

# **SASNET**

## Swedish South Asian Studies Network

### **Minutes from the Board meeting, February 3, 2004, 13.00-17.00**

**Venue: House Alfa 1 at Ideon Research Village.**

**Members present:** Boel Billgren, Björn Hettne, Jan.Magnusson, Rajni Hatti Kaul, Catarina Kinnvall, Martin Gansten, Bo Lindblad, Gunnel Cederlöf, Kjell Härenstam, Eva-Maria Hardtmann, Neil Webster, Camilla Orjuela, Jan Essner, Mats Bengtsson, and Birgitta Göranson.

**Others:** Staffan Lindberg and Lars Eklund

#### **1. Election of chairperson, secretary and person to verify the minutes**

Björn Hettne was suggested to chair the meeting, but informed the meeting that he must leave before 16.00.

*Decision:* Björn Hettne was elected to chair the meeting, Lars Eklund to be its secretary, and Jan Magnusson to verify the minutes.

#### **2. Agreement on the agenda. Any other business to be added to the agenda**

As Björn Hettne must leave the meeting early Staffan Lindberg suggested that a deputy chairperson should be elected. The meeting decided to elect Rajni Hatti Kaul to take over the chair in the last part.

The agenda was otherwise agreed upon without additions.

#### **3. Presentation of all members of the Board, old and new.**

The participants of the meeting made an informal presentation round.

**Enclosure 1: SASNET board 2004–2006**

#### **4. SASNET work report for 2003. Staffan Lindberg, Director/Coordinator and Lars Eklund, Deputy Director and Webmaster.**

**1. General report** including a report about the activities and success of some of the Planning Grants.

2. SASNET's financial situation: Financial result 31/12 2003. **Enclosure 2**

3. Internet gateway, Development of new features in the content and technology, continuous upgrading work, etc.

4. Work with the Conference on Swedish Development Studies Research, named "Fattiga och rika. Aktuell utvecklingsforskning och dess villkor i Sverige" which was organised by Sida/SAREC and Lund University on 9–11 January 2003. Several of the projects are related to

South Asia. See SASNET's list of these, most of them accompanied by abstracts.

<http://www.sasnet.lu.se/ukonfpaper.html>

A summary of the organisational and financial discussion has been prepared by SASNET's Staffan Lindberg. See: <http://www.sasnet.lu.se/uconfpanel2.pfd> (in Swedish only).

5. SASNET at the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs' India Seminar, 12 February, 2003 (See <http://www.sasnet.lu.se/forumasia.html>)

6. SASNET at the Indo-Swedish Joint Commission's 14<sup>th</sup> session in New Delhi, 1–2 April, 2003 (See <http://www.sasnet.lu.se/delhireport.html>)

7. Masters programmes at Lund University (See <http://www.ace.lu.se/>) and Uppsala University (See <http://www.afro.uu.se/southasia/index.htm>).

Jan Magnusson reported on the success for the Lund programme, which is currently running its second semester. The South Asia track has attracted 14 students, mostly coming from abroad, especially Pakistan and Bangladesh, and very few from Sweden. In the third semester fieldwork will be carried out in South Asia, and discussions are under way to formalize cooperation with universities and research institutions in India and Sri Lanka. Gunnel Cederlöf reported on the Uppsala programme, which is an interdisciplinary course with emphasis on language studies. It has mostly attracted Swedish students so far. The programme has been extended from three to four semesters. In the last semester the students do an apprenticeship, e.g. at the Swedish Embassy in India.

Camilla Orjuela also reported on the undergraduate programme in development studies that is going on at PADRIGU, Göteborg University.

8. Cooperation with the Centre for East and South-East Asia Studies (ACE), Lund University, the proposed India-China Research Programme; the re-location of SASNET's office in November 2003; and SASNET's guest lectures during 2004.

9. Nordic Centre: Dr. Neelambar Hatti is the new chairman of the new board. New efforts have been made to get it sanctioned by the HRD Ministry in New Delhi (See <http://www.nias.ku.dk/nordindia./default.htm>)

10. Øresund Network of Asian Studies, ØRNAST (See <http://www.sasnet.lu.se/ornast.html>)

11. Undergraduate course at Österlen's folk high school: the second year students have graduated and a third batch is on its way (See <http://www.osterlen.fhsk.se/sydasion/index.htm>)

12. Development of the international Masters programme 'Globalisation and social transformation' based at the Department of Sociology in Lund, Frankfurt, Shanghai, Varanasi, Mumbai, Sofia and Bucarest.

13. SASNET seminars in Stockholm and Uppsala in May, 2003 (for reports, see <http://www.sasnet.lu.se/sthseminar03.pdf> and <http://www.kus.uu.se/aktiv-dev-text.html#ev18>), and in Karlstad and Göteborg in September 2003 (see <http://www.sasnet.lu.se/karlmeet03.html> and <http://www.sasnet.lu.se/followupmeet.html#goteborg>).

14. Work with **NorFA graduate school**, organised by Björn Hettne, Padrigu, and NIAS, Copenhagen. In the end NorFA did not approve the grant proposal. Björn Hettne told about the proposal and the unfortunate rejection in the last round. The planning already done should however not be spoilt, but instead be used to develop

programmes and courses locally at the universities that were involved in the NorfAsia graduate school.

15. Roskilde University Centre's seminar **Religious Mobilisation and Organised Violence in Contemporary South Asia**", 3-4 April 2003, where SASNET took an active part (see <http://www.sasnet.lu.se/conferences.html#reports>).

16. The formation and appointment of SASNET's new board.

17. Indo-European Think Tanks & Networks for research and policy.

18. Guest lectures and cultural events at Lund University (See <http://www.sasnet.lu.se/lundactiv.html>).

19. Publication of Newsletters No. 23 – 34 (See, <http://www.sasnet.lu.se/sasnetf.html>).

20. **Contact journey to Pakistan and Afghanistan in November - December 2003** (see <http://www.sasnet.lu.se/newsletter34.html>). Since Lars Eklund has been ill in January, the publication of a final report has been delayed.

*Discussion:* Gunnel Cederlöf wanted to know why a certain amount had been reserved for the Lund University Masters programme in Asian Studies in SASNET's 2004 budget. Staffan Lindberg explained that during the development of the programme Lund University's Board of Directors gave a special, earmarked grant directly to the Masters Programme. For practical reasons, since the programme did not have an institutional base at this time, the money was paid to SASNET's account. Since all of this money was not spent during 2003 it appears as a budget item in SASNET's 2004 budget. The money, however, does not belong to SASNET but to the Masters Programme.

Boel Billgren commented that the budget could be clearer on this issue, and she also asked for more explicit differentiation in the budget between funds used for root node activities, for SASNET's core work, and for other things.

The meeting approved of her opinion.

## 5. 18th ECMSAS in Lund 2004

Report about the activities so far (See, <http://www.sasnet.lu.se/EASAS18.html>).

49 Panels have been suggested, and selected by the Planning Committee (See <http://www.sasnet.lu.se/panels04.html>).

Budget Enclosure 4.

SASNET's board members were invited to participate in the conference.

Information given on the Keynote speaker: Prof. Dipankar Gupta, JNU, New Delhi. Topic: "Cultural Politics in South Asia - Processes, Causes, and Futures".

Information on the Session on **Poverty and Human Development in South Asia – Challenges Before the State, Market and Civil Society in the Post-modern Era**.

Chairperson: Dr. Alia Ahmed, Key note: Dr. Gita Sen, Bangalore, Dr. Zulfiqar Bhutta, Karachi, and Dr. Ghanshyam Shah, New Delhi. Enclosure 5.

Staffan Lindberg reported on the funding: Mostly bad luck so far: Applications for funding from the Crafoord Foundation and the Asia-Europe Foundation received a negative reply. SEK

150 000 has been given from the Bank of Sweden's Tercentenary Foundation, and also appx. SEK 175 000 from Lund University. We are continuing our efforts, applying to the Nordic Research Councils, Lund University, other European sources, etc.

*Suggestion:* If the 350 000 SEK applied for to the Swedish and the Norwegian Research Council is not granted, and if Sida/SAREC does not grant us any money instead, we suggest that that this amount is taken out of SASNET's Planning Grants fund for 2004.

*Discussion:* There was a general agreement that all efforts must be used to ensure success for the conference. Björn Hettne declared that it is a very important mission for the SASNET network and he therefore supported the suggestion. Bo Lindblad added that no other thing is as important for SASNET than the conference right now.

*Decision:* The meeting decided to give the SASNET director a free hand to ensure that the conference gets sufficient funding. He should do his utmost to secure funding from external funding agencies and Lund University, but if no other option remains money budgeted for planning grants should be used to cover the conference costs.

## **6. New Directions for SASNET?!**

Enclosure 6 SASNET Plans 2003 served as a background to this point

*Suggestion:*

The plan suggests that SASNET continues to work with focused networking, combining personal contacts, meetings, and the development of the Internet gateway. Board members and other partners of SASNET are encouraged to get involved in this work (if working specifically for SASNET, travel costs could, for example, be covered by SASNET's root node).

The main objectives should be to promote existing higher education and research programmes related to South Asia, and to take the initiative to new ones. We should promote more student/teacher/researcher exchange between Sweden and South Asian universities, including the signing of formal MOU's between partners that develop specific exchange and cooperation programmes.

More specifically:

- Improve the Internet gateway with information about news lists, discussion groups, and research in fields that are strong in the Nordic countries.
- Make SASNET's name visible in all possible ways including organising or co-organising events in Stockholm, Copenhagen, Oslo and Helsinki.
- Start new undergraduate and graduate courses related to South Asia.
- Work with the development of PhD programmes including so called Sandwich Programmes, doctoral courses, summer courses, etc.
- Promote the invitation of researchers from South Asia to give guest lectures in Sweden and the other Nordic countries.
- Lobby in the universities for more courses, positions and funds related to South Asian studies, and for the development of South Asia Studies Centres
- Network more with government, public bodies, NGOs and business.
- Make Afghanistan a first priority, and Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka a second priority in root node networking.

Question: Should we give priority to certain research fields in which Swedish researchers are strong? Like, for example,

- Environment and economic development
- Public health
- Peace and conflict research
- Comparative religion
- Politics & ideology
- Education

Or should we give equal attention to all fields in which researchers/teachers are active?

*Discussion:* Staffan Lindberg initiated the discussion asking whether SASNET should just go on with what it is doing, or change its strategies. He suggested that SASNET maybe should prioritise core research fields where Swedish South Asia related researchers are especially strong.

Bo Lindblad commented that there is a tremendous amount of activity going on, as reflected in the work report, and it might be necessary to indicate some priorities. Among such priorities he pointed out:

- Promotion of students and teachers exchange, through the Palme Linnaeus Programme
- Researchers exchange. Spreading information on this to South Asia
- Follow up the projects that receive SASNET planning grants.

Bo Lindblad also emphasized the importance of networking with governments, public bodies, NGO's and business groups.

Björn Hettne cautioned against making priorities in research fields. It is the basic idea of the SASNET network to support everything possible, not only some selected areas.

Neil Webster reacted against the wording about giving first priority to Afghanistan and second priority to some other countries, without even mentioning Nepal. "We should not forget Nepal, because if peace initiatives come it will become a major issue how to rebuild the society, and in these efforts researchers in the SASNET network can play a role."

Neil Webster however stressed that SASNET at present must concentrate on preparing the conference in July. Only after that other activities should be pursued.

Boel Billgren recommended SASNET to pay attention also to younger, undergraduate students in South Asia related studies. She agreed with Bo Lindblad about the importance of the Palme Linnaeus programme, and claimed that it is still not used as much as it could be.

She also informed about the Erasmus Mundus programme that will be first initiated in May 2004. SASNET should advertise this EU programme giving opportunities for European universities to collaborate with universities in a third country, and also bring non-European students to Masters courses at European universities.

Jan Magnusson was positive to SASNET increasing its networking with Afghanistan. He said that it should be a good idea for SASNET to collaborate with the Swedish Committee on Afghanistan, as well as with the resurging universities inside Afghanistan.

Rajni Hatti-Kaul referred to the intense discussions that took place in 2001 on integrating different disciplines, and bringing medicine and technology into SASNET. Such interdisciplinary work is still very much a thing that SASNET should promote.

*Decision:* The meeting decided that SASNET should continue its good work according to the plan, but also focus more on younger students and researchers in the field; promote inter-disciplinarity; and work with all the countries of South Asia.

## 7. The Work Report Series

*Suggestion:* Last year the Board decided to start a work report series, one for medicine and natural sciences, and another for the humanities and social sciences. During the fall of 2003 we have found that there is not enough time for the staff at SASNET's root node to carry out this work properly. An alternative route is to encourage some departments/institutes to undertake this task and to give the project an initial support, approx SEK 100 000 over two years. But in this case the money has to come from the Planning Grant fund, which will then be reduced with about 20%.

*Discussion:* Several critical arguments against starting a work series report were given. Neil Webster argued that it would be quite expensive, and thereby taking resources away from the conference.

Boel Billgren said that it is better for SASNET to make a bibliography on the web, presenting where to find good material on South Asia. Rajni Hatti-Kaul asked specifically for a web page linking with masters theses in Lund, Uppsala etc.

Staffan Lindberg suggested that SASNET might encourage a strong research environment/department to take the responsibility for a work series report.

*Decision:* The meeting decided that SASNET should not start a work series report now.

## 8. Towards a Swedish PhD programme for students from Pakistan?

*Suggestion:* Dr. Attar-ur-Rahman, Chairman of the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan (HEC), has suggested that the Pakistani Government would like to send about 50 students for PhD studies to Sweden per year during the coming 5 years. Pakistan is already involved in such programmes in Germany and Austria. Out of the 50 students going to Sweden, 40 should be in sciences, and ten in other disciplines. Enclosure 7, Pakistan PhD students

*Discussion:* Staffan Lindberg informed about the meeting he and Lars Eklund had with Attar-ur-Rahman in Karachi in December.

Bo Lindblad said he has already been involved in Pakistani-Swedish exchange programmes for the past 30 years, and he will be happy to help with this proposed programme, by contacting possible supervisors, etc.

Rajni Hatti-Kaul also agreed to this.

*Decisions:* SASNET will establish a reference group of up to 10 people, representing different sciences, to help connecting Pakistani PhD students with Swedish supervisors/departments. The Pakistani government should also be informed about how the Swedish selection process for PhD training differs from e.g. the one in Germany, which makes it impossible to guarantee that so many students will be accepted at Swedish universities as Dr. Atta-ur-Rahman hopes.

## 9. Activities planned for 2004:

*Suggestions:*

- Continued work with the 18<sup>th</sup> ECMSAS.
- Consultations with members of SASNET's reference group participating in the 18<sup>th</sup> ECMSAS (Enclosure 8: SASNET Reference Group in South Asia)
- Investigate if it is possible to start more undergraduate courses in South Asian studies at the folk high schools, for example, Ljungskile, Biskops Arnö, and Lidingö. If possible, find suitable academic partners for this work.
- Plan activities for doctoral students during 2005 (a summer school, doctoral courses?).

- Plan a workshop during 2005, but on what topic?

*Discussion:* The success for the undergraduate course at Österlens folk high school in collaboration with the Dept. of Sociology, Lund University, was seen as a model to build similar courses in other parts of the country. Besides the folk high schools mentioned in the suggestion above Birgitta Göransson suggested Hållands folk high school in Jämtland to be a possible collaboration partner with a university in North or Mid-Sweden. Kjell Härenstan also referred to the long-standing collaboration that Karlstad University has had with Geijerskolan in Värmland.

Regarding the proposal for a workshop in 2005 Catarina Kinnvall suggested politics in South Asia as a possible theme, whereas Neil Webster suggested development process and stability. Bo Lindblad proposed that the present Pakistani ambassador to Sweden Mr Shahid Kamal should be a perfect key speaker.

*Decision:* SASNET concentrates its activities during the Spring 2004 to the coming conference. The South Asian reference group should be consulted. SASNET will also actively encourage efforts by other Swedish universities to establish collaboration on undergraduate courses with local folk high schools on the successful model built by Lund University and Österlen folk high school.

In 2005 SASNET should arrange a workshop. The theme for this will be decided upon at the board meeting in August 2004, as well as the forms for its organization. Propositions are welcome.

The NORFA process should go on, even though the application for a Nordic research school was rejected. Ideas and plans should be realized in the form of courses, etc, at local universities.

## **10. SASNET's budget for 2004**

*Suggestion:* Enclosure 9: Budget 2004

*Decision:* The board approved the budget.

## **11. Evaluation of SASNET**

*Suggestion:* SASNET is now in its second Sida-funded three-years project period (2003-2005). It means that Sida will start to evaluate the project from the Fall 2004.

*Discussion:* Staffan Lindberg informed that SASNET's activities have been extensively documented all through the years. He asked if any extra efforts should be done from our side. Mats Bengtsson said that is important to influence the evaluation by offering the necessary input into the reference. Jan Essner added that Staffan at an early stage should enter into a dialogue with the relevant people at Sida/SAREC. He also said that the image of SASNET in the different Swedish universities will be most important for the evaluation.

*Decision:* The SASNET director should start a dialogue with Sida/SAREC at an early stage.

## **12. Date for the next board meeting in August 2004**

*Decision:* Next board meeting to be held Tuesday 24 August, 13–17

**13. Any other business (should be announced at the start of the meeting)**

No other business announced

Lund, 20 February 2004

*...Lars Eklund.....*  
Lars Eklund, secretary

*.....Björn Hettne.....*  
Björn Hettne, chairman

Verified by:

*Jan Magnusson.....*  
Jan Magnusson