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Organisation for Diaspora Studies, International  
(ODI International), <http://www.odi.in/>

## Proposal cooperation Sarnámihuis and ODI (International)

### 1. Background

On Friday November 5, 2021, Sarnámihuis held its first international webinar to present the organisation and its work. We hoped that this would result in connecting to organisations with which we can develop a long term relationship on the history of our community.

We are very happy that Prof. Ajay Dubey from the Organisation for Diaspora Initiatives (International) has reacted to the webinar and reached out to us to discuss a future relationship. On Monday November 8 we had our first discussion with him and members of the Organisation for Diaspora Initiatives (ODI): Dr. B.K. Pandey and Ms. Aarshi Dua.

### 2. Purpose

The cooperation has two goals:

1. To establish a durable connection between the Indo-Surinamese community in the Netherlands and India and the connection with other Indian Diaspora communities.
2. To promote research and education on the history of Indian indenture ship and its legacy in relation to India and the Indo-Surinamese community.

### 3. Areas of cooperation

#### 3.1 Diaspora Connect/Calcutta letters

Diaspora Connect is a project initiated by Sarnámihuis that aims to make archival sources with personal information available for the community for genealogical purposes in a user friendly way. The key components of this project are:

- The construction of a database with personal information based on several archival sources.
- The development of a web application and a mobile app to work with the data.
- The communication with users who will use the applications.

With the project Calcutta letters we encounter the problem that we have a few letters in Hindi and Urdu (less than 20) which we like to have translated in English.

The cooperation with ODI can be on the following areas:

- The applications make use of Google maps. We have the historical location (district, police station, village) but would like to map it with the current location. We would request help from ODI in this area. We can send the list of historical location.
- The applications have information about the caste, but we don't know what the meaning is of the caste. We would request help from ODI in this area. We can send the list of castes.
- Given the international experience of ODI we would like to have their critique of the weaknesses of the project which we can correct and make possible international links which we don't have. We can plan a presentation of this project so that ODI can come in with their expert knowledge and experience.
- Once the databases and applications we can plan a presentation in India with ODI in June 2023.
- ODI can help with the translation of the Calcutta letters.

### **3.2 Community Connect**

This is an idea of ODI that they suggested in the meeting of Monday. Sarnámihuis likes this idea very much. There are people from our community that are searching for their ancestors in India. The visit to India and especially Bihar and UP individually or with a small group of family and friends. The Indo-Surinamese community has a strong cultural connection with India (music, dance, religion, films etc). Sarnámihuis would like to develop this idea of community connect with ODI in such a way that we set up a system that enables the face-to-face connection of individuals and groups on different levels. Our aim is to inform, collaborate and invite each other for Diaspora related webinars/ conferences or workshops.

Some ideas we can discuss:

- Bhojpuri/Sarnámi messages from ODI to our community during specific days (Holi, Divali, Id Ul Fitr, June 5 commemoration of Indian arrival day etc).
- Cultural exchange of artists.
- Programs by ODI for people who visit India for genealogical purposes.
- Etc.

### **3.3 Research and distribution of knowledge**

Sarnámihuis has been deeply involved in historical research on the Indo-Surinamese community in cooperation with historian working outside the academia. We publish and present their work. They are involved in our projects. We would like to have a connection with the academia, but unfortunately the situation in Holland and Suriname is not yet at the point where we can set up a cooperation with the academia.

A cooperation with the Indian Universities might fill this gap. The basis would be the formulation of a research program of topics that we would like to have researched because of its interest for Sarnámihuis or ODI. Then we could promote this program in our community in the Netherlands but also at the Anton de Kom University in Suriname in the hope that students (including PhD candidates) would like to get involved and get academic support from the Indian Universities.



### 3.4 Publications

Sarnámihuis has published and is going to publish books that might be of interest for India. We would like to go through the list and discuss the possibilities with ODI.

### 3.5 Educational infrastructure

In the long term Sarnámihuis want to build an educational infrastructure for indenture labour for popular use, especially the youth. Sarnámihuis has a cooperation with the Decolonial International Network Foundation that invests in the technology to build education webapplications (museums, course infrastructure) an mobile app (history app).

Sarnámihuis would like to discuss with ODI whether they can play a role in these endeavours.

Sarnámihuis has developed a course in the Sarnámi language (derived from Bhojpuri). We would like to see how Bhojpuri differs from Sarnámi and how to incorporate those insights in the course.

## 4. Basis of cooperation

Sarnámihuis is a volunteer organization that includes professionals who offers their services for free to Sarnámihuis. We want to develop a relationship with ODI that is based on the following principles:

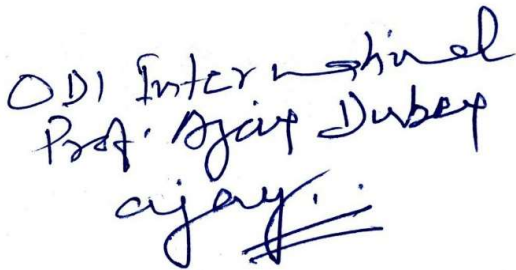
- Transparent communication.
- Result-oriented cooperation.
- Trust and friendship.

Sarnámihuis would like to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with ODI to provide a formal basis of our cooperation.

With these principles we can achieve great things in the future.

Signature and Seal:

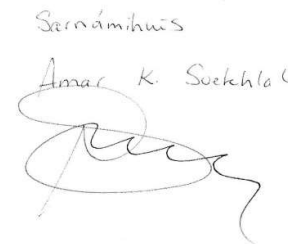
**For Organisation for Diaspora Initiatives  
(ODI International)**



ODI International  
Prof. Ajay Dubey  
Ajay

**Prof. Ajay Dubey  
(President ODI)**

**For Sarnámihuis Foundation**



Sarnámihuis  
Amar K. Soekhlal

**Mr. Amar K Soekhlal  
(President Sarnámihuis)**