Regional Workshop on the Evaluation of the Asia-Pacific Information Network in Social Sciences (APINESS)

30 August – 1 September 1999
Bangkok, Thailand

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PART I

REPORT OF THE MEETING

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Unesco Regional Unit for the Social and Human Sciences in Asia and the Pacific (RUSHSAP) organised a meeting of representatives of countries participating in the Asia Pacific Information Network in Social Sciences (APINESS). The meeting was called to discuss the evaluation of APINESS carried out in 1997 and recorded in the report entitled 'Evaluation of the APINESS 1986-1996', to discuss its recommendations and to discuss the future of APINESS.

The meeting was held at the Unesco Principal Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok, 30th August to 1st September 1999. Participants attending the meeting were representatives of the National Contact Points (NCPs) for APINESS from the following countries: Bangladesh, People's Republic of China, India, Indonesia, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Russian Federation, Samoa, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam. A number of observers attended the meeting as well and details of participants are to be found in Appendix 3.

This report presents the proceedings of that meeting as well as the final decisions that were taken in relation to APINESS's future.

Rationale and objectives of the meeting

At the meeting of the Regional Advisory Group of APINESS held in Bangkok in December 1994, agreement was reached to carry out an evaluation of the APINESS network. At that meeting a draft document was circulated which outlined the proposed form the evaluation would take and, after some modification – the most significant of which was to use a qualitative, discursive evaluation process based on contributions by individual member countries rather than to rely on a questionnaire – the proposal was adopted. The proposal required that the evaluation be 'critical' and 'factual'.

In 1997 a number of member countries were approached to participate in the evaluation. In the event, the following countries took up the invitation to prepare evaluations of APINESS based on their experience at the national and regional level: Bangladesh, People's Republic of China, India, Indonesia, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand. A consultant was engaged to write a consolidated evaluation of APINESS based on these country evaluations and other materials.

The evaluation was carried out and completed in 1997 and the report of the exercise was published in the document titled 'Evaluation of the APINESS 1986-1996'. The consolidated report (see Appendix 2) made a number of recommendations including the following:

> **"That UNESCO RUSHSAP organise a fifth meeting of the Regional Advisory Group of APINESS to discuss the recommendations of this APINESS evaluation report and to develop a programme of action in the light of the decisions arrived at the meeting". (pg. 25)**

This is the report of the meeting that gives effect to this recommendation.

The opening session

The meeting was inaugurated by Dr. Malama Meleisea, Regional Adviser for Social and Human Sciences in Asia and Pacific. He gave the apologies of Dr. Victor Ordonez, Director of UNESCO PROAP who was unable to attend and open the meeting as he was engaged elsewhere.

In his introductory remarks Dr. Meleisea pointed out that the original factors that had led to the creation of APINESS still existed: (a) The importance of social science information – to development processes, to policy making, to education and so on; and (b) the fact that the region served by APINESS had the largest population in the world and one characterised by a large discrepancy between the information rich and the information poor.

Dr. Meleisea highlighted the importance of the meeting for the future of APINESS. He pointed out that the evaluation report had outlined a number of different scenarios or options for the future of APINESS including one which would see it disbanded. This last option was one not to be entered into lightly though it remained an option. On the other hand any other option developed and agreed upon in the light of the discussions over the next few days should also not be entered into lightly either but should (a) be based on frank, critical and honest discussion of APINESS and (b) should be subject to a review of its activities at the end of 6 months.

He pointed out the budgetary constraints that the social science activities of Unesco worked under and the importance of ensuring that whatever resources were used were used wisely. He then declared the meeting open.

Under the leadership of the Regional Adviser the meeting unanimously elected the following Officer Bearers:

Chairperson:	Dr. K. G. Tyagi (India)
Vice-Chairperson:	Dr. Virginia A. Miralao (Philippines)
Rapporteur:	Dr. John A. Evans (Papua New Guinea)

After the election, Dr. Tyagi took the chair and made an acceptance speech. In his remarks Dr. Tyagi welcomed the fact that the position of Regional Adviser for the Social and Human Sciences had been filled after a gap of a number of years. He pointed out how the social sciences were the Cinderella sciences and the fact that they received a tiny fraction of the total budget of Unesco and that even from this tiny fraction a still smaller fraction was devoted to the social sciences in this vast and populous region of the world. This in spite of the fact that it was almost universally recognised that the solutions to the problems facing the world – and in particular to those facing this region – were not to be found simply at the scientific and technological levels but most crucially at the social level. He said we should all decide to pursue the goal of a greater proportion of funding for the social sciences more vigorously.

Dr. Tyagi pointed out that he had been associated with APINESS almost since its inception and he remembered well the efforts and energies that went into its conception. He was pleased to see that the evaluation had been funded and undertaken and welcomed the report. Regular evaluation of APINESS was necessary, perhaps every 5 years or so. He disagreed with the option of discontinuing APINESS. APINESS should change to meet the challenges of the 21st century. He congratulated the consultant, Mr Henry Barnard, on an excellent report. With those remarks he invited Mr Barnard to present his report.

CHAPTER 2: PRESENTATION OF EVALUATION

Mr Barnard presented his report in five parts.

Presentation

Introduction

Mr Barnard pointed out that in the field of science, a hierarchy exists with the natural sciences placed above the social sciences. Even within the social sciences there was an internal hierarchy ranging from disciplines like economics and psychology at the top and others like Sociology and disciplinary areas like Women's Studies and Development Studies at the bottom. But right at the bottom of all of these were those who worked to support the social sciences. Social scientists showed a grievous lack of attention to the basic infrastructure that underpinned social science itself. In this respect they had a lot to learn from the natural sciences who demonstrated a strong commitment to this infrastructure. This pointed to the need to support activities like APINESS which were small steps towards rectifying this situation. Social Scientists had many opportunities to engage with each other about the things that concerned them. APINESS was one of the few opportunities for those who worked to support the work of social science to communicate and engage with each other in relation to their particular and different concerns.

Key features of evaluation report

Prehistory and history

The major sources for the consolidated evaluation were the country evaluations and a careful review of the reports emerging from the various regional meetings of APINESS. In carrying out the review Mr Barnard said he had focussed on being factual and critical. Some of the country evaluations had failed to be as critical as they could have been.

APINESS's prehistory in the era of the exponential growth of social science documentation and the advent of the computer was outlined. In relation to its actual history, it was important to remember that APINESS was the child of AASSREC and RUSHSAP and that ASTINFO (the network concerned with Information in Science and Technology) was its elder sibling. It was pointed out that, at the time of its inception, ASTINFO was seen as providing the model for APINESS; that is, APINESS was seen as a vehicle to try and do for the social sciences what was being done successfully for the sciences and technology. However, this member of the family was quickly abandoned by the others and left to fend for itself, with the only significant support coming from RUSHSAP. This may well have been as a result of APINESS trying to become independent too soon.

To understand the development, and the attendant problems, of APINESS it was important to pay particular attention to the report of the inaugural meeting and subsequent reports of meetings of the Regional Advisory Group. It is clear that a great deal of attention was paid over the whole period to structural issues; that is, to issues concerned with the framework of APINESS.

The inaugural meeting spelt out a structure which saw each country appointing National Contact Points, National Advisory Groups, and national networks of Participating Centres. This set of institutions and roles would themselves be the nodes of the larger regional network.

The record of success on the part of member countries in meeting the basic structural requirements was very mixed. Some countries (India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Thailand) were very successful, others failed (Australia, New Zealand, Philippines). Success or failure should not be treated as a source of guilt. This was not a judgement and no 'blame' was implied. It was just a statement of fact. It was also important to note that success or otherwise did not coincide with the traditional division of countries into 'information rich' as opposed to 'information poor'. In fact, it would appear that here the traditional division was working almost strictly in reverse.

'Framework' or 'structural' issues bedevilled APINESS throughout its history. Each biennium a lot good ideas for activities were put forward but were wrecked on the lack of development of the basic national APINESS infrastructures. Those countries that were successful in implementing the framework model were those who were able to make use of preexisting structures. "Those who could implement the framework did, those who couldn't didn't". Reference was made to the table on page 12 of the consolidated report (see below).

At this point, the chairperson, Dr. Tyagi intervened to remind participants that the APINESS framework was never meant to duplicate existing structures and that the use of existing bodies was encouraged. Mr Barnard agreed but pointed out that it was precisely those countries who could make use of preexisting structures who were most successful. Dr. Tyagi disagreed and pointed out some countries (Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Papua New Guinea) who had in fact responded by initiating and establishing new structures. Mr Barnard conceded that this was true but still argued that this was easier for some countries than for others and that this was possibly partly a function of the degree of government involvement in support for the social sciences *per se* in different countries.

The Evaluation

The Evaluation itself was carried out using two different questions: (1) Whether the original objectives were reasonable and (2) given these objectives, whether they had been achieved. The short answer to both was 'No'. The problem of structural issues had already been highlighted in the discussion of the history of the project.

It was also important to note that another feature of the reports of the meetings of that period was the constant resort to exhortation for funds. A constant refrain from the various meetings was the call for Unesco to fund this or that. There was a somewhat unreal quality about these exhortations. It was quite clear that these funds were never going to be forthcoming and yet ideas were constantly promulgated which required extensive funding. No attention was given to who would take the initiative to secure the funds or where they were realistically going to come from. In other words a lot of thought was put into conceiving good ideas that APINESS should engage in but none at all on where the resources to carry them out were to come from, except for the somewhat plaintive call that they *should* be available.

If one looked at the action programmes developed at the different meetings outlined on pages 18-21 (in itself a summary of some 30 pages of action programmes from the various reports)

one can see a host of good ideas but none that was implemented in any significant way. Even such a simple activity as setting up an elist for APINESS was a failure. It was established and members subscribed to it but it was never seriously used.

The only exception to this sad story was the production of the APINESS newsletter. India was to be congratulated for its work in this regard. But one could learn about APINESS's problems from this partial success. The work was all India's: contributions from other member countries were desultory, intermittent and not very useful.

The conclusion from this was that APINESS had some serious problems. The issues that gave it life in the first place remained but the question is whether the present structures were the best for its future.

Recommendation

Scenario 1

In the light of this evaluation Mr Barnard developed two scenarios for the future. The first would see APINESS reinvigorated on the same framework and principles as before. In order to do this there would have to be a greater focus on fighting for resources. This scenario would only work if these resources were forthcoming. Without them APINESS would continue to suffer from the same problems as it had suffered from up to now. However, in voicing this scenario, Mr Barnard said he remained extremely sceptical about whether the energy required to implement this scenario was available.

Scenario 2

In the light of his pessimistic conclusions about Scenario 1 he had developed a scenario which would focus on the positive outcomes.

Rationale

The rationale for this scenario was as follows

1. In arriving at his recommendations, Mr Barnard said he asked himself the question: Is there something going on in APINESS which justifies its existence? The short answer to this is 'Yes' and it is quite simple to state:

   - Every two years each member country is "forced" to take stock of the state of the art of the development of its social science information infrastructure.

   - Every two years social science information professionals were brought together to discuss the problems facing them in their respective countries. The exchange of perspectives on their respective infrastructures and ideas arising out of this exchange in these meetings was good in itself.

2. Social Science needs to support the development of infrastructural capacity. APINESS is one of the very few projects which encourages this.

3. It is easy to destroy (the option to disband), but much harder to create.

Process and structure

1. RUSHSAP, as secretariat of APINESS, would write to Unesco National Commissions or designated nominee National Contact Points (NCP), once every two to three years to invite them to convene a forum of specialists working in the social science information and data infrastructure field. It may be the case that some member countries already have such forums or councils, in which case it will not be a difficult task. In other cases it may be necessary for the NCP to take a more proactive role to convene such a forum. The invitation would include a suggestion that National Commission or nominee consult with the local representative of AASSREC.

2. Each participating institution in this national forum would produce a report about its own work: its place in the social science field, its resources, networks belonged to, activities, etc.

3. At the national forum delegates would speak about their institutional reports.

4. Forum would elect a delegate to (a) write a country report based on the deliberations of the forum and (b) attend APINESS regional meeting.

5. APINESS Regional meeting:

   - Plenary session: Presentation of national reports
   - Evaluation Workshop: 2-3 members per country would review the country report of each member country
   - Plenary session: Presentation of evaluations
   - Workshop/Demonstration session on some key issue of concern to social science information professionals

6. Publication and distribution of individual country reports.

Outcomes

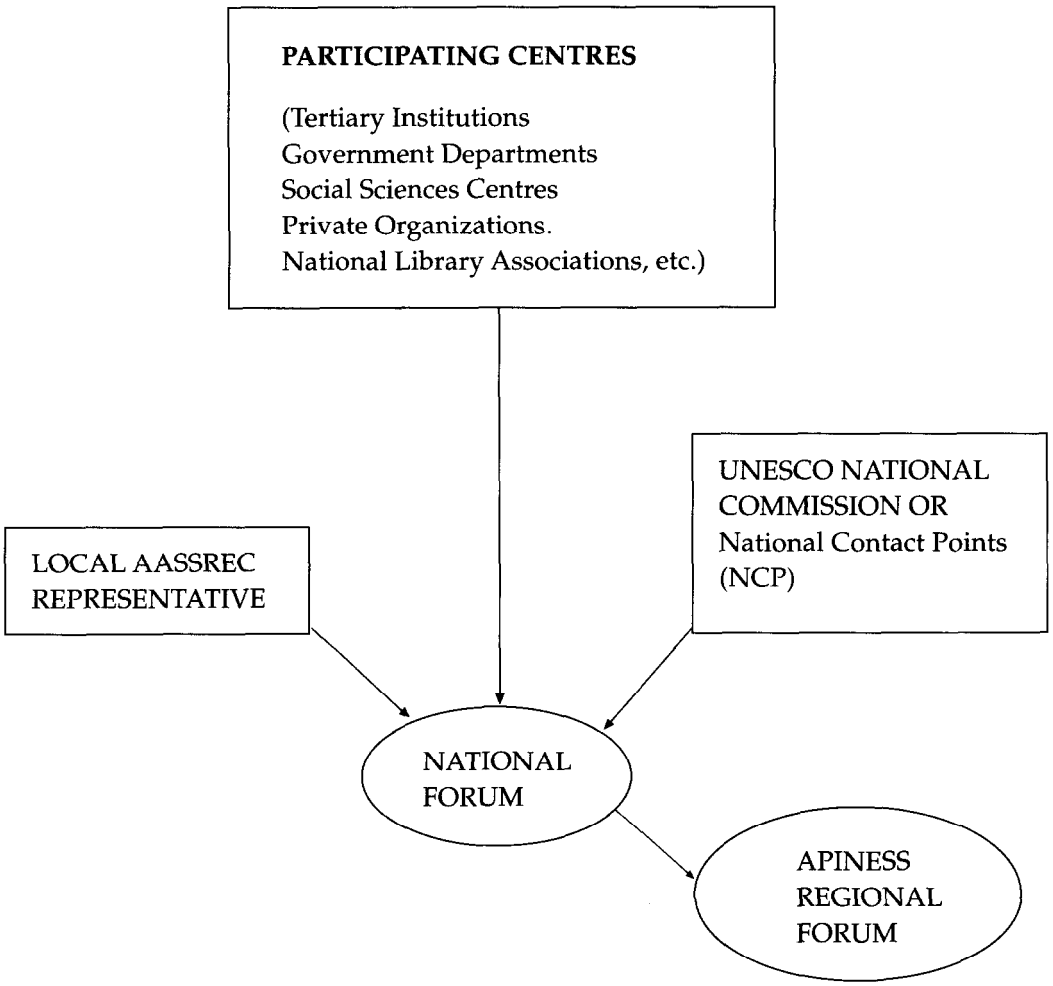
National Level

Each country would have a comprehensive and detailed account of its own social science infrastructure with a critical review by experts in the field. These reports could be used in the following ways:

1. As a resource for all interested in social science.

2. As a basis for negotiating with decision makers about improvements to infrastructure both at the level of single institutions and at the national level.

3. National Forums themselves will be catalysts for networking.



Regional Level

1. Country reports from other countries could be used as models for member countries and raising of possibilities for infrastructural development at the national level.

2. Source of information for social scientists.

Global Level

Regular source of information for the update of various databases (e.g. Unesco DARE database).

Advantages over the present structure

1. This option gives APINESS a sharper focus, therefore making it easier to achieve.

2. Does not require additional resources other than those already committed.

3. Is not reliant on absolute continuity of participation.

Other Scenarios

Mr Barnard closed the presentation by a brief discussion of two other options.

Option 3: An Internet Based APINESS

A number of member countries had mentioned the possibility of developing an Internet based APINESS. Mr Barnard felt that this could easily be incorporated into the option outlined above. In fact, the process itself would provide considerable materials for an Internet website for APINESS.

An elist for APINESS had been established in 1994 but had been unsuccessful as a medium for communication. However, this may well have been simply a historical situation and it may be well worth trying again.

Website creation was easy; the major problem is maintenance. If APINESS created a website it was important to ensure that it was updated.

Option 4: Discontinuance

The final option was that of closing APINESS. Given that resources in the social sciences were scarce it was important to ensure that such resources were used to good effect. In other words, it was important to develop an effective and realistic future for APINESS otherwise this was an option that would have to remain a possibility. It was imperative therefore that we use the opportunity offered by the meeting to develop such a future.

Discussion

Dr. Tyagi opened the discussion by saying that one of the crucial issues that needed to be addressed in the process of creating a new future for APINESS was to ask the question: What did individual member countries expect from APINESS? He asked Mr Barnard what New Zealand expected from APINESS?

Mr Barnard, speaking as the New Zealand representative, said that in an ideal world he would like to have a well developed social science information structure for New Zealand but that this was unrealistic. All that New Zealand could reasonably expect from a network like APINESS was an opportunity for it to reflect on the development of its infrastructure and for this to be subject to review. At the regional level, APINESS would be a source of information about developments in other countries.

The Bangladeshi representative said it was important that forums should consist of information professionals and not bureaucrats.

The issue of language was also raised. This was a problem not just across countries and regions but within national boundaries. To this should be added the indigenous nature of social science knowledge. It was important for countries to have access to knowledge about themselves.

It was generally agreed that the original issues that APINESS had been created to address still remained – the issues of information-isolation and infrastructural development.

CHAPTER 3: COUNTRY RESPONSES TO EVALUATION REPORT AND PRESENTATION

BANGLADESH

1. Introduction:

It is well recognized that social science research and the resulting information play a critical role in the socio-economics status and development of any country. Bangladesh is no exception to this. All concerned need an appropriate and fast information support to deliver the desired output effectively. This is only possible if information needs could be assessed and met properly.

2. Social Science Research in Bangladesh: A Broad Overview

Social science research is now firmly established in Bangladesh in the academic world, in the Government and the public sector and in the private sector.

There have been quite a few significant policy oriented researches that made wide spread impact. The most outstanding example is research on what is now known as Comilla Approach, Grameen Bank approach to alleviating mass poverty through earning activities for the rural poor, BRAC formulated mass literacy and health care programme for the rural poor and so on. Economic research carried out on a sustained basis at BIDS, have been largely analytical and policy oriented right from the inception of the institute. Bangladesh Bureau Statistics and National Institute of Population Research and Training are also progressively acquiring capabilities of policy oriented and applicable social research.

But due to lack of coordinating mechanism, most of these works are disjointed and lacking policy focus or social relevance.

3. Social Science Research Capabilities in the Country

The diverse social science research capabilities currently available in the country can be grouped in the following broad categories:

1) Academic bodies like universities and affiliated Research/Training Institutes;

2) Institutions of innovative social research like the newly founded Open University and distance learning;

3) Government organizations concerned with social research and training such as the Planning Commission, BBS and NIPORT;

4) Autonomous research institution like BIDS, BPATC, NIPORT, NIPSOM etc.;

5) Large numbers of NGO's such as Grameen Bank, BRAC;

6) International research institutes located in Bangladesh such as ICDDR'B, CIRDAP, IJO;

7) Private Chambers of Commerce and Industry and Associations along Private individuals is also doing a good number of social science research as consultants researchers.

4. The Future Trend in Social Science Research

It is quite difficult to assume future trend of Social Science Research in Bangladesh. However the following key trends will give us an idea about the future trend of Social Science Research in Bangladesh.

1) Development of social science research-particularly its methodologies and techniques will be increasingly influenced by the development of information technology;

2) Use of statistical and qualitative packages will be universal and will make social science methodologies standardized and easy to apply;

3) Dominance of operational policy research particularly Gos and project or programme oriented research will increase, compared to academic and theoretical research; and

4) Need for co-ordination of social science research activities will intensify with a view to channelize and promote social research towards socially priority areas.

5. Organizational Structure and Co-ordination of the Network

Considering the economic value of the information network, specially after the WSSD, Beijing and the Earth Summit, the central role of libraries and information services need to be given high priority, with their importance as sources of information for development by the Government and non-Government agents.

Integration and co-ordination of the resources and services of those isolated to a common pool by all possible co-operative methods should be considered.

To achieve this formulation of a separate social science information policy at the national level and establishment or reactivate information network and machinery is essential. Such network would be administer at international and regional level by the UN agency like UNESCO/UNDP and at the national level by the concern government.

6. Some Problems Relating to Introduction of APINESS

a. *Financial Problem*

Adequate financial provision would be needed to support the programme. This can be arranged by the national government or international organization.

b. *Collection and Use of Information Resources*

To better serve the information users, systematic listing of articles and research reports pertaining to social problems should be made.

Acquisition of documents in specialized fields need to be coordinated among different libraries to avoid duplication of materials, to acquire maximum number of documents with minimum financial resources and to ensure that at least one copy of each document is available in any of the component libraries.

For the purpose, the local libraries and information centres should be given responsibility to collect relevant literature and information for the local users.

The national co-ordination centre may, on the other hand, be responsible for building up collection, which have not been adequately covered by the local libraries and information centres.

A reliable and up-to-date union catalogue of periodicals and active co-operation among the libraries are too essential factors that are needed to be made for maximization of the use of existing resources of the country.

c. *Manpower Development*

There is a lack of trained and skilled manpower, this is particularly so in the specialized information service work. It is mainly due to the lack of training facilities within the country. This may be due to the relative regency of demand of trained personnel.

Adequate facilities should be developed at the national co-ordination centre to conduct refresher and specialized training courses for information service personnel to keep them informed of latest developments in information science and technology.

d. *Applications of New Information Technology*

In the present-day world, application of computers and videodiscs to library information services has brought about landmark changes. The theme of library automation is still relatively new in libraries and information centres of Bangladesh. Modern information technologies are yet to be introduced in most library activities and services in the country. Experiences show that such technologies are easy to adopt and manage.

It is an appropriate time to think whether we should carry on with the traditional concept of librarianship or orient ourselves to new information technologies and train our manpower in the use of electronic devices for providing improved information services.

7. APINESS Activities in Bangladesh

On 9th March 1987, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Ministry of Education, Bangladesh National Commission for UNESCO established a National Advisory Group (NAG) consisting of 9 (nine) members under the able guidance of National Professor M. Shamsul Haque and Joint Secretary, Planning Division also the Director of BSSRC as Chairman and Member-Secretary respectively. Bangladesh Social Science Research Council (BSSRC) also assigned with the responsibilities to act as National Focal Point (NFP) of APINESS activities in Bangladesh. As per decision of the NAG meeting the number of NAG members were increased from 9 to 24 members. At this stage BSSRC also established a formal internal network with 50 organizations, institutions which are independently and simultaneously engaged in producing, using, preserving and disseminating social science data and information in the country.

Important Decisions of NAG and their Implementation Stage

Decisions of the NAG	*Implementation Stage*
BSSRC will undertake necessary action to hold a national seminar on Social Science Information and Documentation Process, as soon as possible.	Seminar entailed "Social Science Information and Documentation Process and their Utilization in Bangladesh" was held on 12–13 October 1989.
BSSRC will initiate suitable efforts to formulate a national policy on social science research.	Drafted and waiting for the approval of the competent authority.
BSSRC will take proper action in order to formulate a "Documentation Centre Act".	Step not yet taken.
BSSRC will disseminate information regarding, preparation of the "National Register of Social Scientists".	Proper step has been taken and BSSRC collected information from 1,200 social scientists.
BSSRC will regularly publish national bibliography.	BSSRC published about 4 national annotated bibliography.
The competent authority will be requested to initiate appropriate steps so that the libraries of the country can increase their working hours from 8 A.M. to 10.00 P.M.	Proper action has been taken.
BSSRC will develop an Internal Network with the social science research organization in the country taking a contact person from each organization.	Proper action has been taken and presently there are about 50 members in this internal network.
BSSRC will initiate a regular training programme for the skill development engaged data perservation and dissemination work.	BSSRC conducted several training programme

According to the decision of the first NAG meeting a Seminar entailed "Social Science Information and Documentation Process and their Utilization in Bangladesh" was held on 12-13 October 1989. The major recommendations of this seminar were identical with the decisions of the NAG meetings. Other recommendations of this seminar, which were not identical with the NAG meetings and their implementation stage are as follows:

Recommendations	*Implementation Stage*
In order to facilitate collection, storage and dissemination of social science information and data and also to ensure an effective functioning of Social Science Information Network a Network a National Documentation Centre should be set up under the auspices of the SSRC.	The Documentation Centre already been established.
The Documentation Centre should establish and maintain a suitable linkage with other centres engaged in similar and related work.	A internal network with 50 organizations has been established to perform this duty.
In co-operation with concerned institution an interlibrary loan system along with a union catalogue should be introduced.	Steps have been taken.
A phased programme for introduction of information technology including computerization in Bangladesh should be adopted without delay with a view to facilitating speedy access to information and literature on social sciences.	Steps have been taken.
National Social Science Libraries should be properly equipped with books and journals and appropriately organized.	Steps have been taken.

It may be mentioned here that from the inception of BSSRC as national co-ordination body of the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, this council has been engaged in similar activities. So, with the establishment of APINESS network in Bangladesh, the activities of the council got more momentum. For the last eight years, this council with the help of the APINESS member in Bangladesh performed a number of activities.

8. Recommendations

In the light of the above we recommend that:

1) There is an urgent need for promotion and development of a social sciences information network at regional as well as international levels;

2) APINESS activities may be strengthened in the regional as well as national level;

3) A special fund in this endeavour may be raised;

4) NAG meeting may be held at least twice in a year;

5) APINESS newsletter may be published on regular basis;

6) Research work on contemporary problem may be concluded jointly with other member countries; and

7) Seminar/Symposium/Workshop/Training Programme may be organized by RAG on current issues.

Elaboration and Discussion

The Bangladeshi representative called for a strengthening of APINESS and argued the case for regular meetings at the national and regional level. APINESS had been 'sick' for the last five years, however, it had played a crucial part in the development of the social science infrastructure in Bangladesh. In addition he suggested that we should be trying to link in with international networks.

It was pointed out that the Bangladesh story was a very good for showing the catalytic role that APINESS can play in the development of infrastructure. There was some discussion of the relative roles of the Regional Adviser and APINESS in this catalytic role.

CHINA

Generally speaking, there is a large gap between the goal that APINESS made thirteen years ago when it was set up and the gains that it has achieved up to now. However the role that APINESS has played in promoting the development of social science information networks in Asia and the Pacific region should not be completely neglected.

At first, the fact of the establishment and existence of APINESS has shown that the social science information network and the information services in this region has received considerable support not only from international community but also from APINESS member countries. From the evaluation reports many countries submitted we could see most member countries given APINESS a positive evaluation and hope APINESS continue to exist.

Secondly, the aim to break information isolation among countries in the region, was, and remains, a common expectation that the member countries have comparing with Europe and American, the difficulties and obstacles we need to overcome in information sharing are much numerous while the significance is more obvious in the region. So we still need an international organization like APINESS to organize and coordinate the activities at the regional level.

Thirdly, the rapid development of information technologies such as the Internet is widening the gap between information rich and information poor in the world. Considering the unbalance of economic development and diversity of information infrastructure in the region, APINESS still has very important role could play.

At the same time, from the evaluation reports we know that APINESS should be improved or transformed in many aspects in order to more actively play its role in promoting the development of social science information networks in the region and better meet the expectations from its member countries.

1. Activities and programmes that APINESS carries out should be more practical. We should place more efforts on implementing the programmes rather than just making decision.

2. The resalts of conferences held every two years should be improved. Every conference should have a main theme that should to be discussed by participants and examined based on the decisions made in the previous conference. Besides, APINESS conference should be held in different countries so that the influence of this organization could be increased. And APINESS should hold more seminars and workshops independently or cooperatively.

3. *APINESS Newsletter*'s role in exchange of information is very weak due to its long circle of publication (two issues per year) and short of contents. So we should increase the number of issues per year or replace it with other forms such as e-journal through the Internet.

4. The role and function of NAGs and NCPs should be strengthened. Any good decision or programme should be implemented through NAGs and NCPs of the member countries. So the achievements of APINESS in a large extension depends on efforts

of NAGs and NCPs. The current performances of NAGs and NCPs in some member countries however are not satisfactory.

5. Considering the significance of increasing APINESS activities, more financial support from UNESCO is necessary.

Now Information technology (IT), especially the Internet, is playing an increasingly important role in the political, economic and social life in the world. The literature on the advantages of the Internet in information services is increasingly growing. The Internet could be seen as a vital communications tool particularly suitable for the building of an information service networks like APINESS. So the impacts of the Internet on APINESS should be carefully studied.

As we have known, many national and international academic institutions use the Internet as an effective tool for information service and many national and international information networks based on the Internet have been established in the world, and in China, for example. In fact, as early as ten years ago, some NCPs of member countries started to use e-mail to communicate with each other. We should consider how to effectively use the Internet in APINESS's activities.

Elaboration and Discussion

China welcomed the opportunity for evaluation. The original problems that led to APINESS still exist. The internet was widening the gap between the information rich and the information poor especially in the Asia Pacific region.

In the discussion session a number of additional points were made. India said the absence of a newsletter over the recent period was as a result of a lack of funding. An internet publication may be a problem because of lack of internet connectivity.

The question raised whether there was in fact a demand for exchange of information. Is it the case that there is a large unmet need for transnational flows of information? Usually where there is a real need the people who have it find a way to filling it and it is not obvious that APINESS would meet these needs. Is the use of concepts like 'information-isolation' (in the social science context) rhetoric? What does it actually mean? Indonesia said that problems of information exchange within countries could be far more important. In China, the demand for exchange of information with Asia and the Pacific countries is relatively less than that with Western countries due to the relatively weak position of social science research in the world. The lack of English publications and the use of local languages in social sciences in social science publications is another reason for lower exchange of information within the region.

INDIA

Elaboration and Discussion

India made the following points:

- APINESS has made a contribution to the region. Activities have been engaged in which would not have otherwise been done e.g. the Korean conference, the Bangladesh developments, and activities in India and Sri Lanka.
- APINESS was known worldwide.
- The problem of financial resources has been perpetual. It is a shame that social science gets such a low priority and we should all commit to fighting this.
- National Advisory Groups (NAGs) were never meant to replace existing bodies but to supplement them.
- We should try and encourage bilateral relations.
- We should try and encourage Unesco to provide as much support for APINESS's for ASTINFO.
- Suggested a survey of supply/demand for social science information in member countries.
- We need to give more attention to marketing. We should be more proactive and energetic in pursuit of funding.
- There is a need for training in the creation of websites.
- There should be a website for APINESS which should have a rich content.
- In a resource scarce environment networking is the only way forward.

In the ensuing discussion members were asked to ensure that their National Commissions pursue the resolution passed at the last Regional National Commission meeting to ask for a greater allocation for the social sciences at the next General Conference.

INDONESIA

Report

President Soeharto relinquished his power to his Vice President Habibie on May 21, 1998 and thus ends the New Order to be replaced by the Reformation Order. Everything have been changing after that date: the economy is plunging down to the near bottom: millions of people living under the poverty line; massive unemployment; food shortages; the rise in crimes and other social breakdown; widespread corruption; separation flourishing in Aceh, Irian Jaya (West-Papua) and East Timor; racial violence and ethnic conflicts occurring in several regions; and human rights violations are not decreasing. There is still a hope that the new forthcoming democratic elected government (the new president would be selected by the end of 1999) would overcome the problems.

These problems need social science analysis but what happened to the social science research, social science information and social science information network? Though a number of social scientists (especially political scientists) are now becoming prominent and their advises are sought of, but the government cuts the expenditures for research and even more cuts for social science research programmes and library acquisitions, while at the same time the value of rupiah is decreasing. To survive we have to rely more on the Internet and the social science information network resources for information. For us it is likely that APINESS will be essential.

KOREA

Until 1970 social science research in Korea was mostly conducted by unviersities. In the 1970s, the government was aware of the needs of research for policy formulation to develop the nation. The needs for the research and capable researchers in the field of social sciences were on the rising. Consequently, the government began to establish independent research institutes in the field of social sciences. More than ten social sciences related research institutes were founded by the government during the 1970s and 1980s. It is certain that their research has contributed to the development of the nation. It is also true that such research institutes have played an important role in the advancement of social sciences.

In the 1980s, a group of research institutes in the private sector were established by the large business group. The main role of the group was to provide research findings and recommendations for business groups and government to improve policies and develop strategies. In short, since the 1970s, most of the research in the field of social sciences has been conducted through these research institutes.

In the 1990s, it was necessary to develop more efficient structure for supporting information exchange in the field of social sciences. Librarians of six research institutes assembled and discussed how they could cooperate to help researchers in the field of social sciences. Finally, they decided to form a cooperation group to make action plan. Basically, the establishment of KOSSIC was resulted from this Group in cooperation with the Korean National Commission for UNESCO.

KOSSIC Activites: Information cooperation initiatives in the field of social sciences

Korean Social Science Information Council (KOSSIC) is an informal, non profit, and non-governmental organization founded in 1990. Its major function is to promote the exchange and cooperation of information in the field of social sciences among the research libraries. At present, KOSSIC includes 43 member libraries at government-funded research institutes or ones of large business group compared with 24 which initially joined in 1990.

Korean involvement in the APINESS project began with establishment of KOSSIC. In the early 1990s, APINESS prompted the Republic of Korea to organize a seminar of directors of research libraries. The Korean National Commission for UNESCO in cooperation with research libraries founded KOSSIC in January 1990 to strengthen the cooperation between various libraries and information centres in the field of social sciences.

KOSSIC had been designated as a national contact point for APINESS. KOSSIC has been served as a centre for promoting cooperation and exchange information and sharing resources in the field of social sciences.

In last nine years since its establishment, there has been considerable growth of social science information in Korea resulting from the activities by KOSSIC. The growth can be measured by increasing number of the member institutes of KOSSIC, the number of seminars, workshops, meetings and conferences held for professional development of librarians and the number of materials loaned through interlibrary loan and the volume of KOSSIC publications.

In terms of KOSSIC activities, it had carried out numerous essential activities during the nine years as follows:

- Establishing an interlibrary loan system,
- Organizing and holding annual seminar or workshop, (The total of ten seminars and workshops have been held to expand the exchange of information and to seek the ways of promoting cooperation in the field of social sciences)
- Establishing of web-based social science information network,
- Being seeking ways to provide services of photocopying of journals among members of KOSSIC,
- Building database of journal holdings for the purpose of resources sharing.

The activities of KOSSIC have been successfully implemented during the last nine years. The major factors resulting in the success of KOSSIC, is the awareness of needs of cooperation among the member institutes, actively participating in KOSSIC' cooperation initiatives, strong leadership of KOSSIC's presidents and director generals directing towards making benefits for social science researchers and the financial supports of the Korean National Commission for UNESCO for KOSSIC during the first a few years after its establishment. Now KOSSIC is rigorously active and is implementing project of building database of journal holdings for providing services of photocopying of journals among member institutes for resource sharing. KOSSIC is planning to link its system to national on-line shared cataloguing system carried out by Korea & Education Research Information Service (KERIS) which enable libraries to reduce cataguing cost and avoid duplication of purchasing and pursue ILL.

However, it is very regrettable that in the last nine years, activities of APINESS in relation which KOSSIC has not been activated in Korea. So as long as APINESS activities continue, we are trying to strengthen the cooperation with APINESS for mutual information exchanges and cooperation the years ahead.

Development of Information Infrastructures

In the 1990s, remarkable changes have been made in terms of information technology in Korea. Among them, the National Information Infrastructure (NII) project has been undertaken by the Korean government for building the information society. The objectives of NII are to provide multimedia and advanced value added services to the public, in offices and at homes. NII has also made high-speed internet access and electronic document delivery possible. Within the NII framework, libraries could have the opportunities to make use of high speed networking for the information cooperation and exchange and electronic document delivery.

Internet use and internet site is now expanding year by year. Future advanced technological networks will undoubtedly evolve towards integrated services utilizing high speed digital architectures.

Building Database

Research information database has been developed in the early 1990s. Research information database development project has started in three areas. The first is to develop Research Information System. The second is to link university libraries to networking system. The third is to establish National Digital Library. The research information system has been developed and managed by Korea Education & Research Information Service (KERIS). KERIS's primary function is to provide research information to the researchers in universities, research institute through networked system. For example, KERIS makes site license with oversea journals so as to share within the nation. KERIS intends to extend the opportunities to access quality information.

For establishing National Digital Library, KERIS, the National Library and Korea Research Development Information Centre have worked together since 1997. The system is expected to support digitalizing library, sharing information database. In Korea, about 55 per cent of the materials of all the libraries have been input into the database. We all see a great deal of opportunity in the cooperation of information by using the information infrastructure.

Some Suggestions

Today, we are here to review the major role of APINESS and how to implement various strategies cooperatively a future vision of APINESS. In this regard, the following four important areas in which we should pay attention:

According to this report, the general evaluation of APINESS as well as evaluation by each member countries, said APINESS failed to achieve its objectives. The participant of Korea agrees with this. Then what is the reason for the failure. Now we all have to answer this question to be successful for the APINESS' future.

There are a few factors which made APINESS not successful.

The first, APINESS had spent too much time for discussion and suggestions to decide the framework and method without practical activities producing benefits for social science researchers.

The second, there has been information services activities carried by documentation centre such as building database, information delivery service. This makes us confused. There may be a duplication of function between documentation centre and APINESS. There is a need to identify what it can be.

The third, lack of leadership caused the failure. APINESS should have exercised the strong leadership in the practical activities. So, for APINESS to be successful, the Korean participant suggested the following.

The first, we need to redefine objectives of APINESS toward focusing on the benefits produced by cooperation of information activities of APINESS.

The second, we need to simplify the framework and specify the method of activities. In terms of structure, the two systems such as NCP, NAG are not necessary. That can be an obstacle to carry out our goal.

The third, we need to make use of more advanced information technology as a method of cooperation and exchange of information. That can be downloading from the web page, e-mail reference service, e-mail documentation delivery service. So we need to develop web page of APINESS on the UNESCO PROAP's web. We are in the digital age. Internet use is expanding year by year. This method will intensify the cooperation and exchange of information.

The fourth, we need to strengthen the leadership role of APINESS. We need also NCP's strong leadership. Without strong leadership APINESS cannot be successful.

Producing benefits to social science researchers is an ultimate goal for activities of APINESS. Producing benefits for social science researchers has to be the objective of APINESS. So to achieve that objective, we need to simplify the structure for cooperation of information. We need to specify the activities. We need to make use of advanced information technology for exchange of information. And we need also strong leadership.

At first, we agreed with the Scenario 2 of the recommendations of APINESS evaluation report. But in this report, the suggestions are mixed combining scenario 1 and scenario 2.

MALAYSIA

Report

Introduction

Malaysia has a population of about 21 million. The result of the nation-wide survey on *"Reading Habits Among Malaysians"* conducted in 1996 shows that the literacy rate of Malaysian is 93 per cent. Malaysian strive to achieve literacy rate of 100 per cent by 2010. Publishing industries in Malaysia is still developing. From the 1998 statistics of publications received under the *Deposit of Library Materials Act, 1986*, about 6,600 titles (5,820 prints and 780 non-printed materials) were received by the National Library of Malaysia. Recognizing the importance of information technology in shaping the competitive edge of the nation, the government of Malaysia has introduced various IT-related programs and projects. The Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) with its 7 flagships (*electronic government, smart schools, telemedicine, multimedia R&D, borderless manufacturing, e-commerce* and *smart card*) is designed to transform the country toward a digital nation. The education system is changing, integrating IT in learning and teaching. All these developments have major impact on the Malaysian society. Hence, APINESS program in Malaysia shall take into consideration the fast pace of social and economic changes of the society.

1. APINESS in Malaysia and UNESCO Project

APINESS was introduced in Malaysia in 1986. The Socio-Economic Research Unit (SERU) of the Prime Minister's Department was the secretariat for APINESS in Malaysia. In 1992, SERU was dissolved and its functions were abounded into various agencies. The National Library of Malaysia has been designated as the APINESS National Contact Points, and the Director of the Development Division has been appointed as the Liaison Officer.

Research on social sciences are conducted in various institutions, such as:

(a) **Universities**. PERPUN (Conference of University Libraries and National Library) has compile *"A database on Union list of thesis produced by universities"*;

(b) **Research Institutions**. Planning and Research Division of the Ministry of Education; Women Affairs Division (HAWA) of the Ministry Unity and the Community Development; Youth Division of the Ministry of Sport and Youth; Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS), Economic Planning Unit, Statistic Department, National Population and Family Development Board, Malaysia.

JARING (Joint Advanced Research Integrated Networking) was introduce in 1987 and JARINGAN ILMU (Knowledge Network) was launched in 1994. JARING facilitates creation of web-sites and linkages among institutions related to social sciences. Web-sites of institutions related to social science is attached. However, the problem is that most of these web-sites are ephemeral in nature.

Document Delivery System was formalized in 1988 which facilitates resource sharing among major institutions/libraries in Malaysia. Currently 334 institutions and libraries have registered as members of the *Sistem Pembekalan Penerbitan* (Document Delivery system). In 1994, online

Document Delivery Request System was introduced. However, for those institutions/libraries that do not have computer facility, requests are made using special interlibrary loan forms.

2. Issues in Social Science Research

(a) Lack of bibliographical control on social science research publications;

(b) Dispersal of social science research publications kept by different institutions;

(c) No permanent staff for documentation of social science research for most institutions;

(d) Lack of funding for research and publications on social science research;

(e) Lack of co-ordination among social science related institutions.

3. Future Development

(a) Continuous funding by UNESCO for training and building databases related to social science;

(b) Train personnel and encourage institutions related to social science to use IT, create web-sites and databases, and develop hyperlinks with relevant web-sites;

(c) Conduct a regional survey on social science institutions with a view towards compilation of *A directory of social science institutions in the region;*

(d) Creation of listserve for APINESS members, and at national level listserve any social science related agencies.

Elaboration and Discussion

Malaysia has about 12 per cent access to computers. The IT programme may bring about improvements in social science work.

Malaysia has constructed one of the most hyperlinked sites in the region. It is involved in the 'Memory of the World' project and is embarked on a digitisation programme in collaboration with other countries.

Malaysia endorsed the idea of conducting a survey of supply and demand of social science information.

NEW ZEALAND

Report

Response to Consolidated Evaluation

New Zealand endorses the adoption of the second set of recommendations (Scenario 2: Transformation and simplification of the objectives of APINESS). It is the set of recommendations that will allow the continued participation of New Zealand in the project. The first set of recommendations would require New Zealand to withdraw from the project. The rationale for this position is outlined below.

New Zealand does not have the kind of social science information infrastructure which would allow it to participate in any meaningful way with the recommendations outlined in 'Scenario 1'. In the last decade and a half there has been even greater fragmentation and atomisation of the infrastructure that serves the social science community in New Zealand. This has been as a consequence of a number of developments.

At the time APINESS was conceived in the early 1980s the direction in which New Zealand was going looked promising in terms of the possibility of developing an internal national social science information infrastructure. The erstwhile Social Science Research Funding Committee had established and begun to develop significant databases that would have been at the core of such a network. Furthermore, simply by its very existence it provided a focus for the national social science community and through its very functioning had begun to develop that community as a community, as a network of social scientists. It's activity in this area was embryonic and hence 'promising'. It had only just begun to establish a profile for itself in this area when it was disbanded in 1990 as a consequence of a very radical restructuring of the whole field of government funded science research. Whereas the funding activities were passed on to a new body, the ancillary activities of the Committee were allowed to lapse.

At the inaugural meeting of the New Zealand's National Advisory Group for APINESS, the National Library was nominated the National Contact Point. One has to speculate at the outcome for New Zealand's participation in the project if the SSRFC Information Office had been the nominee. The National Library accepted this role but its sole contribution to the project was to act as 'post box' and 'distribution centre' for communications relating to APINESS – principally to respond to the biennial flurry of activity surrounding the Regional Advisory Group meetings and the distribution of the APINESS Newsletter.

The National Library's role was a very 'light' one but it is reluctant to continue even this minor role in the light of the major restructuring it is undergoing at present. The National Library has developed a strategic plan which sees it focussing more and more of its energies on a set of carefully defined 'core' activities. It is divesting itself of any responsibilities that are not connected with these core activities. This includes acting as the NCP for APINESS.

At a recent meeting (August 19th, 1999) of the Social Science Sub-committee of the National Commission for UNESCO a decision was taken by the committee, on the advice of the national representative at the last three RAG meetings, to takeover the role of NCP for APINESS. The verbal agreement of the National Library had already been obtained for this move.

The Social Science Sub-Committee also indicated that it favoured a move to implementing the second of the scenarios outlined in the Evaluation report. The first scenario remains an impractical one from New Zealand's point of view and the Sub-Committee's resources could not see it taking a very active role in implementing it. As for the option of disbanding APINESS the Sub-Committee indicated that there was still some merit in maintaining a regional network for the exchange of ideas and the provision of advice across national boundaries.

In order to facilitate the implementation of the second scenario, the Social Science Sub-Committee proposes to hold a national forum once every two or three years (i.e. as frequently as the APINESS forums) just prior to the APINESS forum, to bring together people with an interest in social science information services. The purpose of this forum would the following:

- Presentation of information on social science information and data services in New Zealand which would be incorporated in a 'Country Report'.
- The nomination of a representative to attend the APINESS forum.
- The exchange of information on the current state of the New Zealand social science infrastructure.
- Networking of people and organisations engaged in providing services to social scientists and users of social science in New Zealand.

The funding of this national forum would draw on the sub-committee's own resources. The funding of New Zealand's participation in the regional APINESS forum would have to come from the same source as the present funding for the Regional Advisory Group meetings.

The Social Science Sub-Committee also took the decision to hold such a forum even if the decision of the Regional Meeting in Bangkok in 1999 was to go with some alternative set of recommendations for the future of APINESS. It can therefore be said, that the evaluation exercise itself has been the catalyst for a very positive development on the social science information scene in New Zealand.

Note the address of the new **National Contact Point** for APINESS in New Zealand

Postal Address:
Science and Social Science Programme
New Zealand National Commission for UNESCO
C/ -Ministry of Education
P.O. Box 1666
Wellington
NEW ZEALAND

Office Address:
Level 5
Ministry of Education
St Paul's Square
45–57 Pipitea Stree
Wellington
NEW ZEALAND

Telephone: 64 6 499 1004
Fax: 64 4 499 1090

Email: Elizabeth.Rose@minedu.govt.nz
Susan.Isaacs@minedu.govt.nz

URL: http://www.unesco.govt.nz

Response to Country Evaluations

The first thing to note about the various country evaluations are the similarities and differences between these evaluations and those of New Zealand. Firstly, the similarities: The strongest similarity is that there is a quite clearly a discernible desire for change where any desire is expressed. It is quite clear that all APINESS members who have expressed an opinion agree that for the project to be a success in the future substantial change will have to take place.

Another set of similarities, but this time with a smaller group of members, is a clear perception that at the national level APINESS has been a distinct failure. Only a handful of members at most express any confidence in the value of APINESS in the past at the national level.

Lets turn now to the differences: Firstly, New Zealand is one of only a small number of countries that chose the evaluation report to make recommendations for the future of APINESS. The country reports of the most other participants in the evaluation exercise focussed on description rather than prescription. Secondly, for the most part, those countries that express a view to the future (and these are – as has been noted – very much in the minority) seem to hope that APINESS can find the resources and the energy to implement the substance of the goals expressed in its original vision. New Zealand on the other is less certain that this is a viable option for the future and, in any case, would not be able to continue as an active member – at the present moment – if this was the chosen track. It may be the case that in future circumstances might change at the national level to allow for a more active participation by New Zealand in this version of APINESS but for the present nothing seems to indicate that this will be possible.

Conclusion

New Zealand endorses the adoption of the second set of recommendations. If this is not the favoured option it remains open to other possibilities and will work with members towards a consensus view on the future of APINESS.

Elaboration and Discussion

In addition to the information in the report above New Zealand pointed to the embryonic developments in relation to Royal Society of New Zealand. The Royal Society of New Zealand is not a research funding body, is not a research body, nor is it an information centre. It's role is to provide a space for scientists to (a) contribute to the policy making process in relation to scientific and technological matters and (b) to provide an association for scientists, including social scientists, to assist in the development of the field as a whole as well as particular disciplines. Thus, for example, it now provides a home for the home pages of a number of different disciplinary associations, such as the Sociological Association of Aotearoa New Zealand, the Population Studies Association of New Zealand, the New Zealand Geographical Society and so on.

The Royal Society has a Social Science Committee and it is beginning to take up some of the functions that were left in limbo after the demise of the SSRFC in 1990.

The New Zealand representative noted that the different experiences of the different member countries was linked to the way the State in each member country organised its involvement in the field of science. In countries such as New Zealand where there was a profound gulf between

funding and provision of research then there was less ability to develop national information infrastructures, especially if the funding of infrastructural development was by definition ruled out.

New Zealand's representative made it clear that New Zealand did not have the capacity to participate in APINESS within the old frameworks. It had nothing to offer the network within that framework and little to gain from it. It was important, for its continued involvement, to move towards a more open structure.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Report

Item 1

Papua New Guinea was inclined to support scenario 2 and agreed that there needs to be a meeting to discuss it. This scenario makes sense especially when read alongside the New Zealand Report.

To clarify matters on the PNG report, it is a fact that APINESS was catalytic to the developments and idea formation here. It was particularly important in getting a broader group of people to discuss issues relating to social science information – it would have got nowhere if it involved only the library community. This would not have occurred without the chance of getting together through APINESS.

Item 2

As to Agenda items there will need to be some discussion on the reports as there are doubtless queries that will have weight in relation to the scenarios. Concrete issues set out relating to an action plan regionally and nationally. Of particular importance would be secure some source of regular funding for the revamped entity. Mention is made of ASTINFO and one of the main differences with ASTINFO is that it can make funding available and APINESS cannot.

Item 3

The participant said that he would be pleased to represent PNG at this meeting, as owing to changes in personnel and have the longest experience with this network. Official designation is as specified.

Previous matters

In an earlier letter the Regional Adviser asked for further details of a project for which we had received funds from UNESCO based on ideas raised at APINESS. The main issues were:

PNG Social Science Council formation – The idea here is to create something like the various Councils represented in AASSREC. One would look at this Council as the future focal point in relation to APINESS once established.

Indigenous Knowledge Centre – The intention here is to create something that could participate in the network of such Centre being developed under CIRAN/NUFFIC. You can read about these in the *Indigenous Knowledge Monitor*. This is a rather controversial idea here at present but the concept is well developed internationally.

PHILIPPINES

Report

Joining the Philippine Social Science Council (PSSC) as its Executive Director several years after the adoption of APINESS as an activity of the Council, it did not take long for me to see that APINESS was not among PSSC's functioning programmes even as PSSC regularly sent participants to the regional APINESS meetings.

The reasons for this were many, but the more central ones are contained in the Philippine Evaluation Report that we had earlier submitted on the APINESS programme. These in turn, have been succinctly summarized and integrated in the Regional Evaluation Report on APINESS prepared by Dr. Henry George Bernard and which reveals these reasons to be shared by a number of the other national institutions involved in the APINESS network.

As in other countries, the APINESS programme failed to prosper in the Philippines due to an inappropriate implementing structure, as well as to a lack of focus and the lack of funds and resources to develop the PSSC's capability in the area of information collection, documentation, sharing and exchange.

PSSC is a small private institution, which enjoys no support from the government. Its primary concern is to promote social science disciplines in the Philippines by encouraging the development of national professional social science organizations, and the conduct of conferences and the publication of scholarly journals by these associations/organizations. The Council also organizes training-related activities to upgrade social science research and teaching in the Philippines. Given these main activities of PSSC and the limitations in its resources, it was ill-equipped to spearhead APINESS activities nationally.

Since the conclusion of the national evaluation of APINESS however, other developments at PSSC have prompted it to become more involved in related data-banking and information networking activities. These are:

1. The installation of a data-banking facility at PSSC by one of its associate members, the Social Weather Station or SWS which is also the country's leading polling organization. SWS has set up a data bank at PSSC containing the data sets from the various national opinion and social surveys it had conducted over the years. These data sets have been classified by broad topics (e.g. economics, politics, government, democracy, society, values, etc.). The SWS data bank was set up primarily for the use of students and researchers who may wish to undertake further secondary (trend- or cross-sectional) analysis on SWS' survey data archives.

2. The ongoing development also of a centralized data-banking facility on migration information at PSSC by the Philippine Migration Research Network or PMRN which is currently implementing a research project under UNESCO's MOST Programme in the region. The PMRN data bank is envisioned to contain various types of migration information on the Philippines – including annotated bibliographies of migration studies in the country; laws, policies and programmes bearing on migration; service statistics maintained by relevant agencies as the Bureau of Immigration, and the Philippine

Overseas Employment Agency; and data sets coming from earlier national migration surveys. The PMRN data bank is expected to be used by migration researchers and scholars, as well as by planners and policy-makers, and support groups for migrant Filipinos and their households.

3. A third development is the invitation from the Institute of Mathematical Sciences and Applied Economics (ISMEA) in France for the PSSC to form part of the Southeast Asia Euro Network on development economics. In addition to PSSC, the other members of the network are the Institute of Economics of the National Center of Social Sciences and Humanities in Vietnam; the Department of Southeast Asian Studies of the University of Malaysia; and the Institute of Asian Studies of Chulalongkorn University. The research and information exchange among members of the network will focus on contemporary socioeconomic issues as these are unfolding in Southeast Asian countries. The Southeast Asia Euro Network is part of UNESCO's UNITWIN programme, which will provide training support for network managers and network users in the countries of members.

Although the three foregoing activities are new and are still being developed, our experience with these appears encouraging. These may also offer some thoughts on how we can improve on and reconceptualize APINESS activities and operations in the future.

The three data-banking and networking activities of PSSC at present are each with a definite focus: i.e., in terms of the data bank's/network's members and users, and in terms of the type/nature of information and research that is to be collected, abstracted, categorized and shared/exchanged by network members and users. In addition, each of the foregoing projects has at present its own data- or information-manager who is charged with conceptualizing and overseeing data-inputs and exchanges.

It would seem that it would be useful for us to include in our discussions in the next three days the following: 1) how best we can delimit or structure the focus and objectives of APINESS; and 2) how each of our own home institutions can contribute to and benefit from a new APINESS programme.

Elaboration and Discussion

One of the new themes that emerged in the discussion following the Philippines contribution was the need for countries to gain access to materials about themselves. The Philippines had made a concerted effort to try and get on top of this by subscribing to services which delivered all materials relating to the Philippines to the Philippines itself. APINESS could play a role here. The task of managing theses publications was of particular concern.

The PSSC's role in APINESS should be seen in the larger context of the social science field in the Philippines. It was a private organisation but one which gave priority to social science matters. Other bodies also had social science interests but these bodies were much larger and the social science interests were only a small part of what they did.

Dr. Tyagi, from the Chair, said that it was really important for member countries to send publications to RUSHSAP.

RUSSIA

Report

Thinking about the APINESS report, Russia have decided not to make conclusions about success or insuccess of the project. This task should be left to participants of the APINESS.

Rather, Russia compared the activities of APINESS with the Russian libraries' experience in the eighties and nineties.

The 80s

In the eighties, before the collapse of the Soviet Union, libraries were only minor providers of electronic information and databases. At these times, academic and ministerial information centres were the main providers of bibliographic databases. However, this wealth of electronic resources was, for the most part, lost, after ministries collapsed. Academic institutes, like INION or the All-Russia Institute for Scientific and Technological Information (VINITI), are among few survivors, which have preserved the electronic bibliographic tradition since then.

Library cooperation in electronic resources was practically non-existent in the eighties. Each library did its own cataloguing.

However, there was cooperation at the international level in the field of social sciences. This was done among former socialist countries Academies of Sciences, which signed an agreement about creation of the International System for Social Sciences (MISON), of which INION was the heading body. By 1988, one million electronic bibliographic records were created by joint efforts of MISON participants with annual addition of 200 thousand records. Besides, factographic information databases were compiled, and joint bibliographic indices and briefing journals were published for various fields of social sciences.

Information exchange between countries-participants was first provided on magnetic tapes, and since 1980 – through remote phone communications with the host computer in INION (Moscow). Among participants of MISON were present-day APINESS members: Mongolia and Vietnam.

The 90s

The process of library automation has become active in the late 80s and in the 90s, and, especially, in 1992-1998, when local networks and computer catalogs were created in most of the major libraries in Russia. The results of this stage were as follows:

- software for library automation software was adapted and implemented at many libraries;
- foreign library automation software was adapted and implemented at many libraries;
- computers were acquired by libraries at a large scale, and computer technologies were implemented;

- libraries created their own digital resources and became familiar with the INTERNET resources.

As of now, electronic resources of libraries and information centres account for millions of bibliographic records. Only regional libraries of Russia have accumulated the total of seven million machine-readable bibliographic records.

The statistics for federal libraries is as follows:

The Institute for Scientific Information on Social Sciences library – two million records;

The Russian National Library (St. Petersburg) – two million records;

The Russian State Library (Moscow) – over one million records;

The States Public Library for Science and Technology – over one million records.

Four other federal libraries accumulated electronic resources of 150 to 750 thousand records, and six other – from 20 to 100 thousand records.

University libraries have also been actively creating their electronic catalogs.

The Russian part of the INTERNET is also rapidly developing. By 1998, the number of web-site, indexed in Russia totaled at 12 thousands.

This was the stage which may be called "sovereign-ambitious", because each library developed its computer system almost independently.

At the same time, need for cooperation was, of course, realized by the libraries community. Thus, we have passed to the stage of interaction and integration. Unification of libraries takes place, by regional principle, by subordination and by inter-regional principles.

Unfortunately, we do not have a library network for social science libraries yet.

LIBNET

The most ambitious and most significant project for libraries unification has become the LIBNET programme, the objective of which is creation of the all-Russia information and library network. The programme implies unification of 150 major libraries along several directions, including: library automation with emphasis on creating online catalogs, and joint catalogs; development of remote access to online catalogs, and joint catalogs; development of remote access to online catalogs and other information resources; implementation of new document delivery technologies; international cooperation and organization of training courses.

By the end of 1998, LIBNET programme achievements were:

- improvement of technical equipment of libraries. The number of computes in libraries has reached three thousands. Local area networks have been created in many libraries;

- the communication format for machine-readable records was developed and published;

- the centre for cooperation in machine cataloguing was created at the State Library for Science and Technology;
- in many regions, information and library networks have been created;
- major federal libraries, both public and special, have got fiber-optical or other designated channels for data transmission;
- many libraries use technologies of electronic document delivery.

INION

INION is a participant of the LIBNET programme. In the last years, it has provided its large multi-language bibliographic databases in the INTERNET, free of charge. Information resources and databases are accessible at **Error! Bookmark not defined.** The search interface has the English-language option. The electronic document delivery services is also active.

Since 1996, INION has annually produced five bibliographic databases (economics and demography, philosophy, sociology, law, language and literary studies, history and informetrics) on CD-ROMs.

The Institute publishes nine series of bibliographic indices on the new literature in social sciences and humanities. Those include: "Oriental and African studies" and "Chinese studies". It also publishes ten series of briefing journals, including "Contemporary problems of Social Development in Asia and Africa". Another INION series is the English-language annual bibliography "Social Sciences and Humanities in Russia".

Coming back to APINESS, I would like to notice, that the need for integration has emerged objectively. Each participant of the information process should have the opportunity to develop the directions that best correspond to the needs of its own information milieu. The organization and methods of cooperation should be well provided for.

Literature

1. Libraries and Associations in the Transient World: New Technologies and New forms of Cooperation. Proceedings of Fourth International Conference. Vol.1-2. Sudak, 1997.
2. Libraries and Associations in the Transient World: New Technologies and New forms of Cooperation. Proceedings of Fifth International Conference. Vol.1-2. Sudak, 1998.
3. Libraries and Associations in the Transient World: New Technologies and New forms of Cooperation. Proceedings of Sixth International Conference. Vol.1-2. Sudak, 1999.
4. Bibliotechnyie i. Komyuternyie seti. Rossiia i Zapad: Sovremennyie tendentsii korporativnoi raboty bibliotek v setiah peredachi dannyh. – Moscow: Libereia, 1998.
5. Otchet o razvitii mezhdunarodnoi informatsionnoi sistemy po obschestvennym naukam v 1988 g. – Mowcow: INION, 1989.

6. Regionalnye biblioteki Rossii v zerkale tsifr i informatsii. – Moscow: Libereia, 1998.

7. Russian Encyclopedia of Information and Telecommunications. Information on Enterprises. Database Description. – Moscow: MBIT.1997.

Elaboration and Discussion

The Russian delegates did not feel that they had had a significant enough involvement to permit them to make any strong recommendations but only to give some advice. They pointed to the impact that changes in state ideology had on the development of social science information infrastructures. They suggested that, from their own experience, APINESS should be making much more use of its UNESCO image. This carried a lot of weight in certain circles. They suggested that as far as web site construction is concerned we should have two different 'faces': an external face for outside users and an internal one for our own concerns.

The Russian delegates also suggested that APINESS might consider publishing a small brochure about its activities.

Dr. Tyagi pointed to a lack of development of infrastructures in some former states of the USSR and the fact that they may wish to join APINESS. The New Zealand representative commented on the fact that the Russian story was a 'heroic' one in that it told the story of a struggle to maintain and develop infrastructures under the most trying circumstances.

SAMOA

Samoa first entered the APINESS Project at the first Regional Advisory Group Meeting in September 1988 (Bangkok).

Like most Pacific countries, Samoa is information isolated, technology poor and infrastructurally under-developed with regards to research capacity in the whole area of research for policy development, and appraisal of the impact of development efforts on social and economic development.

As a member state of UNESCO and belonging to this vast and diverse region (in every aspect) of Asia-Pacific, Samoa saw value in joining a Regional Forum such as APINESS, as a network that brought together users and providers of social science information. The Department of Education which is responsible for the whole Education Sector and Library Services in the country was nominated as the National Contact Point. The lack of institutional capacity in terms of infrastructure and resources, and in particular, social scientists made it difficult to initiate APINESS activities and to make any meaningful contribution to the APINESS network. So if you like, Samoa has been a passive participant up to now, and will probably be for the next few years.

Recently of course, development in the whole post-secondary areas, and in particular, the rapid development of the National University of Samoa has emerged a 'consciousness' in the urgent need for social science information to guide government policies on economic and social reforms.

So while Samoa has not been much of a contributor to the network, I believe the national environment is ripe for Samoa to develop the capacity to contribute and take advantage of the social science experience of more advanced countries in the Asia-Pacific Region.

The formation of a Social Scientists Association and History Seminar Series by the National University are encouraging local developments. The activities of MOST in the Pacific is also creating a lot of interests in the Pacific member countries of UNESCO.

Project Evaluation

For Samoa, the scenario 2 model is favoured simply because it reflects the level of development in the country. With time it will probably evolve into the kind of concept and 'sophistication' orginally envisaged for APINESS.

Of course, countries with more solid infrastructure and strong institutional capacities will build of those strengths and their experience and achievements will contribute much value to the APINESS Regional Forum, thus assisting in breaking information isolation for slower evolving countries in the network.

The Future

As an idea, as a mechanism for information dissemination and sharing, and as a forum for bringing users and providers of social information together, it will be a shame to abandon

the APINESS Project. There is much value in cross-pollination, and the idea of information sharing in this vast region with member countries at various levels of development can only benefit and enrich us all.

UNESCO Role

UNESCO will do well to continue its usual role of facilitator and catalyst in encouraging member countries to participate in the network and to bring together the Regional Advisory Group, say, every two years or so to reflect on country experiences.

UNESCO organized activities gets status recognition from Pacific member countries because we see it as one of the benefits of belonging to an international intellectual organization.

In terms of information, which is what this network is all about, communication is at the heart of UNESCO's mandate.

Discussion

Samoa gave a verbal report. Samoa had a small population (approx 165000). It was information isolated and information technology poor. Its infrastructure for research and development was also poorly developed though this was changing. Samoa felt that APINESS needed repackaging. It was difficult for a country like Samoa to initiate activities and to make significant contributions. It was a passive participant.

However, there were interesting developments at the level of tertiary institutions and also involvement of Samoa in programmes like MOST that were signaling a changing environment.

Samoa indicated that it favoured the implementation of Scenario 2 as outlined in the consolidated report. It felt that it would be a shame to abandon the project at this state. It said that we should look at ways of making use of synergies and also that Unesco should continue in the role of facilitator and catalyst. Samoa said that for APINESS to succeed it needed strong leadership and this was endorsed by other member countries.

Mr Barnard said that when he had constructed the second scenario he had had very much countries like Samoa in mind. It was important to have a structure for APINESS which allowed participation without a sense of an inability to contribute.

SRI LANKA

Report

The National Library of Sri Lanka was designated as the contact point (NCP) of the APINESS national network in 1986. Currently the national network consists of 31 major libraries as participating centres.

National Advisory Group (NAG)

The National Advisory Group of the APINESS network first set up in 1987. The National Advisory Group was reformed in 1993 and 1995 owing to the changes of the Sri Lanka government. Currently NAG consists of seven (7) representatives. The Advisory Group advises and assists the national contact point to discharge its duties.

Since the constitution of the National Advisory Group in 1987, up to 1999 twelve (12) Advisory Group meetings have been held.

Being a member of the APINESS Network, Sri Lanka was able to gain many advantages in the field of social sciences.

Collection – Building on Social Sciences

The National Library of Sri Lanka is mainly collecting literature on Social Sciences, Humanities, Library & Information Sciences, Science & Technology and Mass Communication. Building up of the core collection commenced after designating the national library as one of the deposit libraries in 1976, it receives all materials published in Sri Lanka.

With the establishment of the social science documentation centre and its designation as the national contact point of APINESS network, special emphasis was given on the following activities.

Bibliographic Control on Social Science Literature

The Volume of social science literature generated in Sri Lanka is vast and complex. Therefore, it is impossible for those who are involved in research, to scan the entire the literature to retrieve information according to their needs. Therefore main emphasis was given by the National Library Documentation activities.

1. Sri Lanka National Bibliography (Current)

The National Library of Sri Lanka is one of the important centres for the bibliographic control of Sri Lanka literature. The Sri Lanka National Bibliography is the only authoritative record of current publishing in Sri Lanka.

2. Sri Lanka National Bibliography (retrospective)

The Compilation of the retrospective National Bibliography is another important project launched since 1991. It covers the period from 1962, goes backwards to 1885.

3. Compilation of Indexes

   3.1 The Sri Lanka Conference Index
   3.2 Index to Library News
   3.3 Sri Lanka News paper Article Index

4. Compilation of the National Union Catalogue

5. Compilation of NATNET LANKA Newsletter

6. Documentation on Devolution of power and Ethnic Conflict

Regional Level Activities

Contribution to APINESS Newsletter

Social Science Documentation Centre of the National Library of Sri Lanka has provided information about the activities relevant to social sciences in the country for the APINESS Newsletters information is provided bi-annually and the contribution on made to APINESS Newsletter since 1986-1999 have covered a wide range of topics.

National Level Activities

Cooperation/Networking

The National contact point and the participating centres of the National APINESS Network have links with International, Regional and national information networks. Most of the centres serve as either Focal Point, coordinating or associated centres or as a member. Some of the International and Regional networks that the NCP, participating centres and other libraries involved are ASTINFO, DEVISA, CINSA, APINESS, APINMAP and OSHINET.

As the premier government organization in the library field, the National Library of Sri Lanka considers it a duty to assist library networks and formed a network named NATNET LANKA – the National Library Network of Sri Lanka in 1996. The main objective network is to coordinate the activities of library networks in Sri Lanka. Other objectives include, improving cooperation among library networks, assisting new and comparatively weak networks, coordinating training programmes and assisting library networks to improve their activities and performances etc. The inaugural issue of the NATNET LANKA Newsletter Vol. 1 No. 1 July 1997 was published in July 1997. Up to 1999 July 5 (five) issues of the NATNET LANKA Newsletter have been published.

Training Programmes

Various training programmes have been carried out by the National Library (NCP) and participating centres of the APINESS national network and some major social science libraries in the country as well as Library Association. This training programmes aimed at keeping the professional community up to date with regard the latest developments in documentation and information techniques and systems.

Recommendations

Sri Lanka agreed with all recommendations which was mentioned on pages 25th and 26th in the evaluation report.

Suggestions

If APINESS can establish a wide area network (WAN), information can be shared among the member countries of the APINESS through WAN.

It is better to provide the outputs of the APINESS to the member countries.

THAILAND

Report

Evaluation

1. The National Research Council of Thailand (Thailand (NRCT)) as the APINESS National Contact Point (NCP) has played limited role as this activity is not the direct function of the organization.

2. The Thailand National UNISIST Committee (which has been changed to PGI now) as the National Advisory Group (NAG) also has limited role in advising the APINESS Participating Centers.

3. The existing social science information network depends on existing cooperation particularly academic libraries. However, the cooperation of academic libraries is not fully conducted due to some constraints such as limited budget, scattered information resources, computer system and internet connection.

4. APINESS Newsletter with the frequency of six months cannot give current information. It is not widely distributed and used in social science information organizations.

Recommendation

1. The APINESS Participating Centers in Thailand support Scenario 1: Contribution of APINESS with same objectives and structures with the emphasis on more effectively concrete implementation.

2. The National Contact Point (NCP) has to be changed to the other organization with direct responsibility for social science information.

3. The PGI Committee as the National Advisory Group (NAG) has not recognized the existence of APINESS. There has not been any contacts or meetings between APINESS and PGI (that is why the chart on page 12 of the report states the word "unclear") for Thai NAG. Concerning the involvement of PGI at the regional level, Thailand supports the recommendations item 7 on page 7 and item 11 on page 8 of the Evaluation report, which emphasizes that the Inter-governmental council for PGI support the activities of APINESS and make available a range of materials to all APINESS members.

4. Support of UNESCO both advice and fund for efficient social science information network.

Proposed Plans

- Survey of existing social science databases
- Creation of APINESS website with linkages to existing social science databases locally and other APINESS countries

- Creation of APINESS listserv.
- Information Resource Exchange and Sharing (to cite examples)
- Publication Gift and Exchange
- Document Delivery
- Staff Development
- Thailand APINESS Newsletter

Elaboration and Discussion

Thailand endorsed India's position on the future of APINESS. It informed the meeting that the issue of the NCP for Thailand was in a state of flux as a result of recent governmental initiated changes. It indicated that some activities could be provided without any external funding e.g. the designation of NCPs as nodes in a document delivery system.

The Chair raised once again the issue of ASTINFO and the PGI towards APINESS and the need for this to change. He also suggested that NCPs should be directly involved with social science information activity.

VIET NAM

Report

The Institute of Social Sciences Information (ISSI) is part of the National Center for Social Sciences and Humanities (NCSSH) of Vietnam. We are responsible for maintaining social sciences information for Vietnamese scholars and we have the largest Library in social sciences, including 500,000 book titles and over 2,000 periodicals .

Our services are used not only by scholars of the NCSSH but also by students from all University social science such as those in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City National Universities and also by foreign researchers and students. We are developing a framework for updating a database of recently acquired books by all establishments of NCSSH.

We provide a variety of documentation and information services in the social sciences. For example:

- Thematic bibliographies
- Abstracts and surveys presented periodically in Social Science Information or in various publications attached to a topic particular.

These services are used by numerous Departments in the Institute such as:

- Department of Philosophy and Sociology,
- Department of Economy and Law,
- Department of Historic Sciences,
- Department of Literature and Linguistics,
- Department of Information on area.

All the publications are in Vietnamese. There is a "Vietnam – Social Sciences" in English and sometimes in French. It is a periodical publication edited by the NCSSH.

Currently, CDS/ISIS is used for information automatization. We would be grateful if UNESCO could send us its new versions with the language codes ISO 601, 602. It will help us to update our programme with nomination of new countries (toponymes). We would also like UNESCO to add to the UNESCO documents stocks in our Institute.

We hope that in future the ISSI will improve its relationships with the analogues in region and will make a more effective contribution to the activities of APINESS.

CHAPTER 4: FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR APINESS

Summary of Discussions

Following the country reports the Chair was taken by Dr. Meleisea, the Regional Adviser. He invited active participation in the following discussions so that all could make their contribution. He then invited the consultant, Mr Barnard to make suggestions as to how the discussion should proceed.

Mr Barnard indicated that it was his reading of the discussions in the preceding sessions that there were some differences between participants on how they wished to see APINESS develop: there were those who wished to see it reinvigorated along roughly the same framework as before and those who wished to see a new direction which took into account their particular capacities.

He suggested that the best way to proceed was to turn to the details of the original principles and framework and to work through them clause by clause to see if they needed any alteration or updating. The relevant pages of the consolidated report were referred to (pages 16-18). This suggestion was accepted.

There was a general willingness if not eagerness to simplify the set of principles that underlay APINESS and through a process of consolidation and excision a new set of principles was arrived at. The core principle from the original set was elevated to level of 'purpose' and two new principles were incorporated to reflect the changes in the world of information technology that had taken place since their original drafting.

At the conclusion of the section on principles the consultant, Mr Barnard, listed a set of questions that he thought member countries could think about as they began to think about the new framework for APINESS. These are to found in Appendix 2 below (see page 93).

In relation to the framework, at the suggestion of the consultant, the entire framework was scrapped and a new one introduced based on notes that he had prepared the night before in the light of the sentiments expressed during the meeting. In particular he had included changes to incorporate the idea of a Chair for APINESS. This was to give effect to calls for strong leadership. These draft proposals were modified and a new framework devised. (see below).

A set of activities for APINESS were discussed as well and are outlined below. The issue of training workshops was raised. The Regional Adviser indicated it was his preference to deal with training workshops at the national level rather than at the regional one. Each countries needs tended to be rather unique. This was not to say that there couldn't be a regional component but that the focus should be national.

Finally, at the request of the both the Chinese and the Bangladeshi representatives, a few words need to be said about the relationship between the new framework and the old. In particular they were concerned that the new framework made no mention of National Advisory Groups and they asked for some clarification on this issue.

National Advisory Groups and the New Framework

The original framework called for not just the nomination of a National Contact Point but also a National Advisory Group (NAG) which would advise the NCP. In the new framework, member countries are not required to have a NAG. The structure was open and they were allowed to make such arrangements as suited their particular situation.

However, the new framework does not exclude NAGs and those countries that function with them should continue to use them. Certainly in the case of India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Thailand NAGs play a vital role in their links to APINESS and they should continue to do so. NAGs should be encouraged to be proactive and should hold regular meetings to make their contributions effective.

RUSHSAP will act as the Regional Contact Point but its role will be larger than just that. It will be the Secretariat for APINESS.

A new constitution for APINESS

Purpose

The network should be mechanism for:

a) Promoting communication about social sciences information (production, use, dissemination, and management);

b) For helping to develop adequate social sciences communication and information infrastructures at national and regional level.

The major principles guiding APINESS are the following:

1. The concept of network in this instance should be defined as an inter-institutional arrangement of NCPs from each participating country, and not as a synonym for a supra-national centre.

2. Asymmetry in institutional frameworks at the national level will imply that no single model can be prescribed but that each country should decide for itself its priorities for development of information infrastructure, but some activity at the regional level may be required to coordinate initiatives by the network participants.

3. Effective management and support for the network by UNESCO is required and must be ensured at the regional level.

4. Communication from and to national and regional levels will be essential for network development as will incorporation of information communication technologies in network activities.

5. The raising of resources should be encouraged not only through cooperation among participants of the network by sharing for mutual benefit, but also by developing specific and general proposals for funding by agencies and associating with existing agencies which already have relevant infrastructures and which support the network's objectives.

Framework

At the national level

1. Each member country will have a National Contact Point (NCP) with the following responsibilities:

   a) To respond to communications from the APINESS secretariat and from other NCPs regularly;

   b) To facilitate networking and/or the convening of a forum of social science information professionals in member countries;

   c) To liaise with national bodies where necessary or appropriate in relation to APINESS issues.

2. Each member country will have a network and/or convene a forum for social science information professionals. These networks/forums will have structures and functions as are deemed necessary by each member country itself but will include the biennial preparation of a country report on its social science information infrastructure.

At the regional level

1. On a biennial basis APINESS (beginning 1 Sept. 1999) will elect one of its member countries as Chair of APINESS. The functions of the Chair will be as follows:

   a) In conjunction with RUSHSAP (UNESCO Regional Unit for Social and Human Sciences in Asia and the Pacific), undertake such activities as will promote the goals of APINESS;

   b) Convene, in conjunction with RUSHSAP, a biennial workshop/meeting of APINESS NCP representatives.

2. On the biennial basis, APINESS will hold a biennial meeting of APINESS NCP representatives. The functions of this meeting will be to:

   a) Present Country Reports from member countries for evaluation/review by the meeting;

   b) Conduct a workshop on a selected issue of interest to APINESS. This workshop could include a training in and/or demonstration of skills or developments relevant to social science information professionals.

3. RUSHSAP will be the RCP (regional contact point) and serve as the APINESS secretariat. Its functions and activities will include the following:

   a) Handling of the administration of the network's affairs at the regional level and liaison with international agencies and National Commissions for UNESCO;

   b) To promote the purposes of APINESS;

   c) To assist in the search for funds to support the activities of the network;

   d) To report on its activities in relation to APINESS.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION – ACTIVITIES FOR THE NEXT BIENNIUM 1999-2001

Start Date for New Arrangement

It was agreed that the starting date for the new arrangements would be the 1 September 1999. It was also agreed that the next regional meeting would be held in September 2001 on such dates as to allow individuals to comfortably fit the meeting in with commitments to IFLA.

Election of Chair of APINESS for 1999-2001

As a result of the decision to proceed with the new framework it was necessary to elect a chair for the forthcoming biennium. Malaysia was elected to the chair unanimously. The representative from Malaysia asked all other member states for help to ensure the success of APINESS.

Activities for Biennium 1999-2001

The following activities were endorsed for the next biennium:

(a) A review at the end of 6 months: this was to ensure that APINESS was alive again, to see what kinds of things had been accomplished under its rubric by that stage.

(b) Establish clearly defined National Contact Points and communicate information about them to RUSHSAP.

(c) The reestablishment of an elist for APINESS with a commitment to its active use.

(d) The establishment of a WWW website under the rubric of RUSHSAP and communication by member countries with RUSHSAP concerning their contributions to this web-site.

(e) The production of an electronic newsletter to be circulated through the APINESS elist. The issue of a paper edition was to be looked into as well.

(f) A survey, carried out through the internet, based on a set of questions outlined in Appendix 2 below (see page 93 below).

(g) Hold a biennial meeting in Bangkok in September 1991. A workshop/demonstration could be run in conjunction with this meeting. One suggestion for the content of this session would be to focus on the creation, maintenance and management of social science directories.

PART II

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: THE CONSOLIDATED EVALUATION REPORT

Terms of Reference for the substance of the final report

1. Consolidate APINESS evaluation reports produced by APINESS/RAG member countries (Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, People's Republic of China, Malaysia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand).

2. Prepare a final report which will underline:
   - common areas: success and obstacles
   - future action at national and regional level
   - proposals on future framework and structure of APINESS/RAG

3. The final report should be critical, factual, and accurate.

Introduction

> **Evaluate** *vb. (tr.)* **1.** To ascertain or set the amount or value of. **2.** To judge or assess the worth of; appraise.

I open this consolidated evaluation of the APINESS project with some evaluative quotes, where it has been possible to extract them, from the national evaluation reports that were submitted to RUSHSAP.

> **BANGLADESH**: No evaluative comments offered.
>
> **CHINA**: "Although the initiative of setting up APINESS is very important in promoting the development of social science information services and information resources sharing in the Asia-Pacific region, yet *its influence on China's social science information work is relatively limited.* ...APINESS should make a more practical action programme, actively implement it, and examine the result. The RAG meeting should be improved in order to make everyone know that APINESS is not a forum but a coordinator and organiser in promoting the development of social science information network in the Asia-Pacific region."
>
> To this should be added the comments of the representative from the People's Republic of China at RAG IV: "...the representative of China welcomed the proposal [to evaluate APINESS] as she had felt somewhat sceptical of APINESS's achievements to date" {UNESCO Principal Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific. Regional Unit for Social and Human Sciences in Asia and the Pacific 1997: 17}

INDIA: "The objectives of the APINESS as formulated in the first Expert Group meeting held in 1985 have mostly remained unchanged. In the 1st phase of APINESS these objectives were all right. But at the dawn of the 21st century, we have to modify some of them for making these objectives more useful in the light of latest development in the information and communication technologies in providing information services...

In various RAG meetings most of the NCP have submitted proposals for undertaking bibliographical and documentation activities either at national level, bilateral or at regional level. Some of these proposals were really well conceived and well developed, however, because of lack of adequate response from APINESS and UNESCO and even other funding agencies, even some good proposals could not take-off because of non-availability of adequate support in term of resources".

INDONESIA: "Learning from the experience of ASTINFO there should be a strong personality at the regional level who will administer APINESS. Regional training courses should be held from time to time... APINESS should have one or several common projects..."

KOREA (DPR): "..it is desired that the APINESS pays more attention to the national social science information network of the DPR of Korea, which is a member of APINESS, and gives financial and material support to the network".

MALAYSIA: "The National Library of Malaysia feels a new approach to the exchange mechanism of information needs to be established if APINESS programme is to continue. *It should no longer exist in the present set-up*".

NEW ZEALAND: "If the recommendations suggested in this evaluation are implemented, New Zealand could still participate in the project with benefit to itself and to other participating countries. *It is certainly the case that continued participation under the present framework would seem to be of little benefit to anyone.*"

PAPUA NEW GUINEA: "There has been welcome impact nationally. However, *regional activities have been, despite the best endeavours, minimal* – especially in recent years. This is a reflection of the weakness of APINESS as a 'network' rather than there being an absence of need or of expertise that could be shared. This is one major area for consideration in the evaluation, otherwise other networks will supersede APINESS".

PHILIPPINES: "The foregoing accounts suggests that *[there has been] little progress in the implementation of APINESS in the Philippines*...The PSSC has been able to maintain its role as an information centre for the social sciences in the Philippines utilising existing programmes and infrastructures. Because APINESS at the regional level remains a loose network however, PSSC has

not been able to use APINESS to further institutionalise its linkages with other national networks in the region."

SRI LANKA: No evaluative comments offered.

THAILAND: No evaluative comments offered.

This is an interesting mixture of evaluations of APINESS: from a range of countries that do not offer any comments, to those who offer fairly complementary evaluations, to yet others that offer quite critical evaluations. These reflect the different experiences of APINESS in each of the member countries. It will be the task of this consolidated report to sift through all the materials, including the specially commissioned national evaluations, to arrive at some kind of overview and synthesis of the evaluations and to make recommendations for future action.

Evaluation of a project as wide ranging as APINESS is fraught with difficulties. The fact that any particular participant has *not* been impressed by APINESS or has been *very* impressed by it should not be taken as a comment on the project as a whole. In order to do a holistic evaluation one needs to take up one of two almost impossible positions: firstly, one which is based on the diverse experiences of the project of its participants simultaneously; secondly, one which is 'objective' and based on its real achievements. Neither position is completely achievable but this report will try to take up a position that incorporates both – i.e. an internal viewpoint and an external one.

Sources

The sources for this evaluation are the following:

(a) a series of specially commissioned evaluation reports produced by eleven member countries.

(b) The reports of the four Regional Advisory Group meetings held since the inception of APINESS, the report of the inaugural meeting and the APINESS newsletters.

(c) The experience of the consultant's participation in RAG III and IV including the extensive discussion at the last meeting centred on the evaluation project.

In addition to these primary sources a number of other publications have proved useful in this exercise. One of these deserves particular mention: the ASTINFO evaluation report published in 1991. Though the methodology of this APINESS evaluation is quite different from that of the ASTINFO evaluation (the latter relied on a questionnaire technique whereas APINESS has quite explicitly adopted a more discursive approach to the collation of information) and though the experiences of the two projects by member countries are different, nevertheless there are useful parallels between the two projects and their respective evaluations.

One of the key differences between the two projects is linked to differences in the kinds of information that both networks try to serve. Whereas, in general, science information is more 'universal', social science information is much more nation or culture specific. This has profound implications for both supply and demand for the two kinds of information. The Indian evaluation

report draws attention this: "Users interest in Social Science Information (SSI) is usually restricted to local (country wide, regional) information only. This is in sharp contrast to the Science and Technology Information (STI), the users of which cannot do without accessing the global information base" (Indian evaluation report). Thus, only a few social scientists in New Zealand are interested in India and social science information emanating from there and only a few Indian social scientists are interested in New Zealand. This is a simple fact of life in the social sciences. This contrasts with the interest of say chemists who are not too concerned about the national site of origin of information about the processes their are interested in so long as they can be assured of its reliability.

This issue goes to heart of the 'demand' side of a network like APINESS and may well be at the bottom of the developments relating to the 'supply' side which APINESS itself represents.

History of the APINESS project

This section of the report is based on the materials from the national evaluations and from the various reports produced during the course of the APINESS project. It should be seen as partly fulfilling the first of the bulleted points of the second clause of the Terms of Reference above.

Prehistory

The APINESS project has both a general and a specific 'prehistory'. Speaking generally, the immediate prehistory of the project lies in the scientific research climate leading up to the early eighties. The late sixties and early seventies were a period which saw an unprecedented increase in the growth of social scientific research and an exponential increase in the number of documents produced from such research. A large number of journals and working papers series were created in this period and a culture of report writing was established. This whole process has gone on apace with increasing momentum in the years since. This was also, fortunately, a period which saw the beginnings of the exponential growth in the development of information databases as computers increasingly became recognised as communication and storage devices rather than just calculating devices. Until the late seventies, computers were seen as being the domain of either big business – for the management of payroll and other complex billing systems – or, more commonly, the preserve of the lab-coated scientist seeking to resolve complex calculations. Then, in the late seventies and early eighties, with the development of large database organisations such as DIALOG in the United States, computers began to be seen as devices that allowed one to communicate with other computers to extract information from them. This was just as well as the developments on the document production side had grown to the point where, without the assistance of information databases, chaos threatened to reign. It is enough to compare the volumes of the early years of such an index as the Social Science Citation Index with the volumes of more recent years and its CD-ROM based versions to get a sense both of the huge growth in the sheer volume of documentation being produced and also a sense of the huge transformations that have occurred in the management of it.

It is clear that those involved at the inauguration of the APINESS project were well aware of the fact that it was these developments that provided the backdrop against which the project was conceived and brought into existence. In his inaugural address to the participants gathered

at the first meeting to launch the project, the Assistant Director-General for Coordination of UNESCO Activities in Asia and the Pacific, Dr. Makaminan Makagiansar, pointed out that the number of books published between 1965 and 1974 had almost doubled and that about '8 to 10 million scientific and technical documents are published every year' (UNESCO Regional Expert Meeting on the APINESS, 1986: 44).

Concerns amongst information specialists about the burgeoning literature saw them give more and more attention to the possibility of exploiting network relationships for its management and control at all levels: at the level of information databases; at the level of acquisitions; at the level of exchange and resource sharing. Thus, for example, at the conclusion of a detailed and rigorous survey of the information needs of social scientists in the United States in the 1980s, focussing on the disciplines of Anthropology, Economics, Political Science, Psychology and Sociology and carried out by the Research Library Group as part of their Programme for Research Information Management, the authors of the study conclude that "many of the needs identified call for making information available on a 'national network'." (Gould and Handler, 1989: 53) It is noticeable that Education is missing from this list of disciplines and with good reason: one of the most successful examples of the effectiveness of networking in a discipline close to if not 'of' the social sciences is ERIC, the US network of Clearinghouses set up to control the huge literature in Education in the United States and elsewhere. This network has appealed to the imagination of a number of information workers in the social sciences though, as yet, no other social science discipline has managed to emulate it[1].

We can continue to draw on the Gould and Handler report to help us understand the general context in which the APINESS project developed. In addition to pointing to the need to establish a 'national network' to meet the information needs of social scientists, Gould and Handler go on to add almost immediately that "opportunities for sharing information *internationally* will become increasingly compelling as more information becomes available in machine-readable form and links to networks in other continents multiply." (ibid: 52) It is this sense of a need for international networks that, I believe, lies at the back of the developments of APINESS.

However, another dimension of the climate of that period needs to be understood for an appreciation of the motivations underlying the creation of the APINESS project: the sense of the marginalisation of the social sciences in the field of sciences in general. There is a hierarchy of sciences even amongst the natural sciences with theoretical physics and molecular biology holding the current limelight. But the hierarchy is even more pronounced if one includes the social sciences (which have their own internal hierarchy as well from Economics and Psychology on the one hand to such marginalised fields as Sociology on the other). The social sciences as a whole have been significantly neglected and marginalised and this neglect and marginalisation has extended to the area of information documentation.

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[1] Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) was established in 1966 and recently celebrated its 30th anniversary. It consists of a set of linked 'Clearing Houses' each of which has duties for a specialised area of the field of education. These clearing houses collect, abstract, and index the materials relating to their specialised area and add them to the comprehensive ERIC database. To the network of clearing houses, based mainly at Universities but centred on the National Library of Education, are a series of adjunct clearing houses that cover even more specialised fields of education. The whole system is supported by the US National Library of Education, the US Department of Education, and the US Office of Educational Research and Improvement.

It is in the light of this latter dimension of the general climate that we must note the existence of another network on which the APINESS project was explicitly modelled: ASTINFO – short for the Regional Network for the Exchange of Information and Experiences in Science and Technology in Asia and the Pacific. This UNESCO cooperative project was established in 1983 and emerged as a consequence of recommendations made at a high level meeting of Science Ministers in Manila in 1982. It's objectives, according to its own publicity, are as follows: "(a) Developing appropriate information policies to guide the overall progress of national information infrastructures and services in support of national development plans and programs; (b) Stimulate and promote the creation of non-bibliographic databases in science, technology; (c) Improving the education and training of human resources to support information programmes and activities; (d) increasing awareness and use of information by vigorously promoting and marketing existing information systems and services and providing training in their use; (e) Strengthening at least one selected institution in each Member State to become an effective national coordination mechanism (ASTINFO Coordination Unit) for the programme; (f) Introducing new and innovative information services in order to gradually mainstream in the national development process and enable active involvement of other library and information services; (g) Developing the technical and organizational basis for cross-border exchange of data and sharing of information processing facilities and other information resources." (http://www.inet.co.th/cyberclub/dtorrij/ast.html; See also http://www.education.unesco.org/proap/new/astinfo.htm). That this network was very much at the forefront of the minds of those involved in initiating the APINESS project is made clear by the prominent role it played in the report of the first inaugural meeting of APINESS (see below).

At the inaugural meeting of the APINESS project, the Deputy Secretary-General of the Thailand National Commission for UNESCO, Mrs Savitri Suwanasathit, spoke of the fact that a "regional organisation for information and documentation in social sciences" had been mooted at the 6th Regional Conference of the National Commissions for UNESCO in Asia and Pacific in 1975. And even earlier than that, in 1973, at the First Asian Conference on Teaching and Research in Social Sciences organised by UNESCO, when the formation of an Association of Social Science Research was advanced one of the themes of that conference was the need to promote the exchange of information amongst countries of the region.

However, planning for the project began a decade later in 1983. UNESCO, with the assistance of the Institute of Library Sciences of the University of the Philippines, organised a seminar on information sources, systems and services in the social sciences in the Asian Region. One of the 19 recommendations that emerged from this seminar urged the UNESCO Regional Unit for the Social and Human Sciences in the Asian Pacific Region (RUSHSAP) to "extend its activities to include promotion of regional documentation and information services and assist national centres in strengthening and consolidating their activities" (UNESCO Regional Expert Meeting on the APINESS, 1986: 50). This seminar also provided the materials for the first set of country reports relating to the social science information infrastructure of eleven countries of the region.

To implement the recommendation referred to above, UNESCO RUSHSAP commissioned the director the 1983 seminar, Dean Ursula Picache, to carry out a feasibility for the establishment of a regional social science information network. This was duly carried out. Dr. Picache visited a number of countries of the region and then presented her report to all the national commissions

in the region as well as to the member councils of AASSREC "for their comments and expressions of interest in joining the network" (ibid: 50). The report described the existing information infrastructure of countries of the region and drew attention to the "asymmetrical development" of these infrastructures: some countries were highly developed and others were not.

The report was tabled at the 6th General Conference of AASSREC in Bali, Indonesia in 1985 and was further discussed by the Executive Council Meeting of that Association in February 1986. At this latter meeting AASSREC decided to collaborate with UNESCO to establish the regional network and to organise the inaugural meeting which would launch the project. This then ends the 'prehistorical' phase of the project.

Beginnings

RUSHSAP approached member councils of AASSREC and the UNESCO national commissions of the region to nominate delegates for the inaugural meeting of the network. There were 38 member states of PROAP and 16 of these (highlighted in the list below) sent delegates:

Afghanistan	Japan	**Pakistan**
Australia	Kiribati	Papua New Guinea
Bangladesh	Lao, PDR	**Philippines**
Bhutan	**Malaysia**	**Korea, R.**
Cambodia	Maldives	Samoa
China	Marshall Islands	Solomon Islands
Cooks Islands	Mongolia	**Sri Lanka**
Korea, DPR	Myanmar	**Thailand**
Fiji	Nauru	Tonga
India	**Nepal**	**Turkey**
Indonesia	**New Zealand**	USSR
Iran	Niue	Vanuatu
		Vietnam

Also attending the inaugural meeting were representatives of a number of already existing regional organisations and networks: ASTINFO, AMIC, SEDNAP, AASSREC and there were a number of observers. Details of those attending the inaugural meeting can be obtained from the report of that meeting (UNESCO Regional Expert Meeting on the APINESS, 1986).

The inaugural meeting was held in Bangkok between the 12th and 16th May, 1986. The agenda for the meeting had been prepared by RUSHSAP and was subject to an adoption process at the beginning of the substantive part of the meeting. The substantive part of the meetings was in five parts: (a) A briefing by Dr. Picache based on her feasibility study and a presentation by RUSHSAP of a proposed structure for the project; (b) Brief presentations of country 'situations'; (c) Discussion of the proposed structure and how it could be implemented; (d) Examination of proposed activities for the network through both general discussion and workshops; (e) And finally a session to draw together the workshop proceedings and other discussions into a report for adoption. It is important to note the structure of the agenda and its contents because it provided the model for the other meetings that were organised to progress the project.

I will elaborate some aspects of the substantive dimensions of this meeting in later sections of this report. It is important to note that the meeting concluded with a list of 17 'Conclusions and Recommendations'. These were as follows (I have abbreviated some of them):

1. A statement of appreciation of the efforts of UNESCO in particular but also AASSREC in setting up the regional network.

2. A proposal that the countries that had expressed an interest in joining APINESS take the necessary steps in order to provide the local frameworks for the network: indicating National Contact Points, setting up National Advisory Groups, and establishing a network of national participating centres. The regional networks of AMIC, ESCAP and WHO would link up with APINESS once the network was in place.

3. The representatives of the NCPs, of the regional organisations joining APINESS, and the representatives of AASSREC and **ASTINFO** would constitute the APINESS Regional Advisory Group (RAG).

4. A statement that the inaugural meeting should be regarded as the first meeting of the RAG and that the proposed activities be adopted until the next RAG meeting in two years time.

5. RUSHSAP was invited to be the secretariat for APINESS. It was suggested that an 'Associate Expert' such as existed for **ASTINFO** be appointed for APINESS.

6. A welcome to the offer of support and collaboration by **ASTINFO.**

7. A request that the report of the inauguration of APINESS be assigned to the agenda of a forthcoming meeting of UNESCO's Inter-governmental Council for PGI (the General Information Programme: see http://www.inet.co.th/cyberclub/dtorrij/) and a request that the Council support the activities of APINESS.

8. A request that UNESCO's Sector for Social and Human Sciences "make adequate provision in the next biennium for APINESS activities.

9. A expression of concern that UNDP (United Nations Development Programme; See http://www.undp.org/) had dropped its project on 'Regional Co-operation in Social Sciences for Development' and an expression of hope that, in the light of support for APINESS, that the UNDP would reconsider its position on this matter.

10. A recommendation that UNESCO's General Information Programme Division sponsor a Regional Seminar on vocabulary control under the auspices of **ASTINFO**-APINESS.

11. UNESCO General Information Programme to make available a range of materials to all APINESS members.

12. A recommendation that training and refresher courses in data banking, documentation and information handling be organised at the national level.

13. An endorsement of the idea that there be sensitization seminars for policy makers and other users of social science data.

14. An invitation to NCPs of APINESS to approach relevant authorities in their home countries to request that social science information exchanges, etc. be written into relevant bilateral agreements signed by their Governments.

15. A recommendation that the International Development Research Centre (IDRC; See http://www.idrc.ca/index_e.html for the main office and http://www.idrc.org.sg/for the Asia office) be approached for funds to support a range of APINESS activities: (a) The collection of national materials by NCPs; (b) provision of and promotion of the use of computer facilities for information exchange; (c) training; (d) publications of joint bibliographies; (e) provision of equipment for members who needed them to participate in the network.

16. The meeting welcomed the following offers from the respective bodies:

ICSSR: (a) to bring out the APINESS newsletter; (b) to provide facilities for the discussion of the preparation of a directory of indigenous concepts (An ISSC project); (c) to put participating members of APINESS on the mailing list of NASSDOC; (d) to provide training facilities on documentation to other countries of the region; (e) to distribute literature received from abroad.

SEDNAP: to add the names of APINESS members to its mailing list.

AMIC: (a) to add the names of APINESS members to its mailing list; (b) to serve as the regional focal point for documentation in the field of Mass Communication.

ESCAP: (a) to serve as the regional focal point for information exchange in the field of social and economic development; (b) to include APINESS input in the newsletter of ACCIS.

And the final recommendation which was more formally presented and which I quote in full from the report of the meeting:

17. "The Meeting wishes to make the following recommendation to the Director-General of UNESCO:

Considering that

- **ASTINFO** and APINESS have identical objectives of facilitating and improving the exchange and sharing of information, data and experiences within and among countries of the Asia-Pacific region;

- both network projects have been initiated and supported by UNESCO in collaboration with Member States and organisations in the Asia-Pacific region.

Taking note of the fact that

The Division of the General Information Programme (PGI) has activities, programmes and projects especially within the **ASTINFO** framework to assist and develop social science information centres and libraries, for instance, assistance is provided to national, University and academic resource centres and libraries, archives, and data for development services; the activities to improve document accessibility and availability under the Universal Availability of Publications (UAP)

project for the region; the seminars, workshops and training courses for information handling in general, etc.

Also in view of the fact that some of national coordinating agencies and associated/ participating centres are common both to **ASTINFO** and APINESS.

Appreciating that

(i) in project and mission oriented activities and research users need information and data of an inter-disciplinary and inter-sectoral nature;

(ii) available resources should be pooled, conserved and optimally used by avoiding unnecessary duplication of programmes, projects and activities at the international, regional, and national levels.

Strongly urges UNESCO to

(i) consider APINESS as a specialised network for the social sciences in the **ASTINFO** framework;

(ii) make available additional financial allocations to implement APINESS activities and programmes; and

(iii) establish, as soon as possible, appropriate mechanisms to co-ordinate activities of PGI, and SHS (RUSHSAP) to facilitate the rapid implementation of APINESS programmes and activities."

I have highlighted the presence of ASTINFO in the conclusions of the report in order to draw attention to the presence it must obviously have had in the thoughts of those originating this project. It is clear that APINESS was conceived of as working within the ASTINFO framework in order to further the cause of the social sciences.

In addition to those conclusions and recommendations, the meeting outlined a nine point action programme which is detailed on page 83.

It will be useful for the purposes of this evaluation to measure the achievements of the following two or three years against these proposals. It should be noted as a preliminary assessment that, in hindsight, it would appear that this action programme was perhaps a little over ambitious. It should also be noted that there is a hiatus between the action programme proposed for APINESS at the meeting and the conclusions and recommendations coming from the meeting: the almost complete absence of any mention of ASTINFO in the former as compared to the latter, in spite of the fact that one of the conclusions quite explicitly makes reference to the need to see APINESS as a specialised network within the ASTINFO framework.

1986-1988

The question arises, from both a historical point of view and an evaluation point of view, as to what happened in the approximately two year interim between the inaugural meeting of APINESS in May 1986 and the first meeting of the Regional Advisory Group in September 1988. What happened in relation to both the conclusions and recommendations and the action programme enunciated of the inaugural meeting?

The first item that must be noted is that nothing further was contributed to the project by three of the countries that sent delegates to the inaugural meeting: Nepal, Pakistan and Turkey. It should also be noted that the contributions and views of Vietnam received a serious set back by the tragic death in a plane crash of their representative to the first formal meeting of the APINESS Regional Advisory Group in 1986.

It should also be noted, and this is very important, that it is quite difficult to disentangle or disaggregate many activities in terms of whether they would have taken place regardless of the APINESS project initiative. Thus for example, the evaluation report from Bangladesh makes the point explicitly in these terms:

> **"It may be mentioned here that from the inception of the Bangladesh Social Science Research Council as national coordination body of the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, this council have been engaged in almost the similar related activities."**

It goes on to add, however, that

> **"... with the establishment of APINESS network in Bangladesh, the activities of the council got momentum"**

Another example: it is interesting to note that the National Advisory Group of APINESS in India is none other than the ICSSR's Committee on Documentation Services and Information. Thus any activity of the latter can easily have the label APINESS attached to it to turn it into an APINESS activity. Hence, the various training courses and workshops organised by the Committee can be forwarded as APINESS activities even if the participants themselves are only dimly aware of the notion of APINESS.

Similarly, the evaluation study from Malaysia reports that "attempts to set up the National Advisory Group was perceived as not urgent since the UNESCO Sub-committee on Social Sciences was already doing this function".

It will be one of the suggestions of this report that a number of activities ascribed to APINESS were in fact activities that would have occurred in any event and had an APINESS label attached to them *after the event*. It is a moot point as to whether APINESS was ever meant to be additional to already existing structures and activities but it is a serious question then what difference the project has made.

Let us focus on structural issues first

Following the inaugural meeting the countries attending that meeting (with the exceptions noted above) proceeded to implement the regional/national dimensions of the APINESS framework. This process involved, as a first step, either the nomination of a National Contact Point or the endorsement of one which had already been nominated. Thus, for example, for the Philippines the Philippine Social Science Council had been nominated the National Contact Point at its Consultative meeting held in April prior to the inaugural APINESS meeting in May. For other countries the choice was obvious: India already had a well established central node to its

pre-existing national social science information infrastructure in the form of the National Social Science Documentation Centre of the Indian Council of Social Science Research.

This period saw the nomination of National Contact Points for a number of countries. The process by which these NCPs were nominated and the timing of their nomination varied considerably. According to the original ideas concerning implementation of the network framework the nomination of NCP was to be followed by the establishment of National Advisory Groups. This happened in some cases and not in others. Thus, in the case of Australia, the National Library of Australia nominated itself the APINESS NCP at the inaugural meeting itself but never ever convened a National Advisory Group. New Zealand convened a meeting of a National Advisory Group in late 1986 at which the National Library of New Zealand was nominated the NCP. This was the first and last meeting of New Zealand's NAG. Malaysia nominated the National Library of Malaysia as the NCP but did not establish a NAG as it was not perceived as a necessity because the "UNESCO Sub-committee on Social Sciences was already doing this function". The chart below gives an outline of the achievements in relation to the structural objective of nominating NCPs and establishing NAGs by member countries that have contributed to this evaluation and Australia as well.

	NCP & Date of nomination	*NAG date of establishment number of meetings between May 1986 and September 1988*
AUSTRALIA	Nat. Lib., May 1986	None
BANGLADESH	BSSRC, March 1987	Unclear but probably once
CHINA	CASS	None
DPR OF KOREA	SSIRI, unclear	Unclear
INDIA	NASSDOC, 1986	Functions performed by ICSSR's Com. on Doc. Services and Information
INDONESIA	CSDI, 1986	None (see country report)
MALAYSIA	Nat. Lib., 1987	None [Functions vaguely performed by SS subcommittee of Nat. Commission for UNESCO]
NEW ZEALAND	Nat. Lib., 1986	Late 1986, (1) [1st and last]
PAPUA NEW GUINEA	UnivPNG, 1990	Regular meetings since November 1990
PHILIPPINES	PSSC, 1986	August 1988, (1) [1st and last]
SRI LANKA	SSDIC, Nat. Lib., 1986	1987, 6 meetings (see report)
THAILAND	NRCT, 1986	UNISIST Committee, unclear

It is clear from this chart that the nomination of National Contact Points was a fairly straightforward activity but the establishment and maintenance of National Advisory Groups was fraught with difficulties and was largely unsuccessful for most countries. The exception were those countries that could assimilate their NAGs to already existing groups. Thus, in the case of India, NAG was a label tagged on to the already existing ICSSR Committee on Documentation Services and Research Information. Given that naming an institution as a National Contact Point is not, in itself, much of an achievement and that it is the creation and maintenance of a vigorous advisory group that is the true measure of success of these structural objectives it could be argued that APINESS was largely unsuccessful, at the regional level, at achieving these structural objectives.

1988-1990

In September 1988 the First Regional Advisory Group meeting was held in Bangkok over a period of a week. At this meeting there were 11 country participants and a number of observers from various organisations and an observer from the USSR. It should be noted that the Republic of Korea did not participate at this meeting but that the meeting saw the first participation of Western Samoa.

At the meeting a set of 'country reports' were presented outlining the state of the art of social science infrastructure in each country and outlining its hopes for APINESS. A number of organisations also presented reports: in particular, it is worth noting that ASTINFO presented a separate report at this meeting.

The meeting devoted a session to suggestions, recommendations and proposals for the future. The substantive recommendations and proposals were as follows:

1. The cooption of representatives from ASTINFO into the NAGs of APINESS.

2. The cooption of representatives from such groups as AMIC, WINAP, WHO etc. into NAGs.

3. Member countries to regularly supply RUSHSAP with core reference materials so that a regional collection could be built up.

4. Member country NAGs to develop a programme for action for the next 3-4 years and send copies to RUSHSAP by December 1988 so that RUSHSAP could compile them and make suitable proposals for inclusion in UNESCO's programme and budget for the coming biennium.

5. NAGs to liaise with appropriate ministries in their governments to explore possibilities for UNDP projects.

6. The meeting recommended the adoption of the TCDC modality for APINESS activities as this could form the basis for access to support from various sources.

7. Organisation of regional training courses in the areas of information technology, machine readable databases, document delivery services, and abstracting and translation services.

8. Organisation of a regional meeting to review and discuss the use of thesauri.

9. Member countries urged to supply materials to NASSDOC for inclusion in newsletter on a regular basis.

10. The meeting urged UNESCO to organise meetings that brought users and providers of social science information services together.

Reading the report of the meeting in the light of a full ten years of experience of APINESS one has the sense that this meeting of RAG was a 'holding' operation. There is no report of any particularly substantive development in relation to APINESS. In fact, one gets the sense that the project is already coasting: there seems little energy in it. The somewhat plaintive call for member country to at least provide materials for the newsletter on a regular basis gives a particularly poignant basis for this sense. The very short chapter of the meeting devoted to the *review* of practical developments in relation to APINESS also highlights this.

The report of the meeting also includes a chapter devoted to a 'review and appraisal of APINESS framework'. It is not an appraisal in the strict sense of the term: no cost/benefit analysis was entered into, no rigorous critique was undertaken. Rather it revisited the structure of APINESS and presented, once again, the possibilities for the future development of the APINESS 'framework'. In fact the review could more appropriately have been called an action programme as it reiterated the goals of APINESS and suggested various activities the network could undertake. The tone of this chapter of the RAG report is, like much APINESS discussion of progress, exhortative, urging participants to a more energetic participation in the project.

Following the meeting the participants returned to their respective countries and we need to now address what actually happened in the following two years till the next meeting.

The newsletter continued to be produced on a regular basis. NASSDOCs commitment to it should be strongly congratulated for it is clear that the level of involvement by other participating countries was minimal at best and non-existent in many cases. If APINESS members could develop enough energy to make minimally significant contributions to their newsletter then there was little hope in relation to the aspirations for the rest of APINESS and its activities.

Two regional seminars were held. It is suggested by the report of the second RAG meeting that these were APINESS activities. The first, on numeric/factual data handling, was held on 12-16 February 1990 in Malaysia and the second was held in India between 19-26 February 1990 and was devoted to the creation and use of machine readable databases in social sciences.

The first of these is a particularly good example of one of the theses of this evaluation: that the APINESS label has tended to be attached *post-facto* to events which are quite otherwise in their origins. This particular meeting was included in the second RAG report as an APINESS activity but was obviously only construed as such for the purposes of the RAG meeting because it was not felt that it was an APINESS project at the time it occurred: it does not even merit a mention in the APINESS newsletter. The second of the events does feature in the APINESS newsletter but it is clear from the reportage that this was fundamentally a UNESCO-ICSSR project which would have been supported regardless of the existence of APINESS.

To sum up, the clear impression one derives is that APINESS exists as an idea in the consciousness of participating members for the duration of the Regional Advisory Group meetings but fades very rapidly thereafter. It has an 'ideal' existence but not a 'real' one.

1990-1994

We can deal with this period in a more summary form. A study of the national evaluation reports as well as the reports of the third and fourth RAG meetings indicates clearly that the problems that have beset APINESS from its inception have persisted. The lack of energy and commitment to the project by most member countries is clear. The exceptions are striking: India, Sri Lanka and, to some extent, Thailand have all been more active in furthering the project. For the rest there has been lack of direction and leadership.

This should not be read as criticisms of member countries but point to serious problems in the conception and execution of the project at a more collective level. This is addressed in later sections of this report.

1994-1997

It is clear that this sense of serious problems besetting the project underlay the commitment to this evaluation process. The last meeting of the RAG gave a clear signal to a rigorous and critical evaluation project of which the country report and this consolidated report are the outcome. The evaluation project afforded a serious stocktaking of the project as a whole and is critical to its future.

General Evaluation of APINESS

In the country reports included in this consolidated report evaluations of the APINESS project from the point of view of a number of member countries will be found. Not all long standing members of the project submitted a report and, consequently, it is not possible to get a complete sense of the way the project was judged by the membership as a whole. But, nevertheless, the reports that are included give a wide range of views on APINESS.

Evaluation can take place at a number of levels and in a number of ways. This section of the consolidated report will not seek to traverse the same ground as the country reports at the national levels. Readers are referred to the section containing edited versions of these reports to get a sense of the way APINESS worked at the national level of member countries. Each of the reports is prefaced by a preamble which points to the main features and findings of the country reports.

This section will focus, rather, on the general framework and in particular on the *regional* level of APINESS. The report from Papua New Guinea says: "This [the regional level] is one major area for consideration in the evaluation, otherwise other networks will supersede APINESS". The clear implication of this is that, in the final analysis, the regional level is probably the most crucial dimension of the evaluation because whether APINESS is a success or not will ultimately be judged at this level. The very name of the project implies it.

However, even if we adopt a regional focus the evaluation could still be done in a number of different ways. In this report, two methods will be employed: the first will focus on evaluating

the original objectives of APINESS in the abstract. The fundamental question here will be: Were the original objectives defined in a reasonable way: put simply, were the original objectives achievable? Hindsight, as they say, has 20/20 vision and we will have to guard against it. But it is still possible, I believe, to evaluate the original objectives in this way.

The second method is to accept the original objectives and then to ask to what degree the implementation of the project fulfilled the objectives in the following decade. To some extent, the historical overview provided in the previous section has already covered this ground. The task here will be to tackle the question more systematically than historically. This method is the one referred to in the original, unmodified, evaluation proposal that was discussed at RAG IV in Bangkok in 1994 which stated: "In the second phase, attempts will be made to ascertain how effective the network has been in achieving the programme of action it set for itself at the inception meeting in 1986, including assessing the outcomes of the activities undertaken and to what extent all recommendations devised along the years have been implemented". {UNESCO Principal Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific. Regional Unit of Social and Human Sciences in Asia and the Pacific 1997: 126}

It should be noted that APINESS has been 'reviewed' (as opposed to 'evaluated') on a fairly regular basis at each Regional Advisory Group meeting. These reviews consisted of reports from member countries on activities either directly connected with APINESS or with activities which may be of interest to APINESS members.

Furthermore, on one occasion, at the first meeting of RAG, an attempt was also made at an 'appraisal' but this consisted, in the event, of a discussion of a model of networking and was not an appraisal in the true sense of that term.

Evaluations

In order to carry out evaluations using either method, however, the first step is to rehearse the major principles, framework and action programme for APINESS. These have been stated before[2] elsewhere but are specially necessary here.

1. *Major Principles*

The major principles guiding APINESS are the following:

1. The network should be a mechanism for breaking information-isolation and for helping develop adequate infrastructures at the national level;

2. The concept of network, in this instance, should be defined as an inter-institutional arrangement and not as a synonym for a supra–national centre;

[2] See {UNESCO Principal Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific. Regional Unit of Social and Human Sciences in Asia and the Pacific 1997: 25-32; UNESCO Regional Advisory Group of the Asia Pacific Information Network in Social Science (APINESS/RAG). 1989: 29-31; UNESCO Principal Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific. Regional Unit of Social and Human Sciences in Asia and the Pacific 1993: 36-50; UNESCO Regional Advisory Group of the Asian Pacific Information Network in Social Science (APINESS/RAG) 1991: 30-34; UNESCO Regional Expert Meeting on the Asia-Pacific Information Network in Social Sciences 1986: 24-28}.

3. The National Contact Point (NCP) of each participating country should be seen as a centre with its own circle of interactions guided by the commonality of interests and patterns of priorities;

4. Asymmetry in institutional frameworks at the national level will imply that no single model can be prescribed but that each country should decide for itself its priorities for development of information infrastructures;

5. Asymmetry in levels of development at the national level will imply that some activity at the regional level may be required to co-ordinate initiatives by network participants to assist countries;

6. The main guiding principle at this stage should be decentralisation. The network should promote a system of linkages nationally, regionally and internationally and try to identify existing national centres that can add a regional dimension for certain specialised activities;

7. The network programme should proceed step by step from the rudiments of cross-country cooperation that exist currently along the lines of TCDC and in those areas which do not require investment of huge sums of money; and

8. The raising of resources should be encouraged not only through cooperation among participants of the network by sharing for mutual benefit, but also by developing specific and general proposals for funding by agencies and associating with existing agencies which already have relevant infrastructures and which support the network's objectives.

2. *APINESS framework*

At the national level

1. The National Contact Point (NCP): an institution at a high level responsible for facilitation of APINESS programmes and activities, for liaison with other information agencies of every kind, and for the secretariat of the National Advisory Group (NAG).

2. The NCP Representative: a senior officer looking after APINESS activities.

3. The National Advisory Group (NAG): to assist and advise NCP in the discharge of its duties, and to ensure that the NCP submits proposals to UNESCO by October-November, for the following year's activities.

4. The main NCP functions and activities: promotion and monitoring of the network's development at the national level; participation in APINESS regional activities; and innovation in developing policies, programmes, means and mechanisms designed to accelerate the establishment process of a cooperative information network in the region. Furthermore each NCP shall:

    - Promote the APINESS concept at a national level with a view to eliciting cooperation in APINESS activities;

- Liaise with other institutions (governmental and non-governmental) in order to facilitate the implementation of the APINESS project; assist in the development of the national network components of the regional network; and ensure the support of national delegations for the project in the regional conferences of Ministers and appropriate regional meetings on information;
- Coordinate, stimulate and monitor the progress of the implementation of APINESS;
- Collaborate with UNESCO on any subject related to APINESS, such as information, surveys, applications of APINESS/RAG related recommendations and decisions, etc;
- Identify participating centres at the national level (profile and submission to UNESCO);
- Provide for the referral, within the country, of enquiries coming from other countries of the region and dealing with information sources, systems services, computer facilities, and other activities which concern libraries and information processing;
- Help identify and mobilize financial resources for the network project;
- Prepare and publish newsletter on APINESS related activities in the country or the region;
- Develop means and methods for information exchange between APINESS and information networks in other parts of the world;

5. The Participating Centres (PCs): centres working closely with the NAG and the NCP.

At the regional level

1. The Regional Advisory Group (RAG): Representatives of NCPs and other regional organisations that join APINESS and representatives of AASSREC and ASTINFO will constitute the APINESS Regional Advisory Group (APINESS/RAG).

Occasional meetings to review operations of the network and confirm or amend network priorities and action programmes. The range of activities of RAG at the regional level could eventually be as broad as, and similar to, those of each NCP as listed below.

2. The APINESS Secretariat: Its functions and activities are to:

- Provide secretarial services to NCPs and other members of APINESS to facilitate network activities at the regional level (meetings, distribution of network information and reports);
- Handle the administration of the network's affairs at regional level and liaison with international agencies and the National Commissions of UNESCO.
- Develop information services for the network.

3. *Action Programme for APINESS*

It should be noted that, in addition to the action programme developed at the inaugural meeting of APINESS, each of the first three meetings of the Regional Advisory Group following the inaugural meeting added to and modified the action programme. The list of activities suggested for APINESS is therefore quite long. I have focussed on those actions specified for APINESS rather than those recommended for action by UNESCO or other bodies. It is APINESS that is being evaluated.

From the inaugural meeting

1. Development of resources and capabilities, 1986-1989.

A number of different activities were proposed under this heading: efforts to establish and strengthen core collections in within participating countries; establishment of exchange relationships to develop the former; preparation of inventories of data banks and documentation and information centres; training of specialists in data banking, documentation and information.

1. Adoption and development of norms and standards of information handling, 1986-1988.

Activities proposed under this heading included the adoption and promotion of norms and standards; the holding of a regional seminar in 1987 to review the refine the various thesauri development under the former.

1. Development of linkages and co-operative activities, 1986-1987.

Activities proposed focussed on the establishment of APINESS national networks.

1. Training of social scientists/users of social sciences information, 1987-1989.

Activities focussed on developing the knowledge of users of the potential uses of social science information.

1. Publication of state-of-the-art reports on social science subjects, 1986-1989.

2. Processing and repackaging of social science information/research data for policy makers, 1987-1988.

Activities proposed included holding seminars at 'various levels' on the above subject.

1. Bilateral agreements, 1986-1989.

2. Development/integration of specialized sub-networks into APINESS, 1986-1989.

3. Publication of APINESS newsletter and publicity of APINESS in similar bulletins.

RAG I (Bangkok)

1. Cooption of representatives of ASTINFO/NFPs onto NAGs.

2. Cooption of representatives of NFPs of other relevant regional networks, such as AMIC, WINAP, HELLIS, APSDIN and ALINE onto NAGs.

3. All members of APINESS should send on a regular basis core reference materials to RUSHSAP so that a regional collection could be built up.

4. NAGs were advised to develop a programme of action for the coming 3-4 years and to send copies of them to RUSHSAP by December 1988 so that it could compile all such national plans of action and make suitable proposals for inclusion in UNESCO's programme and budget for the coming biennium.

5. NAGs should liaise with appropriate ministries in their governments to explore the possibilities for UNCP projects in the next country programming cycle.

6. Promote the use of TCDC modality for the work of APINESS.

7. The following areas were suggested for regional level activities: (a) information technology; (b) machine readable databases; (c) document delivery; and (d) abstracting and translation services.

8. Convene a regional seminar to review various thesauri being used.

9. NCPs and NAGs to provide news articles and information for the APINESS newsletter on a regular basis.

RAG II (Bangkok)

[It is note worthy, for the purposes of this evaluation, that some of the actions recommended from this meeting repeat those of the previous one]

1. Cooption of representatives of ASTINFO/NFPs onto NAGs.

2. Cooption of representatives of NFPs of other relevant regional networks, such as AMIC, WINAP, HELLIS, APSDIN and ALINE onto NAGs.

3. All members of APINESS should send on a regular basis core reference materials to RUSHSAP so that a regional collection could be built up.

4. NAGs should liaise with appropriate ministries in their governments to explore the possibilities for UNCP projects in the next country programming cycle.

5. Promote the use of TCDC modality for the work of APINESS.

6. APINESS members should keep each other on their mailing lists and send all their future publications to other members so that the publications are available at least at one location in each country.

7. NCPs may explore the possibility of promoting the sale of AASSREC publications along the lines of the centralised subscription service set up the Philippine Social Science Council.

8. It also identified the following sets of activities at the regional and national levels for the following two years:

Regional Level programmes

- APINESS Newsletter.
- Mobilizing Project II: Youth Shaping the Future: Each NAG to determine its level of participation in this documentation project.
- Setting up of electronic mail networks where possible.
- Training programmes in CDS/ISIS, thesaurus construction, project formulation and setting up and accessing databases.
- Compilation of national directories.
- Social science abstracting services.
- Survey of existing social science databases.
- A range of national level programmes identified by each country for itself.

RAG III (New Delhi)

The list of proposed actions from this meeting ran to 10 pages of the final report. The following is an edited list of the actions proposed:

- APINESS newsletter: contributions excepted from Australia, NZ and Sri Lanka on email networks and from Vietnam on social science information services. A range of suggestions for improving the content of the newsletter were also made.
- INFOYOUTH: Members were to informally survey existing sources of information on youth at the national level.
- A range of exchange and training programmes were also proposed.
- Electronic mail networks: members to use this to communicate about APINESS issues where possible, to seek to develop links as urgently as possible, to set up a bulletin board for APINESS.
- Social Science Data Archives: Members to seek to establish data archives if one not already established.
- Central Indexing and Abstracting Service: A proposal by NASSDOC to set up such a facility and for UNESCO to finance it.
- A range of national programmes detailed for each country.

RAG IV (Bangkok)

The list of activities and suggestions for further action from this meeting ran to 8 pages.

- Evaluate the APINESS project
- Exchange programmes and training seminars

- Electronic mail and networks: establishment of a WWW presence and creation of APINESS elist
- Directories and databases
- APINESS newsletter
- Cooperation amongst APINESS members
- A range of national programmes

This is, then, a synopsis of the tasks that the APINESS project and members set for themselves. The task now is to evaluate them using the two methods outlined earlier.

Method 1

To reiterate, the fundamental question for this method of evaluation is: Were the objectives of the project defined in a reasonable way; were the objectives achievable?

The short answer to this question is: **No.**

Looking over the proposed principles, framework and action programme it would be clear to any observer that they were over ambitious. The vision was for a great network of multilaterally and bilaterally linked national centres which provided the nodes for a similar structure within each member state. Along the channels of this network would flow a large range of information, people, resources, programmes, and activities[3]. These would all be linked to other networks which had common interests.

There are serious problems with this vision.

Firstly, there is something of an unreal quality about it and this arises from the fact that at no point is any serious attention given to the fundamental question of where the resources for such an enterprise are going to come from. There are certainly remarks to the effect that this or that funding organisation be approached to fund the project in general or some particular activity but no mention is made of how or who would be making the case for this funding or its likelihood of success.

Thus, the resource implications – and in particular the financial resource implications – of establishing and maintaining such a network were never clearly established or stated. No serious costings were made or justified. In the absence of this the ambitions of the project seem unreal and impractical.

Secondly, the project assumes that member countries would adopt or already have in place a particular kind of social science information structure – one which relied on a publicly funded social science system. The project did not, in its conception and inception, seriously address the

[3] "...'APINESS is like a highway of information' and the Regional Advisory Group has the responsibility to chart its path by identifying what landmarks it would connect and what pitfalls it should avoid. On this highway are to tread both information-documentation specialists and users of social science information" (RAG II report: 23). It is quite clear that this is a highway which has had very little traffic of the first kind on it and none of the second.

very diverse infrastructual arrangements existing in potential member countries. Rather, it sought to promulgate a particular vision of such arrangements – one which it was clearly easier for some countries (e.g. India and Sri Lanka) to meet than others (e.g. Philippines, Australia, New Zealand). It is a serious issue whether an organisation such as UNESCO should venture into a project which requires member countries to conform to a particular model in order for their successful participation in the project. It is clear that from the beginning APINESS was conceived in the light of the experience of a particular set of infrastructural institutional arrangements – ones which are increasingly at odds with the 'more market' models of information service delivery being taken up by a number of countries of the region[4].

In other words, if more attention had been given to the *differences* between countries of the region in terms of their information infrastructures in the conception of the project and if those differences had been articulated and accepted and been used as the foundation for the development of the project the aims, objectives and structures of the project might have been quite different from those actually adopted. They might then have been more achievable.

To conclude, a close examination of the aims, objectives and structures spelt out for the APINESS project at the beginning clearly indicates that they were over ambitious and poorly defined to begin with. The project was unlikely to be successful from the beginning.

Method 2

The second method of evaluation seeks to answer a different question: To what extent was the project successful in achieving its aims and objectives? That is, accepting the aims and objectives as originally defined, how successful was the project in fulfilling them.

The short answer to this question is: **Very little.**

By any measure, if one lists the objectives of the project and then looks at what was actually achieved in terms of them, the answer would be 'very little indeed'. Certainly there may be a way of reading some of the national accounts as local success stories but we have to take this with a grain of salt: it is clear from a number of such 'success' stories that the successes were not those of APINESS but of the national frameworks which pre- and co-existed with the APINESS project.

The crudest test that illuminates the answer to the question raised by this method of evaluation is to ask the question in regard to the simple objective of setting up the necessary structures for APINESS. It is clear that in most cases those countries that were 'successful' in these terms were ones which had already succeeded in meeting the narrow structural requirements of APINESS by assimilating them to already existing structures – other countries found even the achievement of this simple objective profoundly problematic.

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[4] Thus, for example, the first meeting of the RAG in 1988 stated that: "The group was hopeful that soon other countries of the region would join APINESS. In fact, those countries which do not have social science documentation centres may be prompted like Bangladesh, to establish such centres so as to meet the demands of social science users nationally and to cooperate with similar centres regionally" (ibid, p.29). It is clear that a centralised state-funded separate social science infrastructure as the way to the future success of APINESS was much in the minds of key participants and that the existence of such centres were required for the success of APINESS.

By any measure APINESS has not even a small fraction of the objectives it had set itself at its inception or during the course of its existence. Even where some minimal objectives were achieved their very success served to highlight the weaknesses of APINESS. Thus, for example, though an electronic list was set up for APINESS nearly four years ago the traffic on it has been non-existent. Thus, for another example, though the Indian National Social Science Documentation Centre has been assiduous and industrious in its production of the APINESS newsletter, the contributions of *other* countries has been – to put it mildly – seriously deficient pointing to a lack of interest and commitment to the project. These comments should not be read as criticisms of member countries but as a generic criticism of the project itself.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is clear that the APINESS project, as currently conceived, constructed and supported, has not been a success. It has suffered from problems of conception and execution. The recommendations that follow seek to address this failure and suggest alternatives which might lead to better outcomes.

Recommendations

A plan of action which would meet with consensus does not clearly emerge from the individual country evaluations that are incorporated into this report. There is a diversity of views about the success of APINESS and a diversity of views about action for the future. There are those who think that APINESS has been a considerable success to those who think it has been a failure; there are those who think that there is very little future for it in its present form and would like to see it radically transformed to those who would like to see its present objectives and frameworks strengthened and supported. It is clear, however, that there is consensus on the issue that APINESS does need a major injection of either new energy and ideas on the one hand or all of that plus a substantial injection of funds as well on the other. In the light of this I propose to make two sets of mutually incompatible recommendations which would point to two different directions for the future. ***The third, to abandon the project altogether, is one which should not at this stage be contemplated.***

The first set of recommendations would see APINESS proceed along more or less the same lines that it has done in the past but with a much more proactive role for UNESCO RUSHSAP in fostering it and in finding the resources to maintain and develop it. This would see the appointment of a full time secretariat to the project supported by adequate financial resources to ensure that it was able to carry out the tasks assigned to it. This scenario would only work if RUSHSAP were able to accept the value of the arguments made by those in favour of the current structure and objectives of APINESS and if it were able to accept the necessary responsibilities thrust upon it. It would also be completely dependant on further and quite substantial additional funding becoming available for the project over and above the kinds of commitments already made to it over the last decade but these funds would have to come from UNESCO or from some source that UNESCO can tap into. It is clear from all evaluations that funding sources from within the countries of the region to support the envisaged project are non-existent.

But there are further implications from adopting the first set of recommendations. It is quite clear from the country reports that even if APINESS were to receive a substantial boost by

the appointment of a permanent secretariatship with additional funding to assist it in its tasks not all countries are in a position to participate in this venture in the form the current objectives and structure envisages. Conceptually, the objectives of APINESS call for a considerable degree of centralised functioning of social science information systems amongst participating members. Only a few countries have this kind of infrastructure: e.g. Bangladesh, China, India, Sri Lanka. Other members – Philippines, New Zealand – have more laissez faire systems and would not be able to participate in any meaningful sense even with a considerable injection of funding at the regional level. Consequently, this scenario would require more rigorous assessment of the capacity of members to meet their obligations in terms of the objectives of APINESS. It would require UNESCO to implement a project which would, by definition, see the exclusion of a number of countries because they would be unable to conform to the network models prescribed by APINESS.

The second set of recommendations would see APINESS transformed into a forum for the exchange of views about social science information infrastructures and a forum for action to support the development of social science information structures in countries of the region. The implications for UNESCO RUSHSAP are much less stringent than the first scenario and call for no more commitment than has already been devoted to APINESS to this point. This scenario also has financial implications but these are more in line with the kinds of average costs that have already been incurred in relation to the APINESS project to date and would not require additional funding (except that required to keep up with inflation).

I should declare my interest at this stage and state clearly that I favour the second scenario. In the light of this there is one recommendation which I believe would meet with the approval of all those involved in the project:

> **Recommendation:**
>
> **THAT UNESCO RUSHSAP organise a fifth meeting of the Regional Advisory Group of APINESS to discuss the recommendations of this APINESS evaluation report and to develop a programme of action in the light of the decisions arrived at that meeting.**

Scenario One: Continuation of APINESS with same objectives and structure

> **Recommendation:**
>
> **THAT UNESCO RUSHSAP more vigorously promote the objectives, structural and functional, of APINESS as set down in the original document establishing the network in 1986.**

This major recommendation can be broken down into a number of further, more specific recommendations so that a more concrete image of what is implied emerges.

Recommendation:

THAT UNESCO make additional appointments at RUSHSAP so as to provide the full-time secretariatship that a reinvigorated APINESS would require.

Recommendation:

THAT UNESCO RUSHSAP seek funding, in the first instance, at least on a par with that of ASTINFO so as to further the aims and objectives of APINESS.

Recommendation

THAT participation by countries be rigorously monitored to ensure that that they implement the structural arrangements required for successful participation in APINESS.

Recommendation

THAT each meeting of the Regional Advisory Group set aside a session to the rigorous review of the contributions and participation of member countries and the APINESS secretariat.

Scenario Two: Transformation and simplification of the objectives of APINESS

Recommendation

That APINESS be defined as a forum to report on, review and make recommendations on the state of the art of the social science information infrastructures of each on the participating countries.

Recommendation

THAT Regional Advisory Group meetings be renamed Regional Experts Meetings and that they be conducted in such a way as to provide critical and constructive feedback on the country reports.

Recommendation

That the results of the deliberations of the Regional Experts Meetings be published as separate reports on each country as soon as possible after each meeting and be widely disseminated in each country.

These recommendations conclude the 'final report' element of the terms of reference of this evaluation. It has sought to be critical, factual, and accurate. The following section presents a consolidation of the national reports of member countries.

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