

INTER-OFFICE CORRESPONDENCE

FROM: LCD

DATE: March 19, 1951

TO:

JHW		JHW

COMMENTS:

APR 6 1951

SUBJECT: SSRC

SSRC has now provided us with complete figures on expenditures broken down by major purposes and by RF and other funds. There is also a separate breakdown of special projects expenditures showing the major projects individually.

They have also provided a breakdown of the number of fellowship appointments under each of the programs administered by the Council and a list of names of some of the more widely known recipients of fellowships under the RF-financed program. This latter is intended to aid your memory in selecting some illustrative cases which you may wish to use in your presentation. It was suggested that you might perhaps want to make and illustrate the following two points about the fellowship program:

A. First, a special effort is made to give prospective fellows useful guidance in shaping their programs, often in directions that the candidates have not intended but which turn out to be highly rewarding both to the candidate and to the advance of social science. A few examples of the usefulness of such guidance:

1. Ralph Bunche approached SSRC for a fellowship to permit him to travel about Africa making such observations as he could. The SSRC fellowship adviser interested him in going first to the London School to study anthropological research methods and problems of colonial administration. With this more adequate preparation, he then went to Africa. It is believed that this modification of his original plans made both his visit to Africa and his subsequent career far more fruitful than would otherwise have been the case.
2. Paul Gates, with the strong backing of Fred Merk - who was then chairman of the SSRC Fellowship Committee, applied for a fellowship to permit him to take a year off to gather data for a book on agriculture in Iowa. The SSRC fellowship adviser persuaded him to devote his fellowship period to the study of agricultural economics, rural sociology, taxation, and similar matters, which greatly broadened his capacity for the work he has done subsequently.
3. Just after Ed Hutchinson took his degree under E. B. Wilson, he applied for a fellowship to continue his studies of vital statistics, which was simply more of exactly what he had been doing. The fellowship adviser succeeded in interesting him in broadening his interests and pursuing sociological studies, with the result that his subsequent career has been considerably more fruitful than if he had remained a statistical technician whose interests were confined to narrow studies in vital statistics.

4. The Leightons (Alexander and Dorothea), who had been working in psychiatry under Adolph Meyer at Johns Hopkins, applied for a fellowship to study the Indians in the Southwest. The SSRC fellowship adviser persuaded them to go first to Harvard for a period of work with Kluckhohn on anthropological field methods. The importance of this on the subsequent careers of both is obvious from their publications.
- B. In addition to the active intervention and counseling to modify too-limited plans of fellowship applicants, the SSRC fellowship program in the second place frequently gives encouragement and provides the possibility for plans which applicants themselves have developed but for which they can get no support from traditional departments or institutions. Illustrations of important contributions made by thus enabling applicants to do things that they otherwise couldn't have done include the following:
1. Samuel Stouffer was enabled to study in England with R. A. Fisher, who was developing new important knowledge of the use of small samples in agricultural research. The impact of Stouffer, and through him of small-sampling techniques, in social research has been tremendous.
  2. After the war Louis Guttman was enabled to carry on studies in the new state of Israel, where he has now set up the Israel Institute of Applied Social Research and is carrying on in this new country a vigorous research program having importance for the advance of social science all over the world.
  3. Philip Mosely applied for a fellowship to enable him to visit Rumania and carry out village studies in that country. His own department was distinctly opposed to this aberrant behavior on the part of a historian. By making the visit possible, however, the SSRC made an important contribution to broadening PEM's interests and capacities and to encouraging a broader and more empirical conception of useful historical research.

Finally, SSRC has provided a few suggestions about items from which you may wish to select illustrations of the usefulness of the SSRC program:

- 2005  
SSRC  
General program
- A. Some of the SSRC projects have had fairly direct impact on public policy or governmental activity.
1. The work of the Committee on Government Statistics and Information Services led directly to the establishment of the Central Statistical Board, which has now become the Division of Statistical Standards in the Bureau of the Budget.
  2. The work of the Social Security Committee provided much of the basis for the development of the federal social security program. John Winant has frequently testified to the great importance of the work of this Committee in guiding the development of this program during its early years.
  3. While the Public Administration Committee's capture-and-record studies were in themselves somewhat disappointing to some observers, the experience gained led directly to the government's program of adequate recording and writing up of the histories of national organizations during World War II, and it is generally conceded that this program has been a great advance over anything that has ever happened before.

note: The classification - 3 - of illustrations was off the cuff and obviously would be improved by some shifts.

4. The special agricultural fellowship program was launched at a time when the government suddenly expanded its land grant college funds to include work in agricultural economics and rural sociology and when there were almost no adequately trained people in these fields. The fellows trained under this program are now providing the leadership in these fields.
- B. The SSRC's program has been an effective means of helping along many developments which might otherwise have failed to mature or have been greatly delayed.
1. In the summer of 1940 the SSRC took the initiative in sending Samuel Stouffer and Quinn McNemar to Washington to study what the social sciences needed to be doing about the developing emergency. One direct consequence was that Stouffer was on the spot and available at the moment when General Osborn was ready to have the Research Branch set up in the War Department.
  2. The SSRC's old Industry and Trade Committee did an elaborate job of planning an extensive cost-of-living study, for which no grant was ever secured, but which was eventually taken over almost intact and carried out by the National Resources Planning Board and the Department of Agriculture.
  3. A subcommittee of the Industry and Trade Committee did the early planning which led quite directly to the capital formation and durable goods studies carried out by the National Bureau of Economic Research.
  4. The Committee on Housing Research laid out the tabulations and analyses which were used by the Bureau of the Census in the 1950 census of housing.
  5. The Committee on Census Monographs is providing most of the impetus and the planning which will insure that important monographic studies of the 1950 census are carried out by the Census Bureau and by private investigators.
  6. The Research Plan Bulletin prepared by Dorothy Thomas on migration differentials set the pattern for the collection and analysis of data on migration differentials which have since been used by both the Census Bureau and by nearly all private research in this field.
  7. The Economic History Committee played a role well known to JHW.
  8. The work of another subcommittee of the Industry and Trade Committee laid out the occupational research program of the U.S. Employment Service and both stimulated and guided its preparation of the Dictionary of Occupational Titles.
- C. Perhaps the most important function of the SSRC is the nurturing and dissemination of new ideas in the social sciences. Through the committees of the SSRC scholars with new and unconventional ideas are provided with opportunity to get serious attention and discussion of the new directions in which they wish to move. The SSRC provides respectability and gives impetus to these ideas until they take hold or are superseded through the process of critical discussion and research effort. This is not the sort of thing for which a grant can be made in order to get the job done; it requires long-continuing effort and is a function which should not be permitted to die out.
1. The discussions and activities of the Committee on Personality and Culture from the early 1930's on have played a major role in stimulating many anthropologists to shift from conventional and increasingly barren cataloguing of artifacts and customs to the study of human behavior in different societies and the impact of differences in culture on the development of personality.



2. The SSRC's present efforts to stimulate among political scientists more work on political behavior, instead of the conventional descriptive and comparative studies of governmental organization, may or may not bear fruit. However, this illustrates the kind of effort which is central to the SSRC's program.
3. A similar example is provided by the efforts of the Committee on Economic Growth to stimulate greater attention to the study of the social, political, and economic factors affecting economic development.

The usefulness of the SSRC as a source of education and guidance to foundations, especially the newer ones, is also great - but more difficult to illustrate tactfully. Possibly the preliminary fruits of its efforts with the Markle Foundation could be cited.

Presumably JHW is quite familiar with all of these illustrations, which are mentioned chiefly as aids to his memory. For additional examples or discussion of any of these, DRY, PH, and PW might be consulted by telephone when JHW has made up his mind about the specific information desired.

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