

Center *for*  
Intercultural Dialogue  
*And* Translation

Narrative Report 2013

June 11, 2014

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# Executive Summary

The transition from CIDT tawsiya basita (owner-management) to CIDT limited Liability Company with local-management was difficult, in particular because finding qualified staff, accountants and lawyers within a limited budget is difficult. Because salaries have been below the market rate, CIDT has experienced more fluctuations in staff then desired.

The chaos within Egypt itself since the revolution has made matters even worse with a crumbling economy and religious tensions. Bureaucratic banking regulations and government laws simply make everything more difficult.

The hiring of Adel Rizkallah as Office Manager with many years of management, finance and accounting experience has resulted in major improvements for CIDT.

Cairo, June 11, 2014

## On this Report

This report has been compiled by Cornelis Hulsman and Adel Rizkallah, with the assistance of Sawsan Gabra, Nevine Naguib, Yosra El Gendi, Dietrich Müller-Ehrhard with some writing and editing by Jenna Ferrecchia. Additional editing was provided by Susan Richards-Benson, former senior editor of AWR and current editor-in-chief of Online Editing Services.

This report was only completed on June 11, 2014 after the completion of the auditing report by Ebeid Office which has taken time since both Adel Rizkallah and auditor Ebeid were new to CIDT. They have together worked on a financial reporting system that will make it possible to complete financial reporting and auditing earlier in the year in years to come.

# About CIDT

The Organization: In 1997 the Dutch sociologist Cornelis Hulsman and his Egyptian wife, Sawsan Gabra Ayoub Khalil, founded the electronic magazine *Arab-West Report* (AWR) in response to frequent misreporting they encountered in various Western media about Egypt, which contributes to tensions in Egypt. This later resulted in the foundation of a Taswiyya Basita Company - the Center for Intercultural Dialogue and Translation – in 2005. In 2012 CIDT was reincarnated as a Limited Liability Company. Work in Egypt has developed, made possible with contracts with Kerk in Actie, Missio and Misereor that cover core functions. The appointment of Adel Rizkallah to the post of Office Manager in 2013 strongly contributed to strengthening financial management. This is a significant requirement to aid in efforts to bring in additional business to further expand the organization.

Method: Research and reports are descriptive in their methodology; no political advocacy is carried out. We operate with the view that understandings of humans and cultures are different and that such differences should be respected. Research is aimed at providing context and correcting factual inaccuracies that often surface in reporting on Egypt and on Arab-West relations.

Track record: *Arab-West Report*, with its 15 years of experience and the publication of over 30,000 articles and reports and additional activities, has become a trusted source of information. The electronic magazine and database is supported and **it's** developed further facilitated by the Center for Intercultural Dialogue and Translation. However, ownership of Arab-West Report lies with the Dutch-based Arab-West Foundation under ISSN: 2210-3597. *Arab-West Report* is a major source of information for student interns and of thousands of users outside of our organizations, in addition to being an important source of information for lectures and workshops. For impact, we need to move the AWR database to a different hosting system, make it meet academic criteria, improve the layout and search functions, and use more images.

Guiding principles: With a standpoint of objectivity and non-partisanship – our focus of research is on intercommunal and interfaith relations in Egypt and the wider Middle East.

This is **represented in the company's** mission statement:

*To be a non-partisan organisation that contributes with an electronic database and investigative reporting for the peaceful coexistence of religious groups in Egypt.*

However, 2013 saw CIDT go beyond this due to the realization that influences outside Egypt have a deep impact on relations in Egypt, and thus should not be neglected. Additionally, people and organizations outside of Egypt should realize the impact their actions can have on Egypt.

Seeking cooperation with other partners: core funding covers core processes, however, in order to expand; CIDT will need to explore different means of attracting business and procuring material for

AWR and employing more research and translation staff. This involves intensive marketing to extend the reach of our information. A three-year plan for 2015-2017 will be developed.

About the co-founder of CIDT: Cornelis Hulsman first came to Egypt in September 1976. His experience and connections were greatly needed to overcome the difficulties experienced by CIDT in 2013, due to the sabotage of all their data and its eventual restoration three months later. He was **greatly supported in these efforts by CIDT's new Office Manager Adel Rizkallah.**

## What Others Say about Arab-West Report

It was also a difficult year because of tremendous violence, resulting in much destruction and bloodshed following the removal of President Morsi on July 3, 2013. Dr. George Messiha, former Member of Parliament for the Wafd Party, in August wished us success in our continuing efforts for dialogue:

*"GOD be with you in your quest. I also hope that common sense leads the different part to start a real dialogue. I feel like a very tiny element in this equation. Gen. El Sisi is determined to End the short history of the MB, and on the other hand the MB is fighting to break the army and police, and then take full control over Egypt through a strict theocratic rule. We true liberals are fighting a lot for common sense and dialogue."*

Flemming Weiss Andersen (Danish photo journalist) and Eva Plesner (Danish journalist) summarized the importance of Arab-West Report as following:

*"Kees Hulsman and his staff at Arab-West Report are doing an immensely valuable work, when it comes to investigating sectarian conflicts in all their aspects, revealing the complexity behind the problems, and creating as truthful-as-possible reports.*

*Having lived in Egypt for nearly 8 years now, doing free-lance journalism for major Scandinavian newspapers and the Danish National Radio and for Television, we acknowledge that the special back-ground-knowledge, often reported from remote areas in Egypt and revealed by Arab-West Report, are expressing an insight into the religious and cultural currents in Egypt, that is not available anywhere else.*

*And as religion is playing a very important role both in daily life and in politics, we imagine that the work of Arab West Report must be equally appreciated as an important tool for NGO's, foreign ministries, universities and anyone else, who wants to try to understand the Egyptian society.*

*Additionally, we imagine, that in this very troubled period, the unique position and knowledge of Kees Hulsman, who has made himself respected by some of the most implacable enemies from different camps in the Egyptian society, could be crucial, when it comes to finding ways towards reconciliation."*

## On the 2012-2014 Strategic Plan

Kerk in Actie contracted CIDT in 2010 to formulate **CIDT's** Strategic Report of October 28, 2010, that has become the basis for our 2012-2014 reporting, plans and activities. The revolution in January 25 2011, with unrest and uncertainties has slowed down this process, but we have nevertheless steadily moved in the direction that was then formulated. It was necessary to find qualified staff as well as make changes to the organizational structure in order to be able to carry out plans in this direction.

We have further developed our content and have seen the strong impact this has had on people and organizations that are now aware of our production. Prof. Dr. Christof Sauer, for example, informed us he made substantial use of *AWR* for his PhD. Prof. Wolfram Reiss, working on a network between the University of Vienna, Austria, and academic institutions in the Arab World invited CIDT to take part in **an International Conference on "The Contribution of Religious Minorities to the Society"** at the University of Vienna in July 2013.

The plans for 2012-2014 show a yearly increase in production figures without additional staff or income. We have succeeded in increasing our production throughout 2013 despite great challenges.

In June 2011, we presented a three-year plan that specified the following goals for 2012-2014:

- Development of content and search-ability of our database that helps journalists and researchers place conflicts and tensions in a wider societal context.
- Building and maintaining the database is the core of all our work. It was initially built without the use of a stable platform by Egyptian developers because of lack of investment. In 2011, our data was transferred to a Drupal platform, which was expanded in 2012-2013. Projects we carry out are linked to this database. The destruction of the database on June 27, 2013, was a major blow to our work and the restoration of the database a major achievement in overcoming this challenge.

# Achievement of Goals

GOAL	INPUT	OUTPUT
<p>Development of content.</p> <p>Present and discuss background analysis of Muslim - Christian relations with intellectuals, students, media, religious leaders, and governmental official in order to increasingly influence the conversation for mutual understanding in Egypt and between Egypt and the West.</p>	<p>Database building with summary translations from Arab media. Initially done in weekly issues. In 2013, this changed to daily media overviews, speeding up the publication of summary translations. Production of analytical reports, media critique and other investigative reports which highlight media distortions.</p>	<p>Creation of awareness among users of AWR that one should be cautious with claims made in media reports, and that the reality is more complicated than reported. This was in particular important in 2013 with a widespread usage of Egyptian and non-Egyptian media to advocate partisan positions.</p>
<p>Make data in our database better available for (re) search. Restore data that was destroyed on June 27.</p>	<p>Continuing development of our Drupal based database. Data was restored by the end of September 2013. Forensic copies of all data, both on the OVH server and disks in the office were made by Digital Investigation in November and December.</p>	<p>Increased number of hits and visits to our database until June 27, 2013, when our database was destroyed.</p> <p>Maintaining data on OVH leaves them vulnerable. A search has started to move the data to another system. This needs to be concluded in 2014.</p>
<p>Diversify, expand CIDT/AWR sources of revenue.</p>	<p>Improving the financial administration of CIDT as prerequisite for potential new funders. Presenting project and funding requests to new organizations.</p>	<p>Adel Rizkallah has made a major impact on improving the financial administration of CIDT.</p>

## Development of Content

In 2011, we discussed with Prof. Dr. P.A. van Doorn-Harder, professor of Christian-Muslim Relations at the Free University of Amsterdam, about a research project on the declining proportion of Coptic Christians in Egyptian society

Substantial research was carried out in 2012-2013 on Coptic population statistics. The Dominican Oriental Institute published major findings in MIDEO 29, 2012, which appeared in February 2013. Other reports were published in *AWR*.

A study about the heated discussions between conservative Muslims, liberal Muslims, and Christians over Article 2 of the Constitution, which stipulates that **Shari'ah is the source of Egypt's legislation**, was carried out with the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) which resulted in the 2012 book published in Arabic. A thousand copies were distributed in Egypt. A translation was made of this text which was edited and itself published in December 2012.

Following the publication of research on Article 2 and the Constitution, we moved on to work on a second book on Islamist Movements in Egypt for *Anwendungsorientierte Religionswissenschaften* which we hope will be published in 2014. These publications greatly increase the academic credibility of *Arab-West Report*.

When we started work with *Arab-West Report*, our main focus was on Muslim-Christian relations with media critiques on bias reporting. Following the January 25, 2011 revolution, our focus has been widened to Islamist non-Islamist relations since tensions between Christians and Muslims were to a large extent tensions between Christians and Islamists. The need for widening our focus has been described in our report commissioned by Missio, entitled ["Christians victims of the growing Islamist non-Islamist divide: the urgent need for peace and reconciliation."](#)



# Production results in categories and numbers

By publishing/posting daily articles that incorporate a broad range of Egyptian and Arab views, along with a rigorous Media Watch system for selected subjects (this limitation in the selection is due to our available budget), CIDT/AWR is introducing its readers a balanced and critiqued snapshot of the current intercommunal debate taking place in Egypt and the wider Middle East.

We produce the following products:

- Systematic summary translations and press reviews of selected Arab media
- Background analysis of Arab media reporting.
  - In general:
    - Provide chronological overview of the development of a tension or conflict. Clearly mention where information received was contradictory and identifying the parties that provide contradictory information.
    - Describing Muslim-Christian tensions as reported in Arab media, but placing reported tensions in the wider context of developments in society with concrete examples that illustrate the background of these tensions.
    - Overviews of what various media report on one subject, highlighting the differences between Western and Arab reporting.
    - Media critique; showing where reporting was biased. Distinguishing between rumours and facts, explaining why a certain claim is a rumour, and what the evidence is for this.
- Rapid response reporting following conflicts
  - Similar to media critique, but including rapid dissemination to a wider public in an effort to reduce escalations based on misreporting.
- Interviews
  - Transcripts of interviews with well-informed people who can provide a good insight into the background of developments that have taken place.
- Investigative reporting
  - Reports that make use of background analysis, distinguishing between rumours and facts, using interviews, supplemented with information from contacts on location. It should be clarified that investigative reporting is the most time consuming. This is partly done with the help of supervised interns.
- Newspaper clippings
  - Using our content selection criteria to select English and Arabic articles that could be uploaded to our database untranslated. Keywords will be added to aid later searches for these articles.

The figures were intended to increase from year to year [The targets in table 1 are thus higher than those mentioned in our annual report of 2012]. Our 2013 production results are largely in line with the targets for 2012, but growth in production was only partly achieved due to the substantial amount of time involved in restoring our database.

Table 1: Production Results: 1 January – 31 December 2013

In certain categories, the production goals we were able to achieve were better than expected. However, the number of website hits and visits were affected by the sabotage of our database on June 27, 2013. The CIDT staff has shown remarkable flexibility in overcoming the challenges, working towards restoring the database and maintaining most of the production goals which is truly a remarkable achievement.

Production Figures Table						
	Summary Translations & Press Overviews of Arab media	Background Analysis: Muslim-Christian Relations in Egypt/ME			Rapid Response Reporting on Current Events Related to Middle East	
		General analytical reports	Egyptian reporting on Muslim/non-Muslim Events in Europe	Media Critique		
Target yearly number [2012-2014 plans]	1,500	75			15	
Production numbers in 2013	1,740 articles in 364 daily media overviews	33 *			8	
	In depth interviews by AWR	Investigative Reporting	Lectures	Twitter	Facebook	
Target yearly number [2012-2014 plans]	20	8	15	No target formulated in 2012-2014 plan **		
Production numbers in 2013	22	5	9	53 to 1282 followers	AWR 43 messages to 496 followers	
	Selected Newspaper Clippings	Mini Press Reviews	Clippings placed online****	AWR Website hits/page views	AWR Website Visits	
Target yearly number [2012-2014 plans]	2,400	75 ***	-	The formulated target was increase numbers in the 2012-2014 period		
Production numbers in 2013	2,000	192	24	First half year: 141,907 Second half year: 16,948	First half year: 54,940 Second half year: 42,409	

\* There was a shift from analytical reports to full interviews with key players in Egypt since these better reflect the opinions of these key players. This was not an easy shift since interviews and transcripts of interviews are usually more time intensive.

\*\* Promoting Arab-West Report in social media, Twitter and Facebook, was not part of the 2012-2014 plan but was nevertheless initiated by editor Bill Gallo who left Egypt in 2011 due to violence he experienced close by. He maintained this work in 2012. German intern Tarek Hassan took over this activity from Bill Gallo in 2013. Tarek Hassan left Egypt on April 7, 2013. The absence of our database and work towards restoring this resulted in a slower growth of our social messages than we had wished for 2013. AWF board advisor Marc van Oudheusden in the AWF board meeting of April 3, 2014, committed to assist CIDT staff and interns with social media.

\*\*\* Initiated by Bill Gallo in 2011, continued later by Diana Ghaly until June 27, 2013. This was not continued after she left CIDT for emigration to the USA.

\*\*\*\* Newspaper clippings were mentioned in our 2012-2014 plan. It needed a change in office management to realize these plans. For this reason clippings started in 2013.

## Development of an automated newspaper clipping system

In early 2013, CIDT evaluated its collection process of material that was used for internal and external purposes. Collection of relevant material from hard copy media outlets, mainly Egyptian media, had been the basis we started in 1997. After careful consideration, it was decided to extend the collection process considerably and establish a more enhanced search methodology, deployed in two phases. Articles that appear in the RSS feed are to be used for a newsletter every fortnight. At the current stage, a hybrid selection process takes place both electronically and on paper in preparation for the shift to electronic selection. For that to take place, more RSS material is to be collected from the Arab news sites which will be the main focus of phase two (see below) in order to substitute it for our paper selection.

Marc van Oudheusden began implementing a system to systematically collect English language articles about subjects of interest to CIDT and place them for further research in our electronic library in two phases.

1. Firstly, a set of non-Arabic media sources was established, including most Middle Eastern newspapers in the English language. Many English language sources from Europe, the US, and to a lesser extent, depending on relevance, the rest of the world were also added. The source selection is in principle endless, being academic magazines, media magazines, newspapers, specialized news-websites, etc. This has resulted in the collection of over 2,000 relevant articles in the first year, 2013. Although the process of uploading to the CIDT website was delayed by the sabotage that CIDT suffered over the past year, the articles were stored in an internal system for internal use. Uploading of the articles had been planned for April 2014 but was not materialized because the volunteer dropped out.
2. The second phase will be to not only collect English language material, as mentioned above, but also collect Arabic language material online. No limitation has been set to the Egyptian press only, but Arabic newspapers, newsmagazines, and other relevant material, inside as well as outside the Middle East can be used. It is intended to increase the selection gradually, carry out phase 2 during the course of 2014, and expand in 2015.

Advanced internet search capabilities are used to conduct the search. A search strategy, including Google Customized Search, internet alerts, RSS feeds, single and multiple search engines, together with the development of relevant search strings, has been developed and at least 200 news sources are searched on a regular basis.

## Development of our database

The number of hits and visits to our database [www.arabwestreport.info](http://www.arabwestreport.info) started picking up after the transfer of our website changed to a Drupal platform in 2010 and in 2011 and 2012 applying basic SEO (Search Engine Optimization) to the system, which has considerably increased our visibility on the internet. Drupal is an open source application. Thus, this involved a lot of programming under the supervision of IT consultant Dieter Mueller-Ehrhart in Germany.

We have seen a remarkable increase in hits and visits to our database until the sabotage of our database, websites and backups on June 27. This included:

[www.arabwestreport.info](http://www.arabwestreport.info)

[www.cidtegypt.com](http://www.cidtegypt.com)

Dieter Mueller-Ehrhart created a temporary website for *Arab-West Report* that was used in the months July, August and September. Since the Drupal database was offline for this period, the number of hits and visits on the *AWR* website dramatically reduced which is evidenced in table 2.

Table 2: Visits and page views in 2013

Year	Visits	Hits/page views
1 Jan – 27* June 2013	54,940	141,907
1 July – 31 December 2013	16,948	42,409

\* The office closed on June 30 due to political unrest. There were no visits and hits following the sabotage of our site on June 27.

An April 1, 2014, report of Digital Investigation, a Dutch company specialized in researching internet crime, shows that all evidence for the destruction of our data point to former IT developer Hosam Abdelkader.

Hosam did not hand over the password to Google analytics, and thus our figures for the second half of 2013 are incomplete. Dieter Mueller-Ehrhart, however, was able to find the following numbers:

Table 3: Detailed visits and page views 2nd half 2013 showing consequences of the database destruction

Month	Visits	Hits/page views
Jul 1, 2013 – Jul 31, 2013	47	61
Aug 1, 2013 - Aug 31, 2013	45	58
Sep 1, 2013 – Sep 30, 2013	984	3,216
Oct 1, 2013- Oct 31, 2013	3,872	9,074
Nov 1, 2013 – Nov 30, 2013	6,000 *	15,000 *
Dec 1, 2013 – Dec 31, 2013	6,000 *	15,000 *

\*Data logging stopped as of **1 November 2013, possibly as a consequence of Hosam Abdelkader's** activities. These numbers are estimates made by Dieter Mueller-Ehrhart. The figures show that the destruction of our database and websites has had dramatic consequences on the number of visits and page views in July, August and a large part of September when we only could work with the emergency websites created by Dieter. Numbers began to increase again once most of our data was restored.

## Proposed New Design of *AWR* Database

In the first half of 2013, Jenna Ferrecchia was aided in working on a new *AWR* design and also making *AWR* more compliant with JSTOR criteria for academic publishing. Hosam Abdelkader had agreed to implement the changes and have this ready in July but this agreement turned out to be empty since he then must have started to prepare for the destruction of our database since he immediately left for the USA after this destruction which is not possible without requesting for a visa. This work of making *AWR* more compliant to academic publishing has been delayed due to the destruction of our database and our efforts to reclaim our data.

IT is vital to the publication of *AWR* and the development of our web-based database. A key element of access to *AWR* content is a unique index, which allows the user to logically find content that would otherwise be inaccessible. This index was not updated after 2007 due to lack of qualified staff, which in turn is due to the inability of CIDT to obtain the funding needed to hire a qualified staff member for this purpose.

The change to a Drupal platform increased effectiveness, but the new system still poses some challenges, which need to be addressed in the near future.

Transliteration: This is a major issue in our data as it constantly causes a **high “bounce rate” due to** different transliterated spellings of Arabic names and terms, which severely limit the search capability

of Arabic words. At present, technologies such as the Google suggestion "Do you mean..." is desirable, but not available for our platform.

## Strategic Goals for 2014 Concerning IT-Developments

Following the sabotage of our website, we need to achieve at least the following goals to reduce the risk of additional sabotage:

- Search for a company that can host our data on a system that will provide our data with more security. We are not aware of the existence of such a company in Egypt.
- Acquire a new website administrator in Egypt for maintenance and development tasks to reduce the costs of a European company.
- Maintain regular backups at three different locations to minimize the effects of said possible attacks.
- Return our website by the end of 2014 to normal performance with hits at the same level as they were in the first half of 2013.
- Perform regular updates of Drupal core and modules as well as CentOS linux operating system.
- Improve performance through the configuration of Varnish Cache.
- Integrate international news clippings provided by RSS-feed on a regular weekly basis to put AWR content into a bigger context. Fostering Communication between Egypt and the West

Improving translations between Arabic and Western languages is crucial to overcome the clash of ignorance existing throughout the Western world. Due to financial restrictions, CIDT was unable to maintain a full time translator, and in 2013 only had several freelance translators. CIDT would like to **"link up" in 2014 with organizations that have similar goals.**

CIDT continues to foster communication between Egypt and the West through three main activities:

- Networking and lectures by Cornelis Hulsman and staff.
- AWR presence on Facebook and Twitter and output in Western media.
- AWR posting of summary translations in daily overviews and reports on its website.

Table with production targets illustrates CIDT's efforts in this regard.

## Arab-West Journal

In 2013, our Editor Jenna Ferrecchia created a new electronic magazine – *Arab-West Journal* (AWJ) – meeting academic criteria. Contributors come from a variety of academic disciplines, making for a diverse range of topics and writing styles. Content ranges from articles on contemporary Egyptian politics to historical topics dating back centuries. Each issue contains between 5-10 research papers, interviews, or media reviews not published on the *Arab-West Report* website. AWJ has a better lay-out and higher academic standards. In 2013 two issues were published. [??Rob is this true?? Or is this one issue in 2013 and one issue in 2014?? Please reformulate according to the facts]

## Networking

Cornelis Hulsman continues to travel back and forth between Egypt and The Netherlands, in Egypt tending to work in the office, working six days per week, 15 hours per day, helping Adel Rizkallah, conducting research, and accepting invitations to lecture in different countries. He continues to present the work of AWR/CIDT to a wider public and writes/edits for CIDT/AWR when he is abroad.

Between January and May 2013, CIDT worked on a 90-page report for Missio on the Egyptian Constitution of December 2012, a project organized and edited by Cornelis Hulsman with help from Jayson Casper and Diana Serodio. All major Egyptian political parties were consulted for this project.

Missio asked CIDT to help revise its Country Report Egypt. Feedback with additional information was prepared and mailed by Cornelis Hulsman on June 26, 2013.

From June 30-July 4, Cornelis Hulsman represented CIDT on the International Conference on “The Contribution of Religious Minorities to the Society” at Vienna University, Austria. He presented a paper on Coptic population statistics, based on research to which also CIDT interns had contributed.

Yosra el-Gendy represented CIDT at a conference on Effective leadership in a Politicized World organized by the Danish Egyptian Dialogue Institute between August 24 and 30 in Denmark.

In August and the first week of September, Cornelis Hulsman worked on a 100 page report entitled [“Christians victims of the growing Islamist non-Islamist divide: the urgent need for peace and reconciliation,” commissioned by Missio and published in September 2013](#)

## Preparations for Future Projects

Our 2012 annual report mentions that several discussions have taken place on building a summer school based on the activities of AWR. Since our focus was on restoring our data this could not be further developed in 2013 but our ambitions to realize such a summer school have remained.

The same applies to preparing a new book on the Holy Family tradition since the book *Be Thou There; the Holy Family Journey in Egypt* (AUC press 2001) is sold out.

## AWR in Western Media Reporting

Cornelis Hulsman and the CIDT staff continue their efforts to report in the Western media as opportunities present themselves.

## Finance and management; efforts to diversify and expand sources of revenue

The financial situation of CIDT for the full year of 2013 is positive thanks to a one-time contract of 25,500 USD (around 19,700 Euro) with the Maryknoll Society in exchange for access to *AWR* resources in 2013.

Local commercial contracts continue to prove difficult to obtain due to the current political and economic instability in Egypt.

Douglas May left CIDT in July after assisting in the hiring of Adel Rizkallah who has vast knowledge and experience in management, accounting and finance from previously held positions.

Adel Rizkallah also is very capable in English and French in addition to Arabic. With his ability to read and write Arabic, he is monitoring contracts, agreements and Egyptian law much more closely than any non-Egyptian would be able to do.

### Changes in the Structure of CIDT

It became clear in 2011 that changing the legal structure of CIDT *tawsiya basita* was a major necessity **to stabilize the company. As the company's tax file was not set up well upon establishment in 2005,** the result was delays in payments of taxes and thus a tax debt. Another drawback of the *tawsiya basita* was that this is a structure based on owner management.

**CIDT changed from a *tawsiya basita* (sole proprietorship by Sawsan Gabra Ayoub Khalil) to a "limited-liability company."** It was agreed that the Dutch *Stichting Arab West Foundation (AWF)* would obtain 40% of the shares, CIDT founder Sawsan Gabra Ayoub Khalil would have another 40% and Amr Sherif Ahmed, former translator for CIDT and now Egyptian correspondent for MENA would obtain 20% of the shares of the company. This ensures that Egyptians would maintain over 50% of the shares in the company. The procedure to effectuate the change was given in the hands of auditor Mr. Mossaad Ebeid. This process is expected to be completed in 2014.

In this report we call CIDT *tawsiya basita* OLD CIDT and we call the CIDT limited liability company NEW CIDT. The social insurance file for OLD CIDT closed in 2013. Work to settle tax liabilities for OLD CIDT continued all of 2013 and continues in 2014. It is expected that the tax file of OLD CIDT will be closed by the end of 2014. For NEW CIDT a tax payment schedule was set-up to pay on a regular basis and thus avoid complicated delayed payment procedures.

The changes from OLD CIDT to NEW CIDT were initiated by Douglas May and continued by Adel Rizkallah in 2013.

## Efforts to Become Financially More Stable

Douglas May was hired in February 2012, to assist CIDT obtain additional sources of income. Douglas May stressed the need to professionalize the administration of CIDT as a prerequisite for increasing income, and started working on developing a more professional administration.

Douglas May helped searching for an Office Manager who could both replace Hany Labib, the office manager whose contract was not renewed, and himself. This effort resulted in the appointment of Adel Rizkallah in May 2013, who has built on the work of Douglas May to make CIDT a professionally run company.

German contract organization Misereor requested CIDT to select a new auditor from a list of auditors accepted by Misereor, meeting European auditing standards, which resulted in the appointment of auditor Mossad Ebeid. This too has helped CIDT obtain a more professional administration.

All administration and tax file declarations are in line and up to date handled by the new office manager Adel Rizkallah.

## Finances: Referring to the Attached 2013 Financial Reports

### OLD CIDT

CIDT tawsiya basita (OLD CIDT) ceased operations in 2012, and the social insurance file was closed. The tax files for the years OLD CIDT functioned, 2005-2012, remained in operation and still need to be closed. Tax authorities calculated that the salary tax that still needs to be paid over this period is 89,114 EgP = 9,500 Euro. The corporate tax covering the entire period 2005-2012 has been estimated to be 16,500 Euro. The total tax liabilities of OLD CIDT are estimated to be around 26,000 Euro. To this, the fees of the tax advisor, Mr Ali Abdel Wanis, 51,250 EgP = 5,500 Euro need to be added. An internal financial report was made that shows the payment of social insurance and tax accountant Ali Abdel Wanees in 2013 and efforts to build a buffer to cover expected payments for tax in 2014.

The Arab-West Foundation received 5,300 Euro in 2013 that are used to create a buffer for payment of taxes and social insurance of OLD CIDT. The sums received are:

- Missio, two publications 4,000 Euro.
- Contributions made to AWF through Paypal 1,300 Euro.

## NEW CIDT

### Income

CIDT limited liability company (NEW CIDT) started operations in 2012. Income resulting from contracts with Kerk in Actie, Misereor and Missio in 2013 went to NEW CIDT.

The total income from NEW CIDT in 2013 was 119,025 Euro. Due to the ongoing political and economic instability in Egypt, both Missio and Kerk in Actie made their transfers, totaling 61,000 Euro, to the Arab West Foundation (AWF) which transferred the entire sum, minus costs for CIDT in Europe (i.e. hosting and IT) and bank costs, in different stages to Egypt. Misereor transferred 32,950 Euro to the CIDT account in Egypt. The Maryknoll Society transferred 25,500 USD (= 19,700 Euro), to the CIDT USD account in Egypt, and 5,000 Euro from a Dutch businessman through AWF to cover part of the costs of Digital Investigation (see below). This sum was initially intended for the tax buffer for OLD CIDT but was later moved to NEW CIDT because CIDT's budget for IT related costs was insufficient.

Funds transferred to Egypt were exchanged from the Euro to Egyptian Pound (EgP) as needed due to fears that the EgP may crash. Minus the 60 Euro transfer charge, 5,000 Euro was exchanged at 8.948 EgP to one Euro, 4,000 Euro was exchanged at 9.00 and 7,620 Euro was exchanged at 9.11. **These exchanges were done at "Sarafas", exchange centers in Maadi. During the second half of 2013, all foreign currencies were exchanged directly using the cross currencies transfer at the CIB bank (CIDT's bank).**

### Costs

CIDT has benefited from the currency exchange fluctuations of the Euro and Egyptian Pound (EgP) against each other. An exchange of 1 Euro = 9 EgP, 1 USD = 7 EgP, and 1 Euro = 1.32 USD has been used for calculations. CIDT is reluctant to exchange more Euros to EgP than needed as the EgP continues to fall and further instability could make the EgP crash.

The budget for the plans of 2012-2014 had a built in deficit (and thus the need for fundraising). For these reasons, costs were reduced by combining the functions of Office Manager and Financial Manager. In addition, translations were reduced by a system of selections from English language media with CIDT commentaries, and translations were offered only if the information was not already available in English.

In January 2013, Douglas May and Cornelis Hulsman estimated the costs of tax in 2013 since they were unable to calculate this, and consulted accountants gave conflicting calculations. This explains the

difference in tax in the operational budget for 2013 and the actual tax costs in 2013. After starting work in May 2013, Adel Rizkallah made a global salary tax declaration for the entire period covering August 2012, the moment NEW CIDT started, up until December 2013 and has paid the taxes of 2012 in 2013. Now all taxes and social insurance are paid on a regular basis and consequently there is no tax and social insurance debt for the CIDT limited liability company (NEW CIDT).

Gross salaries costs of Cornelis Hulsman and Sawsan Gabra Ayoub Khalil increased due to a correct calculation of Egyptian income tax. The total amount of taxes was reduced by dividing the total income of Cornelis and Sawsan into two and calculating a similar income for each person. From this salary Cornelis Hulsman pays for airline tickets between Egypt and The Netherlands. They also need to pay Dutch social security.

Full year gross salaries costs (taxes and social insurance included) totaled 92,000 Euro, including several payments to consultants Dieter Mueller-Ehrhart and Marc van Oudheusden in Europe.

Because of the sabotage of our data on June 27, following a recommendation of AWF board advisor Marc van Oudheusden, we hired Digital Investigation, a Dutch company with great experience in dealing with internet crime, to make forensic copies of the data on the OVH server and the relevant disks in our office. On April 1, 2014, they completed their report documenting their findings.

Costs of Digital Investigation and additional work of Dieter Mueller-Ehrhart to build a temporary website and later recover data amount to 7,800 Euro in 2013 (excl. VAT). Other costs include substantial amounts of time of staff to recover the database and websites.

Costs of recovering the database were paid through the use of the budget lines for Hosam Abdelkader's **salary in the second half of 2013, Dieter's consultancy, and the payment of 5,000 Euro** through the Stichting AWF.

Total expenses for the year 2013 were 121,080 Euro, including salaries, taxes, social insurance and unexpected additional costs resulting from the destruction of our database and websites. 17,632 Euro payment of taxes for 2012 and non-budgeted consultancy fees of 1,757 Euro were paid through the 6,216 Euro gain on exchange in 2013 (difference between costs budgeted with 1 Euro = 7.00 EgP and actual exchange of an average of 1 Euro = 9.00 EgP).

The total expenses of 121,080 Euro were thus covered through total funding of 119,025 Euro, and a gain of exchange of 6,216 Euro, which enabled CIDT able to close the year without a deficit despite the unexpected additional costs we incurred.

The Archdiocese of Cologne assisted CIDT to upgrade its outdated office equipment, which had been a constant source of frustration. Thanks to this funding CIDT was able to replace computers, printers, scanners, back-up technology and purchase a photocopying machine.

## Management and staff

- General Director and Editor-in-chief of *Arab-West Report* Cornelis Hulsman remains the key content person for CIDT, editing all content that is placed online. He is responsible for database development, investigative reporting, academic supervision of interns, and liaison with various institutions. He has a tremendously large network and is the key person in contact with Egyptian authorities, universities, churches, the Azhar and other institutes of relevance to CIDT. Cornelis Hulsman travels between Egypt and The Netherlands with extended periods in Egypt. In Egypt, since he is without family, he puts in 15-hour working days. In The Netherlands, he works on reports and edits the texts of contributors to *AWR*.

**Hulsman's role in steering CIDT through a difficult period shows that a more gradual transfer to local management and possible local ownership is needed.** Board members of the CAWU and Egyptian connections prefer that Cornelis Hulsman to remain in this function because his credentials as being an independent observer are most appreciated. Yet in the long run, it is also recognized that a transfer to an Egyptian national is important. With new Egyptian office manager, Adel Rizkallah, business affairs should improve.

- **Adel Rizkallah has been CIDT's Office Manager as of 1 May, 2013. Adel Rizkallah has over 30 years of financial management experience and is of key importance to aiding CIDT as a professionally run organization.** Under his leadership, the administration of CIDT greatly improved and he has made major efforts to close the tax file of OLD CIDT.
- Sawsan Gabra Ayoub Khalil continues to monitor CIDT/*AWR* operations from The Netherlands. Just as in previous years, she visited Egypt in July 2013 to address financial and legal issues with Adel Rizkallah, such as authorizations to sign for bank transfers. For transfers of funds two signatories will be needed.

CIDT and the board of AWF appreciate the wish of Kerk in Actie to see a transfer of operations to permanent local Egyptian management, but cautions that this is not an easy process in a deeply polarized society with insufficient availability of quality management.

## Changes in staff

CIDT witnessed changes in staff. Executive secretary Diana Ghaly migrated to the US and was replaced on August 11 by researcher Yosra el-Gendi.

**IT developer Hosam Abdelkader's last day in the CIDT office** was on June 27, 2013, the day its entire database was destroyed by installing and using malicious software from his computer. Restoration took place in the second half of 2013, and in 2014 efforts are being made to seek a more secure and stable hosting of our data.

Nevine Naguib, webmaster since 2004 with CIDT, however, provided for stability.

Dieter Mueller-Ehrhard, IT consultant from Germany, monitor of Hosam and Nevine, played a major role in returning our database and websites to their pre-June 27 state.

**Secretary Vivian Sa'ad left on November 28, 2013. Secretarial tasks are now shared between** webmaster Nevine Neguib and Yosra el-Gendi.

Jayson Casper continues as a researcher/writer for *AWR* on a freelance basis.

Jeanne Rizkallah is our main Arabic-English translator, but CIDT does have a substantial network of free-lance translators.

Jenna Ferrecchia, our English- language Editor, left on March 1, 2014

Kamal Kamel is our office clerk, knowing key offices of importance to CIDT. Kamal is important to the office since he knows how to handle bureaucratic institutions which reduces time of management.

# Action Points for the Period 2015-2017

Once the strategic goals for 2014 have been realized, we can move forward in the three-year plan 2015-2017 to realize the following goals:

## Making the AWR Database Better Meet Western Academic Search Criteria

A goal set for *Arab-West Report* is to reach an academic standard in its work that is worthy of incorporation into JSTOR, the online scholarly journal archive. In order to achieve academic credibility, *AWR* is working toward a standardized citation format, enforcement of strict academic guidelines for report composition and developing a transliteration system that is both comprehensible and user-friendly. In meeting the JSTOR standard, *AWR's* circulation among academics in universities and research institutions will increase significantly, thereby furthering our goal of a better understanding between the Arab world and the West. The Editor (now vacant) needs to ensure that all newsletters and reports strictly adhere to these academic criteria with strict rules for all contributors.

## INCREASE AWR'S ONLINE PRESENCE

To increase the visibility of *AWR*, it is important that it develops its online presence. Using social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter as well as blogs can help improve visibility and promote *AWR* mission to youth, a segment that is often overlooked in debates in Egyptian society. In that respect, an assessment of *AWR's* social media presence and strategic plan are being developed. A monthly and daily work plan is being developed and will be carried out largely by volunteers, supervised by researcher Yosra El Gendi. Posts will be in both Arabic and in English to ensure that *AWR* messages are conveyed to the Egyptian community. Here again, a lack of sufficient staff to keep updating and monitoring social media accounts places pressure on staff and the few available volunteers. The idea of a blog has also been proposed, as a platform where volunteers can freely share their personal thoughts on intercultural exchange and interreligious dialogue, as well as their experiences of living in Egypt.

A main challenge is to improve our Search Engine Optimization (SEO) to ensure that we are really fully visible to search engines such as Google, Bing etc. The new Drupal based system, which has been in operation since beginning of 2010, allows CIDT to assign extended key words to each article, thereby improving search engine visibility.

It will be an additional challenge to also apply this function on our archived material already in the database to give it enough visibility on search engines. E-commerce and e-fundraising.

Efforts in the past year to realize an income through a subscription system have not produced much in terms of results. We have also written fundraising newsletters, but these have not been a great

success. This is why we would like to develop e-fundraising by asking users to make contributions to our website.

## Improving our content and contact management system

We want to build a section on [www.arabwestreport.info](http://www.arabwestreport.info) that is only accessible to our own staff. In this section, they should find documents such as a handbook for translators that are only relevant to staff, as well as a project management and a contact management system. Our contacts are now spread all over, for the newsletters we make they are in iContact, other contacts that are not newsletter related are with various – part-time – staff. We have thousands of addresses that are relevant to interviews, but are not centrally organized.

## Investigation whether our database can be moved to a university library

The destruction of our database led to discussions in 2013 with the libraries of the University of Vienna and the School of Mission and Theology (MHS) in Stavanger, Norway, about moving our data to one of their libraries since this would guarantee long-term security of our data. The University of Vienna **library's answer was negative** because of costs. The Mission Archives of the MHS possibly can facilitate a deposit at the Digital Archives of the National Archives of Norway. Their condition for such storage would be that our material would be catalogued as a collection at the Mission Archives since it is a condition of the Norwegian National Archives that this is done through a Norwegian institution. Of course all credit for the data will be given to *Arab-West Report* with procedures for publication of databases on terms that still need to be agreed upon. The MHS is a Christian institution and thus will not be seen as neutral by Muslims, but we know of no other institution ready to digitally store our data and make them accessible for use by the wider public and seek coverage of the costs involved. A formulation can possibly be placed online regarding the neutrality of our data. This discussion will continue in 2014.

Cairo, 23 March 2013

Cornelis Hulsman

Adel Rizkallah

General Director

Office Manager/Financial Manager