

Narrative Report Arab-West Foundation 2021 with updates till April 2, 2022

Board members in 2021:

Koen Vliegenthart (chair)

Dick van der Steen (secretary)

Céleste Voogel (treasury)

Advisors to the board in 2021

Cornelis Hulsman

Eildert Mulder

The Stichting AWF supports the work of the Center for Intercultural Dialogue and Translation (CIDT), and Center for Arab-West Understanding (CAWU) in Egypt. Board members and advisors provided advice concerning work and management of CIDT in Egypt. The work of CIDT and CAWU has been described in separate narrative reports. The Stichting is concerned about the meagre pension savings for Sawsan Gabra Ayoub Khalil and Cornelis Hulsman as well as their debts to Egyptian tax authorities and makes efforts to address these and build up some reservations.

The last AWF meeting was on zoom on April 26, 2021. Attending were: Koen Vliegenthart (chair), Dick van der Steen, Céleste Voogel, Eildert Mulder and Kees Hulsman. Dr. Matthew Anderson attended between 8.30 pm and 9.00 pm Dutch time. Sawsan Hulsman joined at 9.00 pm.

The narrative reports and financial reports over 2019 and 2020 were accepted.

1. Board advisors

1.1. Work board advisor Eildert Mulder

Eildert Mulder met with Kees during several visits in 2021 in the Netherlands. They worked together on a bookreview of late Fr. Prof. Dr. Emilio Platti about De Koran herontdekt (the Qur'an rediscovered), that is the origin of the Qur'an. The draft text has been sent for review to the Dominican Fathers in Cairo. No response has been received yet.

2. Contracts with Kerk in Actie and Missio

The contracts with Kerk in Actie and Missio were renewed for 2021-2023. The Missio contract was renewed in December 2020 with a salary for Matthew Anderson that he initially agreed to since he believed this was key to get the Missio approval but in March 2021 Matthew made clear that the salary mentioned in the Missio contract was insufficient for him. We discussed this with Cokkie van't Leven who agreed to change the budget: adding the sum budgeted for Matthew in September 2021-December 2021 to the sum reserved for him in

2022 and 2023. We further have used reduce the budgetline for database improvements to zero and added this to the salary of Matthew for 2022 and 2023. This created complications for accountant Adel Rizkallah since we had to provide two different financial reports for 2021, one for Kerk in Actie and one for Missio since for both donors we must compare actual costs with budgeted costs and the budgets for both donors are, for this reason, different.

Kerk in Actie made clear that their “contributions for 2022 and 2023 are conditional, as they depend on the implementation of the management transition.”

Cokkie van't Leven was replaced in December by Els Hortensius with whom we have an equally good working relation.

3. Dr. Matthew Anderson, succession and the AWR database

Dr. Matthew Anderson committed in our board meeting of April 26 to start his work in Egypt per 1.1.2022. In June 2021 Matthew wrote that he saw opportunities for a partnership between Arab-West Report/CIDT with the International Center for Religion and Diplomacy in the US. Matthew discovered in discussions with this center that the name Arab-West Report did not help us since ‘Arab’ doesn’t resonate well in the US. Matthew asked for a name change which, in his view, would increase our opportunities for partnerships and funding. We discussed this with Brill Publishers, our donors Missio and Kerk in Actie and the boards of AWF and CAWU. It was agreed to change the name of Arab-West Report to: Dialogue Across Borders: Emerging Perspectives on Intercultural and Interreligious Relations. This needed changes across the database which could not be implemented without the transfer of new funding for 2022. This was only received at the end of March. We expect the name change now soon can be realized.

Matthew Anderson wrote a new mission statement for Dialogue Across Borders (DAB) which was approved on March 16, 2022, by the boards of AWF and CAWU.

In December 2021 inquiries were made at the AUC about possibly moving the database to AUC. In February 2022 similar inquiries were made at the French CEDEJ in Cairo. Both AUC and CEDEJ received full access to our database. We are waiting for their responses.

On October 25, 2021, Matthew Anderson and Kees Hulsman met online with Cokkie van't Leven of Kerk in Actie. Matthew asked Cokkie for a delay in starting at CIDT until June 2022 since he was asked to complete the current academic year at Georgetown University. Cokkie van't Leven agreed but also made clear that further delay would not be possible. Matthew Anderson applied for a position at the prestigious Princeton University and said he would give his final answer about starting at CIDT at the end of February. On March 10 Matthew informed us over zoom that he delayed his decision till May 31, 2022, since he applied for a position at the John Templeton Foundation. This is a “philanthropic organization that reflects the ideas of its founder, John Templeton, who became wealthy via a career as a contrarian investor, and wanted to support progress in religious and spiritual

knowledge, especially at the intersection of religion and science.” This is of course in line with Arab-West Report and Matthew’s convictions about dialogue. Matthew guarantees the Arab-West Foundation that he will certainly come to Egypt if he does not obtain this job. Kees Hulsman presented Matthew’s decision to the AWF board. The board decided to ask Kees to write a function description and open the search to other candidates besides Matthew.

4. Fundraising in Christian Reformed Church

AWF asked the Christian Reformed Church in Den Haag for 3000 Euro in support for the year 2021 and received 2000 Euro. In the AWF financial report over 2021 a sum of 5.330 Euro is mentioned. This includes the transfer of a fund that had been committed in 2020, a collection of the Netherlands Reformed Morgenster Church and collections of individual people responding to our newsletter in December 2021.

5. Summer school in 2021

Cornelis Hulsman and Dr. Matthew Anderson organized in 2018, 2019 and 2020 summer schools/webinars with the support of SGP Shiraka funding of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Our funding request for 2021 was focused on the role of Coptic population statistics in Muslim-Christian discussions in Egypt but this was declined by the SGP. We have had thus no summer school in 2021 and won’t get one in 2022 since we are past the deadline for applications for an activity in 2022.

6. The CAWU Learning Center for refugees

We reported in April 2021 that Majorel Egypt company was committed to 20.000 \$ annually in support in the form of assets (including books, stationary, video conferencing, etc.). Sadly this has not been materialized. The commitment was made by Majorel CEO Ricardo Langwieder who left Majorel last summer and is working on the start-up of his own company in the field of work of Majorel. We have made numerous efforts to contact Ricardo’s successor at Majorel but he did not respond.

In March 2021 we had an online meeting with May el-Haddad, representative of Cambridge Assessment, a British examination board, for talks about becoming accredited by their organization. If the CAWU Learning Center would receive accreditation it would also be possible to attract paying Egyptian students since international schools in Egypt are so expensive. The lowest cost school with Cambridge Accreditation in Egypt charges a school fee of 45.000 EgP (around 2.400 Euro) per year while we calculated that we might be able to provide education for roughly 1.200 Euro per student per year. This would open up opportunities to accept school fee paying Egyptian students and provide spaces for refugee students for highly reduced fees. Mr. Jan van der Leest of World Servants recommended Cornelis Hulsman to contact the Weeshuis der Doopsgezinden for financial support. The funding needs to be requested through a Dutch Stichting, the Arab-West Foundation. Our first contact with Mrs. Merel Schreurs of the Weeshuis was very good. Cornelis Hulsman

presented the Learning Center on April 21, 2021, in a zoom meeting to members of the PKN Church in Alphen aan de Rijn and the Christian Reformed Church in The Hague. This meeting was attended by Mrs. Merel Schreurs of the Weeshuis der Doopsgezinden. Mrs. Schreurs, however, became very ill which delayed the decision of the Weeshuis until in July her successor informed us that our request for support did not qualify. Given the first contacts with Mrs. Schreurs this was not expected. We, immediately, had to ask Kindermission Sternsinger to revise our request to them and put elements in our request to Sternsinger that initially were presented to the Weeshuis. Sternsinger was very helpful and accepted the changes but we, since, due us waiting for the Weeshuis application, had missed the board meeting of Sternsinger in June we now had to wait for a decision from their board at the end of September. In June 2021 it was agreed that Peter Mathias would lead the Learning Centre summer school of 2021 and would become its Principal in September 2021. The unexpected dropping out of Weeshuis meant that we were unable to pay Peter Mathias the salary he had requested. Fortunately Pour Les Autres accepted pour funding request in November which made it possible for us to pay Peter Mathias a stipend of 500 Euro/month. This was appreciated but it is still far below his expectations. We agreed to continue searching for funding.

Since we could not start teaching before the Sternsinger board decision we delayed the start of our learning centre until September 20. We ended the school year 2020-2021 with 30 students. Some failed the school year because the curriculum was too hard on them. Others dropped out because their families needed money and they found a paid job. Again, others dropped out because they feared the uncertainty of CAWU-LC funding and went to a refugee learning centre with a Sudanese curriculum. 18 continued with us after September 20, 2021. 10 new students joined. For more details, please see the narrative report presented to Klara Koch of Kindermission Sternsinger in preparation of her visit to the Learning Centre on April 2, 2022.

Mrs. Koch concluded that we must give priority to giving our top 5 students the opportunity of obtaining an internationally recognized IGCSE diploma. It will help if the Learning Centre has an active Board of Governors. We have commitments of five CAWU members and the board soon will meet. On February 20, 2022, Sawsan Gabra Ayoub Khalil and Cornelis Hulsman met in the company of Cherif Esmat Abdelmeguid with Mr. Harry Putker. The Dutch Ambassador is ready to contact relevant Egyptian authorities. Mr. Putker advised us to contact other ambassadors with the request to form a coalition of embassies with the Dutch Embassy. We have written the ambassadors of the UK, US, Canada, Germany, Belgium and Switzerland and attached the attached memorandum for this purpose. We are now waiting for the Dutch Embassy to inform us which embassies will join the coalition as well as contacts with Egyptian authorities.

7. EO-Metterdaad

In October 2019 Rev. Erjan van de Linde of the Diaconal Office of the Christian Reformed Church informed Cornelis Hulsman about the opportunity to apply for funding to EO-

Metterdaad. This had been earmarked for refugee leadership training. This project was carried out under the leadership of former CAWU intern Olewapelumi Comfort Dickson between February 2020 and February 2021. This project included 18 workshops, 8 outreaches in refugee communities, the training of 38 refugee leaders from 4 nationalities. The report was presented to EO-Metterdaad in May 2021. The handbook for refugee leaders is almost completed.

8. Working from the Netherlands

In August 2009 Kees returned to the Netherlands to prepare the return of Sawsan and the children to the Netherlands for reason of education and resuming savings for their AOW/Pension. Sawsan and the children returned to The Netherlands in August 2010. From this moment onwards Kees was extended periods of time in Egypt and was only for limited periods of time with his family in The Netherlands. Since he was retiring per 1.12.2021 he agreed with Sawsan to remain in the Netherlands after he returned to the Netherlands in August 2021. Since August 2021 he has been working for the CIDT office and CAWU Learning Centre from his home office in The Netherlands. Between February 19 and 27, 2022, Kees and Sawsan visited Egypt with an agenda that was packed with appointments for CIDT and CAWU.

9. Open Doors

Cornelis Hulsman was asked in December 2015 to audit the work of Open Doors about their Egypt reporting. That resulted in critique on the Open Doors method of work. Cornelis Hulsman corresponded in 2016 and 2017 with Open Doors asking for a response but no responses except that they were busy and have had no time have come. This was not followed up between 2018 and 2021 and still needs to be done.

10. Pension Sawsan Gabra Ayoub Khalil and Cornelis Hulsman

The 2017 annual report of AWF described the reasons of the AOW and pension gap of Sawsan and Cornelis Hulsman which brings the income of both below the Dutch subsistence minimum once they would retire. The AWF board remains deeply concerned about the status of their pension and is dedicated to help them to find solutions.

10.1. Siwa Farms

In the narrative report of 2018 the purchase of desert land in Siwa oasis in an effort to address the AOW-pension gap of Sawsan and Cornelis Hulsman was mentioned. There were no new developments between 2019 and 2021.

10.2. Pension savings through AWF

AWF is making savings for the pensions of Sawsan and Cornelis Hulsman.

April 4, 2022