

SASNET

Swedish South Asian Studies Network

Minutes of Board Meeting, September 22, 2009, 13.15 – 17.00

Venue: Conference room, 1st floor, Centre for East and South-East Asian Studies, House Alfa 1, Scheelevägen 15D, Ideon Research Park, Lund

Members present: Gunnel Cederlöf, Per Drougge, Pernille Gooch, Catarina Kinnvall, Jan Magnusson, Ferdinando Sardella, and Cecilia Stålsby Lundborg.
Root node staff: Anna Lindberg and Lars Eklund.

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. Intern at SASNET, Mr. Nihat Ulusoy

Mr. Nihat Ulusoy, Masters student at the IMER programme, Malmö University, works as an intern for SASNET during the Fall 2009. The board decided to let him attend today's meeting as an observer.

3. Round of presentation

4. Agenda for the meeting; additional points

The agenda was approved. One additional point was added, as point 6E, a presentation of SASNET's internal evaluation report.

5. Changes in SASNET guidelines and constitution of board

Anna Lindberg reported about the changes in SASNET guidelines and the constitution of the board that the Vice Chancellor, Lund University, decided in May 2009.

PhD candidate Ferdinando Sardella from Gothenburg University is no longer a representative for Swedish PhD students on the board, He is now one of the board's four general representatives of Swedish universities other than Lund University. The same change applies for the deputy board member, Per Drougge, PhD candidate at Stockholm University.

A new board member and a deputy member representing students, especially PhD candidates at Lund University, should be nominated by Lund University Student Unions Association, LUS. The position is still vacant.

(Enclosure 1)

6. SASNET work reports for 2008 and Spring 2009

a) SASNET Work report for 2008, <http://www.sasnet.lu.se/workreport9.html> and Minutes from the board meeting 5 February 2008 (<http://www.sasnet.lu.se/board0901.pdf>).

b) Information about important activities carried out from February to September 2009 (reports by Anna Lindberg and Lars Eklund)

- International workshop on “Women and Migration in South Asia. Health and Social Consequences” in Colombo, Sri Lanka 9–11 February 2009, see <http://www.sasnet.lu.se/colombows.html>
- Nordic conference on South Asian Studies for young scholars in Höllviken 17-19 August 2009, see <http://www.sasnetconference.se/>
- Visit to Lund and Malmö by the new Ambassador of India to Sweden, H.E. Mr. Balkrishna Shetty, May 2009, see <http://www.sasnet.lu.se/ambvisitlund09.html>
- Contact journeys by Lars Eklund to the universities of Jönköping, Växjö, Skövde, and Västerås, see <http://www.sasnet.lu.se/sasnet.html>
- Inauguration of the Mahatma Gandhi Book Collection (part of the Karl Reinhold Haellquist Memorial Collection), 10 September 2009.
- SASNET Seminars, see <http://www.sasnet.lu.se/lundactiv.html>. Including seminars with Daya Thussu, Ravinder Kaur, Walter Andersen, Tabish Khair, David Arnold, and Ishtiaq Ahmed.

c) EU-India Mobility Programmes (EMECW lots 13). Report by Cecilia Stålsby-Lundborg and Anna Lindberg on Programme 1 (administered by Lund University), and by Lars Eklund on Programme 2 (administered by KTH, Stockholm). For 2009, 53 Indian students, researchers and academic staff were selected to come to Lund University, and 20 were selected to come to Karolinska Institutet. The KTH programme will start in 2010.

d) Financial report for January – August 2009 and comments. According to an agreement, Lund University (not SASNET) paid for Anna Lindberg’s salary during the period 1 January – 30 June. It relieves SASNET of a cost of SEK 195 000, thereby compensating for some of the deficit caused by unexpected sick leave costs in the financial result for 2008.

As a result, it has become possible to set aside an additional sum of SEK 95 000 to distribute as planning grants, above the SEK 430 000 in the budget for 2009.

(Enclosure 2)

e) SASNET Internal Evaluation Report. Written by Dr. Stig Toft Madsen, Assistant Director for SASNET during Spring 2009. See <http://www.sasnet.lu.se/evaluation2009.pdf>

7. Planning of SASNET activities September – December 2009

Securing SASNET’s future is the main concern. Therefore, efforts to raise new funding continues. After a hectic period organizing several seminars during September, there will be less focus on this during the remaining year. Lars will

update the website.

8. Distribution of planning, guest lecture, and workshop grants

The Reference group consisting of Jytte Agergaard, Ewa Wäckelgård, and Arild Engelsen Ruud met on 28 August and decided on the distribution of the 2009 SASNET grants. Out of 30 applications, ten projects were recommended for SASNET funding. Total sum to be distributed: SEK 525 000.

(Enclosure 3)

Decision: The board thanked the Reference group for its work, and approved its decisions. The following projects received SASNET grants:

New research planning grants

- Gooch, Pernille, Dept. of Human Ecology, Lund University: “Water, Climate Change, and Rural Livelihoods: Assessing Socio-economic Vulnerability and Potential Adaptive Strategies in Sikkim, India.” SEK 75 000
- Mårtensson, Andreas, Dept. of Public Health Sciences and Dept. of Medicine, Karolinska Institutet, Stockholm: “Molecular Characterization of Plasmodium falciparum malaria in Madhya Pradesh, India: Implications for Rational Use of Anti-malarial Drugs.” SEK 50 000
- Pain, Adam, Dept. of Urban and Rural Development, SLU: “Development of a Rural Development Network between the College of Natural Resources (CNR), Royal University of Bhutan, and the Division of Rural Development, SLU, Uppsala.” SEK 70 000
- Paul, Les & Alström, Sadhna, Dept. of Forest Mycology and Pathology, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Uppsala: “Development of a Collaborative Research Project between Indian and Swedish Researchers towards Sustainable Production of Cocos nucifera.” SEK 70 000
- Routh, Joyanto, Dept. of Geology and Geochemistry, Stockholm University: “High-resolution Holocene Paleoclimate Records in Glacial Lakes from the Northeastern Himalayas in Bhutan.” SEK 75 000

Interdisciplinary workshop grants

- Sauter, William, Dept. of Musicology and Performance Studies, Stockholm University: “Interdisciplinary Approaches to Marginalised Performance Practices in India.” SEK 75 000
- Ubhayasekera, Wimal, MAX-Lab, Lund University: “Introduction to Protein Structures and Homology Modeling.” SEK 50 000

Guest lecture programmes

- Eriksén, Sara, School of Computing, Blekinge Institute of Technology, Ronneby: “Invitation of Aarti Kawlra, Principal Project Officer, Indo-UK Consortium on Advanced Communication Technology, IC&SR Project, Indian Institute of Technology Madras, Chennai, India.” SEK 20 000
- Hydén, Anders, Dept. of Caring Sciences and Social Work, Gävle University: “Invitation of Prabhavati N. Tirmare, College of Social Work, Mumbai University, India.” SEK 20 000
- Pettersson, Margareta, School of Humanities, Växjö University: “Invitation of Somdatta Mandal, Viswa Bharati University, Santiniketan, India.” SEK 20 000

9. The future of SASNET

- a) Report from the strategy group by Anna Lindberg
- b) Report of activities to secure funding by Anna Lindberg
- c) Membership fees
- d) Other possibilities

This was the main point on the agenda. From January 1, 2010, SASNET must find new financial means to compensate for the end of funding from Sida/SAREC, which until now has contributed two-thirds of our budget of SEK 2.4 M. On behalf of the board, a strategy group has worked with this issue since 2008. It produced a document in December 2008, proposing a future organization with sub-nodes at some other universities besides the root node at Lund University. The proposal also assumed that other funding agencies as well as the Ministry of Education would be willing to take over the basic funding responsibility from Sida.

Anna Lindberg reported on the meagre outcome of this proposal. In spite of numerous meetings and telephone calls to different funding agencies, there has been no success in securing the goal thus far. A meeting with representatives of the Ministry of Education is still to be confirmed.

An attempt already being pursued is the conversion of SASNET into a membership organisation, where universities other than Lund University would pay a yearly fee of approximately SEK 50 000 to keep the national network running. A number of universities have already been approached on this matter, and more will be contacted during the fall.

Another possible solution, if the membership model does not work, would be for Lund University, which until now has paid one-third of the budget, takes over the full responsibility for financing SASNET.

Anna also brought up other possibilities, such as getting private funders interested in investing money in SASNET, and accepting an offer from the Embassy of India to fund seminars at different places in Sweden.

Board members reported on interest for the membership model at their respective home universities. Gunnel Cederlöf stated that there is a clear interest from

Uppsala University, but the official response will depend on what individual South Asia-related researchers at the university want. There has to be enough impetus from below to motivate the university to join another South Asia network beside the Nordic Centre in India (NCI) consortium, already based at Uppsala University.

Cecilia Stålsby Lundborg added that at Karolinska Institutet many people are positive towards the idea, but discussions are still ongoing.

Ferdinando Sardella believes that it will be possible to get support for the idea from Gothenburg University.

Jan Magnusson stressed that it is of utmost importance to create a demand for SASNET from below. It is necessary to mobilise colleagues at the universities, as well as students. Lund University should also be reminded about the good PR that the university gets worldwide because of SASNET.

The conclusion reached was that there are several options still open, but it will take some time before any solution may appear. However, time is running out, as Sida funding will end by 31 December. Anna therefore suggested that we should seek a temporary solution for 2010 by cutting the planning grants and asking Lund University to increase its funding of SASNET until we find the solution we are seeking. It will also be possible to apply for grants from such sources as Riksbankens Jubileumsfond.

The board agreed and decided that SASNET should plan for continued national activities during 2010. A follow-up conference to the successful August 2009 conference in Falsterbo should be organised for young Nordic scholars during spring, 2010. Funds should be taken from the economic surplus that should appear in SASNET's financial results for 2009. This should be complemented by grants that will be applied for.

10. New Board for SASNET as of January 2010; Election committee

Because of the unclear situation regarding the status of SASNET after 2009, the board decided not to appoint an election committee. Instead the board decided to ask the Lund University's Vice Chancellor to extend the term of the present board for another 9 months, until 30 September 2010.

11. Any other business

None

12. Extra board meeting

The board decided to schedule an extra meeting during week 50 (7–11 December 2009), with the exact date to be finalised later.

Lund, October 6, 2009

Lars Eklund

.....
Lars Eklund, secretary

Verified by:

Jan Magnusson

.....
Jan Magnusson

Enclosures

1. Changes in SASNET guidelines and constitution of board
2. Financial report for January – August 2009 and comments
3. Planning grants 2009: applicants and decisions