

## Voluntary Contribution Fund Coordinator

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### Goals

The Voluntary Contribution Fund (VCF) provides support for technical activities of members with low income (below \$10,000 per year). The main focus of the fund is to support travel and subsistence costs of researchers presenting their research at conferences in Region 8, which they would not be able to do otherwise due to the lack of finance. The main sources of the fund are additional voluntary contributions declared by IEEE members during the annual renewal of their membership.

Due to the current pandemic related situation, conference travel has largely stopped. The operation of the VCF is therefore currently effectively dormant. The key goal at the moment is to maintain the fund in a stable situation to enable it to swiftly resume normal operation when the situation changes. In order to be able to do this, the fund will aim at maintaining the income stream of at least \$10,000 per year by raising awareness for the fund amongst the membership.

### Historical Trends

Over the course of 2018, the income situation of the VCF has been stabilized with the income from donations in that year totaling \$13,937. This is an increase of roughly 20% over the situation before 2017. This means, that the fund is in the fortunate situation to be able to continue operating at the target budget level of \$10,000 while maintaining and even strengthening its reserves. This in turn will permit compensating future fluctuations of the income stream.

During 2018, a total of 11 payments have been made to grant holders totaling \$6,109. A delayed reimbursement has been completed in January 2019 amounting to \$500. Unfortunately, 3 grants approved totaling \$2,300 were not claimed by their holders as the holders decided to cancel their respective planned conference activities. Therefore, the fund used only 2/3 of its target budget in 2018 with the remaining funds going to its reserves.

In 2019, the income from donations amounted to \$12,572 and a total of 12 grants have been approved, totaling an amount of \$9,100.

The grants approved were granted to members of the sections of Egypt (1), Iran (1), Kenya (2), Nigeria (1), South Africa (1), Tunisia (3) and Ukraine (2) with 9 of the grant holders being male and 2 female. One student member received two grants within the scope of the applicable eligibility criteria.

Unfortunately, only 6 of these grants were actually claimed (of which 2 were delayed claims processed in 2020). Two grant holders withdrew from their grants due to visa issues, four for unknown reasons. As the communication by the grant holders in most of these cases was less than ideal, the corresponding funds were blocked for a substantial time frame and could not be released to other candidates.

### Grant statistics: number of grants awarded, stats by country, age, gender. Comparison with historical data

Since the beginning of 2020, 7 applications have been rejected due to not meeting eligibility requirements. Due to the effective suspension of conference travel, no grants have been approved during the current year.

### Financial status

The donation situation has been reasonably stable in recent years with a positive trend regarding the donations amount each year. Given the current worldwide economic situation induced by the pandemic, it is currently uncertain whether this situation will continue.

The reserves of the fund currently exceed 6 times the pre-pandemic annual target budget of \$10,000 and will likely approach a total of \$70,000 during the upcoming renewal period.

### Future plans

As the resumption of conference travel will depend on the further development of the pandemic situation, it is currently uncertain when the fund can resume regular operation. The fund is open for applications in principal, but it is expected that the number of grants awarded will be very low (if any) until the pandemic situation relaxes.

### Other Issues to report