Final Report

Institutional Evaluation
of the

Canadian Council of Area Studies Learned Societies

for the
International Development Research Centre

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This evaluation has reviewed the operations and achievements of the Canadian Council of Area Studies Learned Societies (CCASLS) since its inception in 1993. The evaluation has provided an opportunity to CCASLS and its member associations to reflect on their role and activities and to examine possible alternative models for the separate and collaborative activities of the member associations. It has focused on the following areas:

* administration and governance
* programming collaboration
* the contribution to the Canadian discourse on international development
* financial viability

CCASLS was created with a three-part mandate: to build the capacities of the member associations and expand their membership, to promote areas studies and development studies in Canada, and to encourage research and facilitate the dissemination of results. In recent years this mandate has explicitly included support for cross-regional and inter-disciplinary activities, and the greater involvement of non-academic audiences with an interest in global and international development issues.

The evaluation included a participatory evaluation workshop at the end of June with 12 members of CCASLS, a questionnaire for workshop participants, followed by semi-structured interviews and a review of relevant institutional documents.[1]

The day after the evaluation workshop, the evaluators and most of the CCASLS Board learned that the Canadian Association of African Studies (CAAS) had just voted at its annual meeting to withdraw from CCASLS at the end of 2008. This decision had an immediate impact on how CCASLS members viewed its future and that of their own associations. These recent developments are built into the findings, conclusions and recommendations.

The main findings and conclusions of the evaluation are summarized below.

- CCASLS has largely achieved the first component of its mandate by building the capacity of the area studies associations and helping to increase association membership and revenues from membership fees. The administrative support of the secretariat, as well as some efficiencies in procedures and information management, have been instrumental in this regard. The other two mandate areas have only been partially achieved, if reviewed against proposals and annual technical reports to IDRC. There are no CCASLS strategic plans to assess performance to objectives.

- Difficulties and disagreements about Board decision-making and functioning were addressed by the Board following a special Operational Review in 2006. Nevertheless, the Board's agreement to adopt a set of practical recommendations to streamline and clarify CCASLS operations have not been acted upon for the most

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1 The workshop included several data gathering and diagnostic techniques associated with Social Analysis Systems, a set of action research techniques developed for application overseas, and funded by IDRC. See http://www.sas2.net.

part. This evaluation finds that some of the underlying strains around Board and secretariat performance and interaction have continued to have an impact on the willingness of associations to work together within the CCASLS structure. Levels of satisfaction with administrative functioning range from low to fair. Satisfaction with governance processes and practices is low. As a volunteer-led organization, CCASLS depends on a substantial commitment of time by Board members who find it difficult to allocate the time despite their general support for the purpose of CCASLS. The Board is also the employer and overseer of CCASLS' operations. The requirements and time commitments for governing and managing a small non-profit council are out of proportion with the capacities, and in some cases with the interest, of many Board members. Given the imminent withdrawal of CAAS, the future of the secretariat and the CCASLS Board is in question.

- IDRC funding, totalling just over $2 million since 1992/93, has enabled modest cross-regional programming collaboration, particularly in the first half of this decade. This was one of IDRC's prime reasons for funding CCASLS in recent years. While this goal is reflected in the most recent three-year proposal to IDRC (2004-2007), few joint activities have been initiated in the last two years. A number of evaluation participants recognize that there is the potential for some interesting collaborative initiatives in the future, but a number now feel that these are best pursued outside of CCASLS, especially in light of the decision of CAAS to withdraw.

- It is not clear how the existence of CCASLS has enabled a greater contribution to the Canadian discourse on international development. At one time, IDRC envisaged a vibrant forum for scholarly exchange on global themes and the possible sparking of cross-regional research. Given the very moderate achievements in this area, and the lack of joint activity in the past two or three years, the IDRC's hopes have been largely disappointed. Few respondents offered evidence of a contribution apart from pointing out that the area studies associations include people who are involved in research on global and development issues. Many are likely also involved in outside (non-academic) circles, including non-government organizations, government forums, and the Canadian Association for Studies in International Development (CASID).

- CCASLS as it currently exists is no longer a viable organization, in part because it lacks the full confidence of all its member associations and the capacity to carry out its full mandate. The heavy in-kind investments by academic Board members, coupled with stronger loyalties to the area studies associations, have created major barriers to continued functioning. IDRC's significant financial stake in CCASLS' governance and administration has been critical to CCASLS and to the survival of several of the member associations. With this support, three of the associations (excluding the Canadian Middle East Studies Committee, CANMES) have raised additional revenues from members and other sources, and are closer to being self-sustaining. This is the objective of CAAS, which is developing a revenue-generation strategy for long-term sustainability. It is not clear at this time how the other three associations might manage without the CCASLS administrative support.

In the course of interviews, several ideas were floated in an effort to identify possible other ways to support cross-regional exchanges and ensure that regional perspectives continue to inform the discourse on international development. These included an IDRC-sponsored project fund for theme workshops or conferences, a cross-association committee to create opportunities and ensure ongoing communication among the area studies associations, and the down-scaling and reshaping of CCASLS.

To conclude, IDRC has made a considerable investment over the past 15 years to ensure the survival and sustainability of the four area studies associations in Canada. With increased membership and a higher profile in academic circles, their prospects for survival have increased along with student enrollment and the numbers of faculty appointments. IDRC's more substantive expectation, namely to bring regional perspectives to the larger discourse on globalization and international development, has been much more elusive. Nor is it clear that the existence of CCASLS has sparked new research collaborations on global and development themes. Nevertheless, the objective of bringing regional scholars and researchers together is still very relevant and worthy of the effort. The withdrawal of CAAS from the CCASLS family will challenge the CCASLS Board to reconsider its rationale and figure out what kind of alternative models, if any, might address this objective with a lighter governance overhead. The following are recommendations to IDRC and the CCASLS Board.

Recommendations

To IDRC

1) Suspend support to the CCASLS secretariat and institute agreed procedures to terminate staff employment. Negotiate with the CCASLS Board, a transition process for managing or winding up joint files and operating systems and other programming activities.

2) Consider alternative ideas and means for promoting area association cross-fertilization through discussions with the CCASLS Board. A number of ideas have emerged in interviews that would be administratively less burdensome and might provide greater incentives for scholars interested in global trends or comparative studies.

To the CCASLS Board:

3) Review the general purpose of CCASLS and its continuing relevance to member associations, with a view to deciding whether and under what conditions to disband CCASLS or to continue with a simpler structure. Consider alternative models or options for supporting cross-regional knowledge exchange and diffusion. (Refer to the discussion on alternative structures, at the June evaluation workshop in Annex E).

4) Work together and with IDRC to plan a transition process for CCASLS.

5) Consult with area studies associations to test the level of interest in maintaining some aspects of the harmonized administrative systems, as well as inter-association agreements: these might include common membership database protocols, links to each others' websites, maintaining the invitation for members in-good-standing to

attend each other's annual conferences, and sharing information on each other's conferences and workshops to ensure maximum interaction.

6) Consider greater use of teleconferencing among area association executives, for example, a semi-annual or annual teleconference to share ideas, review activities and seek ways to work together.

1. INTRODUCTION

This report presents the findings of an institutional evaluation of the Canadian Council of Area Studies Learned Societies (CCASLS). CCASLS is a coordinating council whose members are the four independent area studies associations in Canada - for Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Middle East.[2] CCASLS is a national non-profit organization that seeks to "work together to build organizational capacity and expand membership; promote area studies and development studies in Canada; encourage research and facilitate the dissemination of research results. (CCASLS By-Laws, 1997, Article 1). CCASLS is governed by a Board of Directors comprised of two representatives from each association. It is supported by a two-person secretariat based at Concordia University. IDRC has provided just over $2 million in multi-year funding for CCASLS, and in particular for the joint secretariat, since 1992.

The evaluation was commissioned in May 2008 by the IDRC Canadian Partnerships Program to assess CCASLS' operations and accomplishments since its formation in 1993.

The evaluation follows closely on the heels of a special operational review carried out in 2006. The review was called by the CCASLS Board of Directors to address increasing difficulties with Board decision-making and the operations of the CCASLS Secretariat. This report builds upon the 2006 Review and provides an update on the implementation of its recommendations. (See S. Tyler, CCASLS Operational Review, Final Report, September 2006).

Shortly after the evaluation began, the Canadian Association of African Studies (CAAS) voted to withdraw from CCASLS at the end of 2008. This decision was announced at the June CCASLS Board meeting which was held the day after an evaluation workshop with CCASLS Board members and former members, staff and IDRC representatives. In the wake of the CAAS decision, the evaluators have gathered the views of other CCASLS members about the impact of this decision on each area studies association and for future joint initiatives. These views are included in the findings and have shaped some of the conclusions and subsequent recommendations to both IDRC and CCASLS.

1.1 Evaluation Purpose

The evaluation has assessed the extent to which the current institutional arrangements of CCASLS are meeting the area associations' expectations in three areas:

- administrative and governance requirements
- programmatic collaboration

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2   The associations are the Canadian Association of African Studies (CAAS); the Canadian Association for Latin American and Caribbean Studies (CALACS); and the Canadian Asian Studies Association (CASA), which is comprised of three sub-regional councils. The Canadian Committee of the Middle East Studies Association (CANMES) is not an incorporated association, but rather a committee of Canadian members of the American Middle East Studies Association (MESA).

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- contribution to the Canadian discourse on international development

The evaluation objectives and design have been guided by a small evaluation advisory committee comprised of one representative of each area studies association and two IDRC officers. While the evaluation covers the full period of CCASLS' existence since 1993, the emphasis was on the two years following the Operational Review of 2006, and looking to the future. The objectives of the evaluation are:

1) To account for the results and outcomes of IDRC funding since the formation of the Council;

2) To review the accomplishments of the organization since the formation of CCASLS;

3) To provide an opportunity to CCASLS and its member associations to reflect on their role and activities in the current research and policy environment; and,

4) To examine possible alternative models for the separate and collaborative activities of the member associations (intellectual and administrative).

1.2 Evaluation Questions

The evaluators framed the following key questions, with a number of sub-questions. (See annex B for the evaluation framework).

1) What are CCASLS' most significant achievements, both expected and unexpected, since its inception in 1993?

2) Are current institutional arrangements (organizational and administrative procedures and agreements, reporting relationships and accountability measures) appropriate, effective and necessary to meet the mandate of CCASLS?

3) How are the current institutional arrangements supporting and promoting programming collaboration among Association members?

4) To what extent are CCASLS and the area associations it supports financially viable?

5) How, and to what extent are CCASLS' institutional arrangements and programming contributing to the Canadian discourse on international development?

2. METHODOLOGY

The evaluation involved two distinct phases: The first was a day-long workshop at the end of June with a majority of the current and several former members of the CCASLS Board, secretariat staff and IDRC personnel. The second phase involved semi-structured interviews with ten current and former Board members, two Secretariat staff, two IDRC staff and one of the authors of the 2006 Review.

At IDRC's request, the evaluators designed a workshop using several of the participatory research techniques developed by Jacques Chevalier and his international colleagues. (See Social Analysis Systems at http://www.sas2.net/.) The techniques permitted the evaluators to gather both individual and collective views, and to draw on

full-group analysis of workshop findings. The one-day workshop was held in Toronto on June 24, with 12 participants.[3]

In the workshop, participants addressed questions about what their organizations wanted to achieve, what kinds of activities or behaviours might undermine their efforts, the current and desired levels of interaction for different kinds of collaborative activities and ideas about future activities. Workshop participants also answered a short questionnaire to gather views for follow-up interviews. (See annex F for workshop notes and annex G for results of the questionnaire).

The evaluators reviewed key documents including the By-Laws, annual technical reports to IDRC, including financial reports, starting in 2003, recent association financial statements for CAAS and CASA[4], funding renewal applications, IDRC's proposal appraisal notes and trip reports, various CCASLS administrative policies, minutes of CCASLS Board meetings from 2002 to the present, and membership figures for the associations. Workshop and conference reports and other publications were also examined (see Annex D) along with Association websites and newsletters.

3.   A SHORT HISTORY OF CCASLS

Since the early 1970s, IDRC has been interested in building Canada's intellectual capacity in developing-areas studies. IDRC funding helped to get the area studies associations off the ground with a series of small grants to the different associations from 1974 to 1984. Grants were interrupted from 1984 to 1992 and resumed in 1992 with the creation of IDRC's Canadian Partnerships program. In resuming the grants, IDRC recognized that the separate area studies associations did not have the administrative capacity to adequately support national membership activities at a time when their membership was either not growing or was in decline.[5] A project grant in 1992 helped the three associations to achieve some economies of scale by combining their administrative operations into a modest secretariat with one full-time staff person. Secretariat operations were expanded in 2002 with increased IDRC funding.[6]

In 1993, representatives of the associations formalized this administrative arrangement with the creation of CCASLS. The Council's goals are to (1) work together to build organizational capacity and expand membership; (2) promote area studies and development studies in Canada, and (3) encourage research and facilitate the

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3   An invitation was extended to one additional representative from each area association. Although three additional (non-Board) representatives attended the workshop, only five of the eight Board members were able to do so.

4   CALACS statements were being drafted and not available for this report.

5   CAAS, for example, no longer had the capacity nor the membership base to fully support association activities, in particular managing membership and organizing conferences and other events. With dropping numbers of African academics in Canadian universities, CAAS joined the Congress for the Social Sciences and Humanities which was able to host African studies gatherings.

6   Free office space for an executive director and an office coordinator was obtained by the CCASLS President at the time, Professor Reeta Chowdhari Tremblay, from the Political Science Department at Concordia University.

dissemination of research results. IDRC has supported these endeavours with a series of multi-year grants for secretariat operations and association activities. In recent years, both IDRC and CCASLS have been more explicit about encouraging inter-regional and cross-disciplinary research and knowledge exchange.[7] IDRC's interest in engaging a wider audience, including civil society organizations and policy-makers, is reflected in specific CCASLS objectives.

Since 1992, IDRC has invested a total of $2,058,260 in CCASLS. By 2007, IDRC was spending approximately $165,000 a year, with 75 per cent allocated to the secretariat, 19 per cent to the area associations and six per cent to governance (Board operations).[8]

The IDRC grant to CCASLS, along with a small annual program grant to each association, has allowed the associations to allocate more of their own membership revenues into other activities.[9] A review of the annual technical reports to IDRC suggests that 2000 to 2005 were the high point of CCASLS activities. In 1999, CCASLS received a three year SSHRC grant of $75,000 for two thematic workshops and a graduate methodology workshop. In the same years CCASLS published several occasional papers online (from 2003-2004), redesigned the websites for CCASLS and all of the associations, and set up an online directory of members. (See annex G for a list of joint activities). Over the years, secretariat staff have provided administrative support for each association to organize their executive meetings and annual conferences, manage their websites and provide bookkeeping services. The level and nature of the services has fluctuated over time, based on the needs and preferences of each association.[10]

CCASLS staff have succeeded in reaching potential new members and have helped to increase attendance at the associations' annual conferences. In 2002 there were 469 individual and institutional members registered in the three associations (CANMES registers its Canadian members through MESA in the US). By 2005 the total was 919, and by September 2007 it was 1,168 members including regular, student, retired, developing country members and institutional members. In the last three years membership figures have remained somewhat constant. The largest category of members

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7   See the three year proposal to IDRC, 2004, p. 4, for the four specific objectives for administrative coordination, inter-regional activities, enaging graduate students, civil society and policy-makers, and communications activities.

8   In 1992/93, IDRC granted $250,000 to CCASLS for two years, followed by annual grants that grew each year from $100,000 in 1995/96 to $135,000 in 1997/98. There were three multi-year grants, of three years each, until 2007, and a final one year grant for 2008. The total funds do not include the evaluations in 2006 and 2008.

9   Each association currently receives $8,700 per year from CCASLS for association program activities such as support for graduate student participation in association conferences. CANMES receives $6,000 since it is not an incorporated association.

10 CALACS and CANMES have a different arrangement with the secretariat. In 2004, CALACS decided to take back most of its own administrative tasks, with the exception of membership support. More recently, some of these services have been returned to the secretariat. CANMES has not received the same level of support from the secretariat, in part because of its different needs and legal status.

is institutional (a total of 564 many of which are libraries).[11] Membership is also better distributed across the country and beyond the large universities.

The status of CANMES has occupied Board attention in the past several years. The lack of a clear status had been a cause of concern. In 2007 the Canadian members of MESA agreed to incorporate as a Canadian association, independent of the American MESA. In September 2007, the CCASLS Board approved a set of principles for membership association which included, theoretically, non-academic associations. At the same meeting the Board formally reaffirmed the membership of CANMES. A small grant was allocated from unspent workshop funds to help defray the costs of incorporation. At the time of this report, CANMES is still working on incorporation.

Since 2006 there has been a noticeable decrease in joint activities. The last joint conference sponsored by CCASLS was held in May 2005 and the last thematic workshop (on HIV and AIDS) was held in April 2006. No further external funding for joint programming has been secured. Instead, the Board has turned its attention to addressing operational and governance matters that were addressed in the Operational Review in 2006.

4.   FINDINGS

The following section assesses the accomplishments of CCASLS in meeting its mandate as well as its governance and administrative functioning, programming collaboration and members' contribution to the Canadian discourse on international development. Section 4.6 presents the financial picture for CCASLS and its members and addresses the question of CCASLS' viability. The final sub-section addresses the question of CCASLS' relevance for IDRC's objectives.

4.1   Meeting the CCASLS Mandate

What are CCASLS' most significant achievements, both expected and unexpected, since its inception in 1993?

The majority of people consulted for the evaluation believe that CCASLS' main achievement has been to increase member associations' capacity and build membership, i.e. the first part of the three-part mandate. They recognize that these outcomes have been possible, to a large extent, with the administrative support of the secretariat. Joint programming activities, such as the theme workshops and conferences, are also cited as important achievements. In interviews, however, people often expressed their

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11   The membership data has not been consistently reported for each association. CAAS does not include institutional members while CALACS reports all categories and CASA members are not identified by category. In 2007 all categories of membership were broken down for the three associations. Based on the partial 2007 figures, it appears that CASA membership is falling. CASA reports only 4 institutional memberships, perhaps because it does not host a professional journal.

reservations about the relatively small number of collaborative activities in the past several years and the lack of Board members' time in making these happen.[12]

Public outreach activities, the second part of the mandate, were rarely mentioned in interviews. At the June evaluation workshop, participants rated their interaction with the secretariat in this area of the mandate as low. Nor did participants want to invest more in boosting public outreach activities. IDRC has been disappointed with the lack of outreach to civil society organizations and policy-makers with an interest in global issues.

The third area of the mandate (encouraging research and disseminating results), is viewed as a mixed success, with peaks and troughs in the level of effort put into conferences and theme workshops over the years, (see section 4.4 below). Anecdotal evidence from interviews suggests that CCASLS has functioned as network for scholars from different regions, although there is no concrete evidence of research collaborations growing out of CCASLS' events.

The evaluators conclude that CCASLS has been meeting the first component of its mandate, namely to build the capacity of the areas studies associations and to increase membership. The second component, to promote area studies and development studies, has been partially met through association conferences, and publications, some of which have development themes, and through graduate student support. The third mandate component, encouraging research and the dissemination of research, is being met primarily through the regular activities of the associations, and through other joint activities up to 2006.

All areas of the mandate have been addressed in varying degrees through the activities of CCASLS over the years. In hindsight, however, it now appears to many informants that the whole adds up to less than the sum of the parts. Among the people who were interviewed, views were mixed about the importance of revitalizing CCASLS. With the news of the withdrawal of one association, there seems to be an acceptance that alternatives are needed. The evaluators explore this conclusion again in section 5.0 below.

> *Summary of Main Achievements, June Workshop Questionnaire*
> * building association capacities and sustainability and secretariat support (7)
> * redefining mission as collaborative and encouraging cross-association activities (examples were given) (3)
> * raising profile of area studies with each other and in universities (2)
> * funding for graduate students (2)
> * bringing in CANMES (2)
> (Questionnaire Summary, Annex G)

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12 In the June workshop questionnaire, individual participants rated their top three achievements in terms of their contribution to the CCASLS mandate. The highest ratings (on a scale of 1 low to 5 very high), were assigned to the association capacity-building activities, with a 3 or lower being assigned to programming collaboration activities.

4.2   Administration

Are current institutional arrangements (organizational and administrative procedures and agreements, reporting relationships and accountability measures) appropriate, effective and necessary to meet the mandate of CCASLS?

IDRC's operating grants have enabled CCASLS to provide administrative support to the member associations and to generate certain economies of scale. Initially the secretariat was envisaged as an administrative merger of the operations of all of the associations, although the associations would remain fully autonomous legal entities. This vision was never fully realized. Over the years, the Board attempted to find a workable balance between harmonized systems and procedures on the one hand, and separate services provided by the secretariat to each association, on the other. The secretariat staff argued for more efficiency through harmonization. What resulted was a mix of both, with some standardization and some variability. An important achievement was the creation of one database for managing membership information.

There were inevitable conflicts with both secretariat staff and Board members voicing concerns about miscommunication, delays, work that fell through the cracks and issues of performance. A large liability incurred by CCASLS around the Montreal joint conference on globalization added to the friction and the tension on the Board.[13] These strains lead the Board to call for a special operational review in 2006. The review, funded by IDRC, made a number of practical recommendations about Board and secretariat functioning: to streamline governance and some administrative practices, ensure more effective employer oversight of the secretariat and a mechanism to move forward with a competition for annual thematic workshops. (See annex H for a status review of action on the recommendations).   Despite the Board's agreement to implement the recommendations, there has been little action by either the Board or the secretariat, although several steps have been taken to address points of tension. For example, the secretariat staff agreed to keep a log of activities and identify efficiencies in order to free up time for intellectual collaboration. A new job description for the Executive Director was drafted to reflect agreed functions but was never brought to the Board for approval. The Board also tackled the issue of membership for CANMES.

Although the Board had begun to work on some of the 2006 recommendations, it is clear that members were frustrated that so much of their time at meetings was spent on administrative and governance housekeeping. This frustration showed up clearly in the written responses on the June workshop questionnaire and in follow-up interviews. These indicate that on the whole, Board members are not especially satisfied with the administrative and operating arrangements of CCASLS. Of the eight people (including Board, IDRC and staff participants) who responded to a question about the level of satisfaction with the administrative and operating arrangements, three people rated 2 out of 5 and the others gave a rating of 3.

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13   A liability of over $40,000 in unused room space was incurred with the Marriot Hotel because the number of participants in the conference was lower than anticipated.

Despite this lukewarm response, most CCASLS members are grateful for the support of IDRC and the functions of the secretariat. Respondents were especially positive about help with membership administration and recognized that it had come at a critical juncture in the life course of the associations. The views varied among the associations, however. CANMES and CALACS representatives tended to be less satisfied with the relationship they have with the secretariat.[14] CAAS and CASA respondents are more satisfied with the support, especially for association conferences and membership services. Secretariat staff have developed an annual workplan and efficient systems for events organizing and membership communications. Most people, however, are tired of the administrative debates and disagreements over the role and functioning of CCASLS. This showed up clearly in the June workshop assessments of the different levels of interaction between "CCASLS" (i.e. the secretariat and Board), and the individual associations.[15] The workshop demonstrated a large gap between how each group judged their current level of interaction versus their desired level of interaction. Only CASA appears to be satisfied with current interactions with CCASLS in most of the areas of interaction. (See annex E for June workshop notes).

Why have these issues persisted? Respondents from both the Board and the secretariat pointed to the lack of time that Board members are able to commit to their CCASLS work. For full-time academics, CCASLS is unlikely to rank as a top priority for their attention despite their support for its general purpose. Staff perceive that Board direction is either unclear or absent and that the Board is somewhat negligent in its role as employer although this issue was addressed by one recommendation in 2006. Staff reminded the evaluators that it is not their responsibility to take the initiative in programming or administrative areas except where staff are specifically assigned to an activity. The status of the secretariat as an administrative entity with no real executive functions may be one reason why progress has been so slow without more hands-on guidance from the Board.

Finally, we note that CCASLS has relied solely on financial reports to IDRC for its financial oversight rather than requiring complete financial statements, which is the normal practice for organizations. The financial reports to IDRC do not track financial transactions of activities that are not funded by IDRC such as May 2005 joint conference on globalization. Furthermore they do not include a statement of assets and liabilities, thus making it difficult to track the net financial position of CCASLS over the years (this point is further elaborated in section 3 of Annex I).

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14 CALACs had taken back some of the secretariat's administrative roles on its behalf in 2004 and then handed some of them back again in the past year or so. CALACS still manages its website and bookkeeping functions.

15 The exercise examined current and desired levels of interaction between the associations and CCASLS in four areas: information sharing, collaborative activities, public engagement and interactions with the secretariat. The area of greatest agreement was around public engagement where current levels of interaction were perceived by all as low, with little interest in an increase in the near future. The other three areas ranked higher in terms of the level of interaction, but there were significant variations among the associations as well as differences between what CCASLS (as represented by staff and a former President of the Board) perceived and the perceptions of the other associations.

The evaluators conclude that CCASLS has achieved some operating efficiencies that have had a positive impact on the capacities of the area studies associations. At the same time a number of compounding factors are affecting the operations of CCASLS. These include troublesome relationships between some of the associations and the secretariat, ongoing disagreements within the Board, the limitations on the role of the secretariat, combined with a lack of Board members' time and capacity to manage the Council between meetings. All of these together have dissipated the energy from the 2006 review and left most of the administrative recommendations unresolved.

4.3   Governance

As a non-profit corporation, CCASLS is governed by its Board of Directors representing the views and interests of its member associations. At the same time, the Board has a mandate to address a larger shared purpose: To create the organizational capacity, the opportunities and the networks to advance research and knowledge about global issues across regional and disciplinary boundaries, and beyond. While no one disputes the importance of this purpose, few members of the Board have been able to inject the energy, vision and time into pushing this larger purpose forward in recent years.[16] Board attention has been directed at administrative and governance decisions having to do, ultimately, with the nature and level of support for the member associations. Many members of the Board have found this to be an unrewarding use of their time. A majority of the June workshop participants rated a question about governance effectiveness below 2 out of 5 (only two participants rated a 3 out of 5).

Despite this recent experience, many current Board members continue to support the goals of CCASLS. At the June evaluation workshop, just prior to the announcement of the withdrawal of CAAS, participants reiterated ideas for ways to get back on track. In follow-up interviews, however, current and recent CCASLS members all expressed considerable frustration with their individual and collective ability to move forward.

This raises a couple of questions about governance and management functions. First is the process for selecting representatives to the CCASLS Board, as set out in the By-laws. Area Association Presidents are automatically members of the CCASLS Board. The CCASLS Presidency rotates among the area associations every two years. The role of President, therefore, is not necessarily one that is sought its own right. CCASLS Presidents are also in executive positions in their associations as well as being members of their discipline associations in many cases.

Second, the Board is a hands-on Board that acts as the CCASLS employer. In this role, the Board President is responsible for CCASLS staff oversight and for ensuing that employment policies are in place - essentially acting as a personnel manager. While the secretariat staff report to the President, they are also accountable to the separate associations (to their Presidents) when providing association services. If there are

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16   Leadership on the CCASLS Board has been quite time consuming for the President at various times. The June evaluation questionnaire asked people to estimate the amount of time they commit to CCASLS per month on average. One of the respondents, a former President, said it was between 10 and 15 hours a month. See section 4.6 for an estimate of the total in-kind contributions.

difficulties in any one set of interactions, or performance issues, the CCASLS President and others are potentially involved. This level of engagement can be very time consuming. It also requires a set of management skills that don't necessarily come with academic expertise. It is due in part to these kinds of issues, expectations and demands, that CAAS and CALACS made decisions to take back some or all of their own operations.

The evaluators conclude that the requirements for governing and managing a small non-profit council seem to be out of synch with the capacities and interests of many area association representatives who have multiple roles and responsibilities in their disciplines and area studies associations. This structural anomaly cannot be addressed adequately without delegating greater authority for Council operations to the secretariat executive director, combined with a mandate to fully harmonize and unite administrative procedures. Neither route to greater effectiveness and efficiency has garnered much support over the years despite funding incentives from IDRC.

4.4   Inter-Association Programming Collaboration

How are the current institutional arrangements supporting and promoting programming collaboration among Association members?

CCASLS set out four specific objectives in its three year renewal proposal in 2004. One of these addressed inter-regional and inter-disciplinary activities. The second pointed to engaging graduate students, civil society organizations and policy makers. CCASLS member associations clearly value these collaborative and outreach activities. The proposal described workshops and conferences, graduate student internships and methodology workshops, partnerships with other academic and non-academic institutions, and outreach into the policy communities and civil society in Canada. The proposal also aimed for greater future integration of the research of each association into the programming of the other associations. This document is a good indicator of the possibilities and expectations of the CCASLS members at a relative high point in the Council's life.

> *Indicators of successful cross-regional and cross disciplinary activity*
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> * # joint-sponsored workshops or conferences
> * # participants from each association and outside audiences
> * growth in cross-regional research initiatives by association members
> * external funding for activities and/or joint research
> * # and nature of bilateral events
> * satisfaction of members with collaborative programming

In the end, only a fraction of the joint initiatives described in this proposal was realized in the intervening years, apart from the joint conference in Montreal in 2005, "Furthering the Globalization Debate," and the CCASLS thematic workshop on HIV/AIDs in April 2006.[17] The agreement at the September 2006 Board meeting to set

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17   The 2005 conference was a major event that consumed considerable secretariat time to organize. In the end, conference revenue exceeded direct costs by over $10,000, but the conference also incurred a liability of over $40,000 due to much lower attendance than the Board had estimated.

aside $5,000 for a theme workshop in 2006/07 was not implemented and the funds were returned to the associations[18]. In September 2007, the Board agreed on a set of criteria for theme workshops but none have been planned for 2007/08. Individual area association activities, however, were carried out through the annual association conferences, workshops and publications, with support from the secretariat in most cases.[19] (See annex G for a listing of CCASLS events).

When the evaluators asked Board members to comment on the programming achievements of CCASLS, the most commonly mentioned activities date back to the years from 2001 to 2005 - especially the workshops supported by the SSHRC grant in 1999-2002. Despite the lack of joint programming activity in the past two years, hopeful expectations for future collaboration still remain. At the June evaluation workshop a majority of the participants commented in their questionnaires that there are interesting possibilities for thematic collaboration if the spirit of cooperation and leadership on the Board prevails. A few of the more skeptical commentators thought that the ideas and solutions were not that realistic, or that they no longer had any expectations.

While respondents recognized that there are some important incentives for future collaboration, many now feel that these are best pursued outside of CCASLS, and especially in light of the decision of CAAS to withdraw. The obstacles identified in the June workshop (before most Board members and IDRC staff knew about the CAAS decision), were considerable and well-known.[20] Perhaps a different delivery mechanism and structure could attract the attention of interested association members once again.

4.5   Canadian Discourse on International Development

How, and to what extent are CCASLS' institutional arrangements and programming contributing to the Canadian discourse on international development?

IDRC envisioned that through collaborative forums and public outreach, CCASLS would enrich the Canadian discourse on international development. It could bring people together, spark possible new research initiatives and encourage the next generation of regional scholars to contribute their knowledge to international development and its related fields. IDRC also had an interest in bringing into the CCASLS circle more members of the policy community within and outside of government. Recent annual technical reports have noted the participation of government people, especially CIDA, in some of the joint events.

Few people interviewed were able to assess this dimension of the IDRC rationale for supporting CCASLS, beyond noting that individual members are making a

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18   The option of holding these funds in a CCASLS 'reserve fund' or 'collaborative activities fund' for use in the following year does not seem to have been considered.

19   In 2007, secretariat staff reported that they had planned 18 meetings and conferences, May 17 Board Minutes, 2007, p.4.

20   The workshop included an exercise on listing and discussing the best ways to "sabotage" the work of CCASLS. While a tongue-in-cheek approach, it nonetheless brought to the table the underlying difficulties that members face and their frustrations with progress in resolving them.

contribution through their associations. In the questionnaire at the June workshop, several people thought that CCASLS as such was not making any contribution. To the extent that the area studies associations have been able to support graduate student participation in workshops and conferences, (due in part to IDRC funding), the associations are helping to meet this expectation.

There is also the question of CCASLS distinct 'niche' within the larger discourse in Canada. There are other players, in particular the Canadian Association for Studies in International Development (CASID), which are creating the space for research on international development or globalization to be shared around key themes. Some members of the area studies associations are also active in CASID. There have been some attempts to approach a possible partnership with CASID, but this idea has been set aside. More recently, the Canadian Economics Association has set up a working group on development economics, and there is the relatively new Globalization Studies Network that includes Canadian researchers and institutional members, including IDRC. On balance, IDRC's interests and vision are only partially reflected in the CCASLS mandate and objectives which focus more forcefully on the affairs of the individual member associations.

4.6   Financial Viability

To what extent are CCASLS, and the member associations it supports, financially viable?

In order to assess CCASLS viability, the evaluators looked at all of the financial and human resources involved in delivering services and programs. It was important to get a more complete picture since CCASLS and its member associations are administratively interdependent: The associations share a joint secretariat that offers varying levels of administrative support to the area studies associations. Association financial statements, however, do not reflect this contribution. Nor does the brief annual financial report from CCASLS tell the whole picture: It only reports on how the IDRC annual grant has been spent. CCASLS is also a non-profit organization whose members contribute their time to their area studies associations and the CCASLS Board. CCASLS would not exist without this important in-kind contribution.

Sustainability Factors
* active strategic planning & review process
* # of funders / donors
* broader mix of revenue types
* volunteer / in-kind contributions
* degree of dependence on any one donor
* revenue horizon is longer
* solid financial management systems
* acceptable ratio of administration to program costs

To create one consolidated financial picture, the evaluators have thus combined revenues and expenditures along with an estimate of the monetary value of the in-kind contributions by CCASLS Board members for their work on the CCASLS Board. The calculation also includes the contribution of secretariat rent from Concordia University. This information has been gathered and consolidated for 2006. For the full picture see Annex I.

Financial sustainability: Non-profit organizations are considered to be sustainable when there are multiple funding sources that are more or less reliable over a certain period of time. Vulnerability is reduced when an organization is not highly dependent on a single revenue source. Some member-based organizations are virtually self-sufficient through membership fees or private donations combined with net income earned on services and net earnings from other revenue-generating activities. Other membership organizations require additional revenue from donors in government or private foundations in order to carry out their programs. These organizations could be more vulnerable, should funders reduce or cut their funding.

In the non-profit sector, funders and the public also pay attention to the ratio of administrative to programming expenditures.[21] CCASLS, however, was set up to be the operations and administrative support for its member associations, with little direct funding for programming. The admin-program ratio comes down considerably when other association revenues and expenditures, and in-kind contributions are added.

Figure 1: CCASLS and Area Associations, Revenues and Expenditures
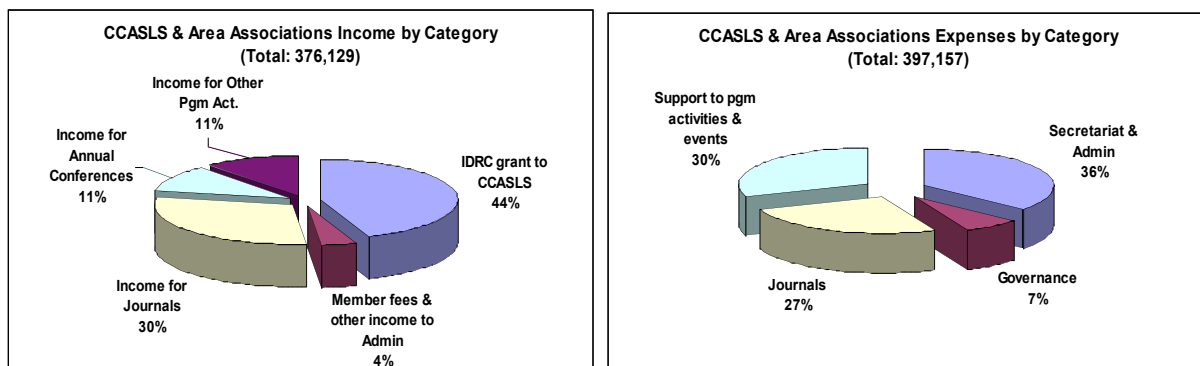
Note: 1) 'Revenue for Journals' includes the portion of member fees that is allocated to the journal, and other revenue such as subscriptions, etc.

2) 'Member fees & other income to Admin' includes the portion of member fees allocated to administration. To this are added other sources of income such as donations, interest, etc.

3) On the 'expense' side, 'Secretariat and Admin' includes the cost of the CCASLS Secretariat as well as Association administration costs.

4) 'Support to pgm activities & events', includes all expenses related to annual association conferences, fellowships, etc. This figure fluctuates with variations in the number of programming events per year. In 2006, CCASLS also funded a theme workshop on HIV/AIDS. In 2007 no joint activities have been organized through CCASLS.

5) Note that the total income figure is less than the total expenses figure. This is due to deficits for both CCASLS and one of the associations in the year under consideration.

Figure 1 shows that income sources are quite varied, including annual membership fees, subscriptions to journals (CAAS and CALACS), SSHRC contributions to the journals, annual conference registration fees, and income for other program

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21   This ratio is very high for CCASLS if one uses only CCASLS revenues and expenditures in the calculation. In 2006, the IDRC grant was allocated mostly to salaries (75%). The remaining funds went to support the Board (6%) and as program grants to the associations (19%), CCASLS financial report to IDRC.

activities (mostly a foundation grant for CASA's fellowship fund), as well as the project grant from IDRC. Despite these revenue sources, the dependence on IDRC is quite large at 44% of the total. A sudden interruption or significant reduction of this contribution would seriously affect the viability of CCASLS and, by extension, its member associations. As expected, the administrative costs, at 36% of the total, are high when compared to program related costs at 57% (a ratio of 0.63).

CCASLS and its member associations appear to be financially quite vulnerable and dependent on IDRC project funding. This is not the full story, however. It does not include the in-kind time that goes towards both governing and administering the operations of CCASLS and the associations.[22] It is clear from both interviews and from CCASLS Board minutes, that a lot of volunteer hours go into governance and operations, and that this is both essential (a strength) and a major disincentive (a drawback) for academic members who do not want to devote so much time to organizational management.[23] With these contributions, CCASLS has been a viable organization since the secretariat capacity was expanded in 2002. (See Annex I for the in-kind calculations).

The imminent withdrawal of CAAS has now altered this conclusion about viability. One, and likely all of the area studies associations, are now considering the likelihood of operating without IDRC funding for a secretariat. The consolidated financial overview demonstrates that IDRC's contribution is supporting, or enabling, more than the operating costs of a joint secretariat.

It is clear that a sudden withdrawal of IDRC funding from CCASLS will have a significant impact on the administrative capacity of most of the associations, at least in the short term. Representatives from CALACS, CASA and CANMES have expressed concerns about the ability of their associations to maintain the administrative services currently provided by the secretariat. CAAS, however, has decided to test a different model and become self-sustaining.[24] This decision can be viewed as a successful outcome of IDRC's support to help build more sustainable area studies associations by building the membership base and the information systems to maintain it.

Regardless of which decisions are taken by the CCASLS Board in the wake of CAAS' withdrawal, and the outcome of this evaluation, a transition period will be essential to give CCASLS members time to review what they have learned and how they

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22   CCASLS Board members estimated the amount of time they spent, on average, each month, working for their Associations and for CCASLS, apart from attendance at the CCASLS Board. Most calculated between 2 and 5 hours for CCASLS and up to twice as much for their Associations, and more if they were President.

23   Annex I develops the value of in-kind revenues and expenditues by assigning a monetary value to the in-kind contributions. In figure 3, the evaluators have estimated that 13 % of expenditures from all sources are in-kind contributions by Board members to governance and operational matters.

24   This decision was triggered in part by the CAAS decision to publish their journal in an electronic format and abolish the costly hard copies. In recent years, two-thirds of the membership fees have gone to the journal. This decision gives CAAS members an opportunity to rethink their operations, including what it means to be a member, whether there will be a membership fee, and how to connect with members electronically. The details and financial implications were still being worked out when CAAS members were interviewed in July and August.

carry forward their commitment to greater cross-regional collaboration and knowledge dissemination.

4.7   Relevance for IDRC Objectives

As mentioned above, IDRC has funded CCASLS and the area studies associations to enable the presence of regional perspectives on global and development issues. This objective has not changed. What has changed is the context for area studies in Canada. Area studies, along with international development studies, have been growing in recent years, following a period of cutbacks to international development activities of all kinds in the 1990s.

While the area studies associations are now more active and viable, their capacity to deliver cross-regional programming through the CCASLS structure has decreased over time. The question now is whether IDRC's objective might be met more fully with a different kind of incentive for collaboration and a structure that is less taxing for academic researchers.

5.   OPTIONS

What are the implications and options for Area Studies Associations if IDRC funding for operations is cut? What are some alternative models to support the mandate?

During interviews, the evaluators discussed ideas for what might take the place of CCASLS in the likelihood that IDRC did not renew its funding for CCASLS in its present form. The following are ideas emerging from these discussions. They are not mutually exclusive.

Project Fund: IDRC establish a project fund for one or more annual thematic workshops, open to members of the area studies associations and graduate students.   The project grant would include administrative support for screening proposals and for contracting a temporary workshop coordinator in a host university.

Criteria for alternative models

* focus on cross-fertilization among area associations
* focus on globalization and development more broadly
* include funds for public communications / outreach on specific research themes
* minimum of two associations to participate
* support for graduate student participation (presenting research)
* possible funding for publication of proceedings or research synopses
* funding for additional administrative capacity for specific activities
* flexible and light decision-making structure
* no additional administrative load for IDRC

Small Program Grants for Area Studies Associations: IDRC continue with four small grants to support graduate student involvement or other program activities of the associations.[25]

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25   The is essentially the funding approach prior to 1993 - an approach that was abandoned by IDRC in 1984.

<u>Inter-regional Committee</u>: IDRC provide a reduced level of funding for a small inter-regional committee to define and oversee cross-regional activities. Representation on the committee could be based on member interest, rather than position in the association executive. Committee business to be conducted primary online and by teleconference with face-to-face meetings in conjunction with one or more area association conferences.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

What, in the end, is CCASLS' 'added value'? What has it achieved that couldn't quite be achieved by each association working on its own? The evaluators conclude that IDRC, through CCASLS, has put the developing-area studies associations on a stronger footing and seen them through a period of decline in support for area studies and international development more broadly. For the most part, CCASLS members believe that the infusion of IDRC funding for the shared secretariat has been responsible for their ability to deliver association programming. As a result of these efforts and a growing interest in area studies (and international development studies) in Canada, membership in the associations has grown from the early years. At least one of the associations now feels it can continue on its own with the financial support of members, revenues from the journal and other funders, and in-kind contributions from university departments.

Through a modest level of joint programming, there is higher awareness among regional scholars of some of the work of their colleagues in different regions. At the same time, it is difficult to know whether there is a sustained or growing level of interest in cross-regional research as a result of CCASLS' activities. Some informants feel that there is the potential for greater bilateral association programming without the heavy structure of CCASLS. The countervailing pull towards regional work and association affairs has been very strong and is unlikely to change. The original idea of creating one big area studies association is long gone although there are a few people who still see the logic of a single organization. In any case, the decision by CAAS to withdraw from CCASLS has signalled that a superstructure like CCASLS is not viable under current conditions. Alternatives to achieve some of the same objectives for cross-fertilization can now be considered by IDRC and by the current CCASLS Board and member associations.

Recommendations

To IDRC

1) Suspend support to the CCASLS secretariat and institute agreed procedures to terminate staff employment. Negotiate with the CCASLS Board, a transition process for managing or winding up joint files and operating systems and other programming activities.

2) Consider alternative ideas and means for promoting area association cross-fertilization through discussions with the CCASLS Board. A number of ideas have emerged in interviews that would be administratively less burdensome and might provide greater incentives for scholars interested in global trends or comparative studies.

To the CCASLS Board:

3) Review the general purpose of CCASLS and its continuing relevance to member associations, with a view to deciding whether and under what conditions to disband CCASLS or to continue with a simpler structure. Consider alternative models or options for supporting cross-regional knowledge exchange and diffusion. (Refer to the discussion on alternative structures, at the June evaluation workshop in Annex E).

4) Work together and with IDRC to plan a transition process for CCASLS.

5) Consult with area studies associations to test the level of interest in maintaining some aspects of the harmonized administrative systems, as well as inter-association agreements: these might include common membership database protocols, links to each others' websites, maintaining the invitation for members-in-good-standing to attend each other's annual conferences, and sharing information on each other's conferences and workshops to ensure maximum interaction.

6) Consider greater use of teleconferencing among area association executives, for example, a semi-annual or annual teleconference to share ideas, review activities and seek ways to work together.

ANNEXES

Information for Evaluation contract (104588-CAP)

Draft 2008-05-15

7. BACKGROUND

This evaluation is part of a cycle of evaluations of the core institutional partners of the Centre's Canadian Partnerships program. It builds upon the Operational Review of the Canadian Council of Area Studies Learned Societies (CCASLS) commissioned by the Centre in 2006. The purpose of the 2006 OR was a) to assist CCASLS in addressing the underlying factors giving rise to actual and potential dissatisfaction or differences in interpretation within the Council regarding its organizational and administrative procedures, reporting relationships and accountability (referred to in this document as governance of the Council), and thus its ability to fulfill its organizational mandate; and b) to assist IDRC in assessing how CCASLS is implementing objectives of the current grant and in determining the scope of the full evaluation to take place in 2007-2008.

8. OBJECTIVES OF THE EVALUATION

The purpose of the present evaluation is to assist IDRC and CCASLS' four member associations and Board to determine whether the current institutional arrangements are appropriate, effective and necessary in terms of meeting the administrative requirements of each association, supporting and promoting inter-association programmatic collaboration, and contributing to the Canadian discourse on international development.

The specific objectives are:

to account for the results and outcomes of IDRC funding since the formation of the Council;

to review the accomplishments of the organization since the formation of CCASLS;

to provide an opportunity to CCASLS and its member associations to reflect on their role and activities in the current research and policy environment; and,

to examine possible alternative models for the separate and collaborative activites of the member associations (intellectual and administrative).

9. AREAS OF FOCUS

Four major areas of focus have been identified: institutional framework (organization); inter-association collaboration; financial considerations and accountability; and relevance and contribution to international development studies in Canada.

10. TERMS OF REFERENCE AND SCHEDULE

Pursuant to this contract, the consultant shall:

- examine the Report of 2006 Operational Review (OR) as well as any relevant organizational documents pertaining to the Council: Constitution, By-laws, operating guidelines, job descriptions, and to its relationship with the Centre (Project Approval Document, Memorandum of Grant Conditions);
- review documents pertaining to the Council's operations since November 2006, to determine the extent to which Board decisions based on recommendations of the OR have been implemented, in particular with respect to suggested remedial measures, procedural guidelines, communication and reporting relationships, practices and accountability;
- organize a one-day participatory evaluation exercise based on Social Analysis System and other appropriate tools for up to 17 participants: up to three from each member association, two from the Secretariat and three from the Centre;
- interview all current Board members, the staff of the Secretariat, and any additional individuals identified in collaboration with Centre staff as key informants;
- prepare a list of indicators against which to assess how the Secretariat and Board make and implement decisions, carry out their operations, and ensure reporting and accountability;
- submit to the Centre and CCASLS a final report based on the outcomes of the evaluation by **15 October 2008**. Section A9 sets out the Centre's expectations and will form the basis of its determination whether or not the detailed report is satisfactory.

The work under this contract must be performed and completed by **15 October 2008**.

Contract with: South House Exchange

Suite 104, 858 Bank Street

Ottawa, ON, K1S 3W3

Consultants: Catherine McLaren and Paul Turcot

Budget (from project 104588 – Centre-Administered)

Global Fee: $36,000 for entire job (2 consultants)

Travel: Ottawa-Toronto (air) x 2

2 nights in Toronto (ask Annamaria Piccioni for hotel rates including taxes)

per diem

taxis to/from Ottawa airport (the airport hotel has a free shuttle)

telephone interviews (communications):

11. EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

The following table sets out draft evaluation questions in the four areas of focus, along with data sources and methods. More detailed interview questions will be developed, based on this framework.

Table 1: CCASLS' Evaluation Framework

Focus Area	Main Question and Sub-Questions	Info/Data Sources	Methods
Main Achievements	*1. What are CCASLS most significant achievements, both expected and unexpected, since its inception in 1993, in the following areas?* a) governance and administrative arrangements b) programming collaboration among the Area Councils c) contribution to Canadian discourse on international development d) What were/are IDRC expectations for CCASLS?	*CCASLS documents *CCASLS current / former Board members *IDRC staff	Selected interviews / survey SAS2 Workshop (main achieve-ments)
Institutional framework	*2. Are current institutional arrangements (organizational and administrative procedures and agreements, reporting relationships and accountability measures) appropriate, effective and necessary to meet the mandate of CCASLS?* a) To what extent have the 2006 recommendations, as spelled out in the Board Action Plan, been implemented? b) What incentives and/or structural obstacles are affecting greater inter-association coordination and governance effectiveness? c) To what extent are CCASLS Board members and staff satisfied with the current arrangements (following the OR/06)? d) What is the current level of agreement on, and understanding of, the CCASLS mandate? (ref to two different sets of assumptions in the OR/06). e) What do members want to keep in any future institutional arrangements? f) What are criteria and indicators for effective coordination and governance?	*CCASLS Board Minutes *CCASLS policies and other operating or service agreements *CCASLS and Area Associations' Board members *CCASLS staff *Stephen Tyler *Other associations information on operations	CCASLS documents review Key respondent interviews Interviews with selected other associations Workshop – SAS2

Focus Area	Main Question and Sub-Questions	Info/Data Sources	Methods
Inter-association programming collaboration	3. *How are the current institutional arrangements supporting and promoting programming collaboration among Association members?* a) To what extent have the 2006 recommendations and Action Plan been implemented, with respect to supporting and promoting collaboration through CCASLS? What plans are underway? b) What kind of inter-association collaboration has been occuring without CCASLS - bilateral or multilateral examples? c) To what extent are CCASLS Board and Association members satisfied with the nature and level of programming collaboration? (refer to specific examples)? d) What incentives and obstables (internal or external) are supporting, or standing in the way of effective programming collaboration? e) What can be accomplished through CCASLS that cannot (quite) be accomplished alone? f) Are there other inter-Association arrangements or models that can support joint research, knowledge sharing and dissemination among the Associations? g) In general, what kind of capacity is required to support the work of the member associations (volunteer, paid staff)? h) What are key indicators of effective inter-association collaboration?	*CCASLS workplans *Annual Reports to IDRC and members (1993-2007) *CCASLS and Association Board members (current) *IDRC staff *Selected other informants	Documents review Informant interviews Informant survey (?) Workshop – SAS2
Financial considerations, accountability and sustainability	4 *To what extent are CCASLS and the area associations it supports financially viable?* a) To what extent does IDRC funding for CCASLS help to leverage funding for the four member associations? (What multiplier effects?) b) What are the possibilities for future financial support or arrangements to support CCASLS? c) What in-kind contributions are made to CCASLS? (esp. by Board members)? d) What are adequate in-kind contributions to support CCASLS work -- implications for future? e) What financial agreements or understandings are in place to share information or resources between Association members and CCASLS? f) What kinds of revenue generation activities have been undertaken or planned to support CCASLS operations and	* Area Association annual reports *CCASLS Annual Reports and financial statements *Service Agreements *Area Associations' key personnel (Board Chair etc.) *CCASLS staff *IDRC staff	Financial reports and documents review Key informant interviews

Focus Area	Main Question and Sub-Questions	Info/Data Sources	Methods
Financial (cont'd)	programming? g) To what extent is CCASLS dependent on IDRC funding to be sustainable? h) What are the implications and options for Area Associations if IDRC funding for operations is cut? What are some alternative models to support the mandate? i) What are key sustainability indicators?		
Relevance and contribution to international development studies in Canada	*5. How, and to what extent are CCASLS' institutional arrangements and programming contributing to the Canadian discourse on international development?* a) What are the main contributions to the Canadian discourse that can be attributed to CCASLS initiatives, since 1993? b) How does the current external research and policy environment affect CCASLS capacity to contribute to Canadian research and discourse on international development? c) What do Association members consider to be the CCASLS' "value-added" to international development discourse? (joint activities, joint research, networking?) d) What is the approximate portion of CCASLS member associations' work devoted to international development? (noting that a focus on ID is not a condition of IDRC funding) d) What indicators could be used to assess this contribution?	*CCASLS Reports *CCASLS Board *CCASLS staff *IDRC staff *other key Association members	Documents review Key informant interviews Workshop with SAS2 tools

List of Participants in the Evaluation

This list includes people who were interviewed as well as those who participated in the June evaluation workshop. Newer Board members were at the workshop, but were not interviewed.

Current CCASLS Board Members	
Stuart McCook	Board President; CALACS
Miriam Grant	Secretary-Treasurer; CAAS
Yann Roche	CASA (SE Asia Council)
Josie Smart	CASA (East Asia Council)
Amal Ghazal	CANMES
Tom Najem	CANMES
Christopher Youe	CAAS
Ann McDougall	CAAS
Juanita De Barros	CALACS (new Board member)
José Curto	CAAS (new Board member)
Rachad Antonius	CANMES (new Board member)
Past CCASLS Board Members	
Judith Teichman	CALACS
Reeta Chowdhari Tremblay	former President
Steven Palmer	former VP; CALACS
CCASLS Staff	
Annamaria Piccioni	Executive Director
Lynn Berrouard	Office Coordinator
IDRC	
Gisèle Morin-Labatut	
Luc Mougeot	
Other	
Stephen Tyler	

ANNEX D

Documents Consulted

CCASLS

By-Laws of the Canadian Council of Area Studies.

Minutes of the CCASLS Board, Executive and General Meetings, from May 2003 to September 15, 2007.

Personnel Policy, October 2002

Three Year Renewal Application, to IDRC, December 2004-December 2007.

Technical Reports for 2001 - 2007, including annexes in latter years, on budgets and membership figures.

One Year Renewal Applicaation, December 2007-December 2008.

Former and draft Executive Director's Job Description.

IDRC

Appraisal of CCASLS Partnership Grant, 2001.

Status of Project Proposal for CCASLS, Draft 19 November 2004.

Trip Reports relating to CCASLS meetings, for 2006, 2007 and 2008.

CCASLS Operational Review, Final Report, by Stephen Tyler and Lynne Tyler, September 2006.

Project Contributions 1992 to 2008/09.

Evaluation Workshop Agenda and Notes

Toronto, June 24th 2008

Purpose: to gather the views of CCASLS members and staff on the achievements, obstacles and future directions of CCASLS. The workshop will help to frame questions for follow-up interviews.

8:30	1.	Welcome, introductions and agenda review	
9:00	2.	Identifying desired future	

"What does your organization really want to achieve that it can't (quite) achieve on its own?"

(SAS2 freelisting and pile sorting exercise)

10:00	3.	Obstacles to CCASLS effectiveness

"Think of things you could do to actively sabotage CCASLS to ensure it fails."

10:30		BREAK
10:45	4.	Assessing CCASLS partnership arrangements

"What are the current and desired levels of interaction?

"What kind of activities might the 'desired' level of partnership involve?"

(SAS2 Network Dynamics)

12:00		LUNCH
1:00	5.	Network Dynamics continued – discussion of findings
1:30	6.	Exploration of future activities / proposals
3:00		BREAK
3:15	7.	Short Individual Questionnaire
3:40	8.	Feedback on draft evaluation workplan
		Next Steps and guidance to the evaluators
		Levels of Support (SAS2 technique)
		Reflection on the day
5:00	9.	Adjourn

 WORKSHOP NOTES

The evaluators used several participatory techniques to elicit ideas and to measure the strength of participants' opinions. The results of each exercise were discussed and analyzed by the group. The techniques come from a suite of tools called "Social Analysis Systems" - http://www.sas2.net/

In addition, participants were given time in the workshop to fill out a questionnaire.

1.   Identifying desired future

"What does your organization really want to achieve that it can't (quite) achieve on its own?"

(Social Analysis Systems technique: Freelisting and pile sorting. Using cards, each participant contributed 2 ideas each (one per card) with an achievement on one side and comments about the achievement, including obstacles, listed on the back side. The cards were posted and clustered into themes.)

Main achievements (from cards)

- effective administration for all associations through CCASLS secretariat (6)
- cross-border/cross-regional issues (5)
- investments in grad students (& new scholars) (3)
- outreach to Canadians re area studies, i.e. beyond academic world (3)
- securing resources beyond what associations have (2)
- networking/sharing (between researchers, between associations) (2)
- unified focus and common agenda for CCASLS (2)
- express "mission" orientation (as opposed to self-interest orientation) (1)
- intra-CCASLS access to members (1)
- outreach to all international students/advocacy (1)
- build academic awareness of own association (1)

In follow-up discussion, participants reiterated that networking across boundaries (disciplines and regions) is an important achievement and ongoing objective, along with promoting the associations within the academy; both activities help to attract new people to area studies. CCASLS has balanced the self-interest of academics with a broader mission-driven agenda to promote research in/on the South. Some participants raised the role of IDRC as a factor in how CCASLS defines its work. IDRC has its own mandate and funding criteria that affect CCASLS work. It is also important to advocate for policies that support the Associations' work and graduate student interests.

It seems that CCASLS is in a moment of transition and needs to be clear about where it is heading and why. The question of CCASLS "value-added" triggered some reflections on what CCASLS has enabled.   Each association has been successful in bringing in more research funding built on membership research interests – some of which is for development research. CCASLS facilitates the development-focused mandate at meetings. This means that many of the members can be "freed" through CCASLS to support development research -- 'development' being interpreted more broadly to include research on political processes or historical and cultural processes.

One participant observed that CCASLS is a unique and innovative way to bring people together around this broader development mandate. There is not enough of a critical mass of graduate students (and funding) in Canada, as there is in the US. Canadian scholars have a duty to push these issues forward – to support research about the South and with Southerners.

Recently, CASA has considered what would happen if CCASLS did not exist – would CASA be able to exist? CASA is also a federation with sub-regional councils all of which are run by volunteers. So the association requires a lot of time too. CCASLS has a structural weakness in this regard - it is another level of structure that requires time. Trying to promote CCASLS within the association is difficult, and most CASA members don't know about CCASLS.

2. Obstacles to CCASLS Effectiveness

Think of things you could do to actively sabotage CCASLS to ensure it fails?

[Process: Participants discussed their top three ideas in small mixed groups. The main ideas were posted for discussion.]

The following were the main ideas:

- Disruptiveness at the Board: question everything, ask for more clarification, more information, more time, go back over past decision, re-open issues
- Laziness and avoidance are easy ways to sabotage a volunteer-based organization
- Providing or offering mis-information to member associations about CCASLS's mandate and mission
- Giving the CCASLS's unedited report to the IDRC Board of Directors and media
- Occupying a space on the Board then doing nothing (active non-participation)
- Letting divisions within the organization and Board to fester unattended
- Cultural inability to address conflict
- Poor electronic communication: inappropriate language and copying "all" on email

Participants discussed how these forms of sabotage apply to CCASLS' current experience. There are structural issues having to do with how the Board members are selected by the various associations combined with how the CCASLS' President and VP are appointed (i.e. by rotation). The result is that selections and executive roles are more or less predetermined. In addition, some people come to CCASLS with a specific agenda to push: it might be personal or a representation of their association.

On the subject of time commitments, and being a "volunteer", some universities encourage, and recognize, the contribution of faculty to various related associations as being part of the professional responsibility of faculty. This varies a lot across institutions.

The orientation of new members is also an issue. Each new member is given a binder of key documents, but not everyone has the time to read through it. Some participants in the meeting felt that new members were not well enough oriented and that new members at every Board might get some additional orientation. On reflection, some

people wondered about the incentives for individuals to contribute to CCASLS. There is more in it for the Association.

There is also a disconnect between the goal of CCASLS and the resources available to really make it effective. One person pointed to the larger environment in which CCASLS operates - namely the university departments and faculties, along with the funders. There is a lot of competition for limited research and conference funds. In this competitive environment, CCASLS is at a disadvantage and cannot compete with its member associations -- who does CCASLS speak for? It is difficult to build a more public profile for CCASLS or its member associations. Association members, (sometimes members of CCASLS), do speak to issues that are in the media, but are they not identified as Association or CCASLS members. The media are often more interested in the fact that someone is from Lebanon or Kashmir and not their academic discipline affiliations.

The flip side of these obstacles or acts of sabotage point to elements that people see as important: in particular having a clear vision and mandate, competent management and the ability to hold different perspectives but still have agreement on CCASLS's mandate. The CCASLS Board has had periods of time when it was effective and clear about its mandate - for e.g., the period from 2000 tio 2003 when they had a mission, set up new operating systems and hosted a number of cross-regional events.
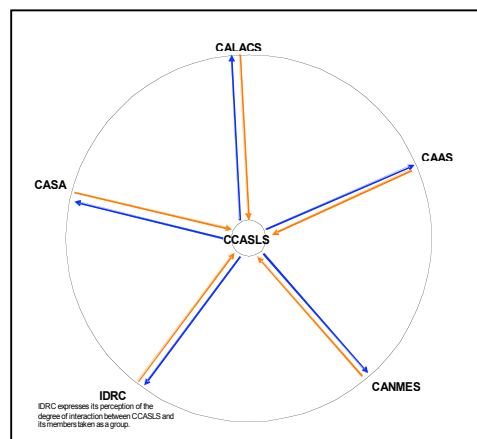

3.   Association and CCASLS Interaction

What are the current, and desired, levels of interaction? What kind of activities might the 'desired' level of partnership involve?

[Process: a Social Analysis Systems technique called " network dynamics'. Participants worked in their organizational groups i.e., the 4 associations (with CALACS joining CAAS since there was only one CALACS representative who is new to the Board), IDRC and the secretariat. Each association rated the level of interaction between their own association and CCASLS (i.e. Board and secretariat). The scale was 0 = no interaction, to 5 = a lot of mutual planning, services, communications etc. IDRC rated its impression of the interaction with the associations as a group, and with CCASLS. The group representing CCASLS was the two secretariat staff along with a former Board President.]

The responses to this exercise are found in the table at the end of this document.

The exercise assessed four areas of interaction:

(1) interaction between CCASLS and the area associations

(2) information sharing between CCASLS and each association

(3) interaction on <u>collaborative activities</u> between the associations and CCASLS

(4) interaction between CCASLS and the associations on <u>engagement with the public</u>

What stands out from this exercise is the variation among the associations in how they rate the interactions between their association and CCASLS, (note that CCASLS represents the corporate entity including both the Board and the secretariat). Participants from CASA rated the level of interaction generally, and for information-sharing and collaborative activities, higher than any other association or CCASLS itself. CANMES rated interaction as 0 or 1, reflecting its lack of involvement and the sense that it is not either contributing to or getting much from the current arrangement. All associations and CCASLS want this to change in future, assigning a 4 or 5 for the desired level of interaction. This pattern holds for three of the four areas of work. The public engagement aspect is clearly not a very high priority.

The other noticeable variation is between the ratings of the group speaking for CCASLS, and the four associations taken together. In all but the fourth area (public engagement), the CCASLS perspective is that there is much less interaction than what is perceived by the associations.

In follow-up discussion, the group noted that the relatively low ratings for interaction around collaborative activities is critical, since this is a key area, especially for IDRC. The low rating by the CCASLS group seems to be based on a realistic assessment of the capacity of the Board to move forward in this area. The somewhat higher ratings by CANMES and CASA suggest that there has been some collaborative interaction around some activities within the associations. CASA has begun to invite Latin American or African speakers to their events or panels, partly as a result of meeting people in the CCASLS Board. These events are not developed through the CCASLS Board.

With respect to information sharing, the CCASLS view (especially from the perspective of the secretariat staff), is that there is not much sharing - in particular, information coming in to the secretariat. On the other hand, CASA CAAS perceive that there is quite a lot more sharing of information from. It is not clear from the dicussion whether this was information flowing both ways or one way. Secretariat staff clearly want more information, and CANMES as well. In any case, several participants feel that better information sharing is a necessary pre-condition for more
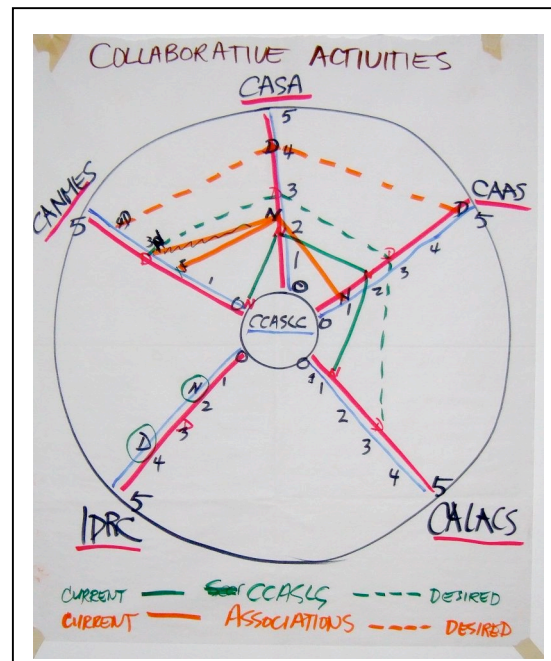
sharing across the associations. There are lots of interesting ways to get involved in each others' associations and it could happen without CCASLS as well, although the CCASLS website could be used to infomr people. It raises the question of why CCASLS is needed.

The evaluators then introduced three structural possibilities: (1) CCASLS with a smaller governance structure and an administrative "hub" similar to the current structure; (2) bilateral service model where administrative services are contracted out for separate services to each association; and (3) CCASLS as a loose network without a dedicated secretariat. The latter implies that secretariat support would be provided by each association. The discussion focused on the nature of secretariat support that might be needed and realistic. Participants wondered what might be involved to maintain a minimal level of interaction and information sharing, versus a more robust structure to support collaborative activities on specific topics or issues, or providing some logistics support. No consensus was sought on this question, although one person favours the network with a hub. Whatever model is best, the Board still needs to be clearer about how it makes decisions on substantive issues, and needs a clear division of function between the Board and the secretariat.

### 4.	Activities to Achieve Desired CCASLS

What future activities can be proposed (what, who, resources, when)?

[Process: While still in the small groups, participants were asked to fill out a "proposal" card or cards that lists possible activities with a brief description. These were then discussed later in the afternoon.]

The following represents the main items that came forward for discussion.

Collaborative activities

1)	Review the 2-way communication flows and see if there are ways to draw on association members to contribute ideas for CCASLS joint activities.

2)	Bring back thematic workshops based on research interests of association members. Workshops can be more focused, with tangible outputs, even something that can be published. There is an agreement already - criteria for workshops. Ideally, these themes can pick up on the activities and themes in the associations. Would it be possible for CCASLS to have a longer-term horizon and a strategic plan that sets this out for more than one year? CCASLS might be able to support the associations with communications and leadership.

3)	Protect a period of time at each Board meeting to focus on content or research interestt. Even one hour a meeting (e.g. 8:30 to 9:30).

4)	Cross-regional panels on international development at various conferences, newsletter, build CCASLS's profile within each Association, etc.

Reaching out - beyond CCASLS

5)	For every event (workshop, conference, etc.) CCASLS could ensure that a press release highlights what has taken place at the conference (noting that this requires

secretariat resources, e.g. staff to write the press release and build some relationships with the media etc.)

5.   Evaluation of the workshop

The day ended with another SAS2 technique - levels of support. On a scale of 1 = low to 5 = very high, participants placed themselves along a continuum and rated their satisfaction with the day and its conclusions for CCASLS. Most participants were quite satisfied with the process and discussion.

Wheel Exercise on "Network Interaction"

1. Interaction between Secretariat and Area Associations

	As perceived by Association	As perceived by CCASLS	As desired by Association	As desired by CCASLS
CANMES	1	1	5	5
CASA	5	1	5	5
CAAS	2.5	1	5	5
CALACS	-	1	-	5
	As perceived by IDRC (for all)		As seen as desirable by IDRC	
IDRC	3		5	

2. Information Sharing betw CCASLS and associations

	As perceived by Association	As perceived by CCASLS	As desired by Association	As desired by CCASLS
CANMES	1	1	4	5
CASA	4	1	4	5
CAAS	3	1	5	5
CALACS	-	1	-	5
	As perceived by IDRC (for all)		As seen as desirable by IDRC	
IDRC	3		5	

3. Interaction on Collaborative Activities

	As perceived by Association	As perceived by CCASLS	As desired by Association	As desired by CCASLS
CANMES	2	0	4	3
CASA	2.5	2	4	3
CAAS	1	2	5	3
CALACS	-	1	-	3
	As perceived by IDRC (for all)		As seen as desirable by IDRC	
IDRC	2		4	

4. Interaction on Engagement with the Public

	As perceived by Association	As perceived by CCASLS	As desired by Association	As desired by CCASLS
CANMES	0	0	2	1
CASA	1	0	1	1
CAAS	1	0	3	1
CALACS	-	0	-	1
	As perceived by IDRC (for all)		As seen as desirable by IDRC	
IDRC	0		2	

CCASLS Evaluation Workshop
Participant questionnaire

PART ONE

Respondents: 12

CAAS: 2 (one returning Board member, one new)

CALACS: 1 (new)

CANMES: 2 (one for 4 years, one new)

CASA 3 (one for 8 yrs - former CCASLS Pres; one for 7 yrs; one for 3 years)

IDRC   2

CCASLS staff   2

In-kind contribution of time per month (8 Board respondents)

Area Association 5.5 hours/month on average, with President's spending 10 - 15 hours per month	
CCASLS 4.0 hours/month, on average, for the four people who have been on the Board for at least one year.	

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS

2. In your view, what are the top two or three main achievements of CCASLS since its inception in 1993, or since you have been involved?

How would you rate the above achievements as a contribution to the CCASLS mandate? (1= no contribution, 5= very major contribution).

What made each achievement significant? Note: a number of people did not comment. Where respondents did comment, a summary is included with the achievement in the table below.

3. On a scale of 1 (no contribution) to 5 (very major contribution), how would you rate the above achievements as a contribution to the CCASLS mandate? **Circle the relevant number and briefly explain your rating.**

CCASLS Mandate is to: Work together to build organizational capacity and expand membership; promote area studies and development studies in Canada; encourage research and facilitate the dissemination of research results(CCASLS By-Laws).

NOTE: At least one person read the question as rating the 3 achievements together against each of the 3 mandate areas.

Note: The IDRC and CCASLS staff choices and ratings have been reomoved to avoid identifying particular individuals

Board perspective (n = 5)	Rating	IDRC staff		CCAS LS staff	
(1) *Uniting area studies in Canada and making them aware of each other . Respondent rated all achievements together against each mandate area. (No sense CCASLS has met mandate area #1 - to build org. capcity & membership- except through existence of a secretariat)	1				
* keeping area associations afloat in difficult times	4				
* raise our awareness of potential of collaborative work	5				
* redefined mission as a collaborative, cross-regional assoc with thematic events	3				
* development focused thematic workshops with X-regional member associations (irregular implementation)	3				
* secretariat to support membership drive, conference org. etc. - (still having impact on membership)	4				
(2) * bringing CANMES in (respondent rated all achievements against each area of mandate)	3				
* investing in area studies	5				
* streamlined CCASLS' operations (budget, meetings, professionalized staff etc.	3				
* professional admin. office that contributed to membership growth in CASA and regular conference activities that are relevant to collab & student training.	4				
* promoting area studies in Canada - still room to improve	3				
(3) * facilitating area studies in Canada when universities were de-emphasizing them (and still are). Respondent rated all achievements against each mandate area.	2				
* funding for graduate students	5				
* improved relations with IDRC that enabled increased funding for staff, grad students, conferences (most of which are regional)	2				
* increased resources for student support	3				
* thematic X-regional workshops (need more regular effort)	3				
(Other) giving CANMES the opportunity to build better profile					

SATISFACTION

NOTE: The new Board members did not answer these questions for the most part. One past member had returned after some years absence, and did answer some of them.

4.. To what extent are you satisfied with the current <u>administrative and operating</u> arrangements (especially in light of the Organizational Review of 2006)?

(Scale: 1 = not at all satisfied   to 5 = totally satisfied)

Board (n = 4) IDRC (n = 2) Staff (n = 2)	score of 1 = 0 responses 2 = 3 3 = 5 4 = 0 5 = 0

Comments?

* Nothing substantial changed since 2006 except for better guidelines. Hope a renewal of mandate could yield more / better resullts

* Org review recommendations have not been implemented

* Little done since 2006

* Secretariat has implemented some improvements; ongoing lack of direction from Board; one Board member took over responsibility for staff liaison

* The organization has not utilized the findings of the OR in 2006

* I can do as much as I am instructed

5. To what extent are you satisfied with the current <u>governance processes and practices</u> (especially in light of the Organizational Review)?

(Scale: 1 = not at all satisfied   to 5 = totally satisfied)

Board (n = 6) average score 2.33	score 1 = 3 responses 2 = 4 3 = 2 4 = 0 5 = 0

Comments?

* Org review recommendations have not been implemented

* Need conflict resolution procedures and procedure to remove destructive Board members

* Little done since 2006

* Decisions following OR were for the most part not followed up. Designated VP has still not made up her mind about whether to accept the position.

* Very little change, if any.

* Many things are not followed through. The obvious contradictions to "CCASLS" are tolerated beyond what is reasonable. CCASLS is forgotten mostly.

PROGRAMMING COLLABORATION

6. Building on the earlier discussion in this workshop, please describe your expectations or hopes for different kinds of programming collaboration among the Area Studies Associations involved in CCASLS..

Comments:

* I believe CAAS will seek out independent bilateral relations with different assocations at different times.

* I am skeptical!

* There are some interesting & potentially fruitful possibilities for collaborative projects e.g. thematic workshops and joint annual conferences

* Defining themes and issues that are central for collaboration; organizing workshops or conferences; searchable databases

* Logistical support for the associational life (membership, admin taskt etc.).

* Research collab on thematic issues/conferences/workshops. Creating capacity to build research teams so there is a strong momentum for important/strategic issues --- impacting on policy.

* Highly dependent of future leadership and spirit of cooperation with the Board and among Associations

* There is an obvious will to collaborate though many solutions offered don't seem very realistic. There is also need for an organization that could take the lead for Area Studies in Canada.

* Leadership on the Board to set forth a 3 - 5 yr strategy with short, med and LT objectives to grow awareness among academinc and larger publics of particular development issues, through a series of ?? activities of info sharing, networking, engagement w other actors and media coverage

* I have no more expectations as I no longer believe that this structure can be made functional.

* (CCASLS staff did not comment)

7. What are the main incentives for programming collaboration among the Area Councils in CCASLS?

Comments

* Not sure - everyone said this is important but what I heard w were impediments to such collaboraton not "independent" reasons for it.

* Two: one is reducing operating costs, the other is a fair number of common research themes that cut across geographical boundaries as well as disciplinary divides.

* Shared intellectual interest is the main incentive, as well as a desire to disseminate our research more broadly

* fulfill IDRC mandate; discuss important issues (to CCASLS) and share more info

* enhanced impact; networking; accessing resources.

* survival of areas studies in Canada

* Canadian content; critical mass to support cross-regional, global development scholarship and student training; efficiency in administration

* structural efficiency; funding; knowledge among membership of the assistacne of CCASLS and its mission.

* Very few inter-association collaboration can take place outside of the Board, assisted logistically by the secretariat.

* academic recognition and grants

(CCASLS staff did not comment)

8. What internal and/or external factors get in the way of more or better programming collaboration?

Comments

* Clearly break down on the Board has sidetracked everyone away from actual aims of CCASLS.

* Poor understanding of CCASLS history and mandate on the part of CCASLS Board.

* Probably lack of time on part of individual Board members. Ideas about collaboration are great but individuals need to work to advance them. I don't know enough about CCASLS itself to judge whether it can play a greater role in facilitating this.

* Lack of oranization; lack of a vision; lack of secretariat or associational cooperation.

* Bigger resources available through other venues (but NOT collaborative, and NOT area-studies oriented. Hence the value and specificity of CCASLS.

* Funding and resources; strong leadership in CCASLS; strong understanding of the CCASLS mandate amonst the Board members and associaitons; voluntary nature of the collaborative activity - the freeloader issue.

* Competency and leadership; funding to support a working, professional administrative office on an ongoiing basis; availability of time and resources for individuals to follow through with program collab.

* Lack of recognition of efforts; many members are already overloaded with work and don't have time for more workshops and conferences; commitment has to be made from Board members, beyond good intentions.

* Lack of leadership within CCASLS (due to the selection system and turnover of Board personnel). Lack of focus and steadfastness. Lack of info diallogue, collaboration or willingness to collaborate with other Canadian actors in development work.

* The current systems in most universities discourage "selfless" collaboration. Academics are motivated to prepare and submit applications for their research than for cross-disciplinary collab.

* Time constraints: importance put on CCASLS, volunteerism, poor consistency in practice and revolving Boards

* Distraction; lack of time; over acceptance / over allowance of dysfunctional association behaviuos and reports (on the part of the board for allowing this, and the associations which continue to do so. Both at fault, but the structure doesn't allow any one person to control situations.

CONTRIBUTION TO CANADIAN DISCOURSE ON INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

9.(a) In your view, <u>what</u> has CCASLS contributed to the Canadian discourse on international development? And <u>how</u> has CCASLS enabled a greater contribution?

Comments

* As CCASLS - nothing. However, to the extent that CCASLS has facilitated the functioning of the individual associations it has made an indirect contribution.

* No

* Not sure - more senior Bd members could have more to say

* Individual members of CCASLS have contributed substantially to the policy development in Canada. An organizational point of view, it has not hd much impact due to a) dysfunctionality of the Board and B) a lack of clarity of the strategic goals amongst Board members and associations

* Support scholarship that addresses a broader framework of "development" and "international development", eg cultural studies, language, symbolic analysis. Support cross-regional collaboration that addresses global issues of development relevance

* CCASLS has contributed much less than it should or could have, save for a few workshops (even tho they were successful). CCASLS has not really enabled a greater contribution except through the membership database.

* To my knowledge, little
* CCASLS per se, nothing

(b)   How might CCASLS further this contribution in future?

Comments

* CCASLS needs to figure out what it is, besides a secretariat.
* Have the Board read the files on CCASLS history and mandate
* Clear vision, a defined schedule of events and activities and a list of themes and issues
* Collaborative work may give more visibility and credibility to the work of CANMES
* There is a great potential - we need to clarify our strategic goals and come up with an understanding that our activites musht have a value added component - impact on … ???
* More regular collaborations, broader engagment with public and government stakeholders
* It could further this contribution with a clear strategy and commitment from the Board
* Refer to my pt. #6 re leadership on the Board - a 5 year strategy, objectives etc.
* I do not see how

10.   On the whole, how would you rate CCASLS' "return on investment" (both human and financial). Use the following scale and circle your answer. Please explain your rating:

1   = the value (return) does not justify the investment of time and money

5   = the value more than justifies the investment

Board (n = 6)	score 1 = 0 # of respondents
IDRC staff (n=2)	2 = 4
Staff did not score	3 = 2
	4 = 0
	5 = 1

Comments on ratings

For scores of 2 --

* Investment of time and money has, in the past, assisted indiv associations to grow and thrive. I'm not convinced this is true any longer. But perhaps instead of CCASLS changing, individual societies should re-thiink their mandates etc.

* Little return on time and money invested

* Little progress has been made since 2006, and there is still a huge waste of time and energy and resources, especially for structural reasons.

* Re a rating of 2 - strategic directions and associations reporting to CCASLS secretariat. Rated a 3 for the unified membership data base and for associaton conferences planning.

Other comments?

* The potential is great! And it has achieved this potential at times, with ups and downs, from what I have understood.

* It is one means of supporting one of a handful of fora that bring together members of the "knowledge community" with interests in development.

* It is difficult to respond to this, as I see a multitude of positive returns from the individual assocations, however, it is just that the sum of its parts seems to be greater than the whole.

* Each association is worth it but CCASLS is completely over-shadowed / lost.

11.   Other thoughts or observations on CCASLS, past, present or future?

Comments

* I think CCASLS served an important purpose a decade or so ago. Either because the structure is inherently one incorporating tensions between the autonomy and individuality of each assocation AND the need of the secretarait to have the associations become more similar to maximize efficiency, OR because the academic /technological environment in which it works has changed - I'm not sure I see a future for CCASLS as such.

* A defined program of activities and more collaboration (associational and secretarial) would make CCASLS a vital and vibrant body.

* Great potential but we need to get our act together.

* Voluntary leaderhip is a constant in ensureing the highest competency or commitment to the implementation of CCASLS' mandate from year to year. Competition from multiple demands on time and effort also affect levels of commitment and performance

* There is a need for an organization that would take charge of area studies in Canada. Could it be, should it be CCASLS?

* Most members of CCASLS appear to work in disciplines (such as history) that are really on the margins of development. And their perspectives are essentially driven by their research interests rather than development needs (supply driven rather than demand driven). Would love to see better academic - CSO/NGO collaboration.

* It seems to have had troubles since its inception.

* I don't think that at this point, without a controlling 'boss' with CCASLS requirements, that the focus of each member association can be shifted enough away from themselves and on to CCASLS to make it worth continuing.

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CCASLS Joint Programming Activities

This list has been compiled from information in annual technical reports from 2002 - 2007 and proposals for funding renewal in 2004 and 2008. It is not a complete list for the earlier years.

1994   *No Borders, New Frontiers,* joint conference in Ottawa

1998   A joint area studies conference in Ottawa

1999 - 2002   With SSHRC funding of $75,000, CCASLS worked on *Globalization and Area Studies: a Research Agenda for the Twenty First Century,* which was a Research Development Initiatives program that planned to sponsor two thematic workshops a year, on a competitive basis, dealing with issues related broadly to globalization.   The workshops took place at universities across the country. Two examples, *A Workshop to Develop a Research Program in Regional Sustainable Development,* at the University of Saskatchewan,[26] and *Creating and Revitalizing Democratic Institutions*, a theme workshop sponsored by CALACs and South Asia Council in 2002, at UBC.

2002   A graduate student research methodology workshop, funded with the SSHRC $75,000 grant.

2003   Joint CAAS and CASA (South Asia Studies Council) at Dalhousie Univerity.

2004   CALACS and CAAS conference with the US African Studies Association at Guelph University, October 2004.

2003 - 2004   Occasional Paper series

2005   *Furthering the Globalization Debate: Cross Regional Comparisons,* CCASLS conference, Montreal, May 2005.

2006   *CCASLS Thematic Workshop on HIV/AIDS* in Montreal, April 2006

ongoing   various projects of area associations to support scholarly institutions in countries of the South

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[26]   IDRC does not have reports on these workshops, and CCASLS Technical Reports to IDRC refer to only two being held. during this time.

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Update on the Operational Review Recommendations

The recommendations of the operational review were reviewed at a workshop with the evaluators on September 15, 2006, then followed up at a Board meeting on September 16. Subsequent Board minutes do not indicate that there was a systematic review of progress against the recommendations although some of the items were being acted upon.

Item #	Action Items per Sept. 2006 Board Meeting ref. 2006 Operational Review report, pp. 28-30	Action Taken to Date (as of Sept. 2008)
	Clarify legal duties and responsibilities of Board members	The consultants, Tyler & Tyler were to provide a revised briefing document. A number of the Board members and staff could not recall whether this was done.
	Look into provision of liability insurance coverage for Board members	Discussed at the May 16, 2007 meeting (cf. Secretariat Report). At the Sept. 15, 2007 Board meeting (Secretariat Report section) the ED looked into this, though there appears to be some confusion about what was being asked for. In the interview with staff, the ED indicated that no insurance was purchased as it was not deemed necessary.
	Re Intellectual Collaboration	
	Create committee to seek funding for initiatives for intellectual collaboration	On Sept. 16, 2006, a sub-committee was struck, charged with setting up the framework and guidelines, and review of applications. The committee met in Sept. 2007 and tabled a set of workshop criteria which the Board accepted.
	Allocate $5,000 from CCASLS for theme workshops	The Sept. 16, 2006 Board meeting approved that $5,000 be allocated to a thematic workshop in the 2006/07 year. The amount was to be drawn from the association grants ($800 from CANMES and $1,400 each from CAAS, CASA and CALACS).
	Seek funding for intellectual collaboration from associations	As part of the discussion at the Sept. 16, 2006 Board meeting, it was also agreed that additional funding might be sought by each of the associations.
	ED to review current staff time allocation & identify efficiencies to free up time for intellectual collaboration activities	The staff reviewed how they allocated their time to various duties. The ED submitted a report on the time allocation of the Office Coordinator at the May 16, 2007 Board meeting, The minutes do not note what, if any, discussion took place nor whether agreement was reached on re-allocation of staff time. During the year 2006-2007, standardizing forms, new software and a reconfigured membership database

Item #	Action Items per Sept. 2006 Board Meeting ref. 2006 Operational Review report, pp. 28-30	Action Taken to Date (as of Sept. 2008)
		resulted in the Secretariat saving time and effort (cf. Sept. 15, 2007 Board meeting minutes - Secretariat Report).
	Allocate staff time to support intellectual collaboration activities	There is no indication whether the freed-up time noted above was re-allocated to collaborative activities.
	Supervision of ED to be insured on behalf of the Board by a designated Board member. The role of this Board liaison person will be to assist the ED in understanding and interpreting Board direction.	At the Sept. 16, 2006 Board meeting, the Board agreed with this recommendation. Chris Youé, Board President agreed to consult Lynn Tyler about the role of such a liaison person. At the May 16, 2007 Board meeting, Yann Roche agreed to serve as Liaison Officer. The Board agreed that the responsibilities of the Liaison Person be noted in the bylaws.
	Service Agreements to be developed between CCASLS and each of the four associations delineating the services to be provided by the Secretariat, and setting out association obligations.	There are no written service agreements between CCASLS and any of the four associations. The ED and representatives of some of the associations (CASA, CAAS) indicate that there is a verbal understanding about the services the Secretariat is to provide. The rationale for service agreements was to make explicit (in writing), the expectations of both parties (CCASLS Board and the associations) to reduce the chance of misunderstanding. They would also allow the Board to address the issue of equity of services provided to the associations.
0	ED's Job Description to be revised accordingly (given service agreements and Board discussion on staff time allocation)	Undertaken by the Board President, but not completed prior to his departure from the CCASLS's Board in the fall of 2007. The task was not picked up by the next President nor by the Liaison Officer. Since the Board had not approved service agreements and had not had a discussion on staff time allocation likely presented an added hurdle in finalizing the job description.
1	Authority Mandate: ED to prepare a draft for review and approval by the Board	The ED did not prepare a draft for the Board's consideration, since service agreements and a revised job description were not available. The 2006 OR recommended that such an authority mandate could be done on interim basis using the current job description.
2	Accountability Measures: ED to be accountable to the Board through 3 main measures: -Secretariat annual work-plan -ED quarterly reports to Board -ED annual performance	These measures were not fully put in place. The ED briefed the Board on current and future activities when presenting a verbal Secretariat report at Board meetings. Regarding the ED performance review, the Sept. 15, 2007 Board meeting established a sub-committee that would be responsible for staff evaluation (composed of Stuart McCook, Paul Sedra and Yann Roche). To date the ED has not had a performance evaluation.

Item #	Action Items per Sept. 2006 Board Meeting ref. 2006 Operational Review report, pp. 28-30	Action Taken to Date (as of Sept. 2008)
	review	

Financial Assessment of CCASLS and Member Associations

1.   Rationale

The evaluators were asked to assess the financial viability of CCASLS. In order to develop a full picture, we have looked at the most recent financial reports of CCASLS along with recent financial statements of the member associations. We have also estimated in-kind contributions to CCASLS based on estimates of Board members' time and the contribution of office space by Concordia University. The reasons for this approach are as follows:

- CCASLS' financial reports are based on the IDRC grant. They are inadequate for assessing viability since they represent only a portion of the resources dedicated to CCASLS work. They cover almost exclusively the costs associated with administrative and governance functions.[27]

- The area studies associations' financial statements provide only a limited picture of their situation because they do not take into account the administrative services that are provided by the CCASLS secretariat. Without such services, some of the current resources of the associations would be diverted to administrative functions.[28]

- IDRC was interested in finding out if CCASLS and member associations were able to leverage revenue from other sources to support their programming activities.[29]

- The estimate of in-kind contributions of time for CCASLS fills out the picture of what the IDRC grant has enabled.

- There is no tradition within CCASLS of sharing financial statements among the area studies associations, nor attempting a broader overview of the council's financial situation.[30] This evaluation is an opportunity to pull together these financial documents.

2.   A Snapshot of CCASLS Financial Situation

The following section presents revenues and expenditures for 2006 for CCASLS and the area studies associations.[31] Three variations of the financial picture are consolidated

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27 75% of IDRC funds are used for secretariat functions and 6% for the Board and governance functions.

28 During interviews, current and past Board members spoke of their concern about their ability to maintain the same level of administrative services and logistical support for association annual conferences, were secretariat support to disappear.

29 The evaluators do not have the financial statements for the associations prior to 2006 so it they have been unable to assess how the financial situation of the associations has changed since 1993.

30 As will be seen from our analysis, some enabling preconditions would be required if the CCASLS Board had wished to adopt such an approach: 1) member associations would be required to share their financial statements; 2) CCASLS would need to adopt the practice of producing financial statements using the same fiscal year as the associations, regardless of its funding arrangements with IDRC; 3) some general agreements on income categories and expenses categories would be required amongst all parties.

below. Each variation on the scenario is captured in two pie charts, one for revenues by source, and the other for expenditure allocations. The first variation, figure 1, includes the basic income and expenses of CCASLS and the Area Associations as they appear in financial reports and statements. The second examines how the picture is modified when a significant joint conference is included. The third looks at the impact of adding in-kind contributions by assigning them a monetary value.

There are several things to consider when assessing CCASLS' viability. On the income side, the issue of revenue diversity and over dependence on any one funder is particularly important. We assume that diverse income sources mean greater resilience and reduced financial vulnerability to funder cuts. On the expenditure side, we look at the ratio of administration costs to program-related costs. Here we assume that an organization would have difficulty securing continued support from its funders and supporters if they are concerned this ratio is too high. The evaluators have not been able to establish what would be an acceptable ratio for this particular sub-sector of the not-for-profit sector. Some of the Board members interviewed were of the opinion that the CCASLS secretariat was costing too much, but this without the benefit of the overall financial picture.

Financial Scenario 1: CCASLS and Area Associations Combined

The first scenario (Figure 1) simply combines the financial information from CCASLS and that of three of its four member associations (i.e. CAAS, CALACS and CASA).[32]

Figure 1:   CCASLS and Area Associations, 2006.
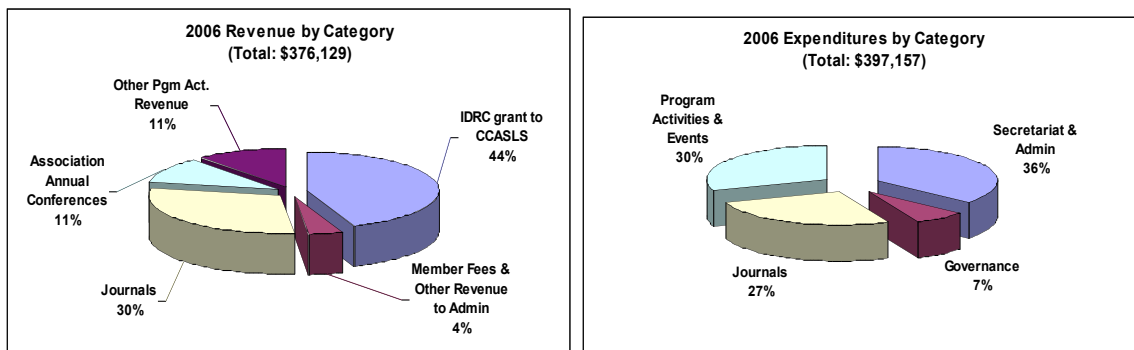
Notes: 1) Revenue for Journals includes the portion of member fees that is allocated to the journal, other revenue such as subscriptions, royalties, etc.

2) Member Fees & Other Revenue to Admin includes the portion of member fees allocated to administration. To this are added other sources of income such as donations, interest, etc.

31   The fiscal year is not the same for CCASLS and the associations. We have used the CCASLS statement for December 7, 2005 to December 7, 2006, and the statements from the associations for April 1, 2006 to March 31, 2007.

32   Since CANMES is not yet incorporated, it has not produced annual financial statements.

3) On the 'expenditure' side, Secretariat and Admin include the costs of the CCASLS Secretariat as well as Association administration costs.

4) Expenditures for Program Activities & Events include all expenses related to association annual conferences, workshops, fellowships, etc.

5) The Total Revenue figure is less than the Total Expenditures figure. This is due to deficits for both CCASLS and one of the associations in the year under consideration.
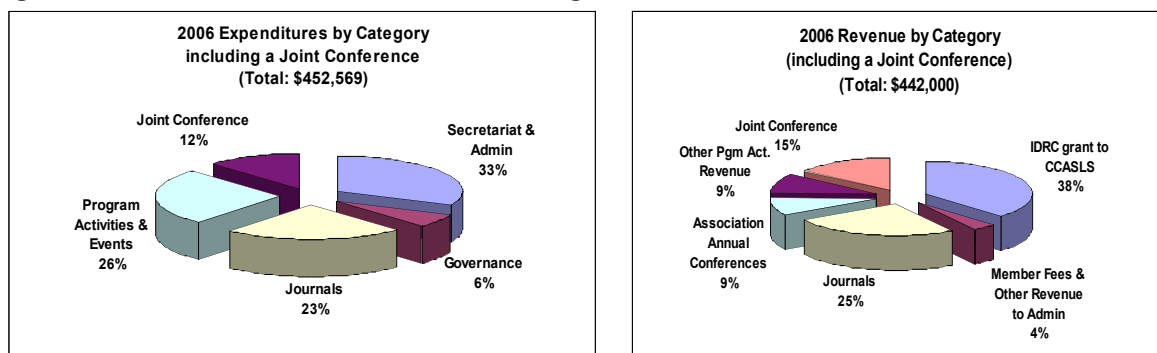
Observations

- Contributions from non-IDRC sources account for more than half of the revenue (56%). However, at 44%, the IDRC contribution is quite significant. Nevertheless, this gives a fairer representation of the overall financial picture and the level of dependence on IDRC funding than looking solely at CCASLS reports.

- It is important to note that some of the revenue is generated by specific associations. For example, the journals of CAAS and CALACS jointly contribute about 30% of the overall revenue. Also, CASA's fellowship fund, financed by the Chiang Ching-Kuo Foundation, accounts for almost all of the 'Other Pgm Act. Revenue', or 11% of the total revenue.

- On the expense side, program-related costs account for more than half of the expenditures (57%), and the administrative costs, at 36%, still considerable.

Financial Scenario 2:   CCASLS and Area Associations with a Joint Conference, 2006.

The preceding scenario does not account for larger joint activities such as the CCASLS conference on globalization in 2005. Scenario 2 examines how the financial picture changes when such a joint activity is included. For the purposes of this exercise, the actual income and expenses figures for the 2005 conference were used in generating the scenario[33].

Figure 2: CCASLS and Area Associations including a JointConference

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32   Note that since the budget for this conference did not come from IDRC's regular contribution to CCASLS, it was not included in the regular financial report to IDRC. The figures were obtained separately from the CCASLS secretariat.

Observations

- CCASLS has raised its own revenue through fees for a larger joint conference. In theory, net conference revenues could offset some CCASLS expenses or go towards additional joint programming.

- IDRC's contribution to overall revenue is reduced to 38% (from 44%), with 62% of revenue coming from other sources.

- Significant revenue is being generated by specific associations, such as CAAS and CALACS for their journals and CASA for a fellowship fund.

- On the expenditure side, administrative costs are reduced to 33% of total costs, and program-related costs account for more than 60% of expenditures.

CCASLS has not organized conferences on an annual basis. Apart from their being a contribution to the mandate, larger conferences could have been a way of improving the overall financial picture by diversifying revenue, reducing dependence on IDRC, and improving the ratio of administration costs to program costs.

Financial Scenario 3: CCASLS/Associations and In-kind Contributions

The final scenario builds on scenario 1 and adds a monetary value for significant in-kind contributions to CCASLS. Two types of in-kind contributions have been calculated for this scenario: office space contributed by Concordia University to CCASLS[34], and the time that individuals, as members of the CCASLS Board, are contributing to the governance and activities of CCASLS.[35]

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33   The figure for the office space of the CCASLS Secretariat at Concordia was obtained from the CCASLS Executive Director: the value of the office space occupied by the secretariat amounts to $4,300/mo.

34   The estimates for in-kind time include only the time contributed by Board members on CCASLS business (including travel time). The estimates were reached by multiplying the number of in-kind hours by the dollar value of the time, assuming an annual salary of $100,000. The information was obtained from the questionnaire administered during the June workshop and from interviews. The allocation of the in-kind contribution on the 'expenditure side' was assigned as follows: 80% of the contribution was allocated to governance, and 20% to program activities, given that much of the CCASLS Board time has been spent on administrative and governance issues. Under different circumstances more time might be allocated to program activities and less to administration and governance.

Figure 3: CCASLS, Area Associations and In-kind Contribution to CCASLS
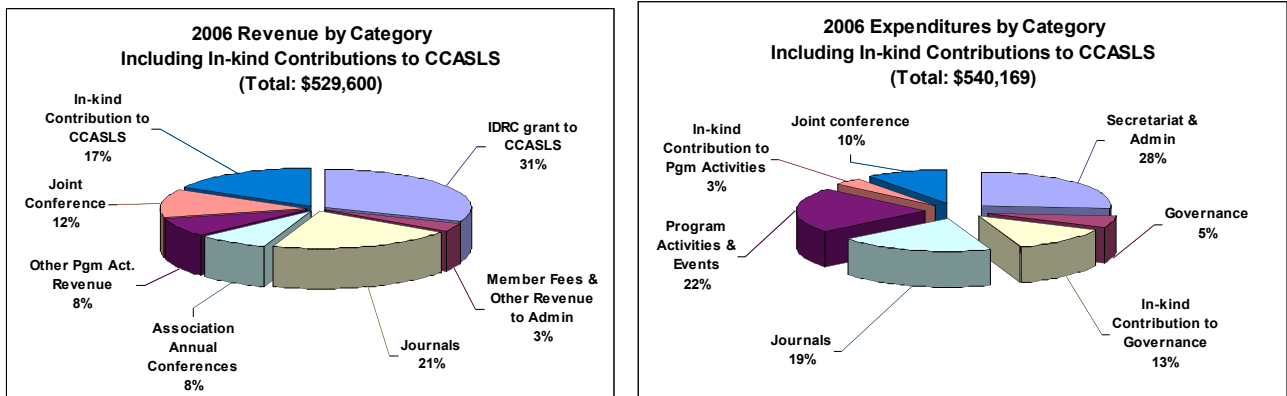
Observations

- The in-kind contributions account for a significant portion (17%) of the overall revenue picture. IDRC's grant accounts for 31%.

- The scenario does not include in-kind contributions to the associations. If in-kind contributions to associations were added[36], the total in-kind contribution would, conservatively, account for over 40% of the revised total. In such a scenario, IDRC's grant would account for less than 25%.

- On the expenditures side, the costs of the 'Secretariat and Admin' amount to 28% of the total. If in-kind contributions to associations were included, this amount would be less than 20%.

- The 'in-kind contribution to governance', at 13% ,is considerable.

    As evaluators we note two very important things from this last scenario:

1) The scenario is an effort to estimate the full range of contributions made possible by the IDRC grant in dollars and in time.

2) On the expense-side, the importance of the 'in-kind contribution to governance' is striking, and is due to the focus of the Board on dealing with administrative and governance matters. Such an investment of time might be viable were more of it dealing with content and program activities. As it is now stands, the focus on administrative matters is a drain and a major disincentive to on-going participation.

3. Financial Reporting

CCASLS does not complete the usual financial statements. It has relied solely on financial reports to IDRC. These reports are incomplete in two ways. They only report on

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35 Based on preliminary information obtained from current and past Board members, their in-kind contribution to their respective associations is, on average, double that being contributed to CCASLS. And this does not account for the time contributed by other members of the association Executives.

the IDRC funds and do not include income and expenses for separate activities (e.g. the May 2005 joint conference on globalization).

Secondly, the financial reports do not include a balance sheet (statement of assets and liabilities), thus making it difficult to track the net financial position of CCASLS over the years. For instance, following the May 2005 joint conference on globalization, CCASLS had incurred a liability of over $40,000 with the Marriot Hotel (related to hotel rooms that had been unused). While the Board was aware of this liability and measures were taken to eliminate the debt over the subsequent years, in no place does this appear in the financial reports. If this liability is discounted, the joint conference generated a net surplus of over $10,000. This amount also does not appear in the financial reports to IDRC. Both these amounts would have appeared in financial statements and would have been the usual way for the Board to ensure its financial oversight of CCASLS.

Complete financial statements, including a balance sheet, would allow the Board to defer expenditures from one year to the next.   In 2006/07, for example, $5,000 had been set aside for collaborative activities. As the year-end approached, these funds were re-allocated. They might have been put into a separate 'collaborative activities' fund and used the following year.