المجلس العربي
للعلوم الاجتماعية

Arab Council
for the Social Sciences

Conseil Arabe
pour les Sciences Sociales

Annual Report 2018

Third Research Forum Amman 2018

John Kennedy Street, Ain El Mreisseh
Alamuddin Building, 2nd Floor
Beirut – Lebanon
Phone: +961 1 370214
Website: www.theacss.org
Facebook: Arab Council for the Social Sciences
Twitter: @ACSS_org

"The case for the importance of the social sciences is being made in the streets"

Seteney Shami
ACSS Director General

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Acronyms and Links

- ACSS: Arab Council for the Social Sciences (http://www.theacss.org)
- ASSM: Arab Social Science Monitor (http://www.theacss.org/pages/arab-social-science-monitor)
- ASSR: Arab Social Science Report. (http://www.theacss.org/uploads/English-ASSR-2016.pdf)
- BoT: Board of Trustees (2019-2021) | Arab Council for the Social Sciences
- BCF: Bassem Chit Fellowship for the Study of Activism
- CCNY: Carnegie Corporation of New York
- CSS: Critical Security Studies in the Arab Region | Arab Council for the Social Sciences
- ECFP: Early Career Fellows Program (http://www.theacss.org/pages/early-career-fellows-program-main)
- 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

Mission of the ACSS

The Arab Council for the Social Sciences (ACSS) is a regional, independent, non-profit organization dedicated to strengthening social science research and knowledge production in the Arab region. By supporting researchers and academic/research institutions, the ACSS aims to contribute to the creation, dissemination, validation and utilization of social science research and to enrich public debate and public policy about the challenges facing societies in the region.

Objectives of the ACSS

• Identifying and addressing the needs of social scientists and social science communities in the Arab region;
• Enhancing social science capacities of individual researchers, as well as academic and research institutions;
• Encouraging the production of independent, high-quality research;
• Providing forums for exchange and communication among social scientists in the Arab region;
• Articulating and supporting the role of the social sciences in promoting the public interest;
• Promoting and supporting the principles of independent thought, critical thinking, and the academic/intellectual freedom of researchers and scholars in the Arab region;
• Supporting effective networks among research, academic, policy, and practitioners' communities as well as with the public and the media; and
• Supporting the publication and wide dissemination of high-quality social science research in the Arab region.

Vision of the ACSS

Four main principles guide the ACSS:
Quality: The ACSS promotes excellence in social science research.
Inclusivity: The ACSS targets and engages the next generation of researchers.
Flexibility: The ACSS is a hybrid institution that brings together organizational and programmatic features of research organizations, academic associations, training institutes and think tanks.
Independence: The ACSS is an autonomous NGO – free from governmental interference and from funding that imposes restrictions on the freedom of expression.

Website: www.theacss.org
Facebook: Arab Council for the Social Sciences
Twitter: @ACSS_org

FOREWORD

Registered in 2011, the ACSS has been operating from its headquarters in Beirut, Lebanon since 2012. After a successful establishment phase, the ACSS laid out an ambitious five-year strategy (2016-2020) for the institutional and programmatic growth of the organization. The strategy initiated a broad range of programs that address many of the gaps in regional social science research and training.

Several factors contribute to the weak status of the social sciences in the Arab region. The official neglect of the social sciences is related to notions of development and modernity that have long governed Arab educational institutions, which traditionally focused on the sciences, medicine and engineering, then shifted in the last few decades to management, finance and information technology, all at the expense of social sciences. Moreover, shortcomings of overall higher education systems have, over the years, resulted in increasing enrollments in tertiary education and prioritizing quantity at the expense of quality. The more recent expansion of private education institutions in Arab countries - which pay little attention to social sciences - has further contributed to the marginalization of these disciplines. The overall outcome has been weak social sciences that are produced in parochial ways, do not inform policy and do not engage public interest. By the same token, the social science community is unable to engage in articulating evidence-based alternatives to hegemonic discourses and ideological agendas, influence public discussions and policy making, promote professional interests and fully participate in regional and global knowledge networks.

It is in this context that the ACSS was conceived and developed its distinctive mission. Since its establishment, the ACSS has sought to provide much needed support to research and knowledge production in the region and help build and consolidate networks of researchers in their pursuit of social justice and welfare in their societies. This mission, as well as the flexibility of the ACSS and responsiveness of its structure, and the paucity of similar organizations in the region continues to validate the importance and niche of the organization.

As the ACSS was being launched, the region was rocked with the events of the uprisings starting in 2010. Protests across the region are now continuing in a second wave. In some countries, this has brought renewed authoritarianism, insecurity, instability and violence. In others, it has meant the opening up of public spaces and a renewed sense of hope and opportunities for change. In both phases, the case for the importance of the social sciences was being made in the streets. There is clear evidence that supporting social science research is imperative in order to better understand our societies. We need to continue to produce reliable data, analyses and practical visions for the future of citizens and the prosperity and well-being of their societies.

As always, we are pleased to note the resilience of the ACSS grantees and their determination to continue to pursue their projects and we are grateful to the social science community for their positive responsiveness to the work we do. We are also thankful to our donors who have been supportive of the ACSS mission and values and are helping us implement our strategy. Appreciation also goes to our engaged Board of Trustees members for their steadfast support at every step of the way.

This report on our activities in 2018 is our first to go online. We hope you will find in this report some useful reading. We welcome your comments.

Seteney Shami,
Director General

ACSS Programs and Activities at a Glance

Biennial Conferences
Three-day public event with papers selected competitively as well as presentations by current grantees.
Audience: Regional social scientists, general public

Biennial Research Forums
Three-day closed event for current grantees to receive feedback on draft papers as well as attend roundtables on research ethics, career planning, and publishing strategies
Audience: ACSS grantees

General Assembly Meetings
Business meeting for reporting on ACSS activities and election of new BoT members.
Audience: ACSS members (individual and institutional)

Arab Social Science Monitor (ASSM)
Permanent Observatory for monitoring and evaluating the state of Social Sciences in the region, producing biennial reports, policy briefs, and background papers.
Audience: Social scientists, research administrators, donors and policymakers in higher education, science policy and development

Research Grants Program (RGP)
Open call for proposals for research under a broad theme that changes every three cycles, providing funding and support for up to 18 months.
Audience: Regional and diaspora researchers, senior and junior researchers post the PhD.

AFAC-ACSS Research on the Arts Program (RAP)
Open call for proposals for research on the arts, providing funding for up to 24 months.
Audience: Regional and diaspora researchers and practitioners as well as collectives and institutions in the Arab region.

Early Career Fellowship Program (ECFP)
Open call for applications for research and publishing support for twelve months; scholars must be affiliated with a regional institution.
Audience: Junior postdoctoral researchers 0-3 years out of the PhD

New Paradigms Factory (NPF)
Mentorship program for research and advocacy on different topics with a focus on writing for different audiences.
Audience: MA holders and activists in the region

Bassem Chit Fellowship for the Study of Activism (BC)
Open call for applications for a 12-month post-doctoral fellowship at Lebanon Support in Lebanon.
Audience: Junior postdoctoral researchers 0-3 years out of the Ph.D.

ACSS-FMSH Short-term Post-doctoral Mobility Program in the Social Sciences and Humanities
Open calls for a short term (2-3 months) post-doctoral fellowship for research and data collection in French academic institutions and laboratories.
Audience: individual researchers from the Arab region who received their PhD degree within the past 6 years.

Small Grants Program (SGP)
Seed funds for travel grants, internships, workshops, dissemination and pilot research.
Audience: Junior researchers and activists in the region

Working Groups
Collaborative and comparative research around specific themes with an interdisciplinary focus.
Audience: Regional and diaspora researchers at any stage post the PhD

Grantee Workshops
Workshops for receiving feedback on new research projects for newly awarded grantees
Audience: ACSS grantees

Training Workshops
Capacity building in specific methods or issues (such as research ethics, interdisciplinarity, data management)
Audience: ACSS grantees, regional junior researchers, students

Online Courses
Courses on specific themes to supplement offerings by regional universities
Audience: Regional students, BA, MA, PhD

Policy Dialogues
Small working meetings in partnership with national or regional organizations to bridge research/ policy divides
Audience: ACSS grantees, activists and policy makers

Publications, Website and Social Media
Informational material, research resources, announcements, published books and e-publications.
Audience: multilingual, regional and global

Institutional Development

Focal Points

To ensure more robust regional outreach and networking, the ACSS has established two focal points in Palestine and Algeria. The basic roles of the focal points are: Disseminating funding opportunities and assisting potential applicants; organizing training and networking events; and providing feedback to ACSS secretariat and the Board of Trustees on local/national thematic and programmatic priorities. The focal point includes a senior consultant to oversee ACSS related functions and activities, a small advisory committee of 4-5 prominent researchers serving on a voluntary basis and a part-time administrator and an accountant.

Palestine Focal Point

In 2018 the Palestine Focal Point (overseen by Dr. Eileen Kuttab) organized the following:

- Meetings to identify research agendas specific to Palestine
- School visits to promote understanding of and interest in the social sciences
- Proposal and academic writing skills workshops

Algeria Focal Point

The Algeria Focal Point (overseen by Dr. Nacer Djabi) began its activities in 2018 by forming an advisory committee and holding several meetings to decide on priorities. These include training workshops on research ethics and on the development of Anthropology in Algeria.

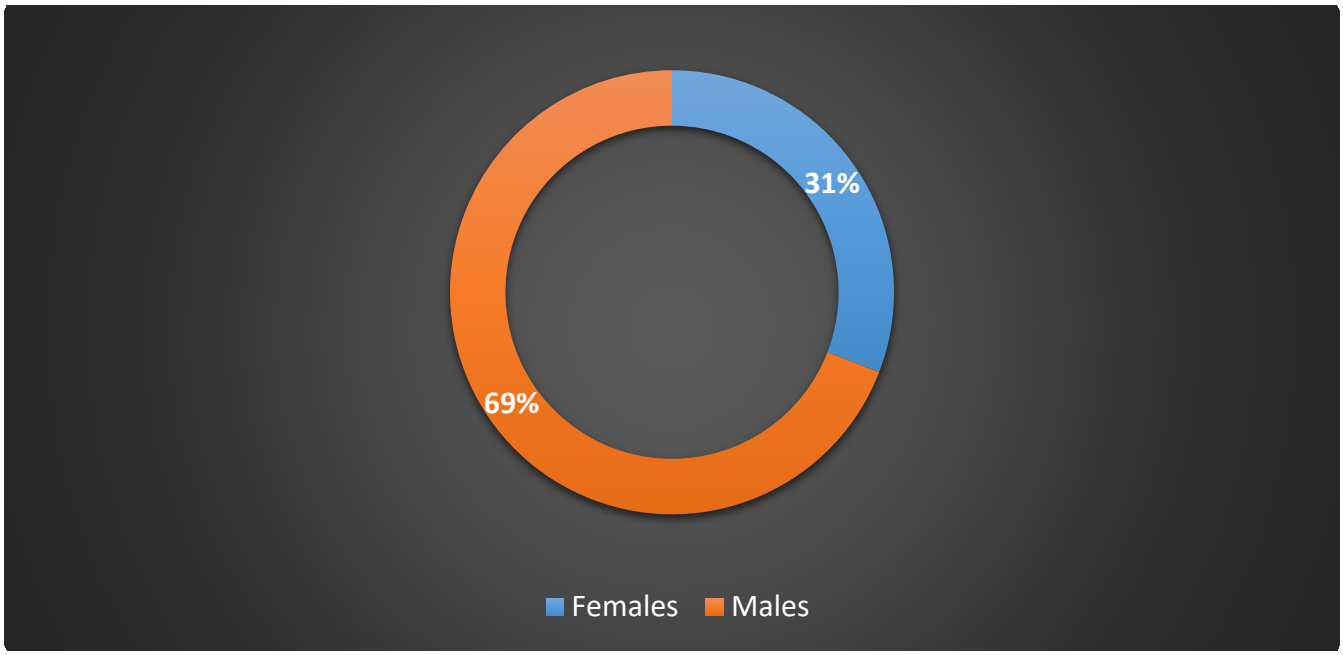
Membership

Applications for individual memberships are steadily increasing. In 2018 ACSS received 246 membership applications for various categories of which 147 were accepted. By December 2018 the ACSS had: 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 also generally applies to all participants in ACSS structures and activities.

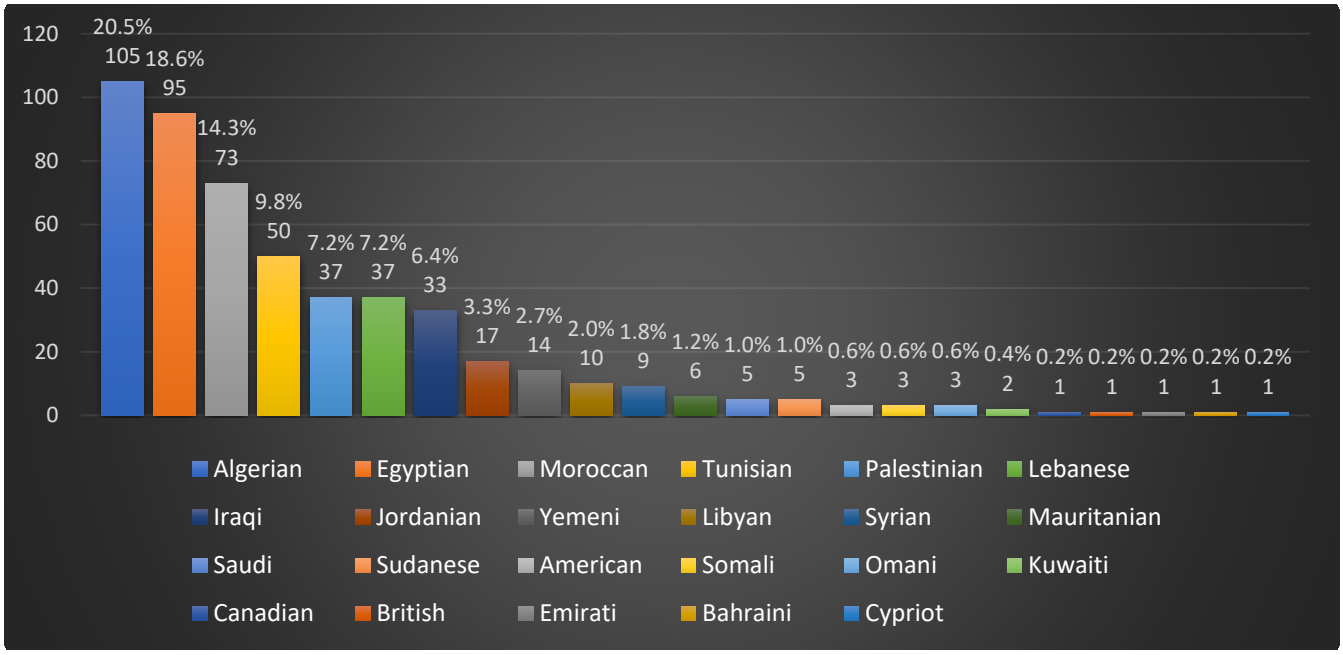
Staff and BoT retreats

Staff and BoT retreats were organized in July and September, 2018 respectively. The staff retreat focused on work culture and employee satisfaction while the BoT retreat provided an opportunity for in-depth discussions of the current and future programs of the ACSS.

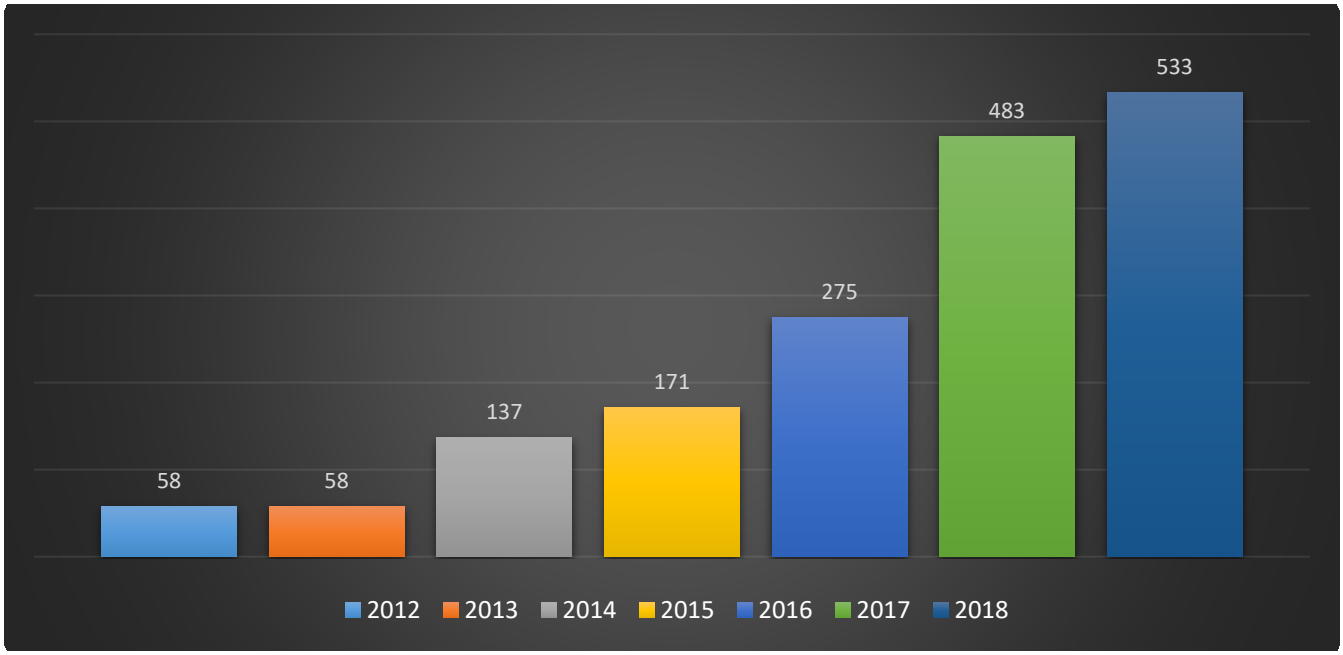
Gender Distribution of ACSS members, 2018



Citizenship of ACSS members, 2018



Total number of ACSS members from 2012 to 2018



Key Activities and Achievements

The year 2018 was one of consolidation and expansion. On the consolidation side, ACSS worked towards strengthening the institution by improving governance and organizational and administrative practices as well as diversifying its sources of funding. On the expansion front, ACSS widened its geographical outreach, increased programs, and expanded membership. The number of applicants and applications to programs has also risen. Finally, the ACSS created new partnerships with sister organizations, and expanded its work in the humanities disciplines. Earlier in 2016, the ACSS had launched its five-year strategy which means that 2018 is the third year of its implementation. The strategy laid out an ambitious program of institutional and programmatic growth. These plans were enhanced by the receipt in 2017 of a five-year BUILD grant from the Ford Foundation for institutional and financial strengthening. In the following pages, we will go over the ACSS institutional and programmatic achievements in 2018.

Six key targets were delineated in the strategy representing the following main areas of work:

Target 1:
Governance: Fully revised and functional charter, by-laws, and internal processes

Target 2:
Financial Sustainability

Target 3:
Regional Reach:
Functioning focal points and a regionally representative membership pool

Target 4:
Institutional Support:
Complement the focus on individuals with support and networking for universities and research organizations

Target 5:
Publications: Support and development of new dissemination outlets and formats

Target 6:
Research Uptake: Supporting collaboration between academic and non-academic researchers and institutions for policy and public impact

Convening

Research Forum

A biennial convening that brings together ACSS research grantees for networking and collaboration. It seeks to create a community of researchers, nurture a research culture and enhance intensive learning through exploring research methodologies, writing and publishing and training on research ethics.

ACSS Third Research Forum – April 4-7, 2018:
The Forum hosted 84 participants from various grants and fellowships and working group programs, in addition to the BoT and selection committee members who acted as chairs and moderators of the various panels and roundtables.

Panel from the Third Research Forum Amman, 2018

In conjunction with the third 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 (see below).

Partners and Donors Forum

A regional consultation that seeks to promote exchange between different knowledge institutions and enhance donor coordination and synergies on needs and trends in social science research

Fourth Partners and Donors Meeting
The Partners and Donors meeting entitled "Knowledge at Risk: Conflict, Collaboration and Ethics" was organized on April 4th, 2018 in conjunction with the Research Forum. It focused on the Arab regional context within which knowledge production and research takes place. The meeting included 21 participants representing 17 institutions (foundations, NGOs, research centers and universities) in addition to members of the BoT and ACSS staff.

The Arab Social Science Monitor (ASSM)

The Arab Social Science Monitor (ASSM) is a major project of the ACSS that aims to establish a permanent observatory dedicated to surveying and documenting the landscape of social sciences and higher education in the Arab region. It documents the infrastructure of knowledge production in terms of institutions and resources and chronicles the work, occupations, careers and accomplishments of social scientists in the region.

The work of the ASSM is guided by an Advisory Committee (27 members from the region) that sets the broad parameters and priorities. This Committee includes some members from ACSS Board of Trustees.

Data for the ASSM is collected through (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 the produced data and knowledge publicly available through an online database and publications. One of the key outputs 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 produced by the ASSM include data reports, country profiles and analytical papers on particular issues arising from the data.

http://www.theacss.org/pages/arab-social-science-monitor

ASSM Database

In 2018 ASSM data collection was extended to include the humanities and now covers 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.

A matrix of indicators was developed to compile information on the national context, institutions, products, practices and uses. Moreover, a questionnaire was designed to collect data on individuals biennially through an online survey.

Second Arab Social Science Report:

'Social Sciences in the Arab Region: An Approach to Arabic Language Outputs (2000-2016)'

http://www.theacss.org/pages/arab-social-science-report-2017

In 2018 the ACSS published the second ASSR. Professor Abdellah Hammoudi (Anthropology, Princeton University) was the Lead Author who worked closely with a team of researchers and ACSS staff as well as authors of a series of background papers. The Report presented a critical review of select social science disciplines in the region covering works written in Arabic as well as others written in other languages by Arab writers from 2000-2016. All references used for the writing of the 2nd ASSR and the background papers were compiled in a comprehensive bibliography that comprises over 1,500 citations.

ASSR dissemination events

•Lead author Abdellah Hammoudi gave a public lecture at the plenary of the 3rd biennial ACSS Research Forum on April 3, 2018 in Amman, Jordan.

•Authors of three background papers on anthropology, sociology and periodicals in the Maghreb (by Amina El Mekaoui, Hisham Ait Mansour and Mokhtar El Harras) gave presentations at the 26th General Assembly of the Latin American Council of Social Sciences / El Consejo Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales (CLACSO) on 19 - 23 November 2018 in Buenos Aires, Argentina (https://www.clacso.org.ar/conferencia2018)

The Arab Public Data Initiative

This is a new initiative that started in June 2018, in collaboration with the Odum Institute for Research of Social Science at the University of North Carolina. It aims to promote data preservation and sharing among social scientists and research institutions, in addition to helping develop policies and procedures for data archiving in the region.

One of the main activities of this Initiative is the creation of an Arab Social Science Data Archive – ACSS Dataverse – as an ongoing resource with a growing number of datasets on the region. Another activity is capacity building in different countries of 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. Jointly managed by the ACSS and the Odum Institute, the Dataverse is 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.

ASSM Flyer

Baseline Study of Higher Education and Research in Palestine

Upon the request of Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), the ACSS commissioned, through an open call for proposals, a research team to conduct a 'Baseline Study of Higher Education and Research in Palestine'. The purpose of the Baseline Study was to (1) present 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 Applied Research Institute Jerusalem (ARIJ (director Jad Issac) was selected to conduct the study and the first draft of the report was submitted in December 2018.

Research Grants & Fellowships Program

Research Grants and Fellowships

Between 2012 and 2018 the ACSS developed seven research and fellowship programs to support scholars, researchers and students in the region. Some of these programs are offered in partnership with sister organizations.

Research grants include: Research Grants Program (RGP) and Small Grants Program (SGP);

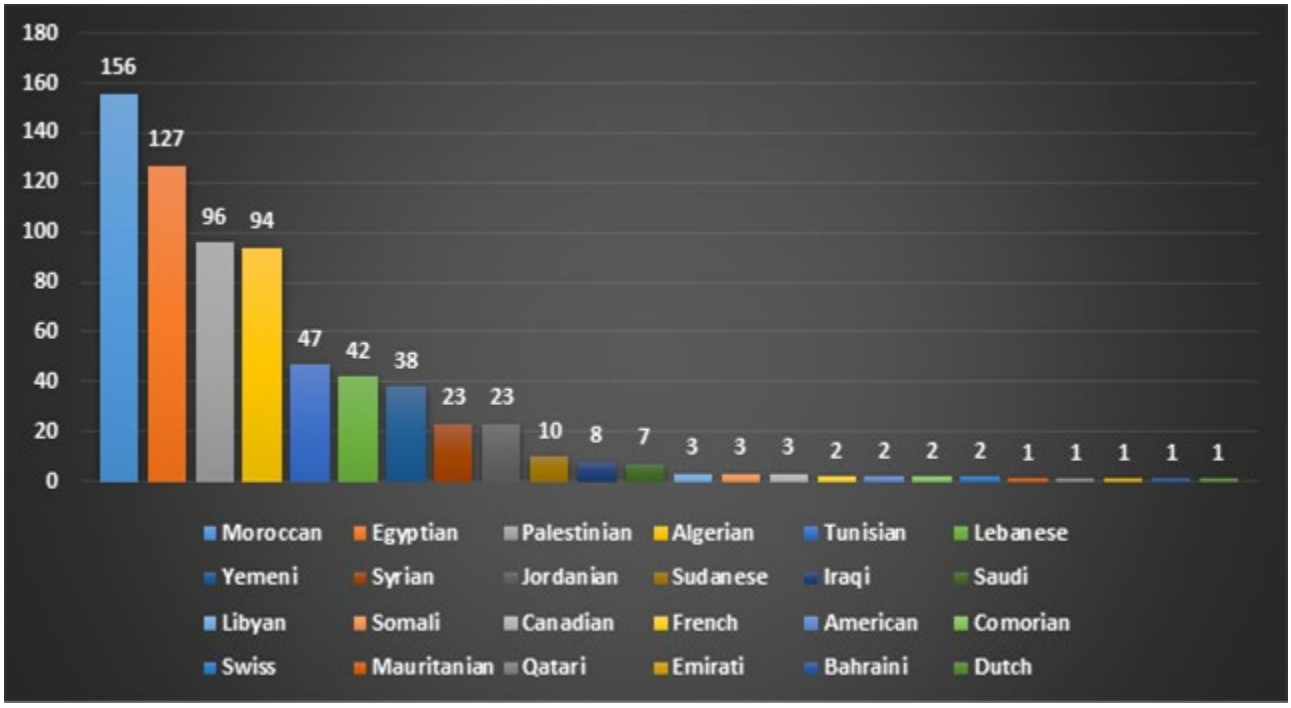
Research grants with partner organizations include: Research on the Arts Program (RAP) with the Arab Fund for Arts and Culture (AFAC);

Fellowships include: Early Career Fellows Program (ECFP), New Paradigms Factory Program (NFP).

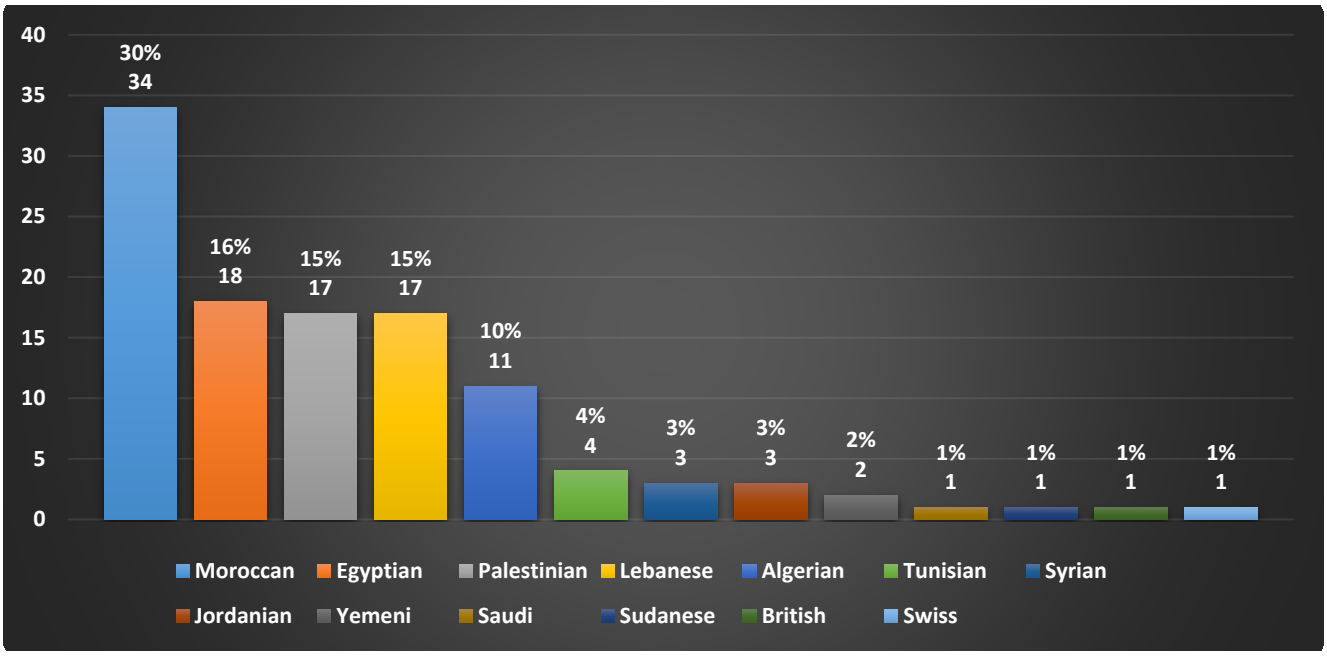
Fellowship programs with partner organizations include: Bassem Chit Fellowship for activism with Lebanon Support and Rosa Luxembourg; and short-term Postdoctoral Mobility Program in partnership with Fondation Maison des Sciences de l'homme (FMSH) in Paris

In 2018 the Grants and Fellowships Program witnessed noticeable growth. Not only did grants and fellowships increase in number and expand in geographical outreach, but they also expanded thematically. Themes covered in 2018 addressed 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 ECFP and the ACSS-FMSH Short-term postdoc mobility program (see below)) attracted a wide range of topics. This year also witnessed a disciplinary expansion into the humanities and several applications came from the humanities, arts and cultural fields.

Distribution of applicants by citizenship (all research and fellowship grants) (SGP18, RGP5, RGP6, ECFP5, NPF3, FMSH1, BCF1, and AFAC1), 2018



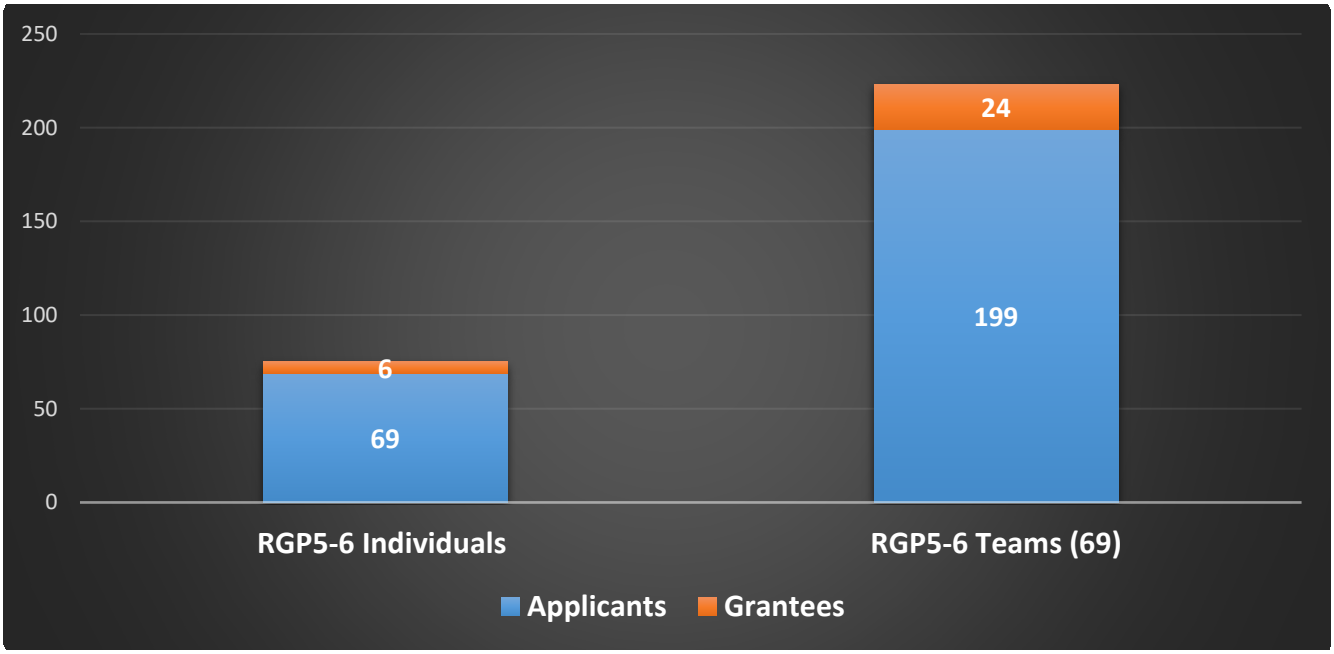
Distribution of grantees by citizenship (all research and fellowship grants) (SGP18, RGP5, RGP6, ECFP5, NPF3, FMSH1, BCF1, and AFAC1), 2018



Research Grants Program (RGP)

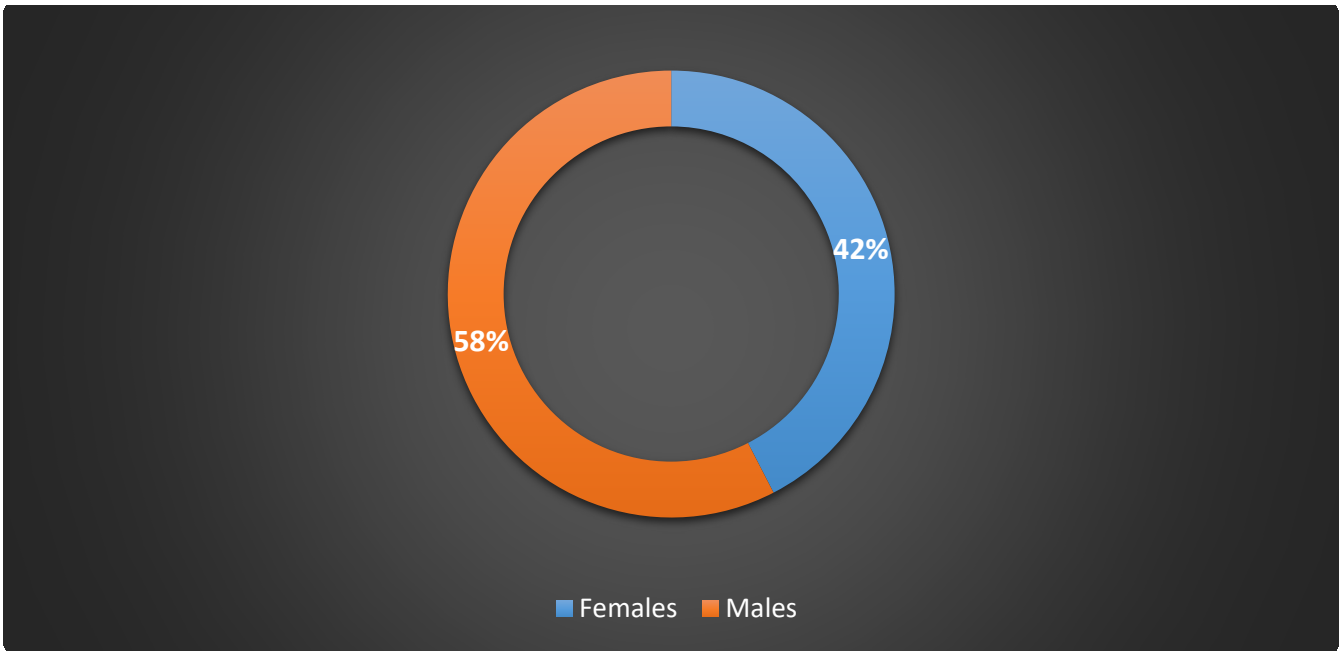
The RGP provides funding for up to 18 months to junior and senior regional scholars – as individuals and in teams - to conduct research across disciplinary boundaries and methodological traditions on key themes of concern to the Arab region. In 2018, the ACSS organized two cycles – 5 and 6 of RGP. Some of the topics addressed: Urban risk and prospects of environmental justice in Egypt, Scrap metal and Syrian workers in Beirut, land and pastoral societies in the Steppe of Algeria, Palestinian agricultural working women in the Jordan Valley.

Total RGP5 and RGP6 applicants and grantees by individual researchers and teams of research*

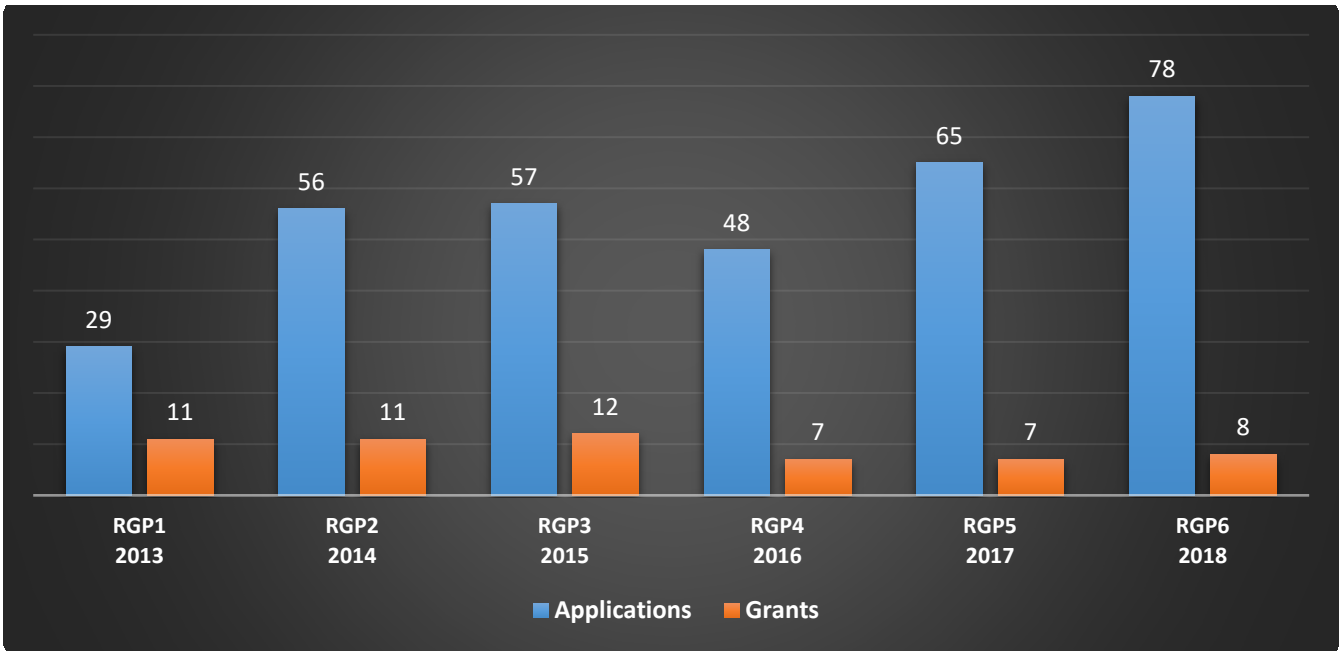


*In RGP5 the applicants were as follows: 33 individuals and 32 teams including 88 researchers. The grantees were 2 individuals and 5 teams totaling 12 researchers.
In RGP6 the applicants were as follows: 36 individuals and 37 teams including 111 researchers. The grantees were 4 individuals and 4 teams totaling 12 researchers.

Distribution of RGP 5 and 6 grantees by gender, 2018



Total number of applicants and grantees by RGP year



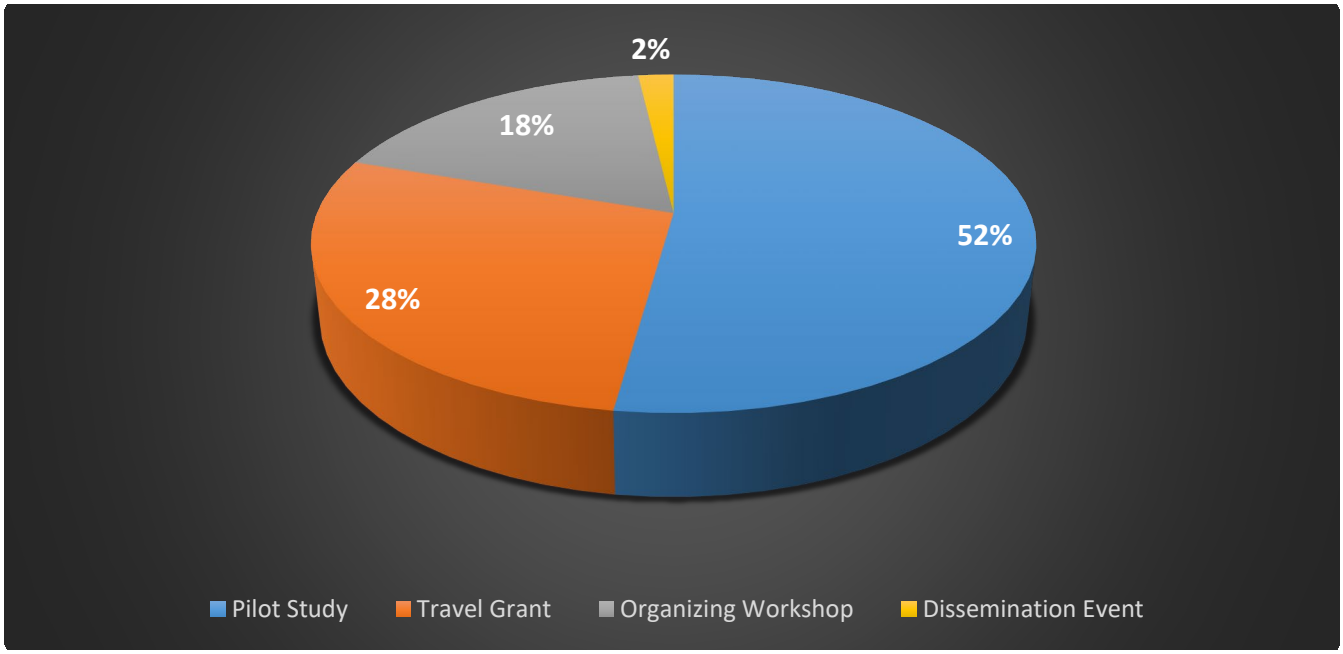
* RGP1, 2 and 3: Inequality, Mobility and Development in the Arab Region. RGP4,5 and 6: Environmentalism, Impoverishment and Social Justice Movements: Interdisciplinary Perspectives.

Small Grants Program (SGP)

Initiated in November 2016, the SGP covers the two themes of "Youth" and "Urban Spatial Inequalities". Its main purpose is to provide junior researchers in the region with access to flexible funding for five types of activities: travel grants to conferences, organizing workshops, internships, dissemination events, and funding for pilot studies. The program accepts three rounds of applications spread throughout the year

Grants made through the three cycles of SGP in 2018 addressed diverse topics including: economic empowerment, citizenship, educational outcomes, changes in the concept and uses of public space, urban politics youth democratic political participation, experiences of youth voters and youth activism, and poverty among youth in marginalized neighborhoods.

Grantees of SGP18 cycles 1, 2 and 3 by type of grant, 2018

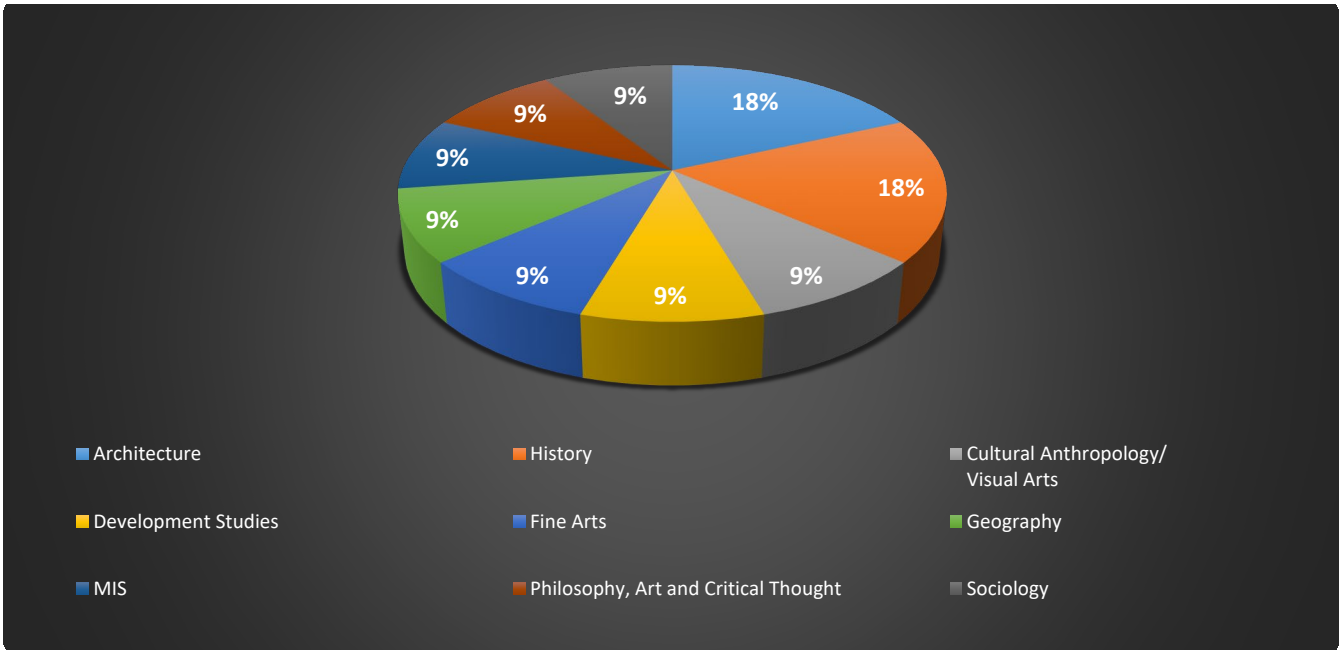


*No internship Grantees

AFAC-ACSS Research on the Arts (RAP)

A collaborative research project with the Arab Fund for Arts and Culture (AFAC) for academics and art practitioners in humanities and the social sciences, applying as individuals or as teams, collectives and institutions. In this first cycle of the program, 8 individual grant and 1 team including 3 researchers were awarded grants. Topics funded included: History of digitally conceived architecture in the Arab World, Genealogy of Palestinian museums, and sociology of music in secondary education in Morocco.

AFAC-ACSS RAP1 by grantees' disciplines



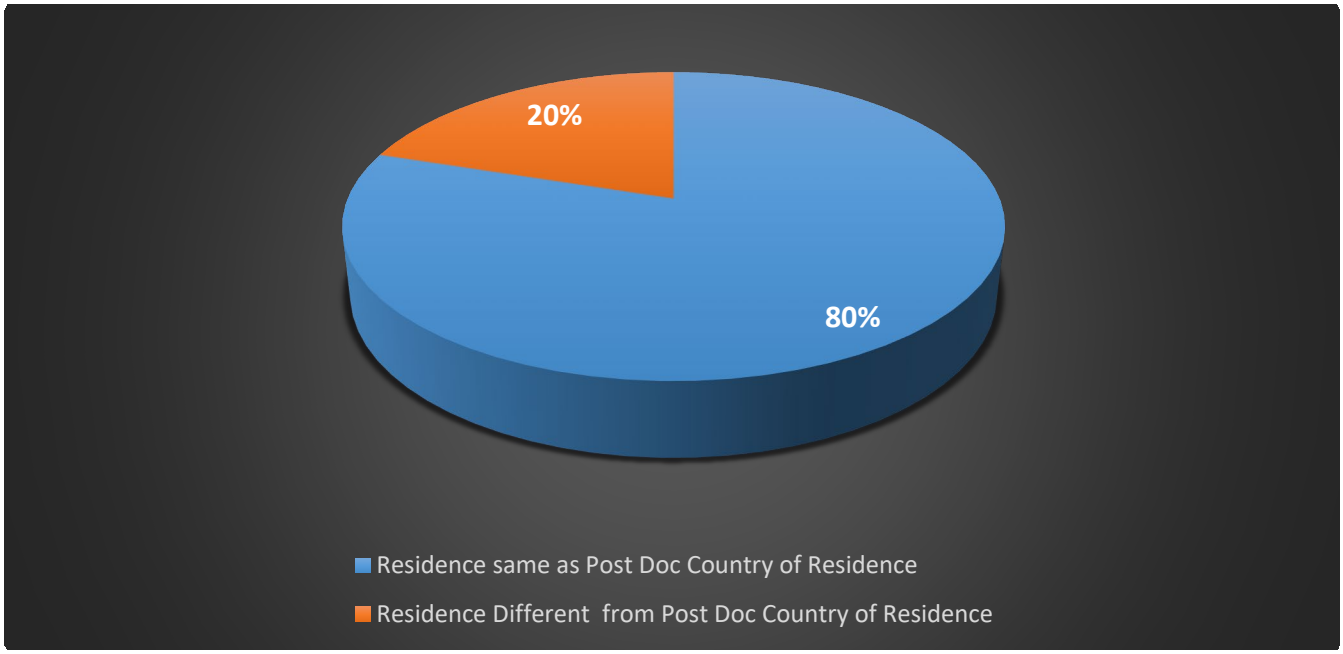
*In the RAP1 program we had 8 individual grantees and 1 team including 3 researchers.

The Bassem Chit Fellowship for the Study of Activism and Early Career Fellows Program

The Bassem Chit fellowship for the study of activism is a one-year post-doctoral fellowship based in Beirut. It is a joint initiative of the ACSS, Lebanon Support, the Orient-Institute Beirut, and Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung Beirut Office, and aims to give early career scholars (0-3 years out of the PhD) the opportunity to conduct research on activism in the Arab region. In 2018, seven applications were received. The ECFP selection committee reviewed proposals and selected one application, Dr. Cynthia Azzam, whose project was entitled "Le paysage scolaire au Liban ; entre centralisation et decentralisation "

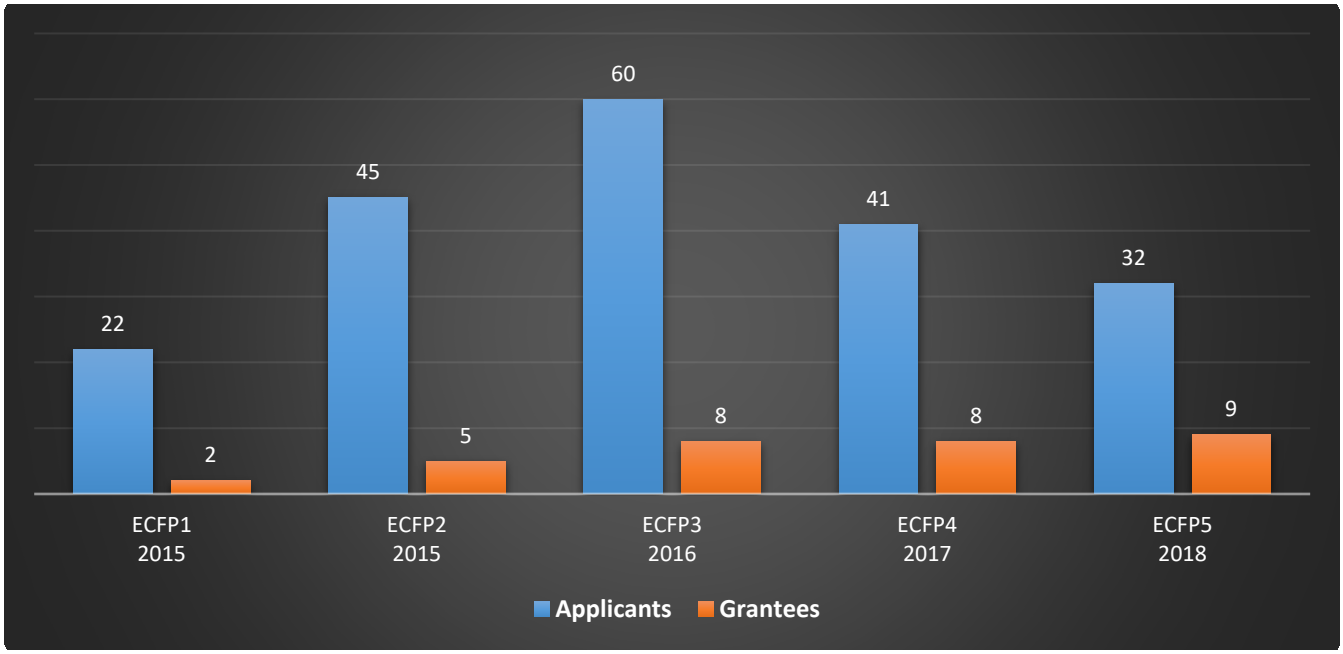
The Early Career Fellows Program (ECFP) was launched in 2015 under the name of the Post-doctoral Fellowship Program. It enables young researchers, up to three years out of the PhD, to do a post-doctoral fellowship in an institution in the region. The program is open to all themes and disciplines in the social sciences and humanities. Starting in 2018, cycle 5 it was renamed Early Career Fellows Program and extended to 12 months (instead of nine). The ECFP enables mobility from form one's place of residence/study to another country in the region. Mobility is an important aspect of this program, allowing fellows to enhance their exposure to other settings and familiarizing them with opportunities for professional recruitment and advancement.

ECFP5 and BCF1 Grantees' Mobility (9 grantees in ECFP and 1 grantee in BCF)



Countries of Residence:
Algeria
Egypt
Lebanon
Lebanon (BCF)
Morocco
Palestine
United Kingdom
Germany

Total number of applicants and grantees by ECFP year



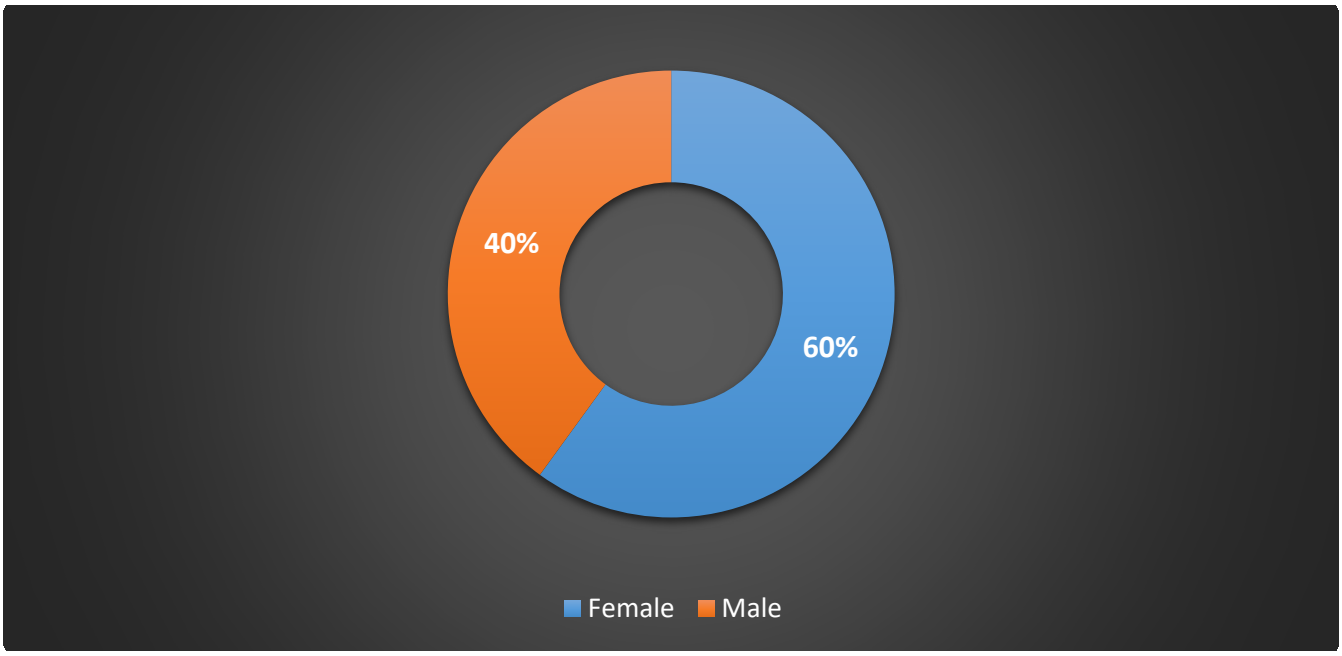
ACSS-FMSH Short-term Postdoctoral Mobility Program in the Social Sciences and Humanities

This short-term fellowship program is organized in partnership with the Fondation Maison des Sciences de l'Homme (FMSH) in Paris, and is managed jointly. The fellowship is for two to three months and targets individual researchers who are residents and nationals of the Arab region to conduct research in France (including field research, library and archival work, as well as other types of data collection).

For the first round of applications, the ACSS and FMSH selected five fellows to work on their projects in France. List of institutions:

1- Centre Emile Durkheim
2- CNRS UMR 500- Environnement-ville et société
3- BepsyLab Universite D'Angers
4- Sciences Po- CERI
5- IRIS-EHESS

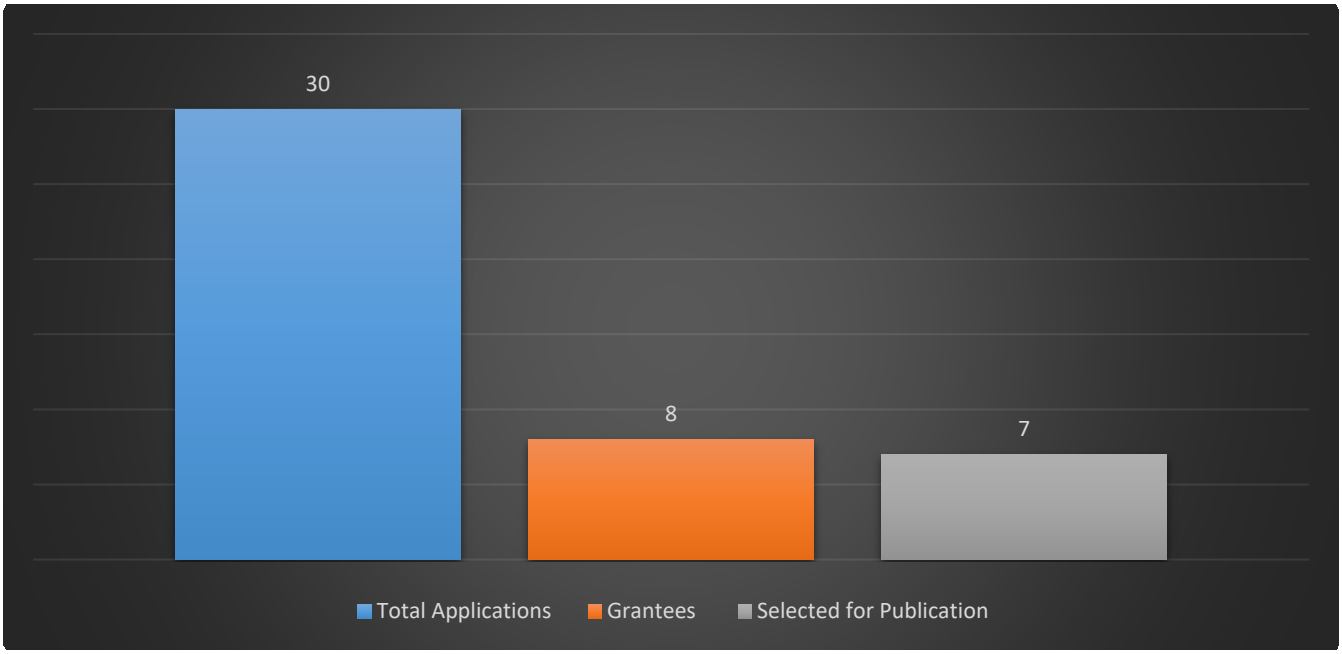
Distribution of ACSS-FMSH1 grantees by gender



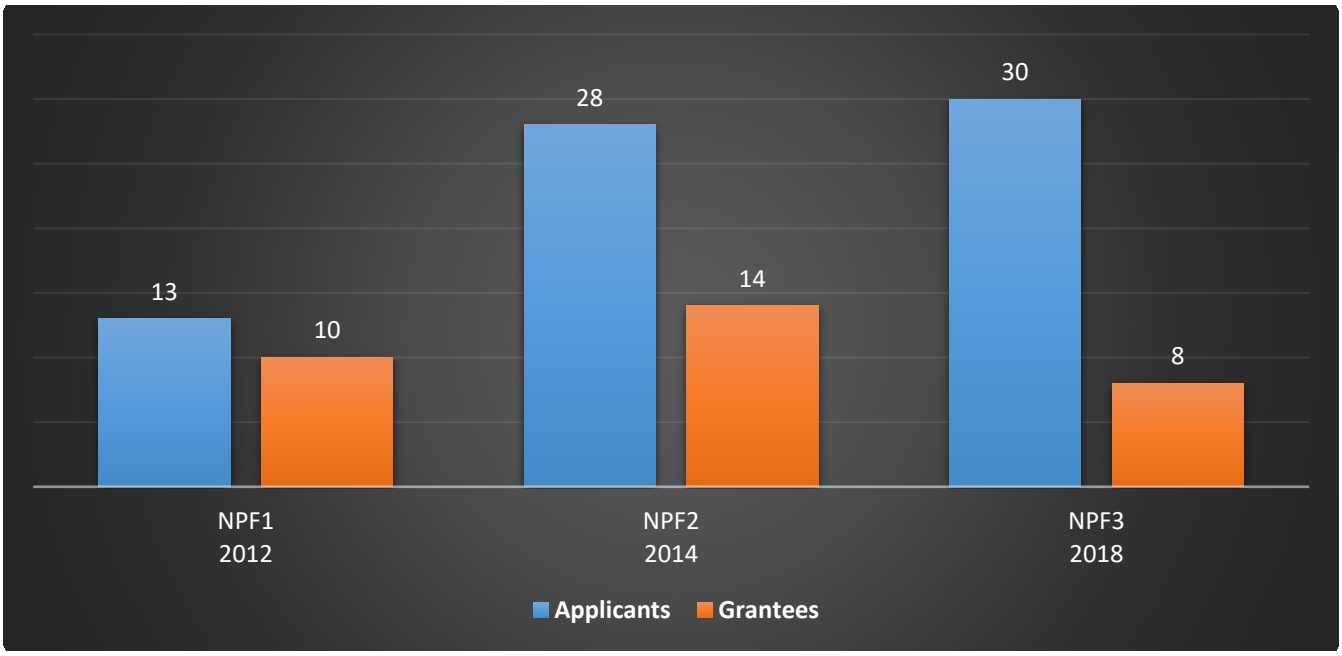
New Paradigms Factory Cycle 3 on "Gendered Resistance"

One of the earliest programs established at the ACSS, this fellowship supports writings by junior scholars and activists to turn their research into publications for a larger audience. The NPF targets applicants with a Master's degree. In 2018, the ACSS launched the third cycle of the NPF writing fellowship, on the theme "Gendered Resistance."

NPF3 total applications, grantees and selected grantees for publication, 2018



Total number of applicants and grantees by NPF year



*The title for NPF1 was "Sovereignty"; NPF2 was "Nationalism and Patriotism" and NPF3 "Gendered Resistance".

Working Groups

ACSS Working Groups bring scholars from across the Arab region and globally, at different stages of their academic careers, to work collectively on a research theme. This collaborative work allows networking, mentorship and sharing of academic knowledge, skills and experience. It also encourages interdisciplinary research and the design of diverse innovative outputs targeting different audiences within the region and beyond. Each working group develops its structure differently depending upon its composition, aims and types of outputs it is producing.

In 2018, the ACSS had three active Working Groups.

Critical Security Studies (CSS):

In 2016, the ACSS launched a working group on Critical Security Studies (CSS) in the Arab region, which focuses on challenging the dominant understanding of the region as a threat to global security. The Working Group is coordinated by Professors Samer Abboud (Villanova University, US) and Omar S. Dahi (Hampshire College, US) and has an advisory board, seven core researchers and nine affiliate researchers. The WG has five sub-themes through which it explores how insecurity is produced in the region: (1) the political economy of insecurity, (2) insecurity of everyday life, (3) technologies of insecurity, (4) discourses of knowledge production, and (5) borders, migration and mobility.

In addition to research conducted by the core and affiliated researchers, the CSS Working Group organized the following activities in 2018, which provided training and mentorship for junior researchers in the region:

Summer Institute

The Second CSS Summer Institute was held in Broumanna, Lebanon on June 21-26, 2018 and brought together doctoral students, early career scholars, and other researchers for training and mentoring by members of the WG who provided sessions on a range of methodological, theoretical, and professional issues to equip the participants with tools and skills necessary for conducting critical research on security issues in the region.

Second Summer Institute, 2018

Small Research Grants

A major purpose of this activity is to provide mentorship for junior researchers and incorporate them into the Beirut Collective's network as well as produce academic journal articles and Beirut forum blog essays. Five grantees from five countries in the region (Iraq, Morocco, Palestine, Syria and Yemen) were selected and invited to participate in the Second Summer Institute in June 2018, for the first meeting with their mentors.

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". The Collective website, was launched in June 2018, serving as the main platform for members of the CSS working group and its network to funnel their research ideas and articles.

Workshops

"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, 2018) [Organized by: Waleed Hazbun and Morten Valburn].

"(In)Security in Everyday Life: Perspectives from the Middle East" (September 7-8, 2019) [Organized by: Sami Hermez]

"International Interventions and Local (In)Security: Critical Perspectives on State-Building in the Arab Region" (October 27-28, 2018) [Organized by: Samer Abboud and Benjamin Muller]

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

Four core and affiliate members of the CSS working group presented a panel at the World Social Science Forum (WSSF) which took place on September 25-28, 2018 in Japan. Speakers discussed the origins and work of the Beirut Security Studies Collective and presented their individual papers.

1. Dr. Omar S. Dahi, Associate Professor of Economics, Hampshire College, USA

Paper title: "Who Is a Threat to Whom? Climate change and the politics of threat multipliers in the Syrian conflict"

2. Dr. Nicole Grove, Assistant Professor of Political Science, University of Hawaii Manoa, USA

Paper title: "Criminality, Simulation, and the Performative Politics of Policing in Dubai"

3. Dr. Karim Makdisi, Associate Professor of Political Studies, American University of Beirut, Lebanon

Paper title: "The United Nations: The view from the Arab World"

4. Dr. Jamil Mouawad, Max Weber Fellow, European University Institute, Italy

Paper title: "Lebanon's border areas in light of the Syrian war: New actors, Old Marginalization"

New Regionalisms:

The ACSS is 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 and North Africa. The first meeting took place on October 24-25, 2018 in London, bringing together 12 scholars from the Arab region, Iran and Turkey. Discussions addressed conceptual frameworks and changing dynamics of the region as well as its connections with other parts of the global system, challenging conventional ways of thinking about the Middle East and North Africa as representing a state of exceptionalism.

Critiques of Power:

The "Arab Theory: Critiques of Power" (CoP) working group was formed in 2017 and aims at revisiting and expanding 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 goal of the CoP is 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. Members have organized themselves into two subgroups focusing on the intellectual traditions of Feminism and Marxism. The CoP is also connecting with initiatives working on South-South conversations, who are asking similar questions. The following activities took place in 2018:

Roundtable

In April 2018, the CoP organized a roundtable during the ACSS Research Forum in Amman, where four members of the group presented the work and aims of CoP, the new mediums it seeks to explore and the connections it hopes to make with other projects and organizations that are producing critical thought in the region.

Forum on Alternative Archival Practices

This two-day public event (December 14-15, 2018) emerged out of the shared interest of members in archives both intellectually and as practice. Sixteen archiving initiatives were presented from Lebanon, Syria, Palestine, Tunisia and Egypt. The response of the audience was highly positive, reflecting an eagerness for debate about archival methodologies, ethics, and infrastructure, as well as the use of archives means of democratizing knowledge. The forum facilitated conversation between groups who have archived revolutions and political repressions, feminist groups working on oral history, organizations working towards transitional justice, and archives of those who have disappeared during wars. Presentations also discussed the archiving of lost geographies and erased memories, through maps, music and sound, orality, ephemeral documents, videos and other materials.

Training Activities

ACSS started developing its training programs in 2015. The activities focus on introducing interdisciplinary fields through workshops as well as training in specific methodologies. Many of these workshops are co-organized and co-funded with other organizations. The workshops also help promote academic networks that create opportunities for cross-national research and foster regional collaborations for knowledge production.

Winter School at the University of Göttingen

In January 2018, ACSS funded three 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". Joined by participants from South America and South Asia, the selected students received training on 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.

Proposal writing seminar

In January 2018, the ACSS partnered with Dr. Suad Joseph from the University of California, Davis and the Arab Families Working Group to organize a three-day seminar on proposal writing and research design with additional focus on data collection, data analysis, and writing for reports/dissertation/publication. The intensive seminar trained junior researchers (recent PhD's or MA level) in the social sciences in engaged transformative research, and helped them prepare for continued graduate training or junior faculty positions.

Mixed methods training in urban studies

The workshop was held from July **2** – 6, 2018 in Amman, Jordan and focused on urban studies as an interdisciplinary field as well as mixed methods research approaches. The workshop was organized in partnership with the Odum Institute for Research in Social Science at the University of North Carolina. Training on mixed methods was provided by Dr. Kevin Swartout from Georgia State University, and Drs. Mona Khechen and Serge Yazigi, both at the American University of Beirut and consultants in the areas of urban planning and design. The workshop brought together 14 participants from Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt, and Algeria for an intensive five-day training, focusing on the state of urban studies in the region, the complexities of studying the city across the region, and how to conduct effective mixed methods research. The participants were all working on their master's/doctoral theses, and spent some time incorporating the workshop materials into their projects and refining their proposals.

ACSS Dataverse workshop

As part of the ACSS Dataverse project, a training workshop was held in Beirut from November 30 to December 2, 2018 and was attended by 13 participants from the Arab region and from various backgrounds (e.g. economics, political sciences, media/communication, library and information sciences). The trainers were Brian Washington (senior research data analyst/lead data archivist at 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 introduced participants to the concept of Dataverse and provided them with skills in data archiving and data management.

Engaged research on gender violence

In partnership with Suad Joseph (UC Davis), the ACSS organized a two-year, training program consisting of four-seminars, focusing on engaged research about gender violence. The first two seminars were held in **February and September 2018 in Amman**, and the final two seminars will be held in 2019. Seventeen female participants and eight male participants represented the following countries: Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, and Palestine. The first seminar in Amman (February 23-25, 2018) had a dual focus: writing research proposals and learning about theoretical foundations for researching gender violence. Participants were assigned a mentor and given a timeline for submitting assignments before the second seminar (September 27-29, 2018). Over the course of seven months, all participants completed assignments that were evaluated by the trainers and subsequently received seed grants for researching their projects.

Research Ethics Initiative

The ACSS launched a pilot project in 2016 to promote regional collaboration on:

- Strengthening research ethics infrastructures in the Arab region;
- Building a network of individuals and institutions to contribute to the development of a culture of research ethics;
- Enabling the ACSS to mentor and train its grantees on research ethics principles and issues.

The ACSS has developed its own Ethical Guidelines for Social Science Research and a working questionnaire for its own grantees. It has also adopted innovative methods such as case studies to illustrate ethical conundrums faced by researchers in the region. In 2018, robust mentoring of grantees on research ethics became an integral component of ACSS workshops, in addition to providing training to universities and NGOs.

Activities in 2018 included:

- The research ethics roundtable during the Research Forum and a training session with grantees of the fifth cycle of the Research Grants Program (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 a sister organization Ettijahat, as part of its program "Research to Strengthen the Culture of Knowledge- Sixth Edition" (Nov 26, 2018).

- Presentation on research ethics for the program "Research on the Arts" in collaboration with the Arab Fund for Arts and Culture (AFAC) (Dec 14, 2018).

ACSS consultant, Jamil Mouawad, presenting at the Research Ethics workshop

Regional, South-South and Global Collaborations

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

Mapping Gender Studies in the Arab Region Planning Workshop

The ACSS hosted a three-day workshop on April 19-21, 2018 on mapping gender and women's studies in the region. The workshop was co-organized with the University of California, Davis, and Arab region Consortium (UCDAR including the American University of Beirut, the 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 event brought together regional scholars to formulate a 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.

The year 2018 saw a leap forward in interaction and collaboration between three major regional social science organizations: CLACSO, Codesria and the ACSS.

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 social sciences in the Arab region during its 8th Latin American and Caribbean Conference on Social Sciences, (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.

"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.

ACSS Director General, Seteney Shami, receiving award from CLACSO, November 2018

ACSS director general Seteney Shami spoke at the opening session while accepting the award, and took part in several panels discussing 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.

CODESRIA

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

ACSS grantees Fouzia Borj and Lahcen Ameziane presenting at an ACSS sponsored panel in Morocco

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 two ACSS grantees presented their research. Fouzia Borj from Hassan II University in Morocco, presented on "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" and Lahcen Ameziane who is on the Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences, Mohammed V University in Morocco, presented on "Nouvelle politique urbaine : justice sociale, Environnement et Mega-projects dans les villes du Maroc." The panel was chaired by ASSM project leader, Nada Chaya.

InterAsia Initiative

The ACSS has a Memorandum of Understanding with the InterAsia Partnership which includes 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. The ACSS contributes to the wider InterAsia Initiative by funding the participation of regional scholars in activities as well as organizing events that encourage "West Asia" scholars to connect with scholars of other parts of the continent and rethink their research in a broader geographical context. In 2018, Director General Seteney Shami participated in the "InterAsian Connections VI" Conference held in Hanoi, Vietnam and spoke at the opening session.

International Conference on InterAsian Connections VI: Hanoi

Outputs and Dissemination

ACSS produces 1) Online material: Website, Social Media, Newsletter, and 2) Print material: Working Paper Series, Occasional Publications from the Conferences and Lecture Series. The work of the ACSS in this area is guided by the BoT sub-committee on Publications as well as by the Editorial Review Board

The number of ACSS produced outputs have steadily grown in 2018. For instance the ACSS blog, known as the Digest, is the most dynamic part of the website with diverse content and increased coverage of events and activities. It also publishes Calls for Applications and job opportunities from other organizations wanting to spread their news, hence making the blog a regular and reliable feature. This has made the (biweekly) Roundup of social science calls for the Arab region a periodic staple, shared on social media and sent to ACSS mailing list. To help the ACSS community keep track of relevant forums, ACSS continually updates the calendar of social science conferences in the region.

Facebook followers grew by 31% jumping from 17,400 in January 2018 to 22,907 by the end of December 2018.

On **Twitter,** followers grew by 43% rising from roughly 1,360 in December 2017 to 1,967 by the end of December 2018.

Subscribers to the **newsletter now number** 1800 which reflects an increased interest in ACSS activities.

In 2018, ACSS released four issues of the periodic newsletter (Issue 1 in English, Issue 2 in English, Issue 3 in English, Issue 4 in English) in English, French and Arabic. Designed to help keep the community of researchers updated on ACSS 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, publications, open calls and events to look forward to in the coming months, as well as news.

Working Paper Series**:** the call for Working Paper submissions remained open throughout 2018. ACSS received 21 submissions, 16 of which were by ACSS grantees. One paper entitled 'The Violence We Live in': Reading and Experiencing Violence in the Field' was published.

Occasional Publication from the Third ACSS Conference**:** centered on Dr. Ghassan Salameh's keynote speech "The State: Between Longing and Trepidation", this Arabic language publication included Salameh's paper, and four commentaries by scholars reflecting different disciplinary approaches and countries. Those included Dr. Rahma Bourqia (Morocco), Dr. Mustafa Kamel El Sayed (Egypt), Dr. Omar El Shehabi (Bahrain) and Mr. Khaled Saghiyeh (Lebanon).

Occasional Publication from the Hanna Batatu Lecture Series**:** Launched in 2015, the first annual lecture series honored the late Palestinian political scientist and historian, Hanna Batatu. Security concerns prevented ACSS from holding the final lecture of the series in Iraq. Thus, a special plenary was organized during the Fourth ACSS Conference in April 2018, along with a publication that paid tribute to Hanna Batatu and his work. The publication comprises the three lectures presented in the series by Dr. Salim Tamari (Palestine), Dr. Dina Khoury Rizk (USA) and Dr. Thabet Abdullah (Canada).

Editorial Review Board: Established in 2016, the **Board** comprises 15 social science scholars including members of the BoT Publications Sub-Committee and a representative from the ACSS Secretariat who serve for a term of two years.

Final Remarks and the Way Forward

The year 2018 was a productive year, marked with growth and development for the ACSS in terms of activities, new programing and enhanced institutional capacity. Solid and realistic planning is in place, and the focus in the coming period will be on financial sustainability and especially on planning for an endowment fund. In addition, the ACSS continues to reflect on how to help and protect its grantees in the current political climate. There are only partial answers to these challenges, especially in an ever-changing context. The ACSS, guided by its BoT, attempts to be agile and responsive to both opportunities and challenges as they arise.

Substantively, an important development and expansion of ACSS work has been the more systematic reach into the humanities and arts disciplines. While humanities and arts already had some presence in ACSS grants and other activities, ACSS now seeks to make a more targeted effort in those areas, given that the humanities and arts are essential components of the region's academic and cultural landscape. Literature (especially poetry and the novel) has long been an important vehicle for social critique and expression of the hope for 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 uprisings in the region. These are made visible by access to new media and increased connectivity across the region and globally. However, just as with the academic social sciences, academic departments in the humanities and the arts continue to suffer from poor resources and negative social perception despite absorbing large numbers of students.

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.

Institutionally, the ACSS is becoming stronger thanks to the core support provided by its donors and the Ford Foundation BUILD grant. Plans are now underway to recruit an Associate Director which will greatly augment the leadership team of the ACSS. Other staff 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.

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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Funding received in 2018:
• A grant from the Ford Foundation for the amount of US$ 200,000 for one year (October 1, 2018 to September 30, 2019);
• A supplement from Sida to the original grant for the amount of SEK3,000,000 (US$327,000) (July 1, 2017 to December 31, 2021).
• A grant from Carnegie Corporation NY amounting to US$1,500,000 for 2 years (October 1, 2018 to September 30, 2021).
• A grant from IDRC amounting to CAD988,100 (US$760,000) (October 1, 2018 to September 30, 2022).
• A sub-grant from University of North Carolina (UNC) for the amount of US$204,000 (January 1, 2018 – December 31, 2019)

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