

The Center for Middle Eastern Studies (CMES) is a lively research and teaching environment at Lund University, Sweden. CMES is one of the more recent institutions at Lund University – inaugurated in 2007 – but rests on a long research tradition dating back to the early days of the university that recognizes the region as an important area of study.

Located in a beautiful villa in the heart of Lund, CMES has expanded rapidly during the nine years of its life. The expansion includes receiving a large grant for the study of “The Middle East in the Contemporary World” in 2009 and the establishment of an international Master of Arts program in Middle Eastern Studies in 2010. These developments have served as a backbone for the CMES’s general development.

Today the CMES engages around 25 scholars and staff and it has established itself as a leading center for the study of the Middle East. In 2015, CMES was evaluated by an international committee of scholars who pointed out the level of excellence in research, education and outreach carried out over the years. The diversity and quality of visiting scholars, research projects, international agreements concerning scholarly and educational exchanges, publications, and the extensive outreach program are important aspects to reaching that level of excellence. Recently, CMES’ staff developed four new research themes that guide our research, which are: (A) Democratization and Social Development, (B) Migration, Multicultural Societies and Minorities, (C) Environment and Sustainable Development and (D) Religion, Processes of Interpretation and Identity Formation. The themes overlap and encourage trans- or inter-disciplinary research. Following these themes, CMES pursues an understanding of the Middle East that is not confined to a geographical area, but is more abstract, fluid and transnational allowing for the study of, for example, cultural expressions of the Middle East in Europe.

Establishing *Nidaba* is an important step for CMES’ efforts to generate both scholarly publications and channels for the dissemination of academic work. As an electronic double-blind peer-reviewed journal our ambition is to create a qualitatively strong platform that is theoretically and methodologically innovative and reflects the interdisciplinary environment at the CMES. I cordially welcome you to the inaugural issue of *Nidaba* and sincerely hope that you enjoy this new and unique journal.

Leif Stenberg

Director of Lund University’s
Center for Middle Eastern Studies

