



Lutfia Rabbani Foundation Activities 2018 – 2019

During the past year the Foundation has expanded its activities in order to further its objective, namely to promote Euro-Arab relations and understanding through education and cultural exchange. Since 2019 is also the 40th anniversary of the Foundation, the Foundation has also put in place building blocks for several major events that will take place in the latter part of 2019.

We have been able to support eleven students and travel grantees in furthering their educational ambitions. This support was realised not only through the [various scholarship programmes](#) that the Foundation offers to both Dutch and Arab students throughout the MENA region but also through dialogue activities and cooperation with other institutions enabling the Foundation to bring people from different backgrounds together in the most efficient and effective manner.

Activities implemented 2018 – 2019

- Overall, **eleven scholarships and travel grants** were awarded to various scholars for the 2018-9 academic year:
 - The **Mahmoud Rabbani Scholarship** – a fully financed Master or PhD scholarship at a Dutch university or other institute for higher learning;
 - The **Vreede Scholarship for International Law** – for Arab students in international law, offered at the International Court of Justice in the Hague;
 - The **Travel Scholarship** – offered to Dutch students and professionals seeking experience in the Arab World;
 - The **Leiden University Fund** – as of 2019 it will be offered to one Master’s student annually from an Arab country to attend an advanced Master’s programme at Leiden University
- The Lutfia Rabbani Foundation supported Paradox, through which they contributed to the **48 Stories project**. 48 Stories is an international artistic collaboration between the NOOR Foundation, a group of Palestinian and Palestine-based photographers, Paradox and graphic design studio Kummer & Herrman. The project documents the experiences, memories and current situation of 48 Palestinians, both 1948 survivors and their descendants. 48 Stories seeks to show a community whose members, although geographically and socioeconomically diverse, are all tied to the same country, landscape and history. LRF supported the 48 Stories project through funding the (international) photographers during their production period.
- **Annual Meet and Greet Reception**: the informal gathering held in June 2018 brought together the Foundation’s staff, Board members, alumni, current MSR scholars, representants of the Nour project and friends of the Foundation who generously support the Foundation’s mission.

- The Lutfia Rabbani Foundation launched a new **informal dialogue series**, and organized so far 6 sessions at its offices. The Foundation seeks to create a dynamic platform for mutual understanding, discussion and networking between Europe and the Arab region by organizing several events to stimulate understanding and discussion. Speakers of these informal dialogue sessions were Dr. Barbara Ibrahim, Dr. Laila Hourani, Sanaa Thabet and Salah Jubair, Desirée Custers (Travel grantee), Esther Schoorel (Travel grantee), and Kianoosh Motallebi (Travel grantee).
- The Lutfia Rabbani Foundation supported a follow-up of the **Kompass Project** “Nothing About Us Without Us” with a grant in 2018. Kompass believes that people should not make a judgement or implement policies on refugees without including them in these conversations. The Nothing About Us Without Us project therefore aims at engaging Syrian refugees and letting their voices be heard.
- The Lutfia Rabbani Foundation initiated a new strategic partnership with Leiden University in November 2018 by establishing a new matching fund: **‘Leiden University Fund – Lutfia Rabbani Foundation Scholarship’**. LRF and the Leiden University Fund have joined forces to support students who demonstrate exceptional academic excellence and a strong motivation to promote Euro-Arab dialogue. The Fund provides one full scholarship annually to a master student from an Arab country to attend an advanced master programme at Leiden University.
- The Lutfia Rabbani Foundation supported for the first time the **International Documentary Film festival Amsterdam** (IDFA) in November 2018 by enabling 4 young Arab film talents from Palestine, Tunisia, Syria, and Lebanon to attend IDFAcademy during IDFA. **IDFAcademy** is an intensive four-day training program that takes place during the festival, offering emerging documentary filmmakers and producers the opportunity to meet a broad spectrum of esteemed documentary professionals who share their knowledge of the industry. The aim of the LRF’ support is contribute to make IDFA more inclusive, by bringing D a rich source of young Arab talents including their ideas and expertise to enrich these discussions, offering different perspectives and valuable insights.
- The Lutfia Rabbani Foundation supported the **United World College in Maastricht** with organizing the 2019 International Peace Conference. Over two days, the students participated in discussions and workshops around the theme of **“Dare to Know”**. The LRF organized a specific session for the first time on **Europe-Arab stereotypes** and engaged students from its broader networks. The main questions addressed the question: In the framework of Euro-Arab dialogue, what are the stereotypes affecting both men and women? LRF supported the student-run initiative, which had workshops led by Haya Omari (MSR scholar), Desiree Custers (Travel grantee to Jordan), and Zina Bankasli (Kompass representant).
- The Lutfia Rabbani Foundation hosted a table at the 10th **Middle East North Africa Trade Dinner** in The Hague in January 2019, inviting representatives from some of the Foundation’s strategic partners and supporters. The LRF’s participation at this event stems from its belief that the business community has a key role to play in supporting its mission of increasing cultural and educational exchanges aimed at strengthening Euro-Arab dialogue and understanding.
- The Lutfia Rabbani Foundation launched its first **Alumni Network Platform** in 2019. In 40 years, LRF has given grants to over 150 young people from the Arab region and Europe. This

Alumni Network has been set up in order for alumni to remain active members of a dynamic platform for exchange, discussion and networking between Europe and the Arab region. The network will give alumni the chance to remain connected to the foundation and each other through on- and offline interaction.

- The Lutfia Rabbani Foundation has expanded its cooperation with and sponsorship of the **Nour Project**, initiated by the Leiden branch of AIESEC the Netherlands. Following the mandate of AIESEC of promoting cultural exchange via short work placements abroad, the Nour Project sends a group of both Dutch and international students to the MENA region for 6 weeks over the summer and winter seasons to work in various projects and internships in their destination country of choice. As part of the strategic plan for the Nour Project for 2018-9, a greater emphasis was put in meeting the Nour managers from different AIESEC branches, establishing a connection with the marketing team and to connect Nour managers and participants with relevant members of the LRF network. In order to improve the overall quality and impact of the Nour Project, LRF became more engaged in attending the Nour Preparation Days and Info Sessions, in addition to reaching out to Nour managers from locations which receive less applicants in order to re-assess their approach and promotion strategy. Focal locations were Rotterdam, Nijmegen, and Maastricht, with the Rotterdam branch being a particularly successful case given the interest from the Nour staff there and the increase in applications for the 2019 winter and summer editions.
- In 2018, the Foundation increased our **Vreede Scholarship for International Law** by supporting two Arab students enrolled in the summer courses and two Arab students enrolled in the winter courses.
- In 2018, the Foundation introduced a new featured to the MSR scholarships by providing scholars with a **new mentorship programme** which pairs each student with a LRF board member, with the aim of promoting knowledge exchange between both parties, connecting the students to the Foundation's networks and fostering new opportunities for dialogue.



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