

SASNET

Swedish South Asian Studies Network

Minutes of Board Meeting, January 27, 2009, 13.15–17.00

Venue: Conference room, The Museum of Sketches – Archive of Public Art (Skissernas museum – Arkiv för dekorativ konst), Finngatan 2, Lund

Members present: Prosun Bhattacharya, Gunnel Cederlöf, Pernille Gooch, Catarina Kinnvall, Bengt Kristiansson, Jan Magnusson, Camilla Orjuela, Ferdinando Sardella and Neil Webster. Root node staff: Anna Lindberg, Lars Eklund, and Stig Toft Madsen

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

Gunnel Cederlöf was elected to chair the meeting, Lars Eklund to be the secretary, and Jan Magnusson to verify the minutes.

2. Agenda for the meeting; additional points

The agenda was approved. One additional point was added, namely, the issue of asking Lund University to compensate SASNET for extra costs for sickness allowances for Anna Lindberg's sick leave in part of 2008. To be discussed under point 13.

3. SASNET work reports for Fall 2008

- a. Minutes from the previous board meeting www.sasnet.lu.se/board0802.pdf
- b. Newsletters: <http://www.sasnet.lu.se/sasnet.html#newsletters>
- c. Other activities in Sweden during Fall 2008 (reports by Anna Lindberg and Lars Eklund)
 - * Seminar with Parul Sharma, CSR Advisor, Group Assurance, Sandvik AB on "A Globalised South Asia and Human Rights", September 10.
 - * Seminar with Radhika Desai, University of Manitoba, on "The Dynamics of Caste, Class and Hindu Nationalism in India". September 19.
 - * SASNET/UPF/MES seminar/panel discussion on Afghanistan.

September 24.

- * Visit by Lars Eklund to Göteborg for 1) participation in Göteborg Book Fair 2008, and 2) meeting at the Nordic School of Public Health (NHV). 25–26 September.
- * Sidsel Hansson represented SASNET at the “India Platform UGent meeting” held at Ghent University, Belgium. October 4.
- * Seminar with Dr. Durre S. Ahmed, Head of Communication & Cultural Studies, National College of Arts, Lahore, on “Human Rights and Women’s Activism in Contemporary Pakistan”. October 7.
- * Sidsel Hansson participated in FOI conference on “Pakistan – Consequences of Deteriorating Security in Afghanistan”, Stockholm October 9–10.
- * Seminar with Prof. Rana P.B. Singh, BHU, Varanasi, on “Indian village: tradition, modernity and change”. October 28.
- * Sidsel Hansson and Lars Eklund participated in seminar on Indo-Swedish research and educational collaboration, organized by the Faculty of Engineering (LTH), Lund University. October 21.
- * SASNET/UPF seminar on political developments in Nepal, with David Ludden, Vijaykant Lal Karna, and Katak Malla. October 23.
- * Visit to SASNET by and discussions on collaboration with Dr. Seteney Shami, Social Science Research Council (SSRC) in New York. December 1.
- * Lars Eklund visited Umeå University. December 10.
<http://www.sasnet.lu.se/umea2008.html>
- * Christer Norström, Stockholm University represented SASNET at the first Sida Science Day held in Stockholm. December 17.

- d. EU-India Mobility Programme (EMECW lot 15). Report by Sidsel Hansson and Anna Lindberg. ([Enclosure 1](#))
At the meeting, Anna added that SASNET’s staff had used approximately three weeks full-time during 2008 working on the EU project.
- e. SASNET Student Forum interactive web pages launched.
Report by Malin Gregersen ([Enclosure 2](#))
The meeting recognized Malin Gregersen for her good work in creating the Student Forum.
- f. Karl Reinhold Haellquist Memorial Collection (KRHMC) web site on Mahatma Gandhi. Report by Erik Svanström ([Enclosure 3](#))
Project leader Jan Magnusson noted that the Gandhi web site will be officially launched in September 2009 in connection with an academic Gandhi seminar that SASNET will organize.
- g. Financial report for 2008 – “utfall” ([Enclosure 4](#))
Lars Eklund explained the results. The Board discussed and approved the economic report after changing the word “loss” to “deficit”.

4. Planning of SASNET activities in 2009

- a. South Asian Reference Group meeting/Subnetwork workshop on “Women and Migration in South Asia – Health and Social Consequences” in Colombo 9–11 February 2009. <http://www.sasnet.lu.se/colombows.html>
Anna Lindberg gave a presentation about the coming workshop and reference group meeting in which both she and Lars will participate. Lars added that he will also visit the Maldives for two days on his way to Sri Lanka, and meet government officials involved in the development of higher education in the Maldives.
Anna will proceed from Sri Lanka to Kerala to take part in discussions about the development of the new Sustainable Kerala Network.
- b. Meetings with strategic institutions and people to secure future activities for SASNET. Anna Lindberg reported on ongoing contacts with the Vice Chancellor of Lund University and representatives of Sida. Meetings will also be held during the spring with representatives of other Swedish universities, VINNOVA, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs etc.
- c. Visits to Swedish universities. Besides those universities involved in strategic discussions with SASNET, the root node staff will also visit other universities. Lars plans to visit Växjö and Jönköping in March.
- d. Nordic Summer University workshop in Copenhagen 13–15 March.
Report by Stig Toft Madsen on the first of six South Asia related NSU workshops that will be held over the next three years.
- e. SASNET conference for young researchers in Falsterbo 17–19 August.
Report by Kristina Myrvold ([Enclosure 5](#))
- f. SASNET seminars in Lund during the Spring 2009.
Report by Stig Toft Madsen.
- g. Paris meeting on EU-India educational collaboration. Lars Eklund and Stig Toft Madsen will represent SASNET at this event on March, 2, 2009.

5. SASNET strategy report

Suggestion: In collaboration with the strategy group formed by SASNET, Anna Lindberg, Lars Eklund and Stig Toft Madsen have compiled a draft plan on the future of SASNET after 2009, when the current funding ends. Based on this draft plan, efforts to seek new funding for SASNET should be carried out during spring 2009. The Board should discuss alternative strategies. ([Enclosure 6](#))

Discussion: This was the main point on the agenda. No decisions were taken by the Board, but the proposals put forward in the draft plan were reflected upon and discussed in detail. Many constructive suggestions were given to the Director and the strategy group for its continued work.

Anna gave a brief presentation of the draft plan and the reactions that have come forward from Sida representatives. Sida has decided to put more focus on so-called actor-based cooperation, including more collaboration between researchers and practitioners. Anna suggests that this should be stressed in SASNET's plan for the future.

Comments from the board included issues such as, for instance, whether the focus on medicine, technology and natural sciences in the draft plan is advisable or not, and also deliberations on the selection of the four suggested nodes (Karolinska Institutet, KTH, Umeå University and Göteborg University).

Catarina Kinnvall pointed out that security issues is an important academic field with a possibility of securing external funding that should be considered as a focus area. Catarina also suggested that SASNET approach NORFA, the Nordic Academy for Advanced Studies run by the Nordic Council of Ministers, for funding.

Neil Webster would like to see more strategy laid out in the plan. The objectives in running SASNET should be made clear, including long, medium and short-term perspectives. The objectives are of fundamental interest for any possible funding agency, and therefore must be prominently indicated. Many others in the Board agreed with him.

Gunnel Cederlöf argued that it is difficult to get funding as long as SASNET continues to take the role of a facilitator. This is a major problem. Most of the funding agencies promote needs-based, applied research, and for that reason clear objectives are necessary. Gunnel advised that the plan for SASNET's future should be divided into two sections: one for external funders, and one for the universities that might be involved.

Bengt Kristiansson supported the idea of focussing on security, in addition to peace and development studies, since this is in line with the foci put forward by the Swedish government. Folke Bernadotte Academy is a possible partner institution. Bengt also suggested that SASNET approach Forum Syd to develop actor-based cooperation, and additional contacts with Brussels/EU to develop collaboration with other European universities.

Camilla Orjuela reported that Göteborg University may not be a partner one should count on to become one of the four suggested nodes as it is presently not very strong in peace and development studies.

Prosun Bhattacharya informed about the development of INSTEC, the parallel Swedish South Asia research network focusing on technology and funded by VINNOVA. A holistic approach is needed to enable SASNET to bring all researchers under one umbrella. He also stressed the need for SASNET to clearly state to the funding agencies what kind of added value it can offer in the form of support to research and education, as well as collaboration in diverse fields including cultural exchange. Finally, he stated that this requires a great deal of lobbying.

Jan Magnusson agreed to the need for intense lobbying, and added that possible private funding should be explored. This alternative was not included in the strategy

draft. It should be investigated whether private business, alumni networks etc. could contribute to SASNET. Lars Eklund informed that SASNET has already been in touch with Ulrika Nilsson, fund raiser at Lund University and discussed this possibility.

Ferdinando Sardella lamented that the humanities do not play any key role in the strategic plan. Cultural gaps are an important feature of today's world, and therefore cultural studies should also be highlighted. There would be a good possibility of securing EU funding for such projects.

Catarina Kinnvall agreed to his idea, and added that business studies is another important field.

Gunnel Cederlöf summarized the discussion and said that there is very little time left in which to decide upon how SASNET should proceed. Funding applications have to be written within a short time. This could be a problem, since Director Anna Lindberg, is still not fully recovered and is still on sick leave, working only on a 25% basis. The Board, therefore, suggested that professional external assistance to write the applications could be an alternative, although the decision in this matter is left to the Director herself.

6. SASNET staff

Information about the staff situation. From December 1, 2008, Anna Lindberg is back in office but working only 25%. During Anna's sick leave, Dr. Sidsel Hansson worked as Acting Director on a 50% basis from 1 April to 30 November 2008. Dr. Stig Toft Madsen has had a temporary position as Assistant Director on a 25% basis during December. Beginning January 1, 2009, his salary will be paid by Lund University (not SASNET)

7. SASNET Gateway

Lars Eklund reported about the ongoing work to improve the Internet Gateway. A partly changed design has been introduced for the front page and main sub-pages. The register of individual Swedish researchers has been moved to a new server in order to facilitate interactive updating. The work has been carried out by Paul Hedberg, LDC System.

Suggestion: The upgrading of the Gateway should continue during 2009. SEK 75 000 should be earmarked in the budget for this purpose. Budget decision to be taken under point 11.

8. SASNET's South Asian Reference group

Suggestion: In February, the members of SASNET's South Asian Reference group

(<http://www.sasnet.lu.se/asiaregggroup.html>) will meet with Anna Lindberg and Lars Eklund in Colombo. SEK 75 000 should be earmarked in the budget to cover the travel expenses for the group members to and from their home countries and Sri Lanka. Budget decision to be taken under point 11.

Due to heavy workload, one of the members of the group, Prof. Zulfiqar Bhutta, Dept. of Paediatrics, Aga Khan University (AKU), Karachi, Pakistan has given notice that he wishes to withdraw from the group immediately. On Prof. Bhutta's recommendation it is suggested that Mr. Mohsin Saeed Khan, a researcher in public health from Rawalpindi, be appointed as his successor in the group. Since 2005, Mr. Khan has been involved in a combined (sandwich) PhD programme with the Division of International Health (IHCAR), Department of Public Health Sciences, Karolinska Institutet, Stockholm. (Mr. Khan's CV, [Enclosure 7](#))

Decision: The board decided to elect Mr. Mohsin Saeed Khan as a member of SASNET's South Asian Reference Group for the year 2009.

9. Karl Reinhold Haellquist Memorial Collection (KRHMC)

Suggestion: Since all work on the Haellquist Collection during 2008 focused on the digitalisation of the Gandhi material, the work of sorting and catalogueing the rest of the donated book collection was postponed. SASNET's board decided at its August 2008 meeting to use part of the earmarked money from the 2008 budget for other purposes, and decided that an equal sum of money, SEK 75 000, should be earmarked for the KRHMC project in the 2009 budget. Presentation by Jan Magnusson. Budget decision to be taken under point 11.

10. Swedish India Business Council (SIBC)

Suggestion: The Director suggests that SASNET continue to be a member of SIBC (annual fee SEK 4 500) in order to receive valuable information, maintain an active dialogue with the business community, and have the possibility of providing opportunities for students in particular.

Decision: The Board decided to continue its membership in SIBC during 2009.

11. Budget for 2009

Suggestion: See [Enclosure 8](#) for the suggested budget, which includes suggestions under points 7, 8 and 9.

Decision: The Board decided to approve the budget for 2009, setting aside an additional sum of money for the development of the Internet Gateway (see point 7),

the South Asian Reference Group meeting in Colombo (see point 8), and the completion of the work with Karl Reinhold Haellquist Memorial Collection (see point 9).

12. Administrative changes at Lund University

Anna Lindberg reported about changes within Lund University that affect SASNET. She also reported about efforts to create an Asia House at Lund University in 2010. Besides SASNET, the Asia House will include the Centre for East and South-East Asian Studies (ACE), the Centre for Middle for Eastern Studies (CME), and the coordination office for the Erasmus Mundus External Cooperation Window (EMECW) Lot 15.

13. Request to Lund University regarding sickness allowance compensation

Suggestion: Since the financial report for 2008 shows a deficit due to the unexpected extra costs SASNET had to bear in paying for part of Anna Lindberg's sickness allowance, it is suggested that SASNET make a formal request to Lund University to seek compensation of this extra cost (SEK 116 000).

Decision: The Board decided to make a formal request to Lund University to compensate SASNET for the extra cost for Anna Lindberg's sickness leave during 2008.

14. Date of next Board Meeting

Decision: The next Board meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 22, 2009

Lund 1 February 2009

Lars Eklund

Lars Eklund, secretary

The minutes have been verified by:

Jan Magnusson

Jan Magnusson

Enclosures:

1. EU-India Mobility Programme
2. Report on SASNET Student Forum
3. Report on KRHMC web site on Mahatma Gandhi
4. 2008 Financial report
5. Report on SASNET conference for young researchers in Falsterbo
6. Proposal for SASNET Strategy Report
7. Mohsin Saeed Khan CV
8. Budget for 2009