

SASNET

Swedish South Asian Studies Network

Minutes from Board meeting 29 August 2006, 13.00-17.00

Venue: Conference room, Centre for East- and Southeast Asian Studies, House Alfa 1, Scheelevägen 15D, Ideon, Lund

Members participant: Björn Hettne, Pamela Price, Jan Essner, Catarina Kinnvall, Bo Lindblad, Rajni Hatti Kaul, Neil Webster and Eva-Maria Hardtman.
Others: Staffan Lindberg and Lars Eklund

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

Björn Hettne was elected to chair the meeting, and Lars Eklund to be the secretary. Rajni Hatti Kaul was elected to verify the minutes.

2. Agenda for the meeting, additional points

Bo Lindblad announced he wanted to present information about training courses on Child Survival, and Leadership in Health Care, at Uppsala University. Included under point 3 E.

3. SASNET work report: Staffan Lindberg and Lars Eklund

Minutes from the previous board meeting 14 February 2006: see [14 February 2006](#). Minutes (pdf-file)

Overall report, work during spring 2006

- a. Report from the 19th European Conference on Modern South Asian Studies, Leiden 26 – 30 June 2006, in which both Staffan Lindberg and Lars Eklund participated. <http://www.sasnet.lu.se/leidenconference2006.html>
- b. Report from the strategy group. Jan Magnusson (absent from the meeting) had informed that no report has been prepared so far. Bo Lindblad suggested that the discussions regarding SASNET's future should be left to the new board and new director, to take over from 2007. He proposed that the new director, to be appointed, should take part in the ongoing work of the Strategy group. Pamela Price added that suggestions from the old board members are most welcome, but could not be binding for the new board.
- c. Five more Newsletters: see, <http://www.sasnet.lu.se/sasnet.html#newsletters>

- d. Financial result for 2006. See **Enclosure 1: SASNET Utfall 2006** (Excel document). Staffan reported that expenses has followed the budget.
- e. Other activities
- NIAS Asian Century Research School is actively working with South Asia. Staffan reported about the researcher training course on Religion, Conflict and Identity in South and South East Asia (organised by Sidsel Hansson and Catarina Kinnvall) that will run in Lund and Copenhagen during October 2006 as part of the this Research school. It will also organise a Nordic conference about "Asian Studies at the Crossroads" in Turku, Finland, 5-9 November.
 - Masters programme in Asian Studies at Lund, oral report by Staffan Lindberg. The programme has settled to an average number of 15-17 new students every year, funding is secured, and the programme will be converted into a full Bologna model Masters programme from 2007.
 - India/South Asia undergraduate 1-year course at Österlen's folk high school, oral report by Staffan Lindberg. The course is still carried out in collaboration with the Dept. of Sociology, Lund University, and is one of several International courses in Tomelilla.
 - Other things. Bo Lindblad informed about the Sida funded training courses on Child Survival, and Leadership in Health Care, to be organised by the Department of Women's and Children's Health at Uppsala University. The courses include studies in Sweden and Bangladesh, and they are supposed to attract researchers on women and child health in Asia.

4. Planning of activities during fall 2006 and the whole period 2006 - 2008

Suggestion: Suggested important additional tasks for 2006:

- Plan an interdisciplinary workshop in 2007, choice of topic, working group, additional finance, etc. One suggestion of topic is: 'Maternal and child health' with about 15 participants from South Asia and Sweden (Nordic countries). Another topic could be 'Water and society', a third: 'Biotechnology and agriculture.'

Discussion: Everybody agreed that SASNET should organise an interdisciplinary workshop in 2007, only the topic was under discussion. Bo Lindblad asked why no specifically South Asian themes had been suggested, and proposed that the workshop instead should be devoted to "The Role of Afghanistan in South Asia". Pamela Price however said that such a topic would be too narrow in a South Asian perspective, and she argued that Biotechnology and Agriculture would be a great theme for a conference, and other speakers like Boel Billgren and Jan Essner strongly supported this idea. Bo Lindblad also agreed, after Staffan had assured him that SASNET already plans for a separate Afghanistan seminar later this year. Staffan also emphasised the importance of a conference dealing not only with biotechnology but also gene technology and GMO. A good setting for the conference, he argued, would therefore be SLU at Ultuna.

Rajni Hatti Kaul proposed that the conference should not relate only to agriculture but also to the field of environment. This caused some discussion, since Neil Webster objected to this inclusion and instead suggested to rephrase the theme "agricultural

development”, whereas Pamela Price wanted to keep environment in. Björn Hettne finally suggested that the final decision should be left to the new board.

Decision: SASNET should organise an interdisciplinary workshop focusing on Biotechnology and Agriculture in 2007.

5. Distribution of Planning and Guest Lecture Programme Grants

Suggestion: See **Enclosure 2**: List of applicants.

Discussion: The evaluation made by the Reference group, consisting of Pamela Price, Neil Webster and Malin Åkerblom, was available at the meeting. At a meeting the same morning, they had selected ten research projects/workshops/guest lecture programmes out of 17 applications. SEK 448 000 were distributed. Staffan Lindberg and Bo Lindblad left the room and did not participate in the board’s discussion of their respective applications.

Decision: The board thanked the reference group for its work, and approved its decisions, as follows:

Networking grant/planning for continued research project:

- Marc Katz, Dept. of Religious Studies, Karlstad University: "The Vitality and Role of 'Sporting Clubs' in the Multi-Cultural Community: A Study of the Traditional Youth Organizations of Banaras." SEK 20 000

Networking grants/planning for new research projects:

- Magnus Holm, Dept. of Cell and Molecular Biology, Göteborg University: "Light regulated development in plants – Translational research in Rape-seed and Rice." SEK 45 000
- Ashok Kumar, Dept. of Biotechnology, Center for Chemistry and Chemical Engineering, Lund University: "Cost-efficient production of therapeutic proteins – a need for bioindustry in developing countries." SEK 55 000 SEK

Grants for a Guest Lecture Programme:

- Göran Djurfeldt and Staffan Lindberg, Dept. of Sociology, Lund University: Invitation of Mr. R. Vidyasagar, Consortium for Interdisciplinary Water Resources Studies, Chennai, India. SEK 20 000
- Christina Grenholm, Center for Gender Studies, Karlstad University: Invitation of Anjoo Upadhyaya, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, India. SEK 20 000
- Sidsel Hansson, Centre for East and Southeast Asian Studies, Lund University: Invitation of Dr. Bidyut Mohanty, Women's Studies Department, Institute of Social Sciences, New Delhi, India. SEK 20 000

- Gunnar Jacks, Dept. Of Land and Water Resources Engineering, Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm: Invitation of Dr. Alagappan Ramanathan, Dept. of Environmental Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India. SEK 20 000
- Bo Nordström, Dept. of Chemical Technology, School of Engineering, Jönköping University: Invitation of Jayant Mahadev Doke, Dept. of Environmental Sciences, University of Pune, India. SEK 20 000

Grants for organising an Interdisciplinary Workshop:

- Bo Lindblad, Division of International Health (IHCAR), Department of Public Health Sciences, Karolinska institutet, Stockholm: "Micronutrient Supplementation to pregnant women in South Asia." SEK 150 000
- Lennart Strömquist, Applied Environmental Impact Assessment; Department of Social and Economic Geography, Uppsala University: "Participatory GIS; a tool for planning of rehabilitation of communities affected by natural disasters." SEK 78 000

6. Date for Planning grants applications during 2007

Suggestion: It is suggested that if more of SASNET's resources are spent on workshops and a guest lecture programme, distribution of planning grants will only take place once a year, and that the deadline for applications is 15 June 2007 and the decision will be taken in August.

Decision: The board decided to change the schedule for SASNET's grants. They will be distributed only once a year, with the next deadline for applications to be 15 June 2007.

7. New Reference group for planning grants, guest lectures, workshops, etc.

Suggestion: The three members of the reference group should be replaced with another three eminent researchers for the period 2007-2009. The ambition is to keep one representative each from Sweden, Denmark and Norway, and at the same time being representative for both the hard and soft sciences. Only one name was however presented before the meeting, Dr. Arild Ruud, University of Oslo.

Discussion: The board was asked to give more suggestions for suitable persons to participate in the reference group.

Decision: The board decided to postpone the decision till the next meeting in January (with the new board).

8. Appointment of the position as director – co-ordinator of SASNET during 2007 – 2009

Suggestion: See **Enclosures 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7** with evaluation and ranking of the applicants, and their qualifications.

The following persons applied for the post:

Associate Professor Rajeev Ahuja, Physics Department, Uppsala University

Assistant Professor Anna Lindberg, Department of History, Penn State University

Associate Professor Anju Saxena, Department of Linguistics, Uppsala University

An Evaluation of the applicants for the post of Director/coordinator for SASNET 2007 – 2009 was prepared by Boel Billgren and Staffan Lindberg. It ends up with an overall evaluation and ranking, as follows:

Our overall assessment is that both Lindberg and Saxena are qualified for the work as Director/Coordinator of SASNET. There is nothing in Ahuja's CV to indicate that he possesses the necessary qualifications for the job.

Saxena has higher academic and pedagogical qualifications than Lindberg, but has also served much longer as academic teacher and researchers.

When it comes to breadth and relevant experiences we think that Lindberg is more qualified than SAXENA. Lindberg has a very broad research agenda, has networked widely in her research, and has intensive and long experience of teaching and supervising undergraduate students at all levels, including supervision in the field in South Asia. Saxena is more narrowly defined through her linguistic research and has very limited experience of interdisciplinary networking.

Lindberg has considerable experience in creating links between the university/academics and other sectors of society through participation in NGO activities and networks in Sweden and in the international field, particularly in India.

Weighing all these factors together we think that Anna Lindberg is the most qualified for the job and therefore suggest that she is appointed for the post as Director/Coordinator from 1 January 2007 to 31 December 2009

Decision: The board decided to recommend the Vice-Chancellor of Lund University to appoint Anna Lindberg as Director/Coordinator for SASNET on a 50 % basis from 1 January 2007 to 31 December 2009.

9. Planning of the Workshop about "The role of South Asia in the internationalisation of higher education in Sweden, 28-29 November 2006 at Karolinska Institutet

Suggestion: See **Enclosure 8**, and <http://www.sasnet.lu.se/workshop06.html>

Discussion: Staffan presented the plans for the conference that is organised by SASNET in collaboration with Karolinska Institutet and the Swedish Institute. The board was enthusiastic about the programme, and gave extra input with suggestions about more people to invite, and other issues to discuss during the conference.

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

None

11. Date for next board meeting

Decision: The next board meeting should be held on Tuesday 30 January 2007

Lund 12 September 2006

Lars Eklund

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Lars Eklund, secretary

Björn Hettne

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Björn Hettne, chairman

Verified by:

Rajni Hatti Kaul

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Rajni Hatti Kaul

Enclosures:

- 1 SASNET Utfall 2006 (Excel document)
- 2 List of applications for Planning Grants
- 3 Evaluation of the applications for the position of Director of SASNET 2007 – 2009
- 4 Lindberg qualifications
- 5 Lindberg Recommendations (Pdf)
- 6 Saxena CV (Pdf)
- 7 Saxena qualifications (PDF)
- 8 SASNET workshop 2006