 members of the BoT and the ACSS focal points. The conference preparatory committee includes: Abdelkader Latreche (Bot Member), Driss Maghraoui (Al Akhawayn University), Nacer djabi (Algeria Focal Point), Eileen Kuttab (Palestine Focal Point), Maysoun Sukkarieh (King's College London), Munira Khayyat (American

University of Cairo), Ruba Saleh (BoT Member), Moha Harb (BoT Member), Morad Diani (Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies), Omar El Shahabi (Gulf Center for Development Policies), Yaser Abunasr (Aumerican University of Beirut). The committee which met in June 13-14, 2018 to decide upon the general structure and organization of the conference, to elaborated on the theme and finalize the call for abstracts and to suggest the keynote speakers and special sessions. The call for abstracts was launched in July 30, 2018 with a deadline of September 17, 2018. 293 abstracts were received and reviewed by the committee in a meeting on October 5-6, 2018. Given the decision to keep the conference at the same size as the Third Conference and given that there were 43 grantees and fellows already slotted to present at the conference, the committee had to choose only 85 abstracts from the 293 submitted.

The conference preparations are well underway and the preliminary program is on the website at http://www.theacss.org/pages/fourth-conference-schedule.

C. Grants and Fellowships Programs

Funding for the ACSS grants and fellowships program are from Sida (RGP and NPF); IDRC and Carnegie (ECFP); Mellon Foundation (RAP), and Ford Foundation (SGP and BCF)

2018 was a fruitful and productive year for the grants and fellowships programs, whereby we were able to regularize the grants calendar and expand our program offerings both in number and in scope. Four major grants and fellowships programs had been developed between 2012 and 2016: the Research Grants Program, Early Career Fellows Program, New Paradigms Factory Program, and the Small Grants Program. However, in some previous years the ACSS was not able to offer all four programs, either due to gaps in funding (which led to the postponement of one cycle of RGP for example) or due to staffing problems (which led to postponement of NPF for two years for example). In 2018, however, the ACSS offered all of its signature programs and managed to add three new partnership grants and fellowships programs to its repertoire.

The core grants offered by the ACSS in 2018 (with the call for proposals appearing in the months mentioned) were: the Research Grants Program (November), Early Career Fellows Program (April), New Paradigms Factory Program on a new theme "Gendered Resistance" (July), and the Small Grants Program (3 times a year). These programs provided research funds for fieldwork, support for postdoctoral fellows, writing and mentorship fellowships for junior academic/activists, and seed funding for pilot studies, workshops, travel grants, internships and dissemination activities.

The partnerships developed during 2018 included:

- ACSS-FMSH Short-term Postdoctoral Mobility Program in partnership with Fondation Maison des Sciences de l'homme (FMSH) in Paris

- Research on the Arts Program (RAP) in partnership with the Arab Fund for Arts and Culture (AFAC) in Beirut
- Bassem Chit Fellowship for the Study of Activism in partnership with Rosa-Luxembourg Stiftung Beirut office and Lebanon Support in Beirut

Our programs did not only grow in number and reach but also expanded thematically. Themes covered in 2018 focused on environmentalism, impoverishment, social justice movements, youth, urban spatial inequalities, gender and resistance, arts and culture, and activism. Other programs that were not thematic (such as the Early Career Fellows Program and the ACSS-FMSH Short-term postdoc mobility program) attracted a diversity of topics and themes. On the discipline level, we received applications not only from the social sciences but also from humanities, arts, and cultural fields.

Research Grants Program (RGP5 & RGP6):

The theme of this program for three cycles (2016-2020) is "Environmentalism, Impoverishment and Social Justice Movements: Interdisciplinary Perspectives" and seeks to fund research that examines the relationships between changing environmental conditions and processes of impoverishment in different contexts. A particular focus of interest is the study of political responses to such conditions and the emergence of socio-ecological movements in the Arab Region. Research priorities included such regional challenges as water scarcity, the impact of population displacement, de-development due to conflict and war, ecojustice policies, protection of cultural heritage and the role of expressive culture and art initiatives.

As reported in the previous annual report, the ACSS launched its fourth cycle of its Research Grants Program in 2016. The ACSS selects themes to run for three consecutive cycles, and therefore the last cycle of this theme will be cycle 6. In cycle 5 and 6 of the program, the ACSS accepted applications from both individuals and teams as opposed to cycle 4 where the ACSS only accepted individual applications due to limited funding available to the program during that year.

<u>Cycle 5:</u>

Seven grantees out of 66 applicants were selected during this cycle, with the selection meeting taking place in January 25-26, 2018. The committee was composed of 5 members. The grantees were invited to a two-day workshop on April 3-4, 2018 (see Appendix 11 for workshop agenda) where they presented their projects to the selection committee members and peers from the same cycle. The ACSS organized a special session on Research Ethics as part of the workshop and grantees also benefited from an hour-long one-on-one session with an assigned member of the selection committee where they were able to discuss the comments and recommendations on their projects.

Contracts were signed directly after the workshop enabling the grantees to start with their research projects by April 15th, 2018. The 7 grantees also presented their projects at the ACSS Third Research Forum that was held between April 4th and 7th, 2018 in Amman, Jordan.

Cycle 6:

The call for the sixth cycle of the RGP was announced on August 6th 2018 and closed on November 22nd 2018. This time the call targeted both individual and team projects. For this cycle, the ACSS received 73 applications (36 individual and 37 team projects) from 13 countries. The ACSS secretariat screened out 25 applications from the pool because they were either incomplete or did not address the theme of the call. The Selection Committee meeting took place on January 25-26, 2019 and 4 individual projects and 4 team projects were selected (see Appendix 11 for the grantee list and their project titles, call for applications, selection committee members and statistics about the applications received for Cycle 6). The new projects will start in April 2019. Grantees from this cycle will be invited to a two-day workshop on April 10th and 11th 2019 that will be held in conjunction with the ACSS Fourth Biennial Conference scheduled from April 12th to 14th. During the conference, grantees from cycle 6 will sign their contracts and meet their peers from previous cohorts and other ACSS programs.

As always the RGP encourages interdisciplinary proposals and this theme showed increased participation by specialists in geography, development studies, anthropology, sociology, public health, architecture, urban planning and environmental sciences. Awarded grantees in this program tackled different dimensions of the theme including: the dynamics of rural ecologies, the resilience of urban farmers, environmental education in secondary schools, neoliberalism in urban development, environmental changes in oases, ecological policies, urban risk and environmental justice, refugees and waste recycling, health hazards of colonial occupation, farmers in the context of war, resistance ecologies, ecojustice, and women in agriculture.

Early Career Fellows Program:

Funded by grants from IDRC and the Carnegie Corporation of New York

The Postdoctoral Fellowship Program was launched in 2015; as a major new grant offering of the ACSS. The program was funded through the IDRC grant as well as a grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York. Starting with cycle 5, the program was renamed the Early Career Fellows Program and starting with cycle 5, the term of the fellowship was extended from 9 to 12 months.

Purpose and Objectives of the Program:

For the first four cycles, the program offered 9-month fellowships to enable young researchers, up to three years out of the PhD, to pursue their research and publishing plans, become part of Arab research networks, plan a research career in the Arab region and expand their opportunities in finding tenure in academic institutions in the region. In order to respond to existing needs and talents in the region, the program is open by theme as well as to all disciplines in the social sciences and humanities.

Cycle	Number of Applications	Number of Selected Fellows
1	22	2
2	45	5
3	61	8
4	51	8
5	32	9

Fifth Cycle 2018:

The fellows' reports and the fact that 76% of the fellows (16 out of 21) from cycles 1 to 4 requested a cost extension (of up to $5000) of up to 9 months, prompted us to review the program and to extend the fellowship period from 9 to 12 months (removing the option for a cost or no-cost extension) and the program's name was also changed to Early Career Fellows program to emphasize the research and publishing components of the program, as well as the integration of the Fellows into research and university institutions in the region.

The fifth cycle of the program was launched on April 16th 2018 and the selection committee was increased to 5 members. Three new members replaced members from the previous committee while 2 members continued. For the fifth cycle, 32 applications were received from 9 countries. The members of the Selection Committee met in July 23-24 2017 and selected 9 fellows. Fellows selected in this cycle will present in the upcoming Fourth ACSS Conference that will be held in Beirut between April 12 – 14, 2018.

The fellows in cycle 5 come from different social sciences disciplines, which are: Anthropology, sociology, political science, geography, and education. They covered topics ranging from revolutionary social movements, higher education, gender, human rights education, Islamic law, refugees, and economic heritage.

Lessons learnt in terms of the Early Career Fellows Program:

- The issue of scholar mobility is often problematic for applicants who are employed at national universities. The program was not able to attract a substantive number of junior scholars who obtained their PhD from the Arab region. This issue could be related to their inability to take sabbatical leaves from universities or finding new affiliations in the region or within their countries.
- There is a substantial fluctuation in the number of proposals received in each cycle. The reasons for this need to be better understood but may be related to the first point above.
- Many host institutions were unable to provide the needed infrastructure and resources for fellows. In response, the ACSS has bridged this gap by reinforcing the importance of the university support in enriching the fellows' experiences through consistent communication with host institution itself during the application process and after the selection of fellows. A letter from host institution was added as a requirement for submission during cycle 4 of the program. After selection, the ACSS contacts hosting deans, directors and mentors to reconfirm their commitment in hosting the fellow and ability to provide the necessary means of support. In some occasions, the ACSS met directly with deans to resolve issues of institutional support.
- The American University of Beirut has become a frequent/regular host for a good number of our fellows (8 out of 32).
- Even though this fellowship was described by some of our fellows as a "Passport to Academia", the job market remains extremely precarious in the region, and the best universities absorb very small numbers of PhD graduates. One possible intervention from our side could be increasing the duration of the fellowship to two years in order to give more time to fellows and their host institutions to strengthen their relationships with each other.
- The understanding of the role of mentors gained more ground from cycle to cycle and both mentors and the fellows were able to align their interests and improve upon their working relationships. The mentors' capacity and willingness to integrate fellows in research networks, to give guest lectures in classes, teach courses, and co-publish articles increased. This fellowship proved to be a good exercise for mentors as well to broaden their mentoring skills as opposed to the traditional and rather authoritarian role of academic mentoring prevalent in the region.

The upcoming sixth cycle of this program will be announced in February 2019.

Please see Appendix 12 that includes: first call of the program, call for cycle 5 after revisions, selection committee members, list of fellows awarded between years 2015 – 2018, quotes from fellows' reports, statistics and pictures.

Small Grants Program:

The Small Grants Program (SGP) was initiated in November 2016. The program is funded by a grant from the Ford Foundation and with supplementary funds from the SIDA and IDRC grants to the ACSS. The two themes of the program are "Youth" and "Urban Spatial Inequalities" (based on the request of the Ford Foundation) and the main purpose of the program is to provide junior researchers in the region with access to flexible funding with a short turnover period. The program accepts three rounds of applications spread throughout the year. The SGP supports five types of activities: travel grants to conferences, organizing workshops, internships, dissemination events, and funding for pilot studies.

The cycles of the program thus far have elicited applications that really addressed interesting topics, both separately and at the intersection of these two themes. Grantees that focused on youth centered heavily on themes of economic empowerment, citizenship, and educational outcomes, while grantees that focused on the latter theme were interested in the changing space in the Arab region, the expansion of the public space, and understanding the relationship between residents and their space. A number of applications explored the intersection of the two themes, critically thinking about how urban politics have excluded youth from access to opportunities, healthcare, quality education, and employment, youth leadership and empowerment, sexual harassment in universities, youth democratic political participation, public space utilization, experiences of youth voters, youth activism, and poverty in marginalized neighborhoods.

As the table below shows, in 2018 the SGP program received 203 applications from 16 different countries and awarded 61 grants over the three rounds. The highest number of grants were given to pilot studies and travel grants categories. While we received a fair number of applications for internships, none of the applications met the eligibility criteria. For this program we require all activities (except travel grants) to be implemented in the Arab region. Applicants who apply for internships chose organizations and institutions outside the Arab region. Please see the list of grantees awarded in 2018.

Grant Type	*Pilot Studies*	*Travel Grants*	*Workshops*	*Dissemination Events*	*Internship*	**Number of Applications**	**Total Grants Awarded per Round**
Round 1	8	3	2	0	0	**39**	**13**
Round 2	7	13	3	0	0	**75**	**23**
Round 3	10	10	4	1	0	**89**	**25**
Total per funding category	**25**	**26**	**9**	**1**	**0**	**203**	**61**

On the sidelines of the ACSS Third Research Forum, a half day workshop was organized on April 5th for SGP grantees who were awarded a pilot study grant in 2017 and 2018. The goal of the workshop was to discuss the outcomes and future projects related to the individual grantee's work, and to create synergies across borders, disciplines, and interests. The ACSS invited moderators, who are experts in the fields of the themes of the Program to critique projects and to provide feedback on the work completed. Two of these moderators were the Selection Committee of the first Cycle (Ms. Imen Yacoubi and Dr. Yasser ElSheshtawy). The grantees also presented their projects in panels at the Research Forum and met the program officers responsible for the program at the Ford Foundation.

After having implemented the program for 2 years, the ACSS commissioned an external evaluator to conduct a review of the program and give recommendations, which were taken into account in the development of the program starting with the third quarter of 2018 (see appendix 13 for evaluator's report).

ACSS-FMSH Short-term Postdoctoral Mobility Program in the Social Sciences and Humanities:

This new short-term fellowship program is organized in partnership with the Fondation Maison des sciences de l'homme (FMSH) in Paris, and is managed by both the ACSS and FMSH. This program is funded mainly by the FMSH (the ACSS contributes in kind and with expenses for meetings as well as contributes towards the travel costs of selected fellows). The fellowship is short-term (2-3 months) and targets individual researchers who are residents and nationals of the Arab region. The recipients of this fellowship should have received their PhD degree within the past 6 years, and plan to conduct research in France (including field research, library and archival work, as well as other types of data collection) (see Appendix 14 for the call of proposals). In addition to a monthly stipend of 1,600 €, the FMSH helps applicants in finding a host institution in France for their intended period of stay.

The first call for applications was announced on October 10th 2017 and closed on February 16th, 2018. For the first round the ACSS and FMSH received 29 applications from 6 different countries (Algeria, Comoros, Tunisia, Morocco, Egypt, Palestine). In this cycle, this was the first time the ACSS receives an application from Comoros which signals an expansion of the ACSS's reach to more Arab countries. A selection committee comprised of two Arab and two French researchers, read and evaluated the proposals and met in person in Beirut on March 24th 2018. The selection committee meeting was chaired by both Seteney Shami (ACSS Director General) and Marta Craveri (Director of the International Programs at FMSH). The committee selected 5 fellows to work on their projects in France for a period of 3 months, in institutions such as Centre Emile Durkhein- Bordeaux, Universite D'Angers, and Sciences Po- CERI.

This program will be offered for three consecutive cycles from 2017 to 2019. The second cycle was announced in September 2018 and the selection committee meeting will take place in Beirut on March 1st 2019. (Please see appendix 14 for the call for applications and list of awarded fellows).

AFAC-ACSS Research on Arts (RAP):

In 2017, the ACSS and the **Arab Fund for Arts and Culture (AFAC)** agreed to partner on a collaborative research grants program for funding research on the arts. AFAC is a well-established organization that has been operating in Lebanon since 2007 and supporting Arab individuals and organizations in the fields of cinema, performing arts, literature, music and visual arts while facilitating cultural exchange, research and cooperation across the Arab world and globally. ACSS was particularly interested in developing this program with AFAC given their immense work and specialization in the area of Arts and Culture and given ACSS's newly developing activities in these areas. On the other hand, AFAC had not offered research grants before and saw a good opportunity in partnering with ACSS. The new program is named "AFAC-ACSS Research on Arts (RAP)".

The call for RAP applications was announced on May 14th and closed on August 10th, 2018. Eighty-four applications (1 from a collective, 12 from institutions, 17 from teams and 54 from individuals) were received from 12 Arab countries including Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, and the United Arab Emirates.

A five-member selection committee was formed to review the applications and select the winning projects. The jury comprised of Dr. Omar Fertat, theater researcher and a faculty member and lecturer at Bordeaux-Montaigne University; Dr. Maya Kesrouany, Assistant Professor of Modern Arabic Literature at New York University Abu Dhabi (NYUAD); Dr. Alia Mossallam, writer and researcher and currently Europe in the Middle East-The Middle East in Europe (EUME-FU) Fellow of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation; Dr. Ismael Nashef, Associate Professor of Anthropology and Sociology at the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies; and Professor Walid Sadek, Chairperson of the Department of Fine Arts and Art History at the American University of Beirut.

The selection committee met in person in Beirut at AFAC's offices on October 18th and 19th, 2019 and selected 9 projects (2 teams and 7 individuals). Awarded grantees were invited to a two-day workshop on December 14-15, 2018 where they presented their projects to the selection committee members and peers from the same cycle. The ACSS organized a special session on Research Ethics as part of the workshop and grantees also benefited from an hour-long one-on-one session with an assigned member of the selection

committee where they received comments and recommendations on their projects. Contracts were signed between AFAC and the grantees in January 2019, enabling the grantees start their projects on January 15th 2019. The 9 grantees will also present their projects at the ACSS Fourth Conference (April 12-14, 2019) in Beirut, Lebanon.

The second call for applications will be launched in May 2019.
Please see appendix 15 for the call for application, list of grantees, and the selection committee statement.

New Paradigms Factory cycle 3 on "Gendered Resistance":

As mentioned in the previous report, the lack of funding for a new cycle of NPF in 2015-2017 was something of a blessing in disguise, as NPF needed a good rethinking in terms of process and structure. The program was revised between 2017 and 2018.

In the July 10, 2018, ACSS launched the third cycle of the New Paradigms Factory (NPF) writing fellowship, on the theme "Gendered Resistance." One of the earliest programs established at ACSS, this writing fellowship aims especially at supporting writings by Arab junior scholars and activists to turn their research into publications for a larger audience. Joining the team of mentors for this third cycle was Dr. Hoda El Sadda (English and Comparative Literature, Cairo University), Dr. Sawsan Abdulrahim (Public Health, American University of Beirut), Dr. Deema Kaedbey (Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies, ACSS consultant), and Dr. Maroua Marmouch (Social Anthropology and Ethnology, Paris – independent scholar), all of whom have worked on the topic of gendered resistance from within their different fields of experience.

The ACSS received 29 applications and the mentors selected 8 fellows from Egypt, Morocco, Palestine and Lebanon: Mai Aboul-dahab, Mariam Mecky, Salma AbouHussein, Nada Wahbe, Imane Errami, Salma Hantouli, Pascale Ghazaly, and Rasha Younes. The first workshop was held on November 5-8, 2018. The workshop included sessions on research ethics, research and law practices, activism and research, and a discussion of key theoretical concepts and frameworks relevant to the field of gender studies and to the theme of gendered resistance. Fellows also had a chance to present their projects and to benefit from individual consultations with their mentors.

In addition to the opportunity to explore different styles of writing, what distinguishes this cycle from the previous NPF cycles is that ACSS is working with the fellows towards a publication of selected projects that is set to come out in August 2019.

The fellows met with their mentors virtually or in person (depending on their country of residence) between November and February, they received extensive comments on their essays and revised their papers. Mentors and fellows met again for the second mentoring workshop between January 31st and February 2nd in Beirut Lebanon. The workshop focused on writing styles and guidelines, research, activisms and resistance in the area of gender, and training on presentations in the ACSS Fourth Conference to be held in April 2019. Fellows also gave feedback to their peers on their essays and worked together with their mentors as a collective.

During the last week of February, the mentors will make final decisions on which papers will be included in the ACSS special volume that will come out in August 2019. Those who are selected will present their papers during the ACSS fourth conference. The mentors also agreed on contributing an introduction to the special volume. (Please see appendix 16 for full details about the program).

Bassem Chit Fellowship for the Study of Activism:

In 2018, during the Partners' and Donors' meeting that was organized in Amman in conjunction with ACSS Third Research Forum, Lebanon Support and Rosa-Luxembourg Stiftung (RLS) approached ACSS to develop a new fellowship program in memory of Bassem Chit. Before his untimely death, Bassem Chit was a founding member of Lebanon Support and was its Executive Director between 2008 and 2014. He had more than 14 years of professional experience in information and knowledge management in development and humanitarian contexts in parallel to his social and political activism, in Lebanon and the region. You can read more about Bassem Chit here.

The Bassem Chit fellowship for the study of activism is a one-year post-doctoral fellowship based in Beirut, Lebanon. The fellowship is a joint initiative of Arab Council for the Social Sciences, Lebanon Support, the Orient-Institut Beirut, and Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung Beirut Office. The fellowship aims to give early career scholars (0-3 years out of the PhD) in the social sciences the opportunity to conduct research on activism in the Arab world.

The fellowship particularly seeks to encourage research that explores the genealogy of mobilizing actors, their action repertoires, their framing processes, their modes of actions, and their demands. This can entail (but is not limited to) broader leftist or secular trends as well as activism and social movements mobilizing for alternative issues encompassing environmental topics, gender, right to housing, food or public space. While the fellowship is situated within the social sciences, it encourages interdisciplinary approaches and methodologies, also exploring linkages between academic and action-oriented research.

The partners agreed that the fellowship be hosted at Lebanon Support offices and mentored by their executive director Marie Noelle Abi Yaghi who has a PhD in political science. The ACSS and RLS are sharing the expenses of the fellowship, however the program is managed and administered by the ACSS.

The call for applications was announced on June 20th, 2018 and 7 applications were received. The ECFP selection committee read and evaluated the proposals and recommended one application. The recommendation of the committee was communicated to RLS and LS who together made a decision to accept the fellow, Dr. Cynthia Azzam. (Please see appendix 17 for the full details of the program)

Moving Forward on the Grants and Fellowships Programs: Future Steps

In 2018, planning began for a new 3-cycle of RGP on the theme of "Health, Livelihoods and Wellbeing in Fragile and Conflict Contexts". The next three cycles under this new theme will be jointly supported by funds from the new IDRC grant as well as the ongoing Sida grant. RGP 7 will be launched in June 2019, however Dr. Lamia Moghnieh was hired as a consultant in October 2018 to develop a background concept paper on the theme and to help organize a consultation meeting which took place in February 7-8, 2019.

More generally, we are happy to note the success of ACSS in designing and developing a diverse set of grants programs since the start of its operations. The rise in the number of grantees and applications is one simple indicator of the increasing influence and reach of the programs. At this stage, and after 6+ years in operation, it is possible to evaluate the progress that has been made and to better tailor future programming to the needs of grantees and to expand the reach of the ACSS to less represented countries. More work is indicated in mentoring, promoting publications and dissemination from the work of grantees and fellows, especially through online platforms, including the ACSS website. The ACSS also could do more to ensure consistent interaction and engagement between ACSS and its grantees, especially former grantees.

As mentioned above, by mid-2019, the capacity of the ACSS to further develop its grants and fellowships programs will be strengthened when the newly recruited Associate Director, Dr. Moushira Elgeziri, joins the ACSS. A significant proportion of Dr. Elgeziri's time will be devoted to managing the Grants and Fellowships programs, which will be developed into a Unit with the ACSS organizational structure. The AD with the able assistance of Grants and Fellowships Coordinator Farah Al-Souri and a newly recruited Program Assistant, will be able to deepen and widen the interaction of the ACSS with the grantees and with their outputs. We look forward to a qualitative leap in this important dimension of ACSS work over the coming phase.

D. Working Groups

Funding is provided by IDRC and the Carnegie Corporation and the Sida Supplementary grant for ***Critical Security Studies*** *(CSS) and* ***New Regionalisms****; and by the Mellon Foundation for* ***Critiques of Power*** *(CoP).*

Working Groups aim at bringing scholars from across the Arab region, and globally, who are at different stages in their academic careers, to work collectively on a research theme or project. This collaborative work not only allows networking, mentorship and the sharing of academic knowledge, skills and experience, but it also encourages interdisciplinary research within the social sciences and the design of innovative and diverse outputs targeting different audiences within the region and beyond. As described below each working group develops its structure differently and flexibly depending upon its composition, it aims and the types of outputs it is producing. Currently the ACSS has three ongoing working group and 1-2 more will be launched in 2019.

Critical Security Studies (CSS):

In 2016, the ACSS launched a working group (WG) on Critical Security Studies (CSS) in the Arab region. This interdisciplinary network of scholars is pursuing research that challenges the dominant understanding of the Arab region as a threat to global security and is also providing training and professional mentorship to junior scholars based in the Arab region. The CSS WG is coordinated by Professors Samer Abboud (Villanova University, US) and Omar S. Dahi (Hampshire College, US).

The working group operates through holding regular meetings and workshops, publishing an online forum, and organizing regular summer institutes, all of which aim to encourage students and researchers from the region to conduct research on issues of (in)security. The first phase of this project (2016-2018) laid out the structure and defined the main outputs and signature activities of the CSS WG:

- The core group co-authored a statement that presents the philosophy behind the "Beirut School for Critical Security Studies", outlining the intellectual roots of the project, its research agenda, methodologies and ethics. The article entitled, "Towards a Beirut School of Security Studies" has been published in the journal *Critical Studies on Security*. Abboud, S., Dahi, O. S., Hazbun, W., Grove, N. S., Pison Hindawi, C., Mouawad, J., & Hermez, S. (2018). Towards a Beirut School of critical security studies. Critical Studies on Security, 6(3), 273-295. https://www.tandfonline.com/eprint/wtwRqnxFsgTYgEc5udE6/full

(See Appendix 18 for the full journal article)

- The Collective's website, the Beirut Forum, was launched in June 2018, serving as the main platform for members of the working group and its network to funnel their research ideas and articles

- Two summer institutes were organized, training and mentoring groups of doctoral students, early career scholars, and other researchers for conducting critical research on security issues in the Arab World
- Five thematic subgroups were created, each of which is overseen by a member of the working group, around which they explore the question of how insecurity is produced in the region
- Research grants were given to members of the working group and 5 junior scholars (selected through an open call for research proposals)
- Participation in a number of events and roundtables were organized, whereby core members introduced the Beirut School by presenting the manifesto, discussing the need for critical security studies in the Arab region and mapping out the work of the School

The main goals of the next phase are to expand the network and center the Beirut Forum website as a main outlet for the project and space for discussion while sustaining a constant flow of outputs within the thematic groups in Arabic and English produced by the core and affiliate members of the Collective and its wider network.

See Appendix 19 for an overview of the working group aims, activities and structure.

Structure of the Project:

A working group structure was established during the first phase of this project (April 2016-September 2018): 1) the core working group of 7 researchers, which sets the general research agenda for the project and conducts the main research projects[1]; 2) research affiliates, who contribute to the intellectual and academic outputs through regular contributions to the project website, submission of chapters to planned edited collections, participation as faculty leaders at Summer Institutes, and the like;[2] 3) an advisory board of two senior scholars, which provides guidance and oversight for the project, in addition to help with financial sustainability[3]; 4) Beirut School network: Network members include junior researchers who attended summer institutes and received grants through the working group.[4]

[1] The members of the core working group are Samer Abboud, Omar Dahi, Waleed Hazbun, Coralie Hindawi, Nicole Grove, Jamil Mouawad and Sami Hermez

[2] Among the affiliated researchers are Mouin Rabbani, Sayres Rudy, Laleh Khalili, and Benjamin Muller. Guilia al-Dardiry, Karim Makdisi, Noura Erakat, Bashir Saade and Zaynab El-Bernoussi joined the group this year.

[3] The advisory board is made up of Pinar Bilgin and Mark Salter.

4 Some members of the network are: Ali Muslih, Salim Hmimat, Omer Shah, Eya Jrad, Osama Hassan, Alya Wagdy, Nawal Boumlik and Hatem Hassan

Summer Institutes

The Summer Institute aims to bring together doctoral students, early career scholars, and other researchers for training and mentoring with a team of established scholars who will provide sessions on a range of methodological, theoretical, and professional issues that will equip the participants with the theoretical tools and practical skills necessary for conducting critical research on security issues in the Arab World. The first Summer Institute on Critical Security Studies in the Arab World was held in Dhour el-Choueir in Lebanon on July 18-23, 2017. The Second Summer Institute was held in Broumanna, Lebanon on June 21-26, 2018. The third edition is planned to be held in June 2019 and the call for applications was announced in November 2018.

Research Themes

The WG has five working themes around which they explore the question of how insecurity is produced in the region. The five thematic groups are:

- Political Economy of Insecurity (Omar Dahi and Samer Abboud)– this theme explores how violence and insecurity are increasingly tethered to the political economies of the Arab region.
- Insecurity of Everyday Life (Sami Hermez)– this theme explores the micro-relations of everyday experiences of insecurity by taking people's experiences, understandings, and terminologies as starting points for what it means to feel insecure.
- Technologies of Security (Nicole Grove) – this theme addresses the relationship between technology and security in the region by investigating the implications of a wide range of technologies on the governance of security and the production of insecurity.
- Discourses and Knowledge Production (Waleed Hazbun and Coralie Hindawi)– this theme focuses on the politics of knowledge production and seeks to produce alternative approaches to theorizing knowledge on the region by placing the experiences of peoples and states in the region at the center of theory.
- Borders, Migration, and Mobility (Jamil Mouawad) – this theme explores the making and unmaking of borders in the region in light of ongoing conflicts by exploring the ethnographies and the resilience or erosion of borders.

Core members' Group and Individual Projects

Affiliate and core members of the group are entitled to apply for grants to conduct research projects and any other activities. The researchers would submit proposals to use the funds for planned workshops, translations, and the like – publishing policy and working papers. Therefore, members of the WG benefit from grants

which allow them, each in his or her own field, to work on a project. The individual and group proposals were submitted to ACSS for review and all projects have been approved for funding by ACSS during the first phase. While some were implemented in the first phase (2016-2018), others have been moved to be implemented in the second phase (2019-2021).

Small Research Grants Program (2018-2019)

A major purpose of this program is to provide mentorship for junior researchers and incorporate them into the Beirut Collective's network. Five grantees from five different countries in the region (Iraq, Morocco, Palestine, Syria and Yemen) were selected through an open call for proposals (see appendix 20 for a list of grantees and projects). The grantees were invited to participate in the Second Summer Institute in June 2018, the first meeting in a series of meetings planned with their mentors. The mentorship consists of regular skype calls with their assigned mentors from the WG core group (Samer Abboud, Nicole Grove and Omar Dahi). The ultimate aim of this program is to channel additional outputs in the form of academic journal articles and Beirut forum blog essays. The grantees will have their own panel at the Fourth ACSS Conference in April 2019. While this year's cohort of researchers was selected through an open call, future grants will be given to participants of the summer institute with promising research projects and plans, based on a successful submission of a research proposal to be approved by a committee formed by the WG core group.

Appendix 20 summarizes the research grants given to core and affiliate members, in addition to the small research grants.

Second Summer Institute in Broummana, Lebanon (June 2018)

The Summer Institute hosted 17 researchers from Algeria, Egypt, Syria, Morocco, Iraq, Jordan, Yemen, Palestine, Denmark, and Italy, who had the opportunity to receive feedback on their research projects from established researchers in the field of critical security studies, including: Bashir Saade (University of Stirling), Nicole Sunday Grove (University of Hawaii), Sami Hermez (Northwestern University in Qatar), Samer Abboud (Villanova University), Omar Dahi (Hampshire College), Waleed Hazbun (University of Alabama) and Jamil Mouawad (European University Institute). Guest speakers included Yezid Sayegh and Bahgat Korany.

See Appendix 21 for the booklet containing profiles of participating faculty and researchers, in addition to a list of the research paper abstracts.

Public Panel: "Towards a Beirut School of Critical Security Studies: The Manifesto"

On June 21, 2018, a well-attended public panel was held at the American University of Beirut to promote the working group's collectively authored manifesto and its website "The Beirut Forum". An overview about the

origins and work of the Collective was given by WG co-coordinator Samer Abboud and WG member Waleed Hazbun. Bahgat Korany**,** a professor of international relations at the American University in Cairo, served as a discussant.

Check the Facebook announcement of the event at this link.

Workshop: "The Making of International Relations (IR) in the Middle East: Exploring IR Scholarship and Teaching in, from, and about the Arab World" (June 21-22) [Organized by: Waleed Hazbun and Morten Valburn]

Working with several partners, a workshop was organized in Beirut, Lebanon in June 21-22, 2018, with a group of IR scholars working across the Middle East as well as Europe and North America that brought together multiple ongoing, overlapping projects. The goal was to seed and cross-fertilize these diverse efforts, rather than attempt to formulate comprehensive solutions. The workshop was comprised of a set of focused panels to foster close engagement between attendees who consisted primarily of IR scholars teaching at English-based "American-style" universities in the Middle East and North Africa. Many participants were either scholars of Arab-origin teaching in Europe or North America or else European or American scholars of the IR of the Middle East. The final panel of the workshop offered presentations and discussions by contributors, who were selected based on the initial call for contributions, addressing the question: How should "International Relations" (IR) be taught in the Arab region? Following revisions and editing, contributions will be complied in a pdf handbook while some will be posted as essays in blog form on the Beirut Forum website.

See Appendix 22 for a summary of this workshop and the June 21st public panel.

Appendix 23 contains the call for contributions on Teaching IR in the Arab World

Workshop: (In)Security in Everyday Life: Perspectives from the Middle East [Organized by: Sami Hermez]

The workshop held on September 7-8, 2018 brought together an international group of scholars working on the Middle East. By focusing on everyday life in the Middle East, the workshop aimed to contribute to a subfield around the Anthropology of Security that can offer a radical critique of dominant models of understanding security. Workshop participants investigated how fear, risk, precarity, and instability operate in people's daily maneuverings, and how aspiration, hope, and well-being are achieved and sustained. The following are outcomes ensuing from this workshop:

- Publication of a special issue on critical security studies with a leading academic journal;

- Establishment of a network of anthropologists working on critical security studies in the Middle East, which would foster long-term collaborations and ongoing open-ended dialogue challenging security frameworks;
- Participants will be encouraged to publish versions of their papers or remarks as blog posts on the Beirut Forum website.

See Appendix 24 for the workshop agenda and Appendix 25 for the workshop report.

Public Panel at the World Social Sciences Forum in Fukuoka, Japan

Four core and affiliate members of the working group held a panel during the World Social Science Forum (WSSF) which took place on September 25-28, 2018 in Japan. Panel speakers discussed the origins and work of the Beirut Security Studies Collective so far, as well as presented their individual original papers.

See Appendix 26 for the panel abstract and titles of individual papers.

Workshop: "International Interventions and Local (In)Security: Critical Perspectives on State-Building in the Arab Region [Organized by: Samer Abboud and Benjamin Muller]

A call for abstracts (see appendix 27) was issued in early 2018 to solicit empirical contributions on the study of intervention and state building on the middle east that examine how interventions manifest materially in local spaces and how various political and socio-economic reconfigurations are brought about through these interventions. Guest editors Samer Abboud and Benjamin Muller received more than 25 submissions in Arabic and English, of which eight were chosen to be included in a special issue to *Third World Quarterly: Thematics*. It is expected that the edited collection will be submitted to the journal by May 2019. A workshop was held in late October 2018 at Villanova University, whereby accepted researchers shared their work. Additionally, a panel was organized at the International Studies Association conference which will held on March 2019 in Toronto for researchers who could not attend the workshop.

See Appendix 28 for a summary of this project.

Appendix 29 contains the work plan for the next phase of this working group. Since IDRC funding for working groups ended in October 2018, with the new grant from IDRC taking a different direction, the supplemental funding provided by Sida as well as the continued support of CCNY is enabling the continued development of the CSS work (as well as the New Regionalisms WG).

Lessons Learnt:

The lessons learnt from the CSS Working Group include the following:

- Despite the proliferation and acceleration of foreign interventions, political conflicts and violence in the Arab region, regional scholarship so far has failed to analyze these events from a critical perspective. Researchers based in the region are still influenced by Western scholarship and knowledge produced by international organizations and NGOs. This was reflected in the low number and quality of applications received for the Small Research Grants (21 applications in total, of which 5 were funded). On the other hand, the Second Summer Institute received 64 applications which is a healthy number. This indicates that while there are very few researchers able and interested in researching security issues from a critical perspective, that there is a strong interest in acquiring such critical perspectives among younger scholars. This bodes well for the future if sufficient mentoring and resources can be made available.
- The WG is succeeding in reaching out to junior researchers based in the region and the diaspora through the two activities mentioned above. The WG structure installed serves to foster a collaborative environment between the core, affiliate and network groups of the CSS working group.
- Early career scholars from the Arab region have benefited a great deal from the intensive knowledge transferred by the core working group members through the participation in the Summer Institutes and through mentorship in the CSS small research grants program.
- Based on its experience with the CSS working group, ACSS is rethinking its working group modality. In comparison to previous ACSS WGs who were operating with less synergy and were rather based on an individual grants model, the new working structure is focused on signature activities and research outputs (small research grants, summer institutes, Beirut Forum Website, workshops, public panels) produced collectively by a group of core, affiliate and network members.
- Through individual and group research grants, core and affiliate members of the Collective are gaining momentum and reputation through their own organized workshops and public events and the ACSS is reaching diverse regional and global audiences through these many events.

New Regionalisms:

The ACSS experienced some delays in launching this Working Group but is now pleased to be working closely with Dr. Adam Hanieh (Reader in Development Studies at SOAS-University of London) to coordinate a working group that addresses the continually emergent, inter-connected, inter-penetrated and overlapping nature of regions, with a focus on the Middle East, North Africa region. A background note was written by Adam Hanieh and was titled "Shifting Regional Dynamics of the Middle East: Hierarchies New and Old" (See background note attached as appendix 30) and the first meeting of the group took place in

London on October 24-25, 2018 and brought together 12 senior and junior scholars from the Arab region, Iran, Turkey and some adjacent areas to discuss concepts of the region, its changing dynamics and its connections with other parts of the global system (See appendix 31 for the workshop agenda and list of participants). The questions explored included the following: features of the current regional power struggles, definitions/conceptualizations of crises and regions, and the role of sectors such as infrastructure, logistics, trade and finance in shaping the region's connection to the world market and its accumulation patterns.

The next steps for this working group is to issue a call for papers in March of 2019 that would solicit contributions in Arabic and English aimed for publication as special issues in peer-reviewed journals, depending on the nature of contributions (both quality and quantity). Authors of selected papers will be invited to a workshop to be held in Nov 2019 in Beirut or London.

With this working group, the ACSS hopes to challenge conventional ways of thinking about the Middle East and North Africa as representing a state of exceptionalism and to explore the region as part and parcel of the global system. It will also explore changing relations within the MENA region as well as with adjacent regions.
See Appendix 32 for a summary of this working group's aims and activities.

Critiques of Power:

The "Arab Theory: Critiques of Power" (CoP) working group was formed in 2017 as part of the ACSS strategy to strengthen projects in the Humanities. Bringing together scholars from different fields and institutions, the primary aim of the working group is to revisit and expand the archive of critical Arab theorizing, while also paying attention to forms of organizing and theorizing taking place through different mediums inside and outside academic institutions. Through closed seminars, as well as engagement with the public, the aim of the CoP since its conception has been to reconstruct an alternative understanding of the intellectual legacies of Arab thought in ways that can be useful for scholars, activists, archivists and cultural producers today (see Appendix 33 for a list of CoP members).

The past year marked a critical and transformational year for the working group. In 2018, the CoP repositioned itself more clearly, internally in terms of its own structure, but also externally in relation to other initiatives and organizations, whose work tackles questions of power critically. In addition to holding its closed reading group meetings and outlining its primary activities for the next two years, in 2018, the CoP also engaged with the public for the first time. The latter public activities ranged from a roundtable presentation at the ACSS Research Forum in Amman to organizing a successful two-day forum on alternative archives.

Early in 2018, in the process of holding its closed seminars, it became clear that the original plan of the CoP to have regular meetings throughout the year was not sustainable. Following meetings in New York (March), Amman (April), and Beirut (August), where only 4-6 of the members were able to commit to the trips, CoP members officially agreed on restructuring (See Appendix 33 for agendas of the three meetings). Members therefore organized themselves into two subgroups, each focusing on one intellectual tradition in the Arab region. Currently the two subgroups are focusing on Feminism and Marxism, with an expectation that the focus of the subgroups would shift after a period of time.

The CoP members decided that each subgroup would develop its own bibliography, meeting schedule (mainly through webinars) and written responses to the readings. The two subgroups however exchange their response papers once during the year. The decision was also made to have a general CoP meeting once a year, in the form of a conference in the summer, and where some of the sessions are expected to be open to the public. The Marxism subgroup is presently focusing on the work of the late Marxist intellectual, Samir Amin, while the Feminism subgroup is exploring the trajectory of Arab feminist thought across different generations and political circumstances, from the 60's to current times through different textual, oral and visual productions. A large CoP meeting/conference is being planned for June 2019, in addition to a workshop which would be open to the public. This restructuring has allowed more flexibility of schedules, and an exploration of a wider array of literature through the work of the subgroups.

The restructuring also made it possible to connect with initiatives working on South-South conversations, who are asking similar questions, and exploring, like the CoP, possibilities for collaboration. The CoP therefore met with some members of a project on critical theories from the Global South, who are starting their own exchanges between scholars from the University of Western Cape, the University of Cape Town, and the American University of Beirut. Even though no collaborative project has taken shape yet following this meeting, there was interest from both sides in future collaborations, from exchanging readings, to co-organizing summer schools.

In 2018, the CoP began its engagement with the public for the first time, starting with a presentation during the ACSS Research Forum in Amman in April 2018. Taking part in a round table, four members of the CoP members presented on the work and aim of the working group, the new mediums it seeks to look at, and the connections it hopes to make with other projects and organizations that are producing critical thought. The presentations sparked interested discussions and questions from the audience, who commented on the importance of thinking about new schools of thought, the relationship between research and theory in the Arab world, and on the specificity of the Maghreb experience when it comes to intellectual productions.

Yet it was the organizing of the Forum on Alternative Archival Practices that constituted the major public activity of the working group (see Appendix 33 for event description and program). This two-day public event emerged out of the shared interest of CoP members in the archives, as part of their academic work, but also because some members are themselves part of alternative archiving initiatives. As the CoP had been mapping para-academic groups that engage critically with questions of power in the Arab world, it was easier to select and contact the organizations and initiatives who worked on alternative archives.

Held on December 14-15, 2018, sixteen initiatives were represented, from Lebanon, Syria, Palestine, Tunisia and Egypt. More than 40 people attended, many of them joining both days of the forum. The response from the audience was very positive, reflecting an eagerness for conversations about archival methodologies, ethics, and infrastructure, as well around the use of archives as forms of social justice organizing. The forum put in conversation groups who have archived revolutions and political repressions, feminist groups who work on oral history, organizations working towards transitional justice, and archives of those who have disappeared during the war. Presentations also discussed the archiving of lost geographies and erased memories, through maps, music and sound, orality, ephemeral documents, videos and other materials.

Lessons Learnt and Next Steps:

The Forum on Alternative Archival Practices demonstrated the need for an initiative like the CoP working group, which can create spaces for critical and productive debates between scholars and non-academic groups, and where an exchange of ideas is possible. The topic of archives and archiving has attracted increasing attention in the last few years, especially after the revolutions in North Africa and the Middle East. What the CoP working group has managed to do is to participate in the discussions that are already happening, without reproducing the same activities or replaying the same conversations. Instead, the forum created a space to add and enrich existing conversations around the archives, and to expand the network of groups and individuals interested in this topic.

In addition, the forum became a ground for new ideas and projects for the working group, as two particular suggestions were especially taken into consideration by the CoP. First, participants and attendees of the forum expressed an interest in having similar forums annually, as well as follow-up meetings about archives. As a result, the CoP will now hold a Critical Practices Forum annually, as well as a meeting or workshop on archives. In December 2019, the Critical Practices Forum will tackle questions of translation and power, and we predict similar positive engagement with this topic. In addition, the CoP is also discussing a follow up workshop on the infrastructure of the archives, which many archiving practitioners expressed an interest in.

The second suggestion that arose from the 2018 forum was a need for a lexicon of critical terms in Arabic, and for systematizing and unifying terms and their definitions. As a result, since the beginning of 2019, the CoP has been researching and holding conversations with initiatives who work on similar lexicon projects. Importantly, this lexicon of critical Arabic terms will also give the working group an opportunity to experiment with different mediums to make the project accessible, such as wiki pages. The CoP is also planning to introduce this lexicon project to the public at the fourth ACSS conference in April 2019, by interactively asking people to suggest critical Arabic terms and translations that they struggle with in their academic field. In the meantime, the reading group will continue its closed webinar meetings and in depth discussion of theoretical texts from the Arab world. Furthermore, the CoP realized that organizing a public event gave CoP members a chance to come together. Indeed, a meeting in December 2018, directly following the forum, was the first time that all members were able to be together in one place. Thus a general evaluation meeting of the CoP was held in December, in addition to a reading group meeting by each subgroup.

During both its closed meetings and its public engagements, CoP members have become increasingly convinced in the importance of a pedagogical component to the working group. Therefore, one of the purposes of the reading group meetings is the creation of the pedagogical infrastructure for an ACSS summer academy. In 2020, the CoP will have developed syllabi and reading materials for the ACSS Summer Academy, and will be offering courses based on the work of the reading group since 2017. Other possible outputs that are being discussed by the members of the working group are: publishing a reader of critical texts and/or publishing some of the written responses of the reading groups. The group is also discussing growing its membership.

In short, in 2018, the CoP truly started its project of rediscovering and rereading theoretical productions of the Arab world, while emphasizing their yield to present forms of organizing. What the CoP demonstrates is that a group of scholars, dedicated to linking generations of Arab theorizing, and connecting theories with those who are putting critical frameworks to practice, has a role to play in the production and in the wider circulation of critical knowledge and thought.

E. Training

During 2018 the funding for training was provided by Foundation to Promote Open Society (FPOS), a subsidiary of Open Society Foundations (OSF) and a number of the workshops co-funded with other organizations

ACSS started developing its training programs starting in 2015. It is particularly noteworthy that a number of the workshops initiated in 2017 and continued through 2018 were co-funded with other organizations, and will continue to be so in 2019. In addition to extending ACSS resources further, this fulfils one of the targets

of the 5 year Strategy, namely developing a number of long-term co-funded programs. In 2018, ACSS redesigned its training offerings to further emphasize interdisciplinarity and field building as well as the promotion of academic networks that create opportunities for cross-national research as well as foster regional collaborations for local knowledge production.

In order to achieve this, ACSS conducted (and will conduct) trainings that bring together scholars from across the region who are working on a particular interdisciplinary theme or field (such as Urban Studies, Gender Studies, Media Studies, Cultural Studies, Human Right Studies, and Environmental Studies). These workshops allow for conversations on the state of scholarship and research in that field, as well as a focus on particular methodological approaches that would enhance the participants' abilities to conduct research. Central to this effort is ACSS's partnership with the Odum Institute of the University of North Carolina, with whom ACSS has signed a two-year MoU to conduct training workshops as well as the partnership with Suad Joseph (University of California, Davis) through the Training for Engaged Research in Gender (TERG) funded by the Foundation to Promote Open Society (FPOS), a subsidiary of Open Society Foundations (OSF)

In January 2018, ACSS funded three Arab graduate students (advanced Master's and early Ph.D.) to attend a Winter School at the University of Göttingen entitled "Inherited Inequality and the Formation of the Modern World", held from January 8 – 14. Over the week-long period, the participants joined colleagues from South America and South Asia were provided with a set of rigorous comparative tools, drawing on the historical, sociological and anthropological perspectives and foci of the faculty, to understand pervasive and enduring forms of domination—and solidarity—in the modern world (See Appendix 34 for list of participants and topics discussed).

Also in January 2018, the ACSS partnered with Suad Joseph (University of California – Davis with funding from the Ford Foundation) and the Arab Families Working Group on a workshop on proposal writing and research design. The three-day intensive seminar aimed to train junior faculty (recent PhD's or MA level) in the social sciences in engaged transformative research. The seminar focused on training in proposal writing and research design with additional material on data collection, data analysis, and writing for reports/dissertation/publication. The training was intended to prepare junior scholars for continued graduate training towards their PhDs or assist new PhDs in initiating new research programs for publication. (See Appendix 35 for a description of the Workshop).

The first of the workshops adopting the new interdisciplinary, field-building format was held in Amman, Jordan from July 2 – 6, 2018. The workshop had as its foci urban studies as an interdisciplinary theme and

mixed methods research as its methodological approach. In order to train participants in both topic and method, ACSS partnered with the Odum Institute to provide a specialist trainer in mixed methods research (Dr. Kevin Swartout from Georgia State University), and ACSS provided the topic experts (Drs. Mona Khechen and Serge Yazigi, both faculty members at the American University of Beirut and consultants in the areas of urban planning and design). The workshop brought 14 participants from Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt, and Algeria to Amman for the intensive five-day workshop that focused on the state of urban studies in the Arab region, the complexities of studying the city across the region, and how to conduct effective research using mixed methods approaches. The participants were all working on their master's/doctoral theses, and spent the week incorporating the workshop materials into their projects and refining their proposals. (See Appendix 36 for agenda and Appendix 37 participant list).

ACSS implemented one more training workshop with the Odum Institute in 2018 in relation to the Dataverse project (for more detail please see below in the section on ASSM). This workshop was held in November 30 – December 2, 2018 and it focused on data sharing and archiving. In April 2019, this same workshop will be offered once again, and two more workshops based on the combination of interdisciplinary field and method will be planned and conducted.

Furthermore, the ACSS continues its partnership with Suad Joseph and has co-organized a two-year, four-seminar training program focused on engaged research on the topic of gender violence. The first two seminars were held in February and September 2018, and the final two seminars will be held in 2019.

In October 2017, TERG in partnership with ACSS published the call for applications for the Training to Engaged Research on Gender Violence workshop (see Appendix 38). ACSS handled the logistics of posting the call and receiving the applications. ACSS received 41 applications, and in December 2017, the TERG trainers and their partner at ACSS met and selected 25 candidates to participate in the two-year workshop. The seventeen female participants and eight male participants represent the following countries in the MENA region: Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, and Palestine (the two Algerian participants have since withdrawn from the program due to personal reasons).

Between December 2017 and February 2018, TERG and ACSS planned for the first seminar that was held in Amman from February 23-25, 2018. That workshop had a dual focus: writing research proposals and the theoretical foundations of doing research on gender violence. In that seminar, participants were a) assigned a mentor (one of the four TERG trainers); and b) given a timeline for submitting assignments before the second seminar which was held in Amman from September 27-29, 2018. Over the course of the seven months between the two seminars, all participants have completed the assignments that were evaluated by the

trainers in preparation for the upcoming seminar in 2019 in addition to providing seed grants amounting to US$5,000 for each individual participant for the projects they have developed.

F. The Arab Social Science Monitor (ASSM)

Funding for the ASSM is provided by the Carnegie Corporation. In 2018, the Palestine Survey is funded by Sida and the Dataverse project is funded by a sub-grant from the University of North Carolina.

The Arab Social Science Monitor (ASSM) is one of the major projects of the ACSS and aims to establish a permanent observatory dedicated to surveying and documenting the landscape of the social sciences and higher education in the region. It documents the infrastructure of knowledge production in terms of institutions and resources and chronicles the work, occupations, careers and accomplishments of Arab social scientists in the Arab region. It also aims to account for the evolving capacities and characteristics of the social science community across the region.

To that end, the ASSM collects and analyzes both quantitative and qualitative measures. Data for the ASSM is collected through various tools, the major ones being (1) a periodic survey of individual social scientists, (2) a database of resources and institutions working on social sciences and (3) commissioned papers for topical issues.

The ASSM makes that data and knowledge produced publically available through different mechanisms. These main mechanisms are (1) an online database and (2) publications. One of the key publications of the ASSM is the Arab Social Science Report (ASSR) a biennial publication on the state of social science research in the Arab region. Other publications that will be produced by the ASSM include data reports, country profiles and analytical papers on particular issues arising from the data.

Work on both the second and third Arab Social Science Reports (ASSR) was underway in 2018. In addition, 2018 saw the further development of data collection tools (ASSM Database, Arab Public Data Initiative with the Odum Institute of the University of North Carolina). Implementation of the ASSM activities in 2018 was through more institutional collaborations and engagement of the ACSS focal points.

Governance and Staffing:

An ASSM Advisory Committee meets once a year and guides the technical and programmatic aspects of the project (see Appendix 39 ASSM Advisory Committee members). The committee met on April 4, 2018 in Amman during the 3rd biennial ACSS Research Forum (see Appendix 39 for ASSM Advisory Committee

meeting agenda). In addition to the annual meeting of the committee, its advice and guidance or that of its individual members of the committee is sought on specific issues when needed.

In addition to Nada Chaya who continues as Project Leader of the ASSM, in March 2018 the ACSS hired a fulltime Research and Data Analyst (Rami Ofeich) whose main role is data management for the ASSM project, including the database of social science resources and institutions as well as the regional and country-specific surveys. He also plays an important role in the Dataverse Project described below. In addition, a part-time Program and Research Assistant (Rana Osman) works on as-needed-basis compiling data, preparing bibliographies, proofreading manuscripts and other various tasks. The projects of the ASSM also require the hiring of consultants, often on a long-term (e.g. 2-year) although part-time basis.

Second Arab Social Science Report:

During the dissemination of the 1st Arab Social Science Report, audiences showed much interest in knowing about the topics that social scientists in the region address in their writings. This guided the conception of the 2nd ASSR - 'Social Sciences in the Arab Region: An Approach to Arabic Language Outputs (2000-2016)' العلوم الاجتماعية في العالم العربي: مقاربة للانتاجات الصادرة باللغة العربية (2000-2016).

Professor Abdellah Hammoudi (Anthropology, Princeton University) is the Lead Author of the 2nd ASSR and he worked closely with a team of researchers and ACSS staff and contributed to defining the content of a series of background papers and developing their TORs. He developed a concept note/conceptual framework which laid out his vision for the 2nd ASSR and guided the work on the background papers.

The ambitious purpose of the background papers was to conduct a critical review of select social science disciplines in the Arab region in order to gauge the content of social science products in the Arab region. These reviews covered works written in Arabic by Arab writers in the Arab region as well as works written in other languages by Arab writers which were subsequently translated into Arabic since year 2000. Of note is that 7 of the 8 authors of these background papers are junior scholars whose involvement in this effort is helping them build their academic credentials.

Dr. Hammoudi wrote the Report over the summer of 2017 after all the background papers were ready. He submitted a draft of the 2nd ASSR early October 2017 which was reviewed by internal and external reviewers who suggested a number of revisions. The report was finalized, copy edited, produced and printed in 2018. All the references used for the writing of the 2nd ASSR and the background papers were compiled in a comprehensive bibliography that contains over 1,500 citations. The 2nd ASSR as well as 4 of the background papers and the bibliography can be accessed at this dedicated page on the ACSS website

http://www.theacss.org/pages/arab-social-science-report-2017. It was decided that the 2nd ASSR will not be translated in full to English and French given the nature of its subject matter (Arabic language production in the social sciences) but rather a detailed executive summary and a full set of the data charts and tables will be made available in English and French.

In terms of dissemination, the background papers are being disseminated separately, in addition to the dissemination of the 2nd ASSR. Dissemination events included the following:

- The 2nd ASSR was presented by its lead author Abdellah Hammoudi on April 3, 2018 in Amman at a public plenary of the 3rd biennial ACSS Research Forum. The public plenary introduced the ACSS and the ASSM project to a Jordanian public and reviewed the objectives and content of the ASSR publications, including the 1st ASSR published in 2015 and the 3rd ASSR planned for 2019. The major focus of the event was the 2nd ASSR. Around 100 people attended the public plenary (see Appendix 40 for ASSM Plenary agenda).
- Three of the background papers of the 2nd ASSR (Anthropology in the Maghreb, Sociology in the Maghreb and Periodicals) were presented by their authors (Amina El Mekaoui, Hisham Ait Mansour and Mokhtar El Harras) at the 26th General Assembly of the Latin American Council of Social Sciences / El Consejo Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales (CLACSO) in Buenos Aires, Argentina (19 to 23 November 2018) (https://www.clacso.org.ar/conferencia2018). CLACSO's General Assembly takes place every 3 years and such presentations help to foster debate between the two regions.
- Amina El Mekaoui and Hisham Ait Mansour, who co-authored the background paper on Anthropology in the Maghreb region for the 2nd ASSR, were invited to contribute a chapter to the manual "Islam and Muslims in the contemporary era" based on the background paper they wrote for the 2nd ASSR. The chapter is titled "Revision of the Maghrebi production in the field of anthropology in Arabic from 2000 to 2016". The manual is an academic tool for undergraduate students in International Relations, Political Science and other related careers and will be edited by the Universidad de las Americas Puebla at the end of 2018.
- Dr. Hammoudi was interviewed on camera by Dr. Bassam Haddad (ACSS Board of Trustees member) and a 10-minute video was produced by a young filmmaker (Deborah Ephrem) with whom the ACSS worked closely in finalizing the video which can be accessed at this link https://youtu.be/achox02kpX0.

Review Volume:

Five of the background papers that were prepared for the 2nd ASSR will be part of an ACSS Review Volume that will be produced in partnership with UNESCO who is eager to see such outputs published and disseminated. The Review Volume is important from two points of view: as a vehicle for the evaluation of knowledge production in the region and building awareness of the topography of such production, including the gaps in research and publishing. In addition to the 5 background papers, the Review Volume includes 8 papers from the following ACSS activities: (1) Background paper for the Conference on "Recentering the humanities: Theories, approaches, knowledge production" that was co-sponsored by UNESCO (Byblos, Lebanon, May 2017); and (2) Papers for the ACSS panel at the World Humanities Conference (Liege, Belgium, August 2017) (see Appendix 41 for Review Volume list of papers).

The authors of the papers were invited to a very fruitful workshop in Beirut on July 19-20, 2018 (8 of 13 authors were able to attend the workshop) to brainstorm and discuss – with the ACSS as well as with UNESCO which was represented by Seiko Sugita, Program Specialist – how to further develop and publish the papers as well as how to move ahead with the aim of assessing the state of social sciences and humanities/arts in the Arab region (see Appendix 42 for Review Volume Authors workshop agenda). The Review Volume, to be published by July 2020, will be co-edited by Mohammed Bamyeh (member of the Board of Trustees) and Seteney Shami, and will be published in Arabic and made available on the ACSS website. The Review Volume will also have an Executive Summary in English and French so that it reaches varied audiences.

Third Arab Social Science Report:

The 3rd ASSR, which will be produced in 2019, will focus on the characteristics and career trajectories of individual social scientists in the region. A great deal of conceptualization and preparations for the 3rd ASSR took place in 2017 and by December 2017, the methodology of the periodic survey of the characteristics individual social scientists was developed and finalized and a methodological report was written. It will be based on a regional survey that will collect information on the following: personal information, education, employment, knowledge production/research, and language proficiency. Like the 1st and 2nd ASSR, this report will be supported by a series of background papers.

Since there are no dedicated directories of Arab social scientists or the few available have not been updated for several years (per the results of a paper that the ACSS commissioned in 2017), it was decided that data collection for this round of the survey would target social science and humanities faculties of universities besides the Arab region in addition to the ACSS.

For universities, we compiled a list of the email addresses of social science and humanities faculty members in Arab universities available on the websites of these universities. For the ACSS community, the information is available in a dedicated database of the Profile of all individuals who had applied to the ACSS activities or events (membership, grants & fellowships, working groups, trainings, and/or conference) since 2012 (http://applications.theacss.org) with new applicants in any of the cycles systematically added to the database. The core Profile was designed to include the same questions (Personal data, Education, Employment, and Knowledge Production/Research) as those of the periodic survey so it would be used as a data source for it.

Data collection for a regional survey on the characteristics of Arab social scientists was conducted through an online survey which started in late fall 2018, a delay in its scheduled launch due to technical issues arising from the dual purpose of the questionnaire: (1) the administrative purpose of documenting applicants to ACSS activities and (2) Research purposes for the periodic survey of Arab social scientists. (see Appendices 43, 44, & 45 for Survey Cover letter, Informed consent, and Questionnaire, respectively).

The ACSS has identified a lead author for the 3rd ASSR – Ahmad Dallal, Dean, Georgetown University in Qatar (GU-Q) – and developed a timeline with him for the writing of the 3rd ASSR.

Baseline Study of Higher Education and Research in Palestine:

With funding from, and in collaboration with, the Sida, the ACSS facilitated the commissioning, through an open call for proposals, of a Research Team to conduct a 'Baseline Study of Higher Education and Research in Palestine' (see Appendix 46 for Sida and ACSS Palestine Study open call). The purpose of the Baseline Study is to (1) obtain an overview of the current state of Higher Education and Research systems and structures in Palestine, and (2) survey the social sciences and humanities research infrastructure and the characteristics and qualifications of social sciences and humanities researchers in Palestine. The ACSS launched two rounds for the open call since the first round did not yield a suitable proposal/research team for the Study. Selection of the Research Team for this ambitious survey was done by a Selection Committee convened by the ACSS based on their research expertise. The Applied Research Institute Jerusalem (ARIJ) was selected in February 2018 to conducts the Study. Jad Issac, The General Director or ARIJ and the Study Lead Researcher, and part of his team met with the ACSS team and Sida on April 3, 2018 in Amman (see Appendix 47 for ARIJ and Sida and ACSS meeting Agenda). The first draft of the Study was submitted in December 2018. There was delay in the submission of the first draft due to the tense political situation in Palestine Spring 2018 as well as due to the "delay in response time from most stakeholders" that led to the extension of the survey deadline. The first draft of the Study was sent to reviewers for their feedback that would inform the second draft of the Study due in February 2019.

Iraq survey:

The ACSS was planning to collaborate with The American Academic Research Institute in Iraq (TARII) – www.tarii.com (coming soon), https://twitter.com/TARII_Iraq – on a 2-year pilot project titled "Interdisciplinarity and Social Science Education at Iraqi Universities". The objective of the project is to gauge the potential for inter-disciplinary social science work in Iraq by (1) piloting data collection on social science infrastructure and individuals and (2) offering an online/blended interdisciplinary course on 'Cities and Urbanism'. Data collection and the online course will be conducted at five largest undergraduate university communities in Iraq. The online course will be offered to undergraduates in a liberal arts style classes that emphasize critical thinking and analysis and will be modeled after the highly successful course that the ACSS organized for undergraduate students in 2016. The 2-year pilot project was greatly due to leadership and internal staff changes at TARII in 2018 and it is hoped that the project will start in 2019.

ASSM Database:

During 2018, data collection for the database of social science institutions and products expanded to include Humanities, in line the ACSS goal of expanding its work into the Humanities fields. The database now includes the following disciplines: Anthropology, Archeology, Art History, Cultural Studies, Demography, Development, Economics, Educational Sciences, Gender Studies, Geography, History, Interdisciplinary Studies, Library / Information Sciences, Literature, Media, Philosophy, Political Sciences, Psychology, Regional / International Studies, Religious Studies, Sociology and Urban Studies (see Appendices 48 & 49 for examples of statistics gleaned from the database).

ACSS Dataverse:

The Arab Public Data Initiative is a new initiative of the ACSS in collaboration with the Odum Institute for Research in Social Science at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The grant period is for 24 months (the pilot phase of the project) with a starting date of 1 June 2018.

The Arab Public Data Initiative aims to address the fact that quantitative research methods and the datasets to which they are applied are not widely accessible in the Arab region. The Initiative aims to promote the norm of data preservation and data sharing among social scientists and research institutions, and to assist in developing policies and procedures for data archiving in the Arab region.

One of the main activities of the Initiative is the creation an Arab Social Science Data Archive – ACSS Dataverse – as an ongoing resource with a growing number of datasets on the Arab region for use by Arab social scientists. Another activity is capacity building in different countries in the region for researchers,

administrators, librarians, and archivists, focusing on the importance of data archiving for social science and public policy, and on global best practices in data archiving.

The ACSS Dataverse will be jointly managed by the Arab Council for the Social Sciences and the Odum Institute. It will create an online, public-access archive for social science data produced in and on the Arab region. A preliminary version of the interface is already online at http://dataverse.theacss.org.

Toward these goals, the ACSS will solicit donations of datasets from social scientists and research organizations, process them in keeping with global data archiving standards, post them on the dedicated website, and make them available at no charge for the benefit of current and future generations of social science researchers.

An Advisory Committee was formed to guide the work of the ACSS Dataverse (see Appendix 50 for ACSS Dataverse Advisory Committee members) which met twice in 2018, in May 2018 and October 2018 (see Appendix 51 & 52 for Advisory Committee Meeting's Agenda).

A series of forms was developed for the project (FAQs, Internal Workflow, Datasets Preparation Guidelines, and User Guide). In addition, two legal documents were adapted by an IP legal firm to conform with Lebanese law since the ACSS is based in Lebanon; these forms were also translated by the legal firm to Arabic and French (see Appendices 53 & 54 for ACSS Dataverse legal forms).

The ACSS engaged a Senior ACSS Dataverse Consultant – Francois Farah – to reach out to individuals and organizations identified by the ACSS and the ACSS Advisory Committee and persuade them to deposit their data sets in the Dataverse. One of the deliverables of the Senior Consultant was to write a progress report at the end of 2018 assessing progress and challenges. The main challenge he pointed to in his progress report was the need for a more personalized approach to datasets curation than done during the first four months of the project implementation. He pointed to the need for a strong, clear and targeted communication strategy that would involve a direct, pro-active, personalized and one-to-one outreach approach with dataset donors. This is due to the:

a) the usual apprehension of sharing or disclosing data that is considered rather private, discrete and valuable,
b) the uncertainty about the risk of misuse and/or abuse of data by third parties,
c) the possible unfamiliarity with the new Dataverse concept,
d) the complex technical aspect and need for tailor-made technical support, and

e) the need for financial requirements that may go beyond the token financial support, which could be perceived to be rather inconsequential.

By end of 2018, the Senior Consultant decided to discontinue his work on the project since he cannot invest the needed amount of time to curate datasets. The ACSS is now searching for another Senior Consultant to carry on the work.

As part of the Dataverse project, a training workshop was held in Beirut from November 30 to December 2 and was attended by 13 participants from across the Arab region and from various backgrounds (eg Economics, Political Sciences, Media/Communication, Library and Information Sciences) (see Appendix 55 for ACSS Datavesre workshop agenda). The trainers were Brian Washington (Senior Research Data Analyst/Lead Data Archivist at the The Social and Economic Survey Research Institute (SESRI), Qatar University) and Armin Straube (Teaching Fellow in Library and Information Science at the University College London in Doha, Qatar). The workshop was very engaging and successful in introducing the Dataverse concept and training in skills of data archiving and data management. Similar training workshops will be held again twice in 2019.

Mapping Gender Studies in the Arab Region Planning Workshop:

The ACSS hosted in its offices and participated in a three-day workshop on April 19 to 21, 2018 on mapping gender and women's studies frameworks in the Arab Region (see Appendix 56 for Mapping Gender Studies workshop agenda). The ACSS was interested in this workshop given the intersection of interests between the proposed project and the ASSM in mapping social science capacities, resources and uses in the Arab region. The workshop was organized by the University of California Davis and Arab Region Consortium (UCDAR), a group of six universities (American University of Beirut, American University in Cairo, Lebanese American University, Birzeit University, American University in Sharjah, and the University of California, Davis) that engages in collaborative, cross-disciplinary research on cutting-edge national, regional and international issues.

The workshop brought together scholars from the Arab region to formulate the research plan and anticipated outcomes for a study examining (1) what knowledge on gender and women's studies has been produced in the last half century, (2) how that scholarship has intersected with political and social currents, and (3) in what arenas this scholarship has led to ground-breaking frameworks for understanding and transforming gender relations and women's conditions.

Looking Forward:

2018 was a year of growth, expansion and increased institutional collaborations as well as tool development for the Arab Social Science Monitor (ASSM). The growth was both in the number of projects that the ASSM is overseeing as well as the number of staff. As described above, the major developments included the following: the expansion of the ASSM institutional database to include humanities fields; the launch of the ACSS Dataverse as a new concept together with related capacity building; launching an online survey using a tool that was harmonized in 2017 with the ACSS Grants Management System to standardize data compiled from various sources.

Data tool development and expansion will continue is 2019, especially that the ASSM has a full-time Data Analyst. As we did for universities in 2018, we will revise the lists of social science and humanities research centers, professional societies, periodicals, and publishers and phase them progressively into the ASSM institutional database. We will also develop Statistical Annexes to be published with each ASSR and that will become the standard tables for the ASSR.

Collecting and compiling data, especially for new tools and initiatives, brings its own challenges. The main lesson learned in 2018 was the need for more time investment and local on-the-ground presence for follow-up when it comes to data collection and compilation. In addition, the complex technical aspect of many ASSM activities points to the need for specific skill sets and expertise, both in its staff and consultants. It also points to the need for more tailor-made technical support. The next phase will be that of increased collaboration with in-country institutions, experts or focal points.

G. Research Ethics Initiative

Funding for this initiative was initially provided by a supplementary grant from IDRC in 2016. Ongoing work is funded through core funds including the Ford Foundation Build grant.

The Arab Council for the Social Sciences (ACSS) launched and implemented a pilot project in 2016 to promote regional collaboration on relevant research ethics guidelines, practices and structures. The Initiative aims to:

- Strengthen research ethics infrastructures in the Arab region;
- Build a network of individuals and institutions that can contribute to the development of a culture of research ethics in the region (research institutions, think tanks and NGOs…);
- Strengthen the capacity of the ACSS to mentor and train its grantees on research ethics principles and issues.

Based on learnings from the pilot phase (2016-2017), the ACSS was able to introduce various training and capacity-building methods such as the development of case studies to illustrate ethical conundrums faced by researchers in the Arab region. ACSS also developed its own document on Ethical Guidelines for Social Science Research and a working research ethics questionnaire, which both serve to encourage researchers to engage in ethical, collaborative and reflexive research in terms of their methods and content, as well as the ways in which they choose to present their research (See Appendices 57 and 58 for the most recent versions of the Guidelines Questionnaire in English and Arabic). In 2018, the ACSS began to more robustly mentor its own grantees on the issue of research ethics as training sessions became an integral component of every grantee workshop. Furthermore, and in line with its goal to partner up with active individuals and institutions involved in research activities, the ACSS continued to provide training sessions to local organizations and researchers. Through these activities, ACSS strives to develop a community committed to a culture of research ethics in the Arab region and to develop the usefulness of its training tools and methods. In 2018, a number of research ethics related activities were organized by ACSS:

- The research ethics roundtable at the Research Forum and a training session with grantees from the fifth cycle of the Research Grants Program at the ACSS Research Forum (April 5-8, 2018)
- Training session with grantees of the New Paradigms Factory on Gendered Resistance (Oct 31, 2018)
- Training session on Research Ethics with the NGO Ettijahat, as part of its "Research: To Strengthen the Culture of Knowledge\ Sixth Edition" Programme (Nov 26, 2018)
- Presentation on Research Ethics for the "Research on the Arts" grants program in collaboration Arab Fund for Arts and Culture (AFAC) (Dec 14, 2018)

As a result of these experiences, the ACSS has drafted a proposal for developing an online platform for dissemination and discussion of research ethics principles and practices. Appendix 59 contains the draft of the online platform to be developed by the ACSS.

Building upon its progress during the initial phase of this project, the ACSS plans to deliver the following outputs in the next two years:

- Set up and launch the online interactive platform
- Finalize the Ethical Guidelines for Social Science Research
  ACSS is currently conducting a literature review in order to revise and update its guidelines with the current debate on principles and practice of research ethics.
- Develop a Training Manual: An Essential Guide to Ethics in the Social Sciences
  The Manual will present basic case studies related to ethics in Arabic and will serve as an

introduction to ethical principles in social science research. The manual will be produced in Arabic and will adopt the format of an academic syllabus including a course description, objectives and learning outcomes. Future trainings will be delivered based on this manual.

- Issue a call for advanced case studies

  The call for submissions of advanced case studies seeks to identify potential contributors on issues about BDS, colonialism, Experts/Researcher etc… who will deliver 5 case studies that will be posted online (on the electronic platform).

H. Regional, South-South and Global Collaborations

From inception, the ACSS has given importance to South-south, cross-regional and global collaborations as part of its identity and mission. The ACSS seeks to be an entity through which Arab researchers will engage in robust Arab region collaborations and networking but also become integrated into cross-regional and global research projects and social science convening.

The ACSS priority for South-South, cross-regional collaborations has always been to work with Codesria and CLACSO, as sister organizations. Over the years there have been various exchanges during global forums (e.g. ISSC – now ISC - meetings). We particularly envisage collaboration on the issue of open access publishing, research ethics in conflict contexts as well as the exploration of joint themes of interest.

2018 saw a leap forward in interaction and collaboration between the three organizations:

CLACSO:

The Latin American Council of Social Sciences (CLACSO) honored the ACSS with a special award in recognition of its contributions to the promotion and advancement of the social sciences in the Arab region during its 8th Latin American and Caribbean Conference on Social Sciences, which took place on November 19-23, 2018 in Buenos Aires. Titled "Struggles for Equality, Social Justice, and Democracy in a Turbulent World," CLACSO's 8th Conference was part of the First International Forum on Critical Thinking, a large, diverse, and open gathering of over 40,000 participants, including world leaders; prominent political figures; progressive academics, intellectuals and students; human rights groups; organizers; and activists.

CLACSO's tribute to the ACSS comes at a crucial time when academic freedom in the Arab region is increasingly at risk, as authoritarian regimes seek to shape Arab higher education and impose limitations on scholars' freedom to inquire, research, teach, communicate ideas, and report facts, and external interventions and armed conflicts damage educational structures, inhibiting people's access to education.

"Our recognition of the Arab Council for the Social Sciences is also a tribute to all those Arab intellectuals who fight and have fought for the construction of a more just, freer, democratic and united world," said Pablo Gentili, CLACSO's Executive Secretary in announcing the award.

CLACSO's 8th Conference featured exhibitions, film screenings, keynotes, lectures, panel discussions, and roundtables with outstanding figures from the political, academic, and social fields, who are known for their contribution to the construction of a more democratic, sustainable, and free world.
Seteney Shami spoke at the opening session in accepting the award and also took part in several panels to discuss issues related to the democratization of academic knowledge, South-South cooperation, and open access scholarly communications.

In addition, ACSS BoT member Mokhtar El-Harras (Mohammed V University), and ACSS-affiliated researchers Hicham Ait Mansour (Mohammed V University) and Amina Al-Mekaoui (Mohammed V University) took part in a special session exploring knowledge exchange between the Middle East, Africa, Asia and Latin America. El-Harras, Ait Mansour and Al-Mekaoui discussed their work on the 2nd Arab Social Science Report.

CODESRIA:

The ACSS attended and sponsored a panel at 15th General Assembly of CODESRIA that was held in Dakar, Senegal from 17 to 21 December 2018. The theme of 15th Assembly was "Africa and the Crisis of Globalisation" ("L'Afrique et la crise de la globalisation"). The Assembly, which meets every 3 years and focuses on one scientific theme each time, was attended by about 350 colleagues from universities and research in institutes in approximately 35 countries mostly from the African continent.

The theme of the ACSS-sponsored panel was "Environmentalism, Rural-Urban Dynamics and Globalization in North Africa" ("Environnementalisme, dynamique rurale-urbaine et mondialisation en Afrique du Nord") during which 2 ACSS grantees presented their ACSS-sponsored research. The first panelist was Fouzia Borj from Hassan II University in Morocco and the title of her presentation was "La crise du développement des oasis marocaines: transformations des pratiques agricoles et conflit de gestion des droits à l'eau dans le contexte de la Mondialisation." The second presentation was by Lahcen Ameziane who is on the Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences, Mohammed V University in Morocco and the title of his presentation was "Nouvelle politique urbaine: justice sociale, Environnement et Mega-projects dans les villes du Maroc." The 2 papers were presented in French and discussed the impact of globalization on access to and redistribution of resources and space in Morocco, the first in a rural setting and second in an urban setting. In addition,

Nada Chaya gave an overview about the ACSS, its mission, governance and main activities including the Arab Social Science Monitor (ASSM) project (see Appendix 60 for CODESRIA Conference ACSS Panel).

InterAsia:

As mentioned in previous reports, the ACSS has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the InterAsia Partnership which included (in alphabetical order) Duke University, Göttingen University, the Hong Kong Institute for Humanities and Social Sciences, the National University of Singapore, the Social Science Research Council and Yale University. According to this MOU, the ACSS contributes to the wider InterAsia Initiative by funding the participation of Arab region scholars in activities of the Initiative as well as organizes activities to encourage "West Asia" scholars to connect with scholars of other parts of Asia and to rethink their research in the broader geographical context. UNESCO: organizing a regional consultation conference and Arab participation at the World Humanities Conference

Striking from the Margins Project:

The ACSS signed a MoU with the Central European University in January 2017 to partner on a project entitled 'Striking from the Margins'. Seteney Shami attended a workshop at CEU between June 15-18, 2017 and gave a lecture as part of the seminar series of the project. The ACSS, together with CEU and the Issam Fares Institute at the American University in Beirut collaborated on organizing a joint conference in January 15-17, 2019 in Beirut entitled "Striking from the Margins: Religion, State and Devolution of Authority in the Arab Middle East." The conference tackled a variety of debates, with a focus on Syria, Iraq and other countries in the region experiencing extreme violence and dislocation. (please see conference webpage on https://www.strikingmargins.com/news-1/2018/12/06/sfm-conference-at-aub-beirut

V. OUTPUTS, DISSEMINATION AND ELECTRONIC PLATFORM

Through all these activities, the number of outputs enabled by the ACSS or produced directly by it has been steadily growing. The table in Appendix 61 (Grantees Outputs) describes all the outputs hitherto produced through the various grants and research programs.

A. Online Activities

ACSS Online Directory:

Over the past two years, the ACSS has been working on developing an online directory that captures all the organization's outputs, which include ACSS-funded research, as well as ACSS projects. Work has

been progressing somewhat slowly on this, especially since there are several interlocking parts for it to function smoothly, including the revamping online applications process as well as of the website as whole, both of which have been delayed. The plan is to work on featuring the database of outputs online in two ways: 1) In combination with the revamped website, we will create the system for the outputs to appear as part of each grantee profile; and 2) We will publish the directory as an online searchable database.

ACSS Website

As our grants and activities grew in 2018, we continued to update our website to reflect our expanding offerings. New pages (for programs, projects or activities) have been added and grantee selections are regularly uploaded to the website.

We also continued to implement our strategic plan for the ACSS blog, known as the Digest, which is the most dynamic part of our website. Over the past year, we continued to diversify the type of content featured, and increased our coverage of our own events and activities, especially in Arabic. As our Focal Point in Palestine has become more established, we've been able to shed more light on its activities, by regularly featuring updates on their work. We hope to be able to do the same with our Algeria Focal Point in the coming year. Calls for Applications and job opportunities have become regular posts, as more and more organizations contact us to circulate their calls. This has made the roundups of social science calls for the Arab region a periodic staple (published every week or 2 weeks) on our blog, and shared on social media and with our mailing list. In a way, if studied over a period of time, the roundups can now give an idea of the available opportunities for scholars in and from the region.

To help social scientists keep track of relevant forums, we've continued to update our calendar of social science conferences that target the Arab region, drawing on calls we receive or events we find in our scouting and monitoring efforts.

A complete revamp of the ACSS website was going to take place during 2018 allowing it to become more dynamic, to better showcase the ACSS activities and the outputs of the grantees. This was postponed to 2019 due to the departure of the Communications and IT Manager and the delays in recruiting a successor. An IT officer joined the staff in February 2019 and can now begin the process of planning for the new website.

Social Media

As our content has become more diversified (including coverage of activities, calls for the region, job vacancies in the region, interviews with partners and grantees, and curated posts), we have been able to increase and vary our social media posts, which has helped increase our online presence and profile. During the reporting period, our Facebook followers grew by 31% (jumping from 17,400 in January 2018 to 22,907 by the end of December 2018), despite Facebook changing its algorithm to deprioritize business pages in favor of personal posts. What is also worth noting here is that this increase remains organic for the most part, since we have not engaged in any direct online advertisements for the ACSS, except for a few ads to promote existing calls for applications or proposals for specific programs. With respect to Twitter, our followers grew by 43% within the reporting period, going from roughly 1,360 in December 2017 to 1,967 by the end of December 2018. This means that more and more people are finding value in our tweets and are following our account. The growing following on Twitter was helped in part by the live tweeting we did for a series of events that took place in 2018, such as the ACSS Research Forum (see highlights), the Second Summer Institute on Critical Security Studies (see highlights), and the Forum on Alternative Archival Practices (see highlights from Day 1 and Day 2).

ACSS Newsletter

In 2018, we released 4 issues of our periodic newsletter (Issue 1 in English, Issue 2 in English, Issue 3 in English, Issue 4 in English) in the three working languages of the ACSS. Designed to help us keep our community of researchers updated on our activities and the ways in which they can take part in them, each issue of the newsletter highlighted the major activities of the preceding period, including grantee selections and grantee and member publications, and the open calls and events to look forward to in the coming months.

Much like our blog and social media posts, the newsletter has resulted in several mailing list subscribers contacting us for help to circulate calls.

Overall, the kind of response we have been getting through our online communications tools reflects the growing interest in our work and the value in the content that we provide. This, in turn, is helping strengthen the position of the ACSS as a reference for the social sciences and social scientists in the Arab region.

B. Print Activities

Editorial Review Board

Established in 2016, the Editorial Review Board consists of 15 scholars in the field of social sciences (including the members of the Board of Trustees Publications Committee and a representative from the ACSS Secretariat), who serve on a voluntary basis for a term of two years. In 2018, Lena Jayyusi (Zayed University) joined our Editorial Review Board (ERB). We had invited Dr. Jayyusi to join the ERB in order to fill the gap we found in the disciplines represented on the Board, namely media and communication studies. We noticed this gap after receiving several papers related to media and communication, which the current board members could not give feedback on. In 2018, further to a decision taken by the Board of Trustees Publications Committee, we also renewed the term of the current external scholars on the Board. All the scholars accepted to stay on for another term, except one, who declined due to their busy schedule. To replace them and to fill other disciplinary and thematic gaps, we will be inviting 2 to 3 scholars to join the Board in 2019.

Working Paper Series

Our call for Working Paper submissions remained open throughout 2018. We received 21 submissions, 16 of which were by ACSS grantees. Further to a decision by the Board of Trustees Publications Committee and the Secretariat to make the submission of a working paper a grant requirement for grantees in the Early Career Fellows Program and the ACSS-FMSH Short-Term Postdoctoral Mobility Fellowships, grantees started submitting their works as they completed their grants. Out of the 21 total submissions, only 3 were rejected. These were by scholars who aren't ACSS grantees. We published 1 paper in English, which was then translated into and published in Arabic. We have 11 papers that are still currently under review. The low publishing rate is largely due to three main reasons: 1) the unexpected lengthiness of the review process; 2) the difficulty in finding available reveiwers covering the disciplines and topics addressed in the papers submitted; and 3) delays in the submissions and revisions themselves. These are challenges we hope to find ways to address in the coming year through discussions with the ERB and the Board of Trustees Publications Committee, as part of our evaluation of the Working Paper Series.

With respect to print publications, this past year has been a year of preparations for upcoming books and volumes.

Occasional Publication from the Third ACSS Conference

Centered on Ghassan Salameh's keynote titled "The State: Between Longing and Trepidation" at the Third Conference, this Arabic publication will include Dr. Salameh's paper, and four commentaries by four

different scholars reflecting different disciplinary approaches and countries/regions, namely Dr. Rahma Bourqia (Morocco), Dr. Mustafa Kamel El Sayed (Egypt), Dr. Omar El Shehabi (Bahrain) and Mr. Khaled Saghiyeh (Lebanon). This publication is due out in April 2019, and will be launched during the Fourth ACSS Conference.

This publication follows the approach started with the occasional publication from the Second ACSS Conference, which included the keynote speech and the papers presented during the plenaries.

Occasional Publication to Close the Hanna Batatu Lecture Series

Launched in 2015, the first annual lecture series was in honor of the late Palestinian political scientist and historian, Hanna Batatu. Security concerns and technical challenges prevented us from holding the final lecture in this series in Iraq. So to close the series, we will be organizing a special plenary during the Fourth ACSS Conference, during which we will launch an occasional publication that pays tribute to Hanna Batatu and his seminal work. The publication will include:

- The papers of the speakers at the first three lectures, namely Dr. Salim Tamari, Dr. Dina Rizk Koury, and Dr. Thabit Abdullah.
- A biography of Hanna Batutu
- A bibliography for Hanna Batatu
- A commentary by Dr. Haider Saeed, an Iraqi scholar and former student of Batatu's.
- Testimonies from colleagues and students, including Dr. Tarek Mitri, Dr. Philip Khoury, Dr. Ted Swedenburg, and Dr. Samir Makdisi.
- Testimonies and exclusive photos acquired from the Batatu and Reynaud families.
- Clippings of articles on Hanna Batatu from Arab and international newspapers.
- A copy of a handwritten exam by Hanna Batatu, when he was a professor at the American University of Beirut.

In addition to the above, Harvard University recently gave us the permission to include the cover of Hanna Batatu's thesis in the publication.

This book will be published in Arabic. As for the layout's stage, we expect to have the final layout by mid-March 2019; (see Appendix 62 for the preliminary cover). The book will be accompanied by a short documentary film on Hanna Batatu, which will be shown during the plenary at the Fourth ACSS Conference.

It should be noted that the first Hanna Batatu lecture was held in Beirut on October 14, 2015 and was presented by Professor Salim Tamari, Professor of Sociology at Birzeit University, who spoke on "The 1908

Constitutional Revolution as a Critical Point in the History of the Levant (Bilad al-Sham): A reading of the Problematics of Local History". (Please see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qULX9qM0lyw).

The second Hanna Batatu Lecture entitled "Society and History in Iraq between Hanna Batatu and Ali al-Wardi" was held on October 20, 2016 in Amman, Jordan, and was presented by the historian, Professor Dina Rizk Khoury (George Washington University). Khoury's lecture focused on the writings of Hanna Batatu and Ali al-Wardi and the implications of their distinct methodologies to our understanding of the history and politics and present-day Iraq. A video of the event was posted on the ACSS website for further dissemination (Please see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xk0tK8kdzz4).

The third Hanna Batatu Lecture entitled "The History of the Iraqi Communist Party: Between the Academic Hanna Batatu and the Political Activist Aziz Sibahi" was held on October 25, 2017 in Tunis, Tunisia, and was presented by Iraqi historian, Thabit A.J. Abdullah (York University). Thabit's lecture focused on the different approaches adopted by Batatu and Sbahi in writing the history of the Iraqi Communist Party. A video of the event was posted on the ACSS website for further dissemination (Please see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AQN1_JALB5E).

Planned Publications

As described in the 2020 Strategy, the Board of Trustees and its sub-committee on Publications had previously decided that the ACSS should launch a new Social Science Journal. 2019 was to be the planning year for this major new publication. Discussions over 2018, however, went in a new direction. The decision is now not to launch a journal but rather a periodic "Reviews" publication, which would be dedicated to reviewing the state of the field by themes, disciplines, fields, areas of interest. Some issues of the "Reviews" publication would be generated through papers out of various ACSS projects (including the ASSM) whereas others could be compilations and curation of articles and essays published in regional journals and others would be special issues on particular emergent concerns (such as new interdisciplinary fields or new institutional practices crossing the boundaries of academic/activism/policy). A major contribution of this publication would be to present essays that review writings and literature in Arabic, English, French and other academic languages thus enabling cross-referencing and dialogue instead of the pervasive compartmentalization by language which currently characterizes the region. Another justification for this kind of publication is that it would complement and strengthen existing journals and publications in the region instead of setting up a competing outlet in the form of a new journal. The Review Volume is thus important from two points of view: as a vehicle for the evaluation of knowledge production in the region and for building awareness of the topography of such production, including the gaps in research and publishing.

The year 2019 will see the publication of the first "Reviews" issues (in partnership with UNESCO) comprising five of the background papers that were prepared for the 2nd ASSR as well as eight papers from the following ACSS activities: (1) Background papers for the Conference on "Recentering the humanities: Theories, approaches, knowledge production" that was co-sponsored by UNESCO (Byblos, Lebanon, May 2017); and (2) Papers for the ACSS panel at the World Humanities Conference (Liege, Belgium, August 2017) (see Appendix 41 for Review Volume list of papers).

The authors of the papers were invited to a very fruitful workshop in Beirut on July 19-20, 2018 (8 of 13 authors were able to attend the workshop) to brainstorm and discuss – with the ACSS as well as with UNESCO which was represented by Seiko Sugita, Program Specialist – how to further develop and publish the papers as well as how to move ahead with the aim of assessing the state of social sciences and humanities/arts in the Arab region (see Appendix 42 for Review Volume Authors workshop agenda). The Review Volume, to be published by July 2020, will be co-edited by Mohammed Bamyeh (member of the Board of Trustees) and Seteney Shami, and will be published in Arabic and made available on the ACSS website. The Review Volume will also have an Executive Summary in English and French so that it reaches varied audiences.

VI. FINAL REMARKS AND LOOKING FORWARD

The year 2018 was a productive year of growth and development for the ACSS in terms of activities, new programing and developing institutional capacity for fulfilling its mission. Solid and realistic planning is in place through the 5 Year Strategy and through the institutional strengthening enabled by the Ford Foundation BUILD grant. The successful recruitment of a highly accomplished Associate Director, as of April 2019, will greatly augment the leadership team of the ACSS and staffing needs are gradually being met in terms of other functions as well. The focus in the coming period will be on financial sustainability and especially the challenge of planning for an endowment fund. In addition, the ACSS continues to struggle with how to help and protect its grantees in the current political climate. There are only partial answers to these problems, especially in an ever-changing context. The ACSS, guided by its BoT, attempts to be nimble and responsive to both opportunities and challenges as they present themselves.

Institutionally, a major focus of the coming year will be the upgrading of its Information and Technology Systems. Increasingly ACSS projects, especially the ASSM through its database and its dataverse, are requiring ways of digitally storing and archiving data, as well as making it public and at the service of researchers. In addition, there is a need to upgrade the online grants applications and grants management platforms. The recruitment of an experienced IT officer will help in strengthening ACSS capacity in this regard.

In addition, the ACSS is planning to improve its Monitoring and Evaluation and this is a major target for 2019. Two staff members (the Finance and Administration Manager and the Communications and IT Manager) attended a training workshop on Monitoring and Evaluation. However, with the resignation of the Communications and IT Manager in fall 2018, the Senior Communications Coordinator, a new staff member who joined on November 1, 2017, was tasked with a role in this function. In 2019, in addition to the current M&E tools (RBM Logframe, Annual survey of grantees, periodic internal and external evaluations), we will be developing new tools and strengthening internal learning.

Substantively, an important development and expansion of ACSS work over the past two years has been the more systematic reach into the humanities and arts fields and disciplines. While the humanities and the arts already had some presence in ACSS grants and other activities, ACSS now seeks to make a more targeted effort in these areas, considering how the humanities and the arts are essential components of the Arab academic and cultural landscape. Literature (especially poetry and the novel) has long been an important vehicle for social critique and the imagining of better futures in the region. The field of Cultural Studies is experiencing a significant growth and dynamism, fueled in particular by the new energies and creative spaces opened in the aftermath of the Arab uprisings. They are made visible by access to new media and increasing connectivity across the region and globally. However, just as with the academic social sciences, Arab academic departments in the humanities and the arts continue to suffer from poor resources and negative social perception despite absorbing large numbers of students.

Major programmatic developments are also being formulated. Launching in 2019, and with funding for a 2.5 year pilot phase from the Open Society Foundation, will be an integrated research and training program (tentatively called the ACSS Fellows) in order to support, mentor and network students at the Bachelor's, Master's, Doctoral, and post-Doctoral levels. The ACSS has also begun to offer funding support for institutions and not only for individuals. The joint Research on the Arts program in collaboration with AFAC is now offering grants to individuals, collectives and to institutions and is an important learning experience in this regard. In addition, the Research Grants Program will be redesigned in Cycle 7 to also offer funding for institutions. Furthermore, we intend to monitor and evaluate the institutional impact of our other programs and activities, even when they target individual researchers. For example, the Early Career Fellows Program does have institutional impact by affiliating junior scholars with research institutions in the region, providing modest honoraria for their mentors and gently insisting that the institution provide infrastructure and networking opportunities for the fellow. The work of the ASSM and especially the Dataverse project is also increasingly involving collaboration with institutions across the region. All these can be built upon and further developed. Finally, and significantly, a conversation has begun with Codesria to design a joint research grants

program bringing together African and Arab researchers working on the Sahel countries. This will constitute an important addition to the grants offerings of the ACSS, to its South-South institutional collaborations and also to the geographic scope of the research that it supports.

Thematically, the ACSS continues to engage a wide variety of themes through its Grants Programs, its Working Groups, its Conferences, its Training Workshops and other activities. The themes are carefully chosen to promote the aims of the particular activity or modality and usually intend to signal cutting-edge approaches while remaining broad enough to engage researchers from a wide range of disciplines and topical interests. In 2018, ACSS calls for proposals included the following themes: the environment, ecologies, gender, security, resistance, borders, social justice, inequality, refugees, youth, media, urbanism and power in addition to methods and research ethics trainings.

Moving forward, the area of research uptake and of enhancing the dissemination of the work of grantees, fellows and working groups is central as the ACSS seeks to establish itself not only as a funding and capacity building institution but also as a knowledge producer. For this, collaborations with other knowledge institutions in the region is crucial. As described in the report, various formats are being explored for these aims, including co-funding programs, joint activities and conferences, and meetings for exchange and discussion as in the Partners' and Donors' Forum held in Amman in April 2018.

We hope that this report has given a good overview of the status of the various programs of the ACSS as well as the state of its institutional capabilities. We are confident that the ACSS has succeeded in creating a unique identity and niche in the landscape of research organizations, regionally and globally. All this is accomplished, and can only be accomplished, through partnerships and support from many institutions and individuals. The ACSS is immeasurably grateful to its donors and partners for their continued support, trust and encouragement.

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