

Proposal Network Medical Anthropologists in Europe [<http://www.easaonline.org/>]

Short history

During the two most recent biennial EASA conferences (in Copenhagen in 2002 and in Vienna in 2004), meetings were held to discuss teaching and research in medical anthropology at European universities. The keen interest and accounts of activities confirmed that in Europe as elsewhere, this is one of the largest and most vibrant sub-fields in our discipline. There are several master programmes in medical anthropology and many examples of research collaboration across national boundaries. Most departments have staff and PhD students working in this area. Journals devoted to anthropology (or social science) and health are published in a number of European countries. There are transnational networks of medical anthropologists such as Medical Anthropology at Home and Medical Anthropology in the Nordic countries, and other regional networks in several countries (France, Great Britain, Germany, Italy, Spain, Switzerland). Some European researchers are members of the Society for Medical Anthropology under the AAA. However, there is no European network in this field to connect scholars in all European countries doing research at home and abroad.

Therefore, the EASA members specialising in medical anthropology (first the EASA members who came forward with this initiative in Copenhagen and, second, the EASA members who convened in Vienna), would like to propose the establishment of a network within the EASA.

In order to establish the network, the interested EASA members who convened in Vienna on 11th September 2004 elected a steering group. Currently there are four steering group members: Els van Dongen, Elisabeth Hsu, Hansjörg Dilger, and Agita Luse. The steering group carried out a short investigation in order to find out about the activities / organisational structure of other EASA networks as well as about the guidelines of EASA for the establishment of thematic / regional networks.

Results of investigation:

1. There are currently six active EASA networks:

- Media Anthropology Network (included on EASA homepage)
- Visual Anthropology Network (included on EASA homepage)
- Teaching of Anthropology Network (included on EASA homepage)
- Ethics Network (included on EASA homepage)
- Africanist Network (launched in Copenhagen, 2002)
- Europeanists' Network (launched in Vienna, 2004)

2. Network activities:

Joao Pina-Cabral, the acting President of EASA at the time, emphasised at the Vienna members' meeting that the activities of networks "should be organized with regularity". He remarked critically that the activities of most EASA networks have decreased over the last few years: while earlier on even **summer schools or larger conferences** had been organized, most networks now restrict their activities to **workshops at the biennial EASA conferences**. Pina-Cabral emphasized that the executive committee expects to be informed about planned activities of the EASA networks.

Apart from **Workshops / Summer Schools / Conferences** the following activities were / are carried out by other networks:

- **Joint Publications or publications series:** The Media Anthropology Network has a working paper series which is published on their website. The Teaching Anthropology maintains a newsletter which is mailed to the network's members on an irregular basis.
- **Homepage:** Some networks maintain a homepage with information on current events; mailing list; working paper series; annotated bibliography.

3. Organisational structure, network membership and funding of networks:

As there was almost no information available on this point on the existing networks' homepages, three network chairs were contacted in the early 2005: Dorle Dracklé (Teaching of Anthropology Network); Sarah Pink (Visual Anthropology Network); and Andrés Barrera (Europeanists' network). In addition,

Laszlo Kürti, currently the EASA Secretary, was contacted. The following information was extracted from their replies:

Funding possibilities within EASA:

- Networks fund themselves, EASA tries to help with sponsors or cosponsoring (for instance, for Summer schools / conferences).
- There are very few cases where financial support was given (for instance, for two publications of the Teaching of Anthropology Network 500 Euro were given for editing of the English version of the manuscript).

Membership within EASA networks:

- The condition for organising an EASA network and/or becoming its member is to be an active/paying member of EASA. Networks must be open to all EASA members who are interested in joining them and in taking part in their activities – there are no restrictions in this respect.

Organisational structure:

- “Networks elect their own coordinators or chairs, that is completely an internal matter” (Kürti).
“There has to be a chair who acts as the responsible person against the EASA executive committee and against the network members. The Teaching Anthropology Network has two coordinators who share the work.” (Dracklé)

From the short investigation it can be seen that there are considerable differences between the existing networks with regard to the activities they perform and with regard to their organisational structure.

PROPOSALS FOR THE PREPARATION OF EASA MEDICAL ANTHROPOLOGY NETWORK:

Based on the finding of the short investigation, the steering group suggests the following:

1. To establish the Medical Anthropology network which is headed by a network committee of medical anthropologists from different European countries with democratically elected members who serve each for four years; this committee should include **two chairs**, who will act as representatives of the network committee, **a webmaster, a representative of teaching programmes, a student representative, a representative of applied medical anthropology and a representative of general medical anthropology**. The chairs and the committee members are to be elected at the business meetings of the network. **Only members of EASA have a vote in this election. The members of the network committee have to be members of EASA.** To be nominated for the chairs the candidates must hold a recognised academic position, e.g., a position at a university.
2. To nominate candidates for the chairs and the network committee. Nominations have to reach the steering committee by **May 1, 2006**. Every medical anthropologist in Europe has the right to nominate candidates (email contact: elsvdongen@planet.nl). The full list will then be circulated prior to the upcoming EASA conference in Bristol in 2006 via various mailing lists of regional and transnational Medical Anthropology networks to as many medical anthropologists in Europe as possible.
3. The election of the chairs and the network committee members will take place at the foundational meeting of the Medical Anthropology network at the EASA Conference in 2006. The results of the election will be distributed via the EASA newsletter and the different mailing lists (see 2.).

Proposal Network activities:

1. Medical anthropology is an important sub-field of social anthropology and therefore a strong link between both is vital, both for the applied and the theoretical oriented projects. Because medical anthropology is a rapidly growing field within social anthropology the EASA network will provide a forum for face-to-face discussion.
2. Support teaching and research in medical anthropology.
3. Planning and advising for at least two panels on medical anthropology at the biennial conferences of EASA.
4. Developing publications in the sub-field of medical anthropology under the auspices of EASA.

5. Providing a forum to exchange information and resources for teaching at both undergraduate and postgraduate level.
6. Informing members of the activities of other networks of medical anthropologists in Europe and outside (meetings, conferences, publications, etc.)
7. Maintaining a website to inform members of activities and employment opportunities.

Els van Dongen : elsvdongen@planet.nl

Elisabeth Hsu : elisabeth.hsu@anthro.ox.ac.uk

Hansjörg Dilger: hansjoerg.dilger@berlin.de

Agita Luse: Agita_Luse@apollo.lv