n 2000, Carnegie Corporation of New York published the first issue of the Reporter. It was meant to be “a magazine simply about ideas…a hub for foundation ideas in the United States and abroad.” Today’s Reporter has a brand-new look—it’s bigger, with more room for colorful illustrations and striking photographs—and more readable, with generous white space and a seamless flow from story to story. Yet its intention is the same as on day one—the sharing of important ideas.

Our cover story takes you to the Arab world, to learn how courageous social scientists are conducting groundbreaking research in a tumultuous time. Fifty years after the signing of the Voting Rights Act we assess the impact of Shelby v. Holder and see what the Corporation’s grantees are doing to make voting easier and less restrictive. Our education story shows how more effective math courses are helping community college students get ahead. There’s a dramatic photo essay on Russia; and the latest issue of Carnegie Results, bound into this issue, tells the story of a successful workshop series aimed at advancing Jewish-Muslim engagement.

A letter from Vartan Gregorian, President of Carnegie Corporation, is featured in every Reporter. In this issue he writes about the negative impact of data overload on knowledge acquisition. Fifteen years ago, introducing the magazine, he wrote, “We hope it will help you understand Carnegie Corporation and its philosophies on education, democracy, international peace…the areas in which we currently concentrate our grantmaking. We also want this publication to be a hub for the work of other foundations, an avenue for important ideas.” These are still the goals for the Carnegie Reporter, and for our website—also redesigned and launching as this magazine is published. Read all about it in “End Note,” on the last two pages of this issue, then visit Carnegie.org.
Real-World Alchemy: Turning Knowledge into Public Policy

It may seem paradoxical that in the current era of global connectivity and instant communication, our society shows signs of being starved for knowledge. I would argue that this is exactly the situation in which we find ourselves. While the modern world is overwhelmed with data and information it is “underwhelmed” with real understanding and clear vision about how to address the challenges that confront us. Television’s talking heads speak to us in a barrage of sound bites and the Internet presents us with billions of lines of text, millions of videos, images, and more “content” than any one human being—or ten, or a thousand, for that matter—could ever attempt to process. And all across the globe, men, women, and children are either plugged into or casting their eyes toward the screens of various electronics that speak, sing, whisper, and shout at us 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The constant chatter of the world seems both addictive and unavoidable.

While this explosion of information seems unlikely to slow down—indeed, we are told that the total amount of collected information will double in less than two years—recent estimates indicate that we are unable to use 90 to 95 percent of the information that is currently available. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that not only are we distracted and overwhelmed by the flood of images, news, rumor, gossip, data, information, and knowledge that bombard us every day, we also face dangerous levels of fragmentation of knowledge, dictated by the need for specialization and the need to find some way to catalog and manage all the learning that human beings have accumulated over the millennia.

Perhaps nowhere is this breakdown in the unity of knowledge more apparent than in our universities, which were largely influenced by the principles of such philosophers as Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767–1835), who believed that a university comprised a whole community of scholars and students engaged in a common search for truth. Truth may still be the objective, but the road leading to that goal now has more byways than even Google maps can chart. After all, universities are no different than any other institution—or our own homes, for that matter—where the daunting arrival of information in the form of books and journals has been compounded by an accelerating electronic torrent of information and opinion, some of it true, much of it false, and a great deal of it falling somewhere on the spectrum of “maybe so but then again, maybe not.”

This situation has resulted, among other outcomes, in a broad decline of support for the time-tested idea of a general education, once considered necessary for an educated citizenry and the strength of our democracy, which has for
all practical purposes become little more than a nostalgic memory. Indeed, because the body of requisite knowledge has become so vast, no one can hope to master more than a small segment of it.

Faced with an impossible undertaking, most universities today have entangled themselves in a smorgasbord of specialties and subspecialties, disciplines and subdisciplines, within which further specialization continues apace. Indeed, the scope and intensity of specialization is such that scholars, scientists, and many others have great difficulty keeping up with the important developments in their own subspecialties, not to mention their fields in general. What this means is that the university, which was conceived of as embodying the unity of knowledge, has become an intellectual “multiversity,” drifting in the direction of becoming a “Home Depot” of educational offerings, without blueprints. At the present time, for example, many major research universities offer countless undergraduate courses, an approach to education in which all too often there is no differentiation between consumption and digestion, no differentiation between acquiring information and learning, and often without accompanying reflection or questioning about what it means nowadays to be an educated person.

As early as the 1930s, José Ortega y Gasset, in his Revolt of the Masses, noted this phenomenon and decried the “barbarism of specialization.” Today we have more scientists, scholars, and professional men and women than ever before, he observed, but fewer cultivated souls. To put the dilemma in twenty-first-century terms, I might describe this as everybody doing their own thing, but nobody realizing how much science is behind our inventions, one would assume science would prevail. Unfortunately, it does not. We love technology and we consume it, but we don’t realize how much science is behind our inventions. Paradoxically, in the midst of a technological revolution, one would assume science would prevail.

The problem in education; the levying and collection of taxes; and the advancement of national and global economies; proposals address issues including policing and race, big data and privacy, the impact of an aging population, the safety of generic drugs, and how attitudes are formed among young people. The Corporation has also chosen for its fellowship program members that will help us transmute raw information into wise practice has long been the concern of fields such as law. In that regard, one is reminded that St. Thomas Aquinas said, “Law is an ordinance of reason for the common good...” The field of medicine, as well, is oriented toward the practical application of even the most theoretical areas of research. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said of the social sciences, for instance, where applied research is all too often looked down upon as being of only temporary or fleeting value and use. Yet today, in addition to science and technology, we must look to the humanities and social sciences. It is exactly in this area where we as a society, a nation, and a global community, need real-time answers to questions that have critical and far-reaching implications for the future. That is not to say that solutions to the problems we face can be patched together with some kind of intellectual quick fixes; not at all. But neither can we watch civilization’s clock tick away its many dangerous hours while thinkers and doers decline to engage one another in useful dialogue. International peace and security; immigration; the relationship of religion to secularism and science; the advancement of national and global economies; progress in education; the levying and collection of taxes; and countless other issues of great complexity require both the attention of scholars and the involvement of policymakers in order for all of us to find our way towards a more peaceful, equitable world. In this endeavor we rely on our academics, who have the unique ability to reintegrate and reconnect the disparate, ever-multiplying strands of knowledge, to bring meaning to information and forge wisdom upon the anvils of changing times. But we also depend on the work of policymakers who must implement the lessons that can be gleaned from the efforts of scholars; policies created without the backing of deep knowledge and framed by wisdom are likely to fail. We have had too many of these failures already, too many adventures in policymaking rooted in shallow understanding that have left both our nation and people across the globe in need of new ideas, new remedies, and new ways forward.

It is in the service of these goals that Carnegie Corporation has devoted significant resources to “bridging the gap” between scholars and policymakers, which in recent years only seems to have gotten wider. Perhaps this is understandable, given that the policy community must often react to global crises with little time or opportunity to reflect on the wider implications of international events while the increasingly specialized academic community all too often remains preoccupied with theoretical matters. Nevertheless, backed by the belief that academic rigor is not incompatible with policy relevance, the Corporation has embarked on a number of major projects aimed at closing that yawning distance between scholars and policymakers. One of our recent efforts involved sending out a request for proposals to the 22 American-based members of the Association of Professional Schools of International Affairs (APSIA). The request called for unique programs, on-the-ground, policy-focused programs, and offered to award two-year grants of up to $1 million each for projects not incompatible with policy relevance, the Corporation has embarked on a number of major projects aimed at closing that yawning distance between scholars and policymakers. One of our recent efforts involved sending out a request for proposals to the 22 American-based members of the Association of Professional Schools of International Affairs (APSIA). The request called for unique programs, on-the-ground, policy-focused programs, and offered to award two-year grants of up to $1 million each for projects with a strong chance of success, especially from institutions willing to rethink tenure rules so that academics are free to pursue policy work and challenge convention and merge ideas across international and disciplinary lines. Experts in the international relations field, chosen for their understanding of the policymaking process in Washington, D.C., as well as awareness of the administrative challenges of universities, reviewed 17 submissions from APSIA members. The following five were chosen: Columbia University, Syracuse University, Tufts University, the University of Denver, and the University of Washington. Their proposals include fresh ideas such as rapid response funds to make academics available on short notice to join counterparts at the State Department as soon as an international crisis breaks, and incorporating nontraditional outlets for research, from new forms of online publishing and social media to documentary videos and TED-style talks.

Further, building on the Corporation’s long-standing commitment to supporting individual scholars of exemplary promise, we recently inaugurated the Andrew Carnegie Fellows program, a major annual undertaking that will provide support for scholars in the social sciences and humanities. Recipients will receive up to $200,000 each, which will enable them to devote between one and two years to research and writing. The first class of 23 fellow-ship recipients, announced this spring, is an exceptional group of established and emerging scholars, journalists, and authors whose work distills knowledge, enriches our culture, and equips leaders in the realms of science, law, business, the arts, and, of course, public policy. The fellow-ship aims to provide new perspectives on the program’s overarching theme for 2015: Current and Future Challenges to U.S. Democracy and International Order. Winning pro- posals address issues including policing and race, big data and privacy, the impact of an aging population, the safety of generic drugs, and how attitudes are formed among voters. The Corporation will award a total of $6.2 million to the inaugural class.

These might be regarded as big programs for one foundation, but we also recognize that they are small steps towards developing an understanding of how we have arrived at this moment in time. Then, perhaps, as problems and issues evolve, we can invoke the lessons of history, apply intellectual rigor, look to humanitarian concerns, and start to open some new doors to the future that all of mankind can pass through not just without harm, but with real hope. At least, that is our aspiration as we follow the mandate of our founder, Andrew Carnegie, who urged us all to “set a goal that commands your thoughts, liberates your energy, and inspires your hopes.” Our work continues in that spirit and we look forward with great excitement to what we will learn in the years ahead. —

Vartan Gregorian
President, Carnegie Corporation of New York
Even in the early days of Syria’s uprising, it was nearly impossible to do independent research. From early on in the rule of President Bashar al-Assad, which began in 2000, very little leeway was allowed for any work that might challenge the regime. Academics, journalists, political activists, even humanitarian workers were subject to harsh measures of control. The situation worsened after peaceful protests erupted across the country in 2011. Nonviolent activists were imprisoned, exiled, or killed, and armed insurgents took their place. From the start, the conflict restricted movement around the country. Even worse, authorities on the government side and later among rebels wanted to manipulate any research or reporting from their tenuous zones of control. Analysts began to call Syria a “black box,” an unruly place off-limits to credible researchers.

Into this confusion stepped two Syrian-born academics: Omar Dahi, an economist at Hampshire College, and Yasser Munif, a sociologist at Emerson College. They practiced traditional disciplines at reputable research institutions, but they wanted to conduct unconventional research. How were Syrians adapting to the transformation of their society and the disintegration of an old order? Dahi and Munif wanted to bring systematic rigor to studying the experiences of the thousands, eventually millions, of Syrians who were building new modes of self-governance, beyond Assad’s control, or who were adapting to new lives and identities in the maelstrom of exile. They believed they could conduct meaningful social science in the “black box.”
"Most of the research about Syria revolved around geopolitical conflict and strategies, interested in a top-down perspective," Munif said. "I was interested in the other way around. I wanted to understand participatory democracy, the different ways people were conducting politics, and the collapse of the state.

Like other radical developments that accompanied the Arab uprisings and government backlash, Syria’s crisis demanded sustained scholarly attention. And research in a rapidly evolving war zone, in turn, required support from a flexible and imaginative institution. Dahi and Munif found their backer in the Arab Council for the Social Sciences, a quickly burgeoning venture that by 2014 had been misdirecting a network of Arab scholars to more confidently practice a new brand of social science that rises directly from the concerns of a region in turmoil.

Dahi and Munif applied in the fall of 2012 for the first batch of funding offered by the grantmaking organization, known by its acronym, the ACSS. Dahi wanted to study the survival strategies of refugees. By the time his grant had been approved and he began research, the number of refugees had swelled from a few hundred thousand to nearly two million. He partnered with researchers and activists in the region who were devoting much of their time to the urgent needs of resettling refugees and defending their rights. Munif wanted to study the way local people took charge of their own lives and themselves. He chose a provincial city called Manbij, in northeastern Syria.

By the time he began his field research, government troops had been driven from the city, leaving it in the hands of local civil society groups and rebels.

By 2014, Munif had to interrupt his own work pre-maturely when Islamic State rebels conquered Manbij. "Without the ACSS, I wouldn’t have been able to do this type of work and the entire project from A to Z," Munif said. "The ACSS is willing to experiment with new types of research, new methodology. With the Arab revolutions we suddenly found ourselves interested in projects that would not get funding from traditional sources."

Arab Social Science

It’s worth pausing for a minute to look at the research that came out of Munif and Dahi’s loose collaboration, because it represents a different kind of social science — one that looks like — in the terms of the ACSS — a new paradigm that addresses questions of concern to people who live in the Middle East and North Africa.

In his part of Syria, Dahi’s project focused on the politics of refugee integration and examined the different ways people were conducting politics, and the collapse of the state.

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The method is as straightforward as the idea is bold. Solicit proposals, especially from researchers who aren’t already ready to walk funded and established networks, or who are working on different questions than the mainstream Western academy, which still dominates the research landscape. Invite researchers (ACSS-funded or not) from the region to join the ACSS as elected members, who will then manage and control its policies and agenda. See what happens.

Since doling out its first grants in 2013, the ACSS has awarded $8.8 million to 108 people. Its annual budget has grown from $800,000 in 2012 to close to $7.1 million in 2015. The first round of research has been completed, and voting members of the Council’s general assembly this year elected a new board of trustees. (There are 25 voting members out of a total of 137 in the general assembly, according to Shami.) It’s been a dizzying journey for a small organization that supports a type of research criminalized throughout much of the region.

The founders and original funders were determined to promote regional scholarship. Carnegie Corporation in particular has aimed much of its funding in the region toward local scholars, with the intention of stimulating and enabling local knowledge production. The Arab Council complements a number of other efforts in the region to strengthen research and social science. New universities, think tanks, and research centers are emerging in the Arabian Peninsula. Arab and Western academic institutions have formed partnerships, sometimes individually and sometimes at the level of academic departments or entire universities. The magnitude of the ACSS’s impact will only become clear in the context of a wide web of related ventures — all of them taking shape at a time of enormous change and pressure.

All across the Middle East and North Africa, academic researchers face daunting obstacles. There are bright spots, like the active intellectual communities in the universities in Morocco and Algeria. But some of the oldest intellectual centers, like Egypt, struggle under aggressive security and police forces as well as university leaders whose top concern is fomenting academic dissent. War has complicated intellectual life in places like Syria and Iraq. Government money has poured into the education sector in Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, but the lack of academic freedom means little. Munif said, "The Council was conceived at a time when repression was high but the red lines were clear," Shami said, referring to the years before the uprisings, when the ACSS was in its planning phase. The current logistical challenges underscore the difficulty of the changing conditions for researchers in the Arab region. An organization dedicated to free inquiry, the ACSS chose to incorporate in Lebanon, where it could operate without governmental restrictions and draw on a vibrant local academic community. Even that location is an imperfect choice.

Members from Egypt, for example, now face new restrictions when they want to visit Lebanon. So far it’s not impossible for Arab scholars to travel around the region, but it’s getting harder. Lebanon’s exorbitant red tape has thrown up numerous hurdles. For example, the ACSS is currently seeking special permission from the government of Lebanon to allow its international members to vote online on internal policy questions. Equally important, according to Shami, is that work permits for non-Lebanese people are becoming more difficult to obtain, which makes it challenging for the ACSS to hire staff from different parts of the region.

Many resources other regions take for granted don’t exist in the Arab region, where governments restrict access to even the most mundane archives. Data about everything from the economy to food production to the population is treated as a state secret.... Until the ACSS compiled one, there wasn’t even a comprehensive list of the existing universities in the region.
The ACSS put a lot of balls into the air from the start. Its founders wanted to create a standing network for scholars from the region and who work in the region. Their goal was to empower new voices, connect them with established academics, and nurture the relationships over a long term. That way, even scholars at out-of-the-way institutions, or smaller countries traditionally ignored by the global academic elite, might get a hearing. The Council also wanted to integrate Balkanized research communities, bringing together scholars who often published and collaborated exclusively in Arabic, English, or French.

Other long-term goals factor into the project’s design. Some of the grant categories, like the working groups and research grants, explicitly aim to change the discourse in academic social science. Others, like the “new paradigms factory,” intend to bring activists and public intellectuals into conversation with academics. The ACSS is a membership organization; each grantee can choose to become a permanent member with voting privileges—a sort of institutional democracy and accountability in action that the Council hopes will filter into other institutions in the region.

Finally, this summer (2015) the Council will publish its first in-house work, the Arab Social Science Report, a comprehensive survey of the existing institutions teaching and doing research in the social sciences in the region. The ACSS has established the Arab Social Science Monitor as a permanent observatory of research and training in the region and hopes to produce a new report on a different theme every two years, in keeping with its role as a custodian, as well as mentor of the Arab social science community.

The inaugural survey demanded an unexpected amount of sleuthing, said Mohammed A. Bamyeh, the University of Pittsburgh sociologist who was the lead author on the report and helped oversee the team that produced it. In some cases it was impossible to obtain basic data such as the number of faculty at a university or their salaries. “If you call them, they will never tell you,” Bamyeh said. “For some reason, it’s a secret.”

In the end, however, a year’s worth of legwork produced a surprisingly thorough snapshot of social science in the region. Researchers identified many more academics and other researchers than they expected, and a wider range of periodicals and institutions. Freedom of research turned out to be a better predictor of quality than funding, Bamyeh said. The quality varied widely, but Bamyeh noted that some reason, it’s a secret.”

You don’t have a strong trust in the virtue of science.” He hopes that the ACSS can play a part in a wider revival, in which social scientists reclaim their influence and beat back the encroachment from clerics and authoritarian states. “The mission and vocation of social science in this region is to connect itself to society and to decision makers,” Hanafi said. He believes the Arab world needs stronger institutions of its own, including independent universities, governments committed to funding independent research, and professional associations for researchers. Efforts like the Arab Council can help pave the way.

Participants at ACSS conferences are encouraged to present and publish in Arabic. The Council also values the efforts of its members as a collective network. Pascale Ghazaleh, a historian at the American University of Cairo, said it was “mind-blowing” to meet scholars she’d never heard from around the region at the ACSS annual meeting in Beirut in March 2015. She said she was moved to hear her colleagues discussing their work in their own language. “It was the first time that I’d been surrounded by people who were unconsciously using social science terminology in Arabic,” Ghazaleh said. “It’s something to be proud of.”

The language is part of an intentional long-term strategy to anchor the Council and its social science agenda in the region. Although many of its founders have at least one foot in a Western institution, Shami said that “we see ourselves as fully homegrown and firmly based in the region, but interacting with the diaspora as well.” The majority of the trustees, for instance, are based in Arab countries. “It is an ongoing conversation as to who decides the main questions of research for social sciences,” Bamyeh said. “Can there be something like an indigenous social science that has its own methods? It is essential for social sciences in the Arab world to develop a strong sense of their own identity.” As an example he cites an Egyptian sociologist in the 1980s who discovered at the post office a bag of unaddressed letters, most of them containing prayers and pleas for help from the poor written to a popular folk saint. A clerk was about to throw them away. The sociologist took them home and produced a seminal study of Egyptian attitudes and mentality. That’s the sort of approach that Bamyeh said he hoped to see employed after the Arab revolts. Instead, he was disappointed to find many American sociologists trying to apply existing Western models to the cases of Egypt and Tunisia. “It was an opportunity to acquire new knowledge,” Bamyeh said. “We need an independent Arab social science that feels its own right to ask questions, questions not asked by the European and American academy. It’s not nationalist, although it might sound that way. It’s really a question of a scientific approach that comes out of a local embeddedness.”

Activist Research

The architects of the ACSS have embraced that quest, encouraging research that springs from local problems, and supporting work from outsiders and nonacademics. In Beirut, the ACSS supported an atypical interdisciplinary research team that explored the misuse of public space and the confiscation of people’s homes. As a result of that research project, Aheb Saksouk, an architect and urban planner without an institutional home of her own, launched an ongoing public campaign to save the last major tract of undeveloped coastline in Beirut. Today she is spearheading one of the most dynamic and visible grassroots social initiatives in Lebanon: the Civil Campaign to Protect the Dalieh of Raouche. The Dalieh is the name of the grassy spit of rock that flanks Beirut’s iconic pigeon rocks. Cliff divers used to perform death-defying Acapulco-style leaps from the Dalieh’s cliffs until last year, when developers suddenly fenced off the last publicly accessible green open space in Beirut. The campaign that Saksouk helped initiate wants to stop the Dalieh from being transformed into a high-end entertainment and residential complex.

“The ACSS was a huge push forward,” Saksouk said. It wasn’t the money, she said, so much as the people with whom it connected her. She was mentored by academics, given a platform to publish in Arabic, and introduced to other people thinking about ways to engage with their city. “My activism on the ground informed what I wanted to focus on in my research, and the paper I wrote for the ACSS informed my activism,” Saksouk said.

The Civil Campaign has started a contest, soliciting alternative, public-minded proposals for the Dalieh peninsula. The point, Saksouk said, is to energize a social movement and change the way Beirutis think about their city’s public space. Her research collaborator, Nadine Bekdache, studied the history of evictions, and together the pair explored the concepts of public space and private property. These are theoretical concepts with explosive implications, especially in a place like Beirut where a few powerful families dominate the government as well as the economy. “A lot of people are sympathetic but don’t think they can change anything,” Saksouk said. “We’re accumulating experiences and knowledge. All this will lead to change.”
In contrast, the clock has turned backward on the prospects for reform and innovation in Egypt, long considered a center of gravity for Arab intellectual life. Egypt has some of the region’s oldest and biggest universities, and historically has generated some of the most important thinking and research in the Arab world. But Egypt’s academy has suffered a long, slow decline as successive dictatorships suppressed academic life, fearing it would breed political dissent.

In the two-year period of openness that began after Hosni Mubarak was toppled in 2011, university faculty and students turned out to be a short renaissance. A May 2015 U.S. State Department report on Egypt’s political situation found “a series of executive initiatives, new laws, and judicial actions severely restrict freedom of expression and the press, freedom of association, freedom of peaceful assembly, and due process.”

At least one well-known ACSS grant winner, the public intellectual and blogging pioneer Alaa Abdel Fattah, languishes in jail; he was detained before he could complete the paper work to start his research. Officials even took away his access to pen, paper, and books after his prison letters were published.

 universities have seen a severe decline in academic freedom and some researchers have stopped working or have fled. Outspoken academics like Khaled Fahmy, a historian who has been a critic of military rule and also a journalist who fled. Outspoken academics like Khaled Fahmy, a historian who has been a critic of military rule and also a journalist who has been called a terrorist by the Egyptian government.

However, there is a work in progress and many aspects of the association have to be worked out, the interest among the members in making it succeed seems very strong.

Egypt: In the Shadows of a Police State

The act of creating a network across multiple countries is in and of itself a major feat, given the realities of the region,” Deana Arsenian said. “While it’s a work in progress and many aspects of the association have to be worked out, the interest among the members in making it succeed seems very strong.”
Not Left, Not Right, but Forward!

50 Years On, Advancing U.S. Voting Rights for All

by Abigail Deutsch
nialized Mencacha, who lives in El Paso, Texas, has been on the last name ballot for the last 30 years. But in November 2014, he confronted a problem at the polls: due to a new law, he needed to show his driver’s license to cast a ballot, and he had left his license at home. Poll workers refused to accept his voter ID card or a federally issued ID for his job at a military base; instead, they told him to fill out a provisional ballot. Three weeks later, he learned that––despite him not having known it was necessary––his provisional ballot wouldn’t count.

Mencacha says the experience made him feel “upset” and “disempowered,” and “I didn’t know it was supposed to make sense.” The poll workers, who live in his neighborhood, knew who he was. It was harder to get his federal ID (which includes his address, a photo, and a computer chip) than his driver’s license. Situations like this explain why he found voting so crucial in the first place: “They try to take your rights away.

In recent years, the United States has seen a rush of restrictive voting policies. The number of new difficulties citizens face—including voter ID laws, cutbacks in early voting, closures of polling places, limitations to same-day registration, and other discouraging measures—is “unprecedented in the last several decades,” according to a report from New York University’s Brennan Center for Justice, a nonpartisan institute. Until 2013, the Voting Rights Act (VRA) required areas with histories of discrimination to clear proposed voting law changes. In 2012, for instance, the VRA stopped Texas from enacting the very policy that would preclude Mencacha from voting two years later.

But the Supreme Court dismantled the Act in 2013 with its Shelby County v. Holder decision, which lifted protections from the regions that need them most.

Harsh voting laws disproportionately affect people of color and people who have been impacted by the criminal justice system, as well as other disadvantaged groups, and the protests that recently rocked cities such as Ferguson and Baltimore have given the matter new urgency. Matt Singer, executive director of the Bus Federation—a nonprofit that supports youth engagement and enfranchisement, and that, like the other organizations mentioned in this piece, receives funding from Carnegie Corporation of New York—sees a link between voting rights and issues that have gripped the American public over the last several months.

“I don’t think that protecting voting rights will on its own resolve his domestic problems, to poverty, to systemic racism,” he says. “But it’s very clear that there are common themes here, with a set of incredibly powerful people in this country—policymakers, judges, and police—whose actions indicate that black people’s lives don’t matter, that their voices and votes don’t matter.”

To Singer, it’s evident that if we hope to solve pressing national problems, we need to empower all Americans to join the conversation—“especially,” he says, “the people most affected by systemic injustices. Our observers to keep an eye on polling activities. In 1965, these strictures applied to Alabama, Louisiana, Georgia, Mississippi, South Carolina, and Virginia, along with swaths of North Carolina and a single county in Arizona. Over the years, that list would evolve as certain jurisdictions proved themselves innocent of discrimination, and obtained relief from coverage, and as others were found newly guilty of bias.

By the end of 1965, 250,000 African Americans had become registered voters. By 1968, voter turnout among African Americans in Mississippi was up 79 percent from about seven percent in March 1965. These trends would continue. According to a 2015 report by the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, more than black Southerners cast ballots in one third of U.S. presidential elections since 1965. Nationally, black turnout exceeded white in the 2012 presidential election.

**More Minority Representation**

The VRA affected not only who voted, but also who got elect. In 1972, the first black southern politicians since Reconstruction won seats in Congress. By 1990, 495 African Americans served as elected officials in Georgia, up from 35 in 1965. As of March 15, 2015, Alabama had elected 777 black officials—a steep rise from 86 in 1970—and more than 17,000 members of minority groups held offices across the nation, up from fewer than 1,000 in 1965. While minorities remain underrepresented in elected offices, these figures nonetheless indicate substantial progress in civic engagement and political influence.

Yet progress has hardly been consistent. Since 2010 in particular, the United States has suffered a vast number of efforts to curtail voting rights. “It seems like every time I turn around,” says Anita Brodie, director of the Southern Innocence Project, “there’s something else going out.”

There is no Southern problem. There is no Northern problem. There is only an American problem,” he stated. The Voting Rights Act, which Johnson signed into law 50 years ago, went a long way toward solving this problem. The brilliance of the law—often seen as the most effective civil rights law ever adopted by Congress—lay in both its geographic particularity and its flexibility, allowing certain jurisdictions to evolve as certain jurisdictions proved innocent of discrimination, and obtained relief from coverage, and as others were found newly guilty of bias.

The VRA affected not only who registered to vote, but also who got elected to office. “The electorate is a problem,” he says, “not because it has worked and is continuing to work to stop discrimination, but because it has the power to do so. If you can get a ballot, you can vote. The VRA is about giving people who have been disenfranchised the right to vote.”

Why this regression? Wendy Weiser, director of the Brennan Center’s Voting and Democracy program, describes it this way: “The VRA is about giving people who have been disenfranchised the right to vote. The VRA is about giving people who have been disenfranchised the right to vote. The VRA is about giving people who have been disenfranchised the right to vote.”

The prescription is a simple one: “We need to restore what we lost in 2013,” she says, “and that means getting a constitutional amendment through the Senate and the House and onto the ballot in 2020.”

Weiss is not alone in her concerns. According to the Brennan Center, 21 states—50 percent of the states—have enacted laws that make it more difficult to vote since 2010. In this year alone, 15 states have enacted new laws, including Mississippi, which effectively overturned a federal ruling that required the state to conduct voter registration audits.

But the law is not clear, and the consequences can be severe. In 2012, for instance, the Mississippi Supreme Court overturned a federal election order that required the state to conduct voter registration audits. In 2013, the Supreme Court upheld a federal decision that allowed the state to continue conducting the audits.

**Shelby County Turns Back the Clock**

The single most damaging legal shift in recent years—one that has permitted many of the policies that paved the way for Shelby County Supreme Court decision. After an Alabama jurisdiction challenged the constitutionality of two sections of the VRA, the Supreme Court declared one outdated: Section 4, which included the formula that identifies the geographic areas subject to federal preclusion. With that, preclusion ended. Efforts to update Section 4 are ongoing, but—in a time when a partisan gridlock makes voters’ rights for President Obama’s productivity—it’s unclear when new legislation will pass.

The Shelby decision yielded swift backlash. President Obama’s response has been to push for voting rights legislation, a Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg delivered a scathing dissent. “Hubris is a fit word for today’s demolition of the VRA,” she wrote, adding that the act should not be destroyed on the premise that it has failed to stop discrimination.

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The federation also runs a voter registration and turnout drives and teaches young people how to cast ballots. Hundreds of national and local organizations partner in promoting National Voter Registration Day, which will take place on September 22, 2015.

New restrictions also face particular challenges to voting, Huang says—partly because many come from countries with different attitudes toward government. “For some Asian communities, not only is the concept of democracy a new one, but in some societies, political participation was cause for severe punishment. So we have a huge cultural barrier there.” As part of State Voices’ work to educate immigrants about American democracy, her program runs voter registration drives, lets voters see their ballots, and access turn-by-turn directions online, which is critical to those who don’t understand voting instructions in English.

Cochaired by Robert F. Bauer, who served President Obama as White House counsel, and Ben Ginsberg, who served as national counsel to the Romney for President campaigns, the Commission’s ten members include election administrators and customer-service–oriented business people whose private and public sector experience help identify best election practices.

The Commission conducted a six-month study of problems that have plagued voting—problems that will confront the American voter in the future. After hearing testimony from around the country and evaluating the results of a survey of thousands of election administrators, the Commission concludes that the “problems that hinder the efficient administration of elections are both identifiable and solvable.” Their report plus online tools and recommendations can be found at the Commission’s website (www.supportvotergov) and on the site of the Corporation-supported Caltech-MIT Voting Technology Project.

Instead, the story of voting in America can’t be reduced to partisan battles over restrictive laws: “There are advances on the good side and the bad side, and sometimes even the same places,” Huang says. Virginia has passed a voter ID law, but it also started offering online voter registration and designated minimum numbers of voting machines and workers at polling places to cut down on long lines on election day. Florida has introduced an online registration system even as it limited voter registration drives, curbed early voting, and effectively disfranchised people with criminal convictions, according to the Brennan Center, between the January start of the 2013 legislative session and mid-May, 113 restrictive measures were introduced or passed in state legislatures—and so were 546 bills that could improve access to registration and voting.

Yet owing both to the ongoing push for restrictive laws, and to what Weiner describes as “a systematic underinvestment in our electoral infrastructure,” voting places can never rest. “We repeatedly come up against cliffs where all the voting machines are about to expire, or we haven’t registered everyone to vote, or our voter rolls are so messy that no one can find their polling places. We’re going to sound the alarm and there will be advocacy and it will get solved, and then a new crisis will come.” The next crisis, she says, concerns anticipated voter ID being “the last straw that will break the camel’s back.”

Weiner says, “I’m confident on the system side, but we’ll have to see how long we’ll need to continue fighting voter suppression battles.” For Richard Strauch, Daniel Menchaca, and the countless other Americans prevented from voting in recent years, those battles can’t be won quickly enough.
Community College Students Find Strength in Numbers

by Kathryn Baron

Taylor Rountree took a year and a half to snag a spot in Yevgeniy Milman's alternative developmental, or remedial, math class at New York City's Borough of Manhattan Community College (BMCC). The 21-year-old had already withdrawn from the regular developmental education course—twice—because she was failing and decided she'd rather get out than get an "F" on her transcript.
the wheel. “Absolutely!” praised Milman, beaming, “that's by something else, and arrived at the wait time to take blood-alcohol level, subtracting another number, divided under their desks. She substituted a fraction in place of sense. That was remarkably clear when Milman asked Gip son said math was a difficult subject for her in high school and that's how she wound up taking a remedial out what we did right and what we did wrong, instead of it to us. Then we work it out together as a class and figure real-world terms,” said 19-year-old Ciara Gipson, wearing their answer. M&M’s candy is the sweet spot in a Statway to chart the rate of change or to compare rates, uses cell school and that’s how she wound up taking a remedial class. He’s calm, patient, and has a quirky sense of humor. He’s patient with a warning: “Algebra comes in”—followed by reassurance: “It’s not necessarily going to be anything bad because algebra is not a bad word; it’s just something that can be useful in certain situations.” Ignoring the meaning, the professor explained that for the next problem they would be figuring out how long someone who has had a few drinks should wait before legally and safely getting behind a wheel of a car. The students perked up. This could relate to:

“The legal limit is this much in three gallons of blood,” Milman told his class, holding his thumb and forefinger about an inch apart to illustrate the tiny amount. A smat tering of shocked murmurs erupted from around the class room; it was much less alcohol than the students expected. Milman had them figure out how long they would have to answer the question and trying to make sure every student understands the problem and what they’re being asked to do. When someone is struggling, he pulls up a chair and makes time for one-on-one. When he senses broad confusion or misunderstanding, Milman stops everyone, goes together in groups to figure out the answers. When students learn to challenge the process they use to get a correct answer, they can “learn to question the idea of error; in this case, determining the accuracy of a mea sure, abilities, and future potential. At the heart of the prob lem are years spent in inadequate schools in impoverished neighborhoods that taught them to view math as a foreign language. Lawsuits such as Williams v. California, a seminal court case settled in 2004, rendered vivid images of low-income students who were especially at risk because they were born into poverty, onto a crumbling plaster, broken bathrooms, insufficient text books, and a revolving door of substitute teachers.

Even students tenacious enough to overcome these in quiries and attend college face other hurdles. On average, 80 percent of entering community college students will be referred to developmental math because they don’t score high enough on the college’s placement exam. Of those, 10 percent will advance to college-level math, which is the ticket to transfer to a four-year college or to earn an associate’s degree. No wonder students feel like interlopers who aren’t worthy enough or, as in Taylor Rountree’s case, smart enough to have a seat at the higher education table. Being told they have to take remedial math, even if it’s new and tailored to their needs, makes them feel not good at this and if we’re actually going to figure out a way to sustain their active engagement in this work, we have to address these issues about motivation, given everything that’s happened to their educational system prior to this point has signaled to them.”

The Pathways team at CFAT spent a lot of time reading and re-reading the students they were having to address this is lege. They immersed themselves in research around social and psychological connections to learning, focusing on the work of renowned Stanford University psychology profes sor Carol Dweck, best known for studying growth mindset. Dweck and her team conducted a series of experiments with elementary school students and found that those who believed in a growth model, who were not described as having a fixed mindset—could change that self-perception by learning study skills, being told that they had the ability to succeed, and getting encouragement to keep trying and pushing ahead even if they failed. In and again. CFAT staff and Pathways faculty expanded Dweck’s ideas into a group model that called “productive persistence,” a tially a set of skills, strategies, and mindsets that disad
tages children and teenagers can use to improve their study habits, motivation, self-regulation, and tenacity. Those motivational tools and habits of mind were embed
d into the teaching, training, and structure of Statway and Quantway.

At American River College in Sacramento, California, Statway professor Michelle Brock starts every class with a request intended to create a growth-mindset culture. Right after walking in the door and saying “hello,” before she’s pulled out the class materials from her rolling backpack, Brock glances at the handful of empty chairs and asks her students to get on their cell phones. “If you look around and see that nobody is here, you can text them real quick and see if there’s anyone who wants to transfer to nearby Sacramento State University. She was accepted into the anthropology department, pending a passing grade in this class. Huffman is 57 years old and hopes to finally make it to the university of her choice. But for students enrolled in Quantway, results are almost flipped—about 60 percent of them pass. Some community colleges have two, three, even four hours. Students who don’t count toward graduation, could take two years to complete in the best of circumstances, require expensive books, and cost the same as any other class. The Commu nity College Research Center (CCRC), which evaluated the Teacher College at Columbia University, found that just 10 percent of students who place three semesters below college math make it to the next remedial level. Typically, they run out of time, money, and motivation.

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and Quantway are undergirded with supports. Tutoring is available during school hours and after-school hours.

When CFAT started digging into problems at community colleges back in 2008, they found that high failure rates in developmental education were the “single biggest impediment” for student success, said Brock. “They can com-
plete everything else, but if you don’t get through that, all
opportunities are blocked. They can’t transfer to four-year institutions and they can’t qualify for a number of different tech-
ications and occupational certification programs,” said
Bryk. “This was a real high-leverage problem to solve.”

It’s not only struggling students who suffer the conse-
quencies. By 2020, just three years from now, 65 percent of all new job openings will require some postsecondary edu-
cation. But the United States is looking at a shortfall of five million qualified workers. That gap can’t be closed without improving the odds for the 7.5 million students enrolled in degree or certificate programs at the nation’s more than 1,300 community colleges. They make up 42 percent of the nation’s public and private nonprofit colleges, according to the latest figures from the National Center for Education Statistics.

Community colleges are also pivotal to advancing social and economic mobility. Forty-four percent of high school students with family incomes below $25,000 choose to attend community colleges after graduation. These insti-
tutions are the only ones for more than half of all Native American, Hispanic, and Black students. “This is really a central institution in our educational system,” said
Bryk. “Yet community colleges are perceived as a lower tier of the [higher education] system in the United States.”

CFAT decided to take on this problem, and started the Pathways initiative as a pilot program. They invited the 26 community colleges within its national network to share and adapt research on math faculty from those campuses to take the lead. When American River’s Brock received the email, she said, “I went to the dean and said, ‘I’m not doing this.’” She was discouraged by the high failure rate in remedial classes and the lack of any effort to address the problem. “We really did need to do something different; we couldn’t keep doing the same thing over and over,” said
Brock, referencing the definition of insanity.

“What we need to do is get math people interested in doing something different; we can’t keep doing the same thing over and over,” said
Brock, referencing the definition of insanity. “There’s an inherent need to be thinking about ways even more is “getting math people interested in doing something different; we can’t keep doing the same thing over and over.”

Brock and the other early adopters have shifted their roles from developers and testers to mentors for colleagues across the country who are new to the program. An ongoing organizational barrier that receives a lot of attention is the lack of alignment between public colleges and universities, even those in the same state. A student may earn an “A” in Statue, but that’s moot if the local four-year state university won’t accept the credits.

Sometimes it’s a bureaucratic tangle, but more often it’s a philosophical debate over whether an entry-level math college student should be required to know. One side contends that students who aren’t majoring in a field that requires algebra or calculus should be allowed to take a math class that will be useful in their liberal arts career. Critics of that perspective maintain that without an agreed upon set of universal requirements, the value of a college degree is diminished. As Brock pointed out, Statway and Quantway were designed as a deliberate challenge to that point of view.

The good news is, the mathematics community is increasingly recognizing and advocating for the need for more closely with a different major. Philip Treisman, a professor, which is one of the reasons it’s hard to recruit more of the programs are still too new to generate the necessary evidence. Sometimes it’s a bureaucratic tangle, but more often it’s a philosophical debate over whether an entry-level math college student should be required to know. One side contends that students who aren’t majoring in a field that requires algebra or calculus should be allowed to take a math class that will be useful in their liberal arts career. Critics of that perspective maintain that without an agreed upon set of universal requirements, the value of a college degree is diminished. As Brock pointed out, Statway and Quantway were designed as a deliberate challenge to that point of view.

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ind fills the tunnel at Ploshad Vostanniya, one of Saint Petersburg’s central metro stops, and crowds of businesspeople, babushkas, and teenage couples edge closer to the tracks, ready to squeeze onto the approaching train before its unforgiving doors slam shut. Inside, shoulders are wedged among shoulders and bodies breathe the same sticky air, but eyes make no contact. People look either up or down, riveted by a map or a spot on the floor. The only voice is that of the automated announcement system, regular and smooth in contrast with the rough vibration of the train.

At each stop the car unloads more people than it takes on. Shoulders are again free to slump and tired legs well come an open space on the bench. By the seventh or eighth stop, it is clear who will be riding the train to the end of the line. Most carry backpacks or suitcases—several shopping bags, at least. At the ninth stop, the train empties. A guard sweeps each car for stragglers.

The doors of the train station burst open into a misty wind. Travelers adjust their scarves and pull their suitcases around puddles. They have come only nine stops from Ploshad Uprising Square, Vostanniya, considered the gates of St. Petersburg and half an hour from the city center. But this place called Devyatkin is much colder. The northernmost stop of the Saint Petersburg Metro system—and formerly, of the world—it is the only Metro station located beyond the city limits. On the outskirts, Devyatkin is a place of transfer. Where the metro ends, passengers proceed to the commuter rail, the bus station, or one of many lingering taxis. Beyond the buses and trains, Devyatkin becomes a quiet bedroom community. After work or errands in the city, a commuter’s walk is just five minutes from train to apartment—the crumbling brown Soviet-style block or the massive blue and orange concrete development next door. One long, muddy road rolls away from the area, with only the occasional car repair shop or convenience store surrounded by overgrown grass to be seen. Outside one of these shops, two teenaged brothers sit in folding chairs while their mother and father stand under a rotting wood roof a few feet away. They seem to be conversing, but everyone faces the road and watches the traffic. Like every establishment in the area, they advertise “24 MACA” service. Travelers, loggers, and truck drivers, tired and hungry, pass through at all times of day. Like the taxis and the subway train, Devyatkin business is always ready. Back at the station, evening rush hour begins. The cool air thickens and so does the crowd, everyone fidgeting to find a spot under the morning as a few heavy raindrops fall. A child stretches out a hand from under her mother’s umbrella to let the rain water a bunch of flowers she’s holding. A glosy couple slides past; the woman holds a newspaper-wrapped bundle close, as if to warm her cheek. The first wave of buses arrives. The rain comes quicker now and passengers take their seats, disappearing behind the foggy windows.

In spring 2014, the Program for Narrative and Documentary Practice at Tufts University took 11 students, including Alison Graham, who created this photo essay, to St. Petersburg, Russia to explore that country up close. The stories and photographs they brought home focused on the cultural—the resurgence of iconographers, the role of chess, and the evolution of dance; the social—the current punk scene, homelessness, and access for the physically disabled; and the sense of place—the Nevsky Prospekt and the ring neighborhoods of Soviet housing. The workshop was led by award-winning photographer Samuel James, an alumnus of the Institute for Global Leadership and an instructor in the Program. An educational initiative of the Institute for Global Leadership and supported by Carnegie Corporation of New York, the Program for Narrative and Documentary Practice teaches students to shape important global issues into penetrating, multidimensional narratives. Its mission is to promote narrative documentary work that cultivates progressive change by amplifying relevant voices, breaking down barriers to understanding, advancing human dignity, and highlighting social injustices. For more photo essays from St. Petersburg 2014, visit Carnegie.org.
Conversations among faith communities is in my experience a great gift. Given the dangers facing the world today, it is also a religious imperative.

Arnold M. Eisen, chancellor, Jewish Theological Seminary; Preface, The Muslim World

Judaism and Islam in America

A Game Plan for Growing Interfaith Connections

by Karen Theroux
How can faith communities survive in a twenty-first-century western world? Modernity offers many benefits to people of all religions and cultures, yet the openness of American life with its seemingly limitless options has dramatically changed the religious experience. In short, it is harder than ever for a community of faith to take its future for granted.

Twenty-first-century challenges affect American Jews and Muslims alike. When it comes to following scripture and maintaining traditions and religious identity in a largely secular society, the two groups have a lot in common. But despite the over 1,000-year history of close relationship and religious dialogue, opportunities to conduct open conversations and share their learning are rare, especially given the atmosphere of mistrust and misunderstanding caused by world events. What to do?

From 2010 to 2014, the Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS) in New York City and two project partners, the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA) and Hartford Seminary, found a way to advance Jewish-Muslim engagement and dialogue nationwide. Their joint project, Judaism and Islam in America, began with a series of three workshops that fostered interfaith dialogues and exchanges between scholars and religious leaders, and ended with other Jewish-Muslim projects that meaningfully expanded on the conversation: two groundbreaking publications and four Jewish-Muslim pilot engagement projects.

Burton L. Visotzky, a professor at JTS, recalls the germ of the idea. “There was a new chancellor at the seminary, Arnold Eisen, who encouraged me to push forward in interreligious dialogue work,” Visotzky says. “I had been making inroads in the Muslim community, but wanted to go further.” Visotzky got in touch with a friend, Mohamed Elsanousi, director of ISNA, whose mission is to foster the development of the Muslim community, interfaith dialogue, and greater understanding of Islam. They held a meeting where Visotzky raised the idea of an interfaith program, and ISNA’s director general responded, “What took you so long?” As Visotzky puts it, “He found me an inspired investor.”

“This was a time when a program was needed, particularly between Jewish and Muslim communities in the United States,” Elsanousi says. “There was a very clear need for our communities to choose from two options: either strengthen our relationship and increase trust here at home by trying to have Muslims learn Judaism from their neighbors and the Jewish community to set a good example of what’s happening in the Middle East and bring that tension here. We chose the first option, and the ‘Judaism and Islam in America’ project was born.”

The former president of ISNA, Ingrid Mattson, was also in favor of the program. She was then the director of the Macdonald Center for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations at Hartford Seminary in Hartford, Connecticut. An academic unit within the country’s oldest non-denominational Christian seminary, it supports the premise that through intensive study and academically guided dialogue, interreligious respect and cooperation can develop. Mattson brought the Hartford institution in as a second Muslim partner with JTS.

Recognizing that there were too few opportunities for Jewish and Muslim scholars and religious leaders to gather and exchange their learning and insight in a secure, open environment, the program leaders set a goal for the series of academic conferences to “spill over into places where Judaism and Islam have similar areas, as well as into advocacy and congregational alliances,” Visotzky says. “We wanted not just to talk, but also to do good in communities and interfaith relations.” A survey was sent out to conservative congregations to assess interest in interfaith activity (Reform congregations had already participated in a similar program), and to seed the message of helping Islam in America to normalize as Judaism had done in order to become a more regular part of the American fabric.

Finding Common Ground

In 2010 the religious leaders launched their first workshop for Jewish and Muslim scholars from universities around the country at JTS in New York City, focusing on what the two groups have in common as members of minority religious traditions in America. The objective was to share the experience of two make connections, and readjust their view of the other. Carnegie Corporation of New York and several Jewish and Muslim cultural foundations provided funding for the event, hosted jointly by JTS, Hartford Seminary, and ISNA. Visotzky says there are some significant obstacles to communication in everyday life between Jews and Muslims. “First and foremost, the Muslim community is primarily a series of immigrant communities: Bangladeshis, Indonesians, Middle Easterners, Arab, Persian, and more,” he explains. “Each community lives in its own silo, with its own mosque, and too much interaction with Muslims is perceived as mixing.” ISNA is helping, and wants to bring together this diverse population to speak in one voice—American Islam. We are trying to help get Islamic leadership trained here, PhDs, chaplains, etc., and to have an Islamic seminary here to ordain imams. Now they are all born and trained abroad, which means they’re getting a perspective of local limits. ISNA is helping, and wants to bring together this diverse population to speak in one voice—American Islam. We are trying to help get Islamic leadership trained here, PhDs, chaplains, etc., and to have an Islamic seminary here to ordain imams. Now they are all born and trained abroad, which means they’re getting a perspective of local limits where they are trained rather than where they live.”

At the workshop, two dozen scholars discussed the issues both groups had experienced in adapting to the traditions of twenty-first-century mainstream America. This first exchange established that there is ample common ground between the Muslim- and Jewish-American communities. Based on the success of this workshop, the participants decided to continue with a second meeting, this time at the Hartford Seminary, focusing on their work in scriptural interpretation and law. The intent was to fortify connections from the first gathering, plan for continued collaboration, and reach out to an expanded group of participants.

Rabbi Daniel Nevins, dean of JTS’s Division of Religious Leadership, took part in the both gatherings, first in New York and then in Connecticut. “It was thrilling to meet a new set of colleagues who shared similar academic and communal concerns while inhabiting very different cultures,” he says. “At the first session in New York, I recall discussing the respective areas of historical experience for Jews and Muslims in America. We also spoke about sacred scriptures and began the process of comparison which always challenges us to reconsider our own assets and present them with a new perspective. This experience reminded me that our identity is always contextual—we curate an exhibition of ourselves from our many self-images, some of which have long been buried in storage. At the Hartford meeting, where Nevins found the focus closer to his own research interests, he was pleased to make a presentation on Jewish law (halakha), which was followed by a Muslim scholar speaking about Islamic law (fiqh). Other participants spoke about Miḥrab and tāfṣīr, the respective traditions of literary interpretation. “I also enjoyed praying beside one another, and the festive dinner that brought community members to the conversation,” he says. “Because this encounter involved not only Jews and Muslims but also Christian scholars, it was a constant experience of comparison.”

Like many of the participants, Nevins became aware that Jews and Muslims are quite similar to one another in the legal focus of their religious cultures and in the intensive study of language. But it was also clear that these relatively liberal Muslims did not come from a reformed tradition, and had some characteristics that he found more similar to Orthodox Jews. “It seemed that we Conserva- tive Jews had much more in common with our Christian colleagues, including the Catholics.”

Also present at the second meeting was Heidi Hadsell, president of Hartford Seminary. She joined the Judaism and Islam project through Mattson, who had left the seminary after the first round of the sub- stitute,” Hadsell explains, “and had the privilege of being a fly on the wall, listening to the conversation, and getting to know all the people. I learned a lot from hearing the two traditions encounter each other.” Why Hartford? Hadsell describes it as an unusual place with a unique mission that’s relevant for religious leadership all over the world. “You can’t be a good religious leader unless you know people of other religions,” she says. “Hartford Seminary’s interfaith work goes back more than a hundred years. Already in the late nineteenth century there was interest in Islam.”

Hadsell explains that the seminary’s purpose at that time was mainly to train Protestant missionaries for work in the Middle East. Eventually the seminary developed a large library and a faculty centered on Islam, and, in the 1990s, decided to stop conversion and take all the faculty and the library and open a center for the study of Islam. “Today we have this center that attracts students from Christian and Muslim communities all around the world,” she says, “and a thriving Islamic chaplaincy program start- ed 18 years ago at the request of the armed services.”

The genius of the Judaism and Islam project was “that it did what interfaith academics do, which is talk in small groups and at a relatively high level of abstraction as they were finding common ground between the faiths in terms of scripture and its uses,” Hadsell says. The two groups were most alike in taking scripture seriously, and to a very high degree, but with very different methodologies, she adds. “There can be deep differences, but participants felt free to be individual. And there was always good will. The first time you meet there’s the joy of encounter and crossing boundaries; the second time it’s a consolidation of that, and meeting old friends.”

Zainab Alwani, a professor of Islamic Studies from Howard University, also joined the second group for what she describes as a very academic discussion among the

“This experience reminded me that our identity is always contextual—we curate an exhibition of ourselves from our many self-images, some of which have long been buried in storage.” – Rabbi Daniel Nevins

Carnegie Corporation of New York and several Jewish and Muslim cultural foundations provided funding for the event, hosted jointly by JTS, Hartford Seminary, and ISNA.

Rabbi Daniel Nevins, dean of JTS’s Division of Religious Leadership, took part in the both gatherings, first in New York and then in Connecticut. “It was thrilling to meet a new set of colleagues who shared similar academic and communal concerns while inhabiting very different cultures,” he says. “At the first session in New York, I recall discussing the respective areas of historical experience for Jews and Muslims in America. We also spoke about sacred scriptures and began the process of comparison which always challenges us to reconsider our own assets and present them with a new perspective. This experience reminded me that our identity is always contextual—we curate an exhibition of ourselves from our many self-images, some of which have long been buried in storage. At the Hartford meeting, where Nevins found the focus closer to his own research interests, he was pleased to make a presentation on Jewish law (halakha), which was followed by a Muslim scholar speaking about Islamic law (fiqh). Other participants spoke about Miḥrab and tāfṣīr, the respective traditions of literary interpretation. “I also enjoyed praying beside one another, and the festive dinner that brought community members to the conversation,” he says. “Because this encounter involved not only Jews and Muslims but also Christian scholars, it was a constant experience of comparison.”

Like many of the participants, Nevins became aware that Jews and Muslims are quite similar to one another in the legal focus of their religious cultures and in the intensive study of language. But it was also clear that these relatively liberal Muslims did not come from a reformed tradition, and had some characteristics that he found more similar to Orthodox Jews. “It seemed that we Conservative Jews had much more in common with our Christian colleagues, including the Catholics.”

Also present at the second meeting was Heidi Hadsell, president of Hartford Seminary. She joined the Judaism and Islam project through Mattson, who had left the seminary after the first round of her sub-
scholars about scripture and Sharia law, and about “how to practice our beliefs and laws all within the American society. We also talked about the role of Jewish and Islamic scholars within the American academy: ‘How do you teach about your theology?’ I still remember many of the discussions and dialogues,” she says. “I think the main critical point was to be honest. Share what you honestly feel, how you think. From the beginning this was well established by scholars from both faiths—honesty about what you know and what you don’t know.”

Because the focus was on a community of faith and beliefs, there was nothing about politics, according to Alwani. “The secret of the success of the meeting was that its focus was the well-being of people, communities, and societies,” she says. “When there’s politics, most of the time it’s complicated and has its own agendas or interests that take away the purity of intention. As religious scholars or a faithful community, the intention is to build a righteous community of families and individuals, while you discuss practical aspects of daily life: food, live, pray, deal with school, children, in-laws. It was two different groups working very hard to advance the well-being of their communities...to feel that you are one human family. At the end, that was my feeling.”

Spreading the Word

The first two dialogues were so successful for establishing common ground and sharing interpretations of law and scripture that the network of scholars and leaders resolved to broaden the impact of the sessions through community outreach. The third and final workshop, “From Classroom to Congregation,” included Muslim and Jewish congre- gational leaders in addition to religious scholars. It took place in Washington, D.C. and ended with a tour of the White House and a briefing with the community engagement staff there.

Experiences from the earlier workshops shaped the format for the last. The daylong closed sessions allowed for frank and open discussion that would not have been possible in a public forum. Hospitality was critical in building trust and creating “networks to continue the conversations that began at the workshop. A well-attended and favorably received public forum was held during which glitches emerged from the outset and the larger context of the need for dialogue were shared.

In this final round, the public presentation was more accessible than the closed conventions, Hassid adds. “There was also the discretion to create, Sharing the Well: A Re- source Guide for Jewish-Muslim Engagement, that could be put in the hands of Jewish congregations, mosques, maybe churches, too,” she adds. “It would be aimed at people who are in the communities, so the fruit of the project wasn’t just academic papers and relationships, but was much more widely spread.” Hassid got a big supply of the publication and sent it to many leaders of congregations, when she felt it was widely enough to add to the repeat, what was already available. While everything in the guide had to be factual and correct, it was essential that the writers insert their own experiences as well, as the guide was not only factual but created by people telling their own stories.

“It was a big accomplishment, and even if it hadn’t been published, the process alone was very enlightening for the scholars involved,” Kaplan says. “Although the authors did not have time to talk to each other about their writing plans within the scope of their assignments, in the resulting compilation of the parallels that came out organically, it illustrates how much the two groups share,” she says. “It was a huge success for writers and readers, and for men and women from all areas of Jewish and Muslim life—a spectrum of voices. The fact that you can use it as you see it is a big plus. It can be an ongoing process, or for holiday time, whatever is relevant to a particular community. It offers frank and open discussions for people everywhere.”

Kaplan says the book really came to life for her about a month after the project ended when she was invited to speak on a panel on interfaith work at the ISNA convention, which drew tens of thousands of Muslims from all over the country. “It was one of the most wonderful experiences ever,” Kaplan says. “It was August and, not realizing how the other women there would be dressed, I was the only one with bare calves. No one looked me strangely, but I felt the difference. Since I was obviously not Muslim, people asked why I was there, and when I said I’m Jewish, everyone was so hospitable, and I was invited to speak to people everywhere.”

Eluansari, who is now Director of External Relations,Secretariat of the Network of Religious and Traditional Peacemakers, believes “history will report that we started this kind of relationship. We can see there is trust building, a level of cooperation, and it is possible to enhance under- standing within the two communities. When I tell people wherever I go, they can’t believe it. Active in international interfaith work, he was recently in the Middle East meeting with religious leaders “from both sides” and brought Shari’ah the Well along with Eluansari, remembers the discussion surrounding this topic, includ- ing a Muslim scholar’s remark that “you must walk before you can run.” As she explained. “If you want people with little background to see each other as people, bringing up a divisive issue is not helpful. We want to create relationships and understandings, so people aren’t talking to the enemy but to their friend. When you meet someone for the first time, you ask the easy questions—not politics. Once you’re friends you can listen to each other’s opinion. We do acknowledge other approaches in the book; it’s all a matter of how you handle it.”

Creating the publication was more complex and time consuming than Kaplan had prepared for, but she says it was important to get the structure and topics right. It was vital to make sure that the book was factual and correct, and that the writers insert their own experiences as well, as the guide was not only factual but created by people telling their own stories.

• Creating the publication was more complex and time consuming than Kaplan had prepared for, but she

Reaching Out

The workshops helped to set the groundwork for dia- logue-based pilot projects between the Muslim and Jewish communities in Northern Virginia, Washington, D.C., and suburban Maryland. Held in 2013–2014, these projects forged genuine bonds between the two communities, and participants have pledged to do similar programs in the future. The general premise of Judaism and Islam in Amer- ica—to take the alliances formed among the academics and bring them into the wider community—came to fruition in four pilot projects:

• Adams Israel Congregation and Masjid Muhammad, Washington, D.C.: The two congregations gathered for an evening exploring the role of the Jewish-Muslim American communities in the American Civil Rights Movement.

• Georgetown University Jewish and Muslim Student Orga- nizations: These student groups met in the Jewish gather- ing space on campus, Mass., to share dinner, dialogue, and a screening of the critically acclaimed documentary, Little Town of Bethle- hem.

• Beth Shalom Congregation of Columbia County, Mary- land, and Howard County Muslim Council: The congrega- tions developed a program with a series on Talking about Israel.

• Temple Rodef Shalom and McLean Islamic Center in Virginia: A dinner and multimedia event (Unity and Mischief: A Muslim Woman Denies the Nazis in WW II Paris) was held at Temple Rodef Shalom.

“…”

Karen Theresa is an editor and writer at Carnegie Corporation of New York.
St Andrews Celebration

The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge were guests of honor at the St Andrews Gala Benefit, held at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City on December 9, 2014. The event celebrated the 600th anniversary of the University of St Andrews, from which the Duke and Duchess graduated in 2005. Of the several million dollars raised at the event, a large portion was earmarked for scholarships supporting students who would otherwise be unable to attend university.

Andrew Carnegie, founder of Carnegie Corporation of New York, and a native of Ireland, is a member of the Corporation’s Board of Trustees. Louise Richardson, principal and vice-chancellor of the University of St Andrews, is the oldest university in Scotland and now one of Europe’s preeminent higher education and research institutions. Louise Richardson, principal and vice-chancellor of the University of St Andrews, is a member of the Corporation’s Board of Trustees. Newly-appointed vice-chancellor of the University of Oxford, is a member of the Corporation’s Board of Trustees. Newly-appointed vice-chancellor of the University of Oxford, is a member of the Corporation’s Board of Trustees.

Summit on African Higher Education

Five hundred representatives of the education, private, and public sectors convened in Dakar, Senegal in March 2015 to debate the future of higher education in Africa. The African Higher Education Summit was organized by the pan-African educational organization TrustAfrica with support from Carnegie Corporation of New York, the African Development Bank, the World Bank, and the MasterCard Foundation, among others. The conference aimed to institutionalize continental dialogue around Africa’s higher education challenges, highlight and sustain exemplary initiatives and innovation, and build a constituency for transformation and investment in the field.

Today, as Africa’s economies continue to grow at an unprecedented rate, the demand for an educated workforce is rising at an increasing pace. African universities, however, are not producing enough employable graduates to meet demand. According to organizers, a consensus is beginning to emerge among governments, the business community, scholars, and pan-African development agencies regarding the critical importance of the role higher education can play in the building of democratic societies, fostering of citizenship, empowerment of citizens, and the facilitating of development and regional integration. Summit participants created a road map for the future aimed at building a constituency for transformation and investment in Africa’s higher education while overcoming such significant challenges as inadequate infrastructures, outdated pedagogies, and low levels of funding. The President of Senegal presented this action plan at the African Union summit in June.

Carnegie Corporation was represented at the higher education summit by Deana Arsenian, vice president, International Program and Program Director, Russia and Eurasia; Claudia Prettelli, program officer, Higher Education and Libraries in Africa; and Judge Anne Claire Williams, member of the Board of Trustees.

New Presidents Meet and Greet

Carnegie Corporation Board Chairman Thomas H. Kean and President Vartan Gregorian hosted a reception in March welcoming the new leaders of three of the Corporation’s sister organizations: William J. Burns, president of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, retired from the U.S. Foreign Service in 2014 after a 33-year diplomatic career. The recipient of numerous distinguished service awards, he holds the highest rank in the Foreign Service, Career Ambassador, and is the second serving career diplomat in history to become Deputy Secretary of State.

Matthew Scott, president of the Carnegie Institution for Science, was formerly professor of developmental biology, genetics, bioengineering, and biology at the Stanford University School of Medicine. His research has focused on genes that control development, and his lab group discovered the genetic basis of the most common human cancer, basal cell carcinoma, and of the most common childhood malignant brain tumor, medulloblastoma.

Subra Suresh, president of Carnegie Mellon University, was formerly director of the National Science Foundation, the only government science agency charged with advancing all fields of fundamental science and engineering research and related education. A distinguished engineer and scientist, Dr. Suresh’s experimental and modeling work has shaped new fields in the fertile intersections of traditional disciplines.
Wake-up Call for Pakistan

Foreign policy experts—American, Pakistani, and international—have spent two years working on a powerful new report, *Jago Pakistan/Wake Up, Pakistan*, published this May by the Century Foundation and supported by Carnegie Corporation of New York. Time is running out for the critical reforms needed in Pakistan to avoid disaster.

As the United States draws down its troop levels in Afghanistan and the world’s attention turns to newer challenges, Pakistan’s people, particularly its elites and leaders, need to seize the multiple opportunities to meet challenges in three vital areas—security, economy, and governance—and take their first crucial steps in a new direction.

Partners in Peacebuilding Convene

A group of grantees supported jointly by Carnegie Corporation and Canada’s International Development Research Centre (IDRC) got together in May 2015, midway through their peacebuilding projects. The two funders each support distinct but related clusters of grantees, some based in the United States and some in Afghanistan, through a 2012 joint RFP on peacebuilding and statebuilding. Grantees were joined by the Advisory Group on the Review of the UN Peacebuilding Architecture. The two-day meeting had several purposes:

- to provide an opportunity for researchers working on peacebuilding and statebuilding to share findings and mutually assess the work being undertaken;
- to encourage creative thinking about activities that would elevate and give visibility to the knowledge being produced; and
- to inform, and be informed by, the UN Advisory Group.

Selection Jury

Chair: Susan Hockfield, president emerita, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Ralph Cicerone, president, National Academy of Sciences
Jared Cohon, president emeritus, Carnegie Mellon University
Mary Sue Coleman, president emerita, University of Michigan
John DeGioia, president, Georgetown University
Robbert Dijkgraaf, director and Leon Levy Professor, Institute for Advanced Study
Jonathan Fanton, president, American Academy of Arts & Sciences
Amy Gutmann, president, University of Pennsylvania
Ira Katznelson, social Science Research Council
Earl Lewis, president, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation
Don Randel, chair of the board, American Academy of Arts & Sciences
Pauline Yu, president, American Council of Learned Societies
Rapporteur: Arthur Levine, president, Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation

Thirty-One Outstanding Scholars Are Part of a New $6 Million Program Supporting Social Sciences and Humanities

The inaugural class of Carnegie Corporation’s annual fellowship program will receive up to $200,000 each to devote between one and two years to research and writing. An exceptional group of established and emerging scholars, journalists, and authors, the fellows are expected to provide new perspectives on the program’s overarching theme for 2015: Current and Future Challenges to U.S. Democracy and International Order.

The Corporation sought nominations from nearly 700 leaders from a range of universities, think tanks, publishers, independent scholars, and nonprofit organizations worldwide, who collectively nominated more than 300 candidates. The jurors, including the heads of some of the nation’s preeminent institutions dedicated to the advancement of knowledge, considered the merits of each proposal based on originality, promise, and potential impact on a particular field of scholarship.

Selection Jury

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Ralph Cicerone, president, National Academy of Sciences
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John DeGioia, president, Georgetown University
Robbert Dijkgraaf, director and Leon Levy Professor, Institute for Advanced Study
Jonathan Fanton, president, American Academy of Arts & Sciences
Amy Gutmann, president, University of Pennsylvania
Ira Katznelson, social Science Research Council
Earl Lewis, president, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation
Don Randel, chair of the board, American Academy of Arts & Sciences
Pauline Yu, president, American Council of Learned Societies
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2015 Fellows

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Introducing the New Carnegie.org

Carnegie Corporation of New York is proud to introduce our redesigned Carnegie.org website to you, our valued Carnegie Reporter and Carnegie Results community.

The new Carnegie.org uses exciting design and content curation tools of today in service of our founder Andrew Carnegie’s vision of a foundation that would “promote the advancement and diffusion of knowledge and understanding.” More than 100 years later, this mission could not be better suited to exciting advancements in digital technology, the dissemination of information, and the building of community.

We invite you to explore Carnegie.org—a new take on the traditional Carnegie forum, bringing together leading scholars and innovators working on longstanding critical issues. Program areas—Education, Democracy, International Peace and Security, and Higher Education and Research in Africa—are now showcased front and center on our homepage in rollover pull-outs designed as spines of books in, appropriately, a library.

Each program area also now exists as its own subdomain or hub, allowing readers to delve more deeply into areas of particular interest. Like the Corporation, Carnegie.org aims to serve as a convener for grantees and audiences within our fields, inspiring and building on the research and activities of leading nonprofit institutions working towards related outcomes.

In our hub dedicated to Democracy, for example, you can learn about the program’s focus areas, staff, news, and grantees. Scroll down for Your Voice—Your Vote, special multimedia and interactive features on voting rights. There’s an aggregated Twitter feed of voting resources hosted by Carnegie Corporation in partnership with NationalVoterRegistrationDay.org plus the ability, through a partnership with the platform Genius, to annotate the 1965 Voting Rights Act in the context of today, and more.

As a convening site, we are committed to robust and evolving use of social platforms. As such, our program hubs now serve as one place where you can see the collected social feeds of related grantees. Moving forward, we will be developing conversation and commenting tools expanding the reach and impact of our communities and their knowledge. Producing content, as we know, is just the beginning. How we engage and exchange with each other, is what leads to the knowledge and understanding valued by Andrew Carnegie.

The Corporation is especially proud of our role as stewards of our founder’s legacy, which you can learn about through quotes on program pages, and through a “Fable” of Carnegie’s life and philanthropy—including the 26 cultural and education organizations he established. Students and others can embed and share individual elements of the interactive biography.

We hope that you, our vested audience, will become part of the development of this site by providing ongoing feedback as we continue to roll out various features. Please share your feedback at externalaffairs@carnegie.org. And don’t forget to try us on a range of devices, as the new Carnegie.org is responsive. Check back frequently; we’ll be tweaking and adding much, much more.

Deanna Lee
Chief Communications and Digital Strategies Officer
2015 Carnegie Medal of Philanthropy

This October, some of the most charitable and visionary philanthropists in America will receive the Carnegie Medal of Philanthropy. These eight outstanding individuals and families embody the spirit of giving demonstrated by Andrew Carnegie, each having made significant and lasting impacts on a particular field, nation, or the international community. Their generosity has had tremendous influence on a wide range of fields, including education, the environment, cancer research, culture, the arts, science, citizenship, healthcare, and technology.

The 2015 Medal Recipients are:

- Microsoft cofounder and philanthropist Paul G. Allen
- Atlantic Philanthropies founder Charles F. Feeney
- Leading environmental philanthropists Jeremy and Hanne Grantham
- Longtime Pennsylvania philanthropists the Haas Family
- Utah philanthropist and Huntsman Cancer Institute founder Jon M. Huntsman, Sr.
- Prominent San Diego philanthropists Irwin and Joan Jacobs
- Two steadfast New York philanthropists, brothers Robert B. Menschel and Richard L. Menschel
- Celebrated culture and education philanthropist David M. Rubenstein

The Carnegie Medal of Philanthropy was established in 2001 to mark the centennial of Andrew Carnegie’s retirement from business and the start of his career as a philanthropist, with the stated goal of doing “real and permanent good in this world.” Medalists are nominated by the more than 20 Carnegie organizations throughout the United States and Europe, and selected by a committee comprised of representatives from seven of those institutions.