

South Asia Node of APFRN Annual Report 2008

South Asia Node

In 2008 seven applications were received by the Node to fund activities and only six were successful in their applications. Funds were allocated as follows:

\$2,000 to “Ocean of Story: Intercoloniality and Networks of Cultural Exchange around the Indian Ocean”, 5-7 February 2008 (convened by Devleena Ghosh, Murdoch University)

\$1,500 to “Youth Identity and Migration: Culture, Values and Social Correctness”, 21-22 February 2008 (convened by Fethi Mansouri, Deakin University)

\$2,000 to “The Cultural Politics of Disadvantaged Castes in India”, 26-27 June 2008 (convened by Assa Doron, ANU)

\$1,000 to “Workplace Communications Skill and SA postgraduates”, 6-7 November 2008 (convened by Judith Booth, La Trobe)

Note: The grant was later refunded as Judith was unable to carry out the activity due to physical problems.

\$1,500 to “Australia-India Update 2008”, 6-7 November 2008 (convened by Auriol Weigold, Canberra University, and Robin Jeffrey, ANU)

\$2,000 to “Many Modernities: India and Australia”, 11-15 December 2008 (convened by Trevor Hogan, La Trobe)

Reports on the events submitted by the applicants are included.

South Asia Node and the South Asia Research Facility

a) Annual conference

On 2 and 3 October, the South Asia Research Facility (SARF) organised the third of its five annual conferences, focussing on current issues and presenting commissioned research on key topics nominated by AusAID. The 2008 conference, titled *South Asia “Environment & Human Security” Conference*, was held at the National Museum of Australia in Canberra. The conference provided an update on recent major economic and political developments impacting on development issues and focused on the problems and policy challenges faced by South Asia due to global climate change and food price increases. The discussions at the conference provided useful inputs for framing Australian aid policy. This was the best attended conference of this series so far, with around 200 attending on the first day and 100 on the second day. Participants included representatives of foreign governments and international organisations, public servants, Director, Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC); **Govinda Rao**, Director, National Institute of Public Finance and Policy, India; **Mark Rosegrant**, Division Director, International Food Policy Research Institute, Washington DC; **Andreas Schild**, Director General, Integrated Centre for International Mountain Development (ICIMOD); **Kunio Senga**, Director General, South Asia Department, ADB; **Zafar Sobhan**, Assistant Editor, Daily Star, Dhaka, Bangladesh; **Achyut Wagle**, Political Analyst/Journalist, Nepal; **Dushni Weerakoon**, Deputy Director, Institute of Policy Studies, Sri Lanka.

Papers are published on the ARC APFRN website

http://www.sueztosuva.org.au/south_asia/ehs_conference/papers.php

b) Targeted Supplementary Research

SARF also administered a competitive research grant of \$15,000 that was awarded to Griffith University for supplementary research on the theme “*Rising Food Prices: Implications for South Asia*”. A paper based on this research was co-authored by Jayatilleke Bandaralage and Saroja Selvanathan, and presented at the October conference

by Jayatilleke Bandaralage. It is available on the conference website:

http://www.sueztosuva.org.au/south_asia/ehs_conference/papers.php

c) PhD Scholarship Program

The seven AusAid funded PhD students made good progress in their studies in 2008. Some of them have completed their scheduled fieldwork while others have made significant progress. The seven students are as follows:

1. Aishath Azza, Curtin University – fieldwork in progress
2. Ajay Ranjan Singh, Monash University – fieldwork completed
3. Deepa Dhital, La Trobe University – fieldwork completed
4. Jay Ram Adhikari, Murdoch University – fieldwork completed
5. Kamala Gurung, James Cook University – fieldwork in progress
6. Venkatachalam Thiruppugazh, ANU – fieldwork completed