

Dear Insaniyyat Community,

First and foremost, we hope this newsletter finds you and yours safe and healthy. At a time when the doctrine of “social” distancing is being promoted in combatting the current global pandemic, we want to make sure that Insaniyyat is working to keep us all connected. Across many lands and oceans, Insaniyyat connects us with each other in the hope that communal trust participates in combating the pandemic and the isolation it brings. Sustaining and cultivating community might play an integral part in building our immunity. In this vein, we wish to give you updates on Insaniyyat's latest and welcome your renewed participation.

Website: Our recently updated [bibliography](#) includes publications about and in Palestinian ethnography. Also, forthcoming on the website will be a series of podcasts of interviews with Palestinian anthropologists (some in Arabic and others in English).

Anthropology in the Community Committee: Tasked with availing and promoting anthropological knowledge in Palestinian society, beyond the academy, this committee is seeking funding for three projects. *The Souq* project wants to connect ancient market spaces in Palestine through ethnographic exhibits (photos and narratives) displayed in the markets themselves. *The Ethnographic Film Workshop* is planned to take place over three days at an academic space on the West Bank, with the aim of introducing students to anthropological-documentary film making. *Photography Training* sessions in visual ethnography are also planned to take place in cooperation with local youth and cultural associations, first in Haifa, and hopefully later in other localities. A fourth and final project is an arrangement between the Arabic language youth monthly, produced in the West Bank, [Filasteen ash-Shabab](#), and Insaniyyat to feature 3-4 columns a year, penned by our members in order to introduce the creativity and relevance of anthropology to Palestinian youth. We already have an interesting line-up of authors, who have committed to writing the first few pieces. You are welcome to contact Insaniyyat if you wish to sign up as a potential contributor. English language submissions would appear in translation.

Al-‘Atabeh [Threshold] Committee: Tasked with connecting Palestine with the world and bringing the world to Palestine, this committee is currently responding to the COVID moment. It issued [a call for submission](#) for a series of short interventions to be published on Insaniyyat's website on the theme, “COVID Palestine: Fieldnotes on Life in Pandemic Times.” These interventions aim to bring Palestinian and anthropological perspectives to our understandings of this very exceptional world moment. The call for relevant work (images, photovoice, poetry, small vignettes, etc.) remains open and we hope you will both circulate it and consider contributing your own experiences and insights.

Conference Committee: Tasked with planning Insaniyyat's biennial conference, this committee has selected for the next theme: “Pessoptimism: Anthropologies of Uncertainty and Hope.” The conference will address the politics, epistemologies, ethics, and ontologies of hope and hope-making in Palestine at a time of compounded uncertainty. While neither the location nor timing can yet be set, we hope to see you with us sometime in the summer of 2021 somewhere in the West Bank.

Bylaws Committee: Tasked with reviewing, and possibly revising, Insaniyyat’s governance, this committee has been carefully reviewing the by-laws, line-by-line, looking for conflicts, ambiguities, and insufficiencies. This committee’s work is central for building a firm ground to guide Insaniyyat through challenging circumstances that will invariably arise in the future.

Fundraising Committee: Tasked with securing funding for various projects, including next year’s conference, this lifeline committee develops fundraising activities and strategies. It has been working closely with the Anthropology in the Community Committee toward funding its projects and begun to develop a strategic fundraising plan. The composition of the committee has recently changed, so I wish to take this opportunity to thank all those who have participated in its unthankful work and to welcome its new members.

Student Representative: We have a new student representative on the Executive Board of Insaniyyat, who is developing a network of student members and exploring ways that Insaniyyat can support them. These efforts are exceedingly timely as the current pandemic hinders funding possibilities and disrupts ethnographic research activities.

Banking Debacle: Unfortunately, Insaniyyat has not yet been able to open its own organizational bank account. As time is only ossifying this intractable problem, despite assistance by a number of members and friends in different countries, we wish to ask if you have any specific advice or insight to offer in this arena. If so, please do let me know.

Black Lives Matter: Insaniyyat has issued a statement entailing a call for various kinds of action. It is posted both on [our website](#) and on the [AAA all-community board](#). Insaniyyat is in an active process of exploring ways to support the uprising for Black lives in the US, and relating it to other struggles around the world, most notably, Palestine’s.

I wish to take this opportunity to offer heartfelt thanks to all of Insaniyyat’s members, many of whom have given of their time and energy in the last period. Given the current difficult situation everyone is facing around the globe, Insaniyyat’s Executive Board decided to automatically renew existing memberships and forego requesting annual membership fees until June 2021. But we welcome any donations, in the sum of the annual membership fee, greater or smaller, to help cover our basic running costs.

Finally, we welcome any questions, comments, suggestions, and ideas. Please use the [website contact page](#) or the [Facebook Forum](#) to pass them along. Especially at a time of peculiar isolation and dizzying uncertainty, we hope that you can take Insaniyyat as a secure place for cultivating and activating your ideas about Palestine and anthropology, and working toward a safer, healthier, and more just world.

Wishing all of you and yours, and our planet, safer and saner times.

Yours,

Khaled Furani

President, Executive Board

On behalf of the Executive Board: Rema Hammami, Vice President; Nadeem Karkabi, Treasurer; Nayrouz Abu Hatoum; Omar Qassis; Amahl Bishara; and Rami Salame