



NFU General Assembly 2014

Time: 11th of December 2014, 1400 - 1530

Venue: Fafo

Agenda (item 1)

1. Constitute meeting and approve agenda

- Election of General Assembly Chair and two reporters
- Approval of agenda

2. NFU Annual Report 2014

3. Annual plan and budget for 2015

4. Elections

- NFU board and auditor, presentation by the Nomination Committee
- Nomination committee, presentation by the NFU Board

5. Incoming business

Item 2. NFU Annual report 2014

(Covering the period November 2013 to December 2014)

1. General

The current year covers the period November 2013 – December 2014. It should be noted that the General Assembly is as a general rule conducted in connection with the Annual Conference. For practical reasons we have adopted flexible business years for reporting and accounts. Since this year's conference was held in Tromsø as early as October 1st and 2nd, the General Assembly is held in December, at Fafo.

2. The NFU Board members 2013-2014

The NFU General Assembly 2013 was held in Oslo at SUM, in connection with the association's 30th anniversary. Following the elections at this meeting, the composition of the NFU Board has been as follows:

Board members

Hanne Haaland, Department of Global Development and Planning, University of Agder (Chair)

Håvard Haarstad, Department of Geography, University of Bergen

Ingunn Bjørkhaug, Fafo, Oslo

Darley Kjosavik, Noragric, Oslo

Kristen Nordhaug, Oslo and Akershus University College

Cecilie Hirsch, SUM, University of Oslo

Trond Waage, University of Tromsø

Thomas Sætre Jacobsen, NTNU, Trondheim

Ingvild Skage Agedal, University of Bergen

Erlend Eidsvik, Bergen University College

Randi Solhjell, NUPI

Nomination Committee

Petter Andersen, UiB

Knut Gunnar Nustad, NUPI/UiO, Oslo

Morten Bøås, Fafo

Trond Vedeld, NIBR

EADI representative

Our new EADI representative, Darley Kjosavik (Noragric, NMBU) was elected via email in February 2014.

Auditor

Hans Jørgen Christiansen, University of Tromsø

3. Progress towards Annual Plan for 2014:

3.1 NFU Board meetings

The NFU Board has conducted four meetings since the last General Assembly (February 28, May 12th, June 18th, October 22nd. Generally, 4 – 6 persons have participated in the meetings.

A tight schedule for all board members made a formal board meeting difficult during the conference, but an informal meeting was held during the first conference day in Tromsø (October 1st), preparing for a meeting between NORAD and NFU on the 2nd of October.

For the first meeting held in 2014 board members connected via videoconferences. We have for the latest meetings turned to Skype. Skype allows for up to 8 participants and is easier to use. Minutes have been written from all meetings. Some discussions and communication has also taken place via email. The number of meetings and interaction through email is hence according to the plan for 2014

3.2 NFU Membership

NFU had 154 paying members by 15th of November 2013 (HERE SIGRID SAYS THAT THE LIST FROM LAST YEARS SAYS 126, whereas annual report says 154)

In November 2014, NFU had a total of 98 paying members. We continue to have an email list with 305 members, but the list needs to be updated. The ambition to maintain a membership base of about 160 has therefore not been fulfilled; rather we have experienced a substantial decrease, despite our efforts to actively recruit new members during the Tromsø conference. The ambition of a membership level of +/- 160 does not seem too high, but requires the serious attention of the board in the next period. In comparison there were 166 paying members of the association by the end of 2011, and 135 members by the end of 2012. The past 15 years the number of paying members has fluctuated between 110 and 180, but membership having sunk to below 100 calls for attention.

The main means to attract memberships to NFU is hosting a relevant and high quality conference that provides the main networking arena for Norwegian development researchers, along with subscription to Forum for Development Studies. Expectations in earlier years were that NFU would see a lower membership payment rate during the years when the conference is organized at the Nordic level (since membership gives a discount in the conference fee). The experience the past three years has indicated the opposite – that paying membership has been higher during the years when the conference was organized at the Nordic level. This may explain the fall in members this year. In 2014 there were about 25 new members paying their fees in relation to the conference in Tromsø. However, what needs to be taken into account is how this year's conference in Tromsø unfortunately collided with the fall break in Southern and Eastern Norway, possibly leading to a lower

attendance from researchers from these areas and possibly also a fall in paying membership fees as part of the conference

(SAY SOMETHING ABOUT ATTENDENCE HERE VS PREVIOUS CONFERENCES?)

3.3 Increase the benefits to, and number and activity level of members

In 2014, the University of Tromsø, with the support of NFU and financial support of the NRC, organised the annual conference on development research. In early May, we were contacted by NORAD, wanting to know more about NFU, our activities and members.

In June (June 23rd) Hanne Haaland and Trond Waage, representing NFU, had a videoconference meeting with Paul Fife and Anne Wetlesen, NORAD. We discussed potential interaction and cooperation and as a result, NORAD was invited to host one session at the conference in Tromsø, representing policymakers. As mentioned, a formal meeting was between NORAD and the board also took place during the conference, continuing the discussions about common interests and cooperation. NORAD has expressed interest in making more use of development research conducted by the Norwegian milieu in their work, and pointed to how NFU as a members' organisation may help NORAD in their efforts to better use knowledge generated by Norwegian researchers.

Based on the discussions from a board meeting following the conference the NFU board has suggested collaborating with NORAD for organising a one day's conference on a specific theme of interest to the broader development research society – eg. impacts of existing policies on education or health. This suggestion has been positively received in NORAD. Increased contact with NORAD can possibly make our organisation more visible, yet we must also strive to ensure our independence of policy makers.

As in previous years, we have offered Forum for Development Studies to paying members, and have strived to keep the members updated through the website and regular email announcements. The Master's thesis award was offered this year. The deadline was set in July but postponed to the 20th of August. 10 eligible theses had been submitted. The evaluation committee consisted of Randi Solhjell, Thomas S Jacoben and Erlend Eidsvik. The winners were announced at the NFU conference, on October 1st. The committee had two strong candidates for the first prize and after some discussions within the board it was decided to divide the price between Lisa Nilsen (UiO) and Anna Sveinsdottir (UiO). The committee argued that the two winner theses were quite distinct in their style and reflecting different traditions within the broad field of development.

As in earlier years we wanted to have a specific event targeted at Master's students, as done at the 2012 conference. However, we were not able to find anyone with the experience to host such an event. We hope that such an important student event will be organised for the 2016 conference.

As for the 2015 conference, it is the idea that it is to be a Nordic conference. Please see point 3.5.

3.4. Procedures and strategy for strengthening role of NFU in relevant public hearings

There have not been any opportunities for participating in public hearings this year. However, in our discussions with NORAD we have indicated that we wish to assume more actively a role in public hearing, for instance with the NORHED projects, and other relevant programs.

3.5 Strengthen and consolidate Nordic and international networking

There is broad agreement that the Nordic conferences should be continued every two or three years. The overall idea discussed in Finland on the 2nd Nordic Conference was that a Swedish environment would host the 2015 conference. We have approached our partners in Denmark and Finland, both pointing towards Sweden and Norway as potential organisers. We have been in contact with NAI, who unfortunately has no opportunity to arrange for anything in 2015. Their suggestion was a joint Nordic Conference and Africa days in 2016, which we have declined wanting to ensure the tradition of a Nordic conference every second year. Based on suggestions from NAI we contacted School of Global Studies in Gothenburg, which now have confirmed their interest in hosting the conference. As the response from Gothenburg arrived late, we have informally approached CMI and NTNU about potentially hosting the conference in Norway. The signals from CMI/UiB are that positive and we hope that their interest will remain strong until the 2016 Norwegian conference.

The NFU is a member of EADI, the European Association of Development Research and Training Institutes. Both our representative Darley Kjosavik and Chair Hanne Haaland participated in the conference in Bonn, with own papers and thus not covered by the NFU budget. Representatives from NRC and NORAD participated and commented the absence of Norwegian researchers. **NFU should more actively promote the EADI network among members. Our board member Darley Kjosavik has been in dialogue with NRC about funds for covering the participation in the EADI board.**

3.6 Improve communication and the visibility of the NFU and development research

We have been using the website, Facebook and emails for updates. Most of the updates concern NFU events, such as the annual conference, call for master's thesis candidates and vacancies. Occasionally these channels are used for other updates as well.

At this years' conference, our coordinator was present with a stand alongside Forum, trying actively to recruit new members. She also used Facebook as a channel to bring updates from the conference. However, the challenge is to secure a steady flow of information, for all channels. The board has continuous discussions about how to best communicate with members and which platforms to use. We agree on the need to have an active webpage, as well as a Facebook account – if we want them to serve as information channels. The challenge is to keep the information flowing and updated. By having one board member with responsibility for information (in addition to the coordinator/chair) is one way of trying to ensure a continuous flow.

3.7 Consolidate the functioning of the NFU Board

The past two years the Board has hired an assistant/coordinator to help with administrative tasks, such as updating the accounts, sending out payment reminders, emails, etc. We have recruited a Master's student for this, and offer a stipend in return. This arrangement has worked well. Sigrid Narvestad Hungnes has been our coordinator for the past year. She has done a good job and we are grateful for her contribution. Unfortunately she is not able to continue and we need to find her follower. There is consensus in the board that the coordinator does not necessarily have to be recruited from SUM, but could also come from other institutions where board members are located. Independent of location, the main issue is to ensure good procedures when handing the work over from one coordinator to another. The bank situation has so far been the most challenging aspect of handing over the work, in terms of responsibility, access etc. The month of December should be overlapping for coordinators, to ensure that a smooth handover takes place.

For 2014 we have had a quite a big board. In order to keep a well-functioning board, we have discussed a clearer division of work between board members. For the board 2014/2015 we suggest that there is a clear division of work when it comes to assistant chair, information responsibility, contact with NORAD/participation in planning of other events, master thesis work – all in order to ensure continuity and a well-functioning board. With such a division of work, the board may not be as vulnerable in potential situations of sick leaves and absence.

3.8 Accounts 2014

Membership income is lower than last year and we have not reached our ambitious target. We have spent a little more than budgeted on board meetings, however, this year the total amount was spent on the coordinator's participation at the Tromsø conference (5836 nok) and some stationary as part of her stand at the conference. We have finally received a bill from Forum for Development Studies, on 24 400, lower than expected, probably reflecting our low membership number. The 30th anniversary seminar costs shows up in our 2014 accounts, as they were displaced to 2014.

For 2013, the accounts were not approved by our auditor Hans Jørgen Oppi-Christiansen, as we had a surplus of 3000 nok that could not be accounted for. We have asked our auditor for a statement regarding the 2013 accounts and will send him the 2014 accounts after the General Assembly.

	Budget 2014	Accounts 2014
Income		
Membership fees	65000	38 900
Interest	300	206
Other		
<i>Total income</i>	<u>65300</u>	<u>39 106</u>
Expenditure		
Board meetings	5 000	5836
Forum for Development Studies	35000	24 400
NFU Web-site	7500	7563
EADI/Nordic cooperation	2000	2056
NFU Awards	10000	10000
Award event	0	0
Honorarium auditor	700	700
Miscellaneous	0	2590
Coordinator	24000	24000
Anniversary seminary		
remaining costs from 2013	13000	15963
<i>Total expenses</i>	<u>97200</u>	<u>93198</u>
Result	<u>- 31 900</u>	<u>-54 092</u>

Balances

Incoming balance 01.11.2013: 163.876

Outgoing balance 30.11.2014: 128.163

Annual Plan 2015 (item 3)

1. NFU Board meetings

The Board will have 5-6 meetings in 2015. It will continue to use Skype when appropriate, which is cost- and time effective. It will also attempt to have at least one face-to-face meeting in Oslo.

2. NFU Membership

The Board has the ambition of increasing our membership in 2015, from about 98 to 150. We hope that membership rates will rise through the Nordic conference and we must particularly continue to target students and former members. Regular email

announcements, an updated and relevant website, relevant events, and the offer of Forum for Development Studies will be key.

3. Increase the benefits to, and number and activity level of NFU members

NFU will continue to offer Forum for Development studies to its members, maintain an updated website, offer regular email announcements, and take part in relevant Events, for 2015 potentially in partnership with NORAD. We will continue planning for the Nordic Conference and keep members up to date on this event.

A main task for the Board will be to secure funds for the conference and facilitate Nordic interaction in the planning process as well as facilitate for interaction between NFU, organizers, NORAD and NFR. We will continue our interaction with NORAD and try to actively engage with them to increase the visibility of our association and facilitate a better interaction between Norwegian development researchers and policy makers. Moreover, we will continue to offer the Master's Thesis Award to outstanding work in development studies.

FORUM has also gotten funds to re-establish their tradition with awarding the best FORUM article of the year, which will be of interest to our members. We will cooperate closely with Gothenburg on organising the conference and we will encourage them to organize a specific event targeted at Master's students. As for the arrangement of permanent panels, this is an arrangement to be reviewed and we will decide whether it should be continued with a new set of three year panels from 2015.

4. Procedures and strategy for strengthening role of NFU in relevant public hearings

We will continue to provide input to hearing documents when we are asked for input, and will aim to be better at drawing on the broader membership in providing this input. Our potentially increased interaction with NORAD will hopefully allow us to serve as a stronger platform for researchers to participate in public debate on relevant issues.

5. Strengthen and consolidate Nordic and international networking

We will continue our contribution to the planning of a Nordic conference in Gothenburg 2015. The Board will participate actively in organization and fund raising.

6. Consolidate the functioning of the NFU Board

Maintaining a coordinator function is intended to make the Board operate more professionally and efficiently. We should aim to have more updated website and more regular newsletter. A clearer division of work within the board will also ensure a better functioning organisation.

7. National council on development studies (Nasjonalt fagråd)

We will aim to strengthen our communication with the National council on matters of common interest. **(THIS YEAR THERE HAS BEEN NO INTERACTION)**

8. Forum for Development Studies

We will dialogue more closely with the editorship of Forum for Development Studies, and consider reinstating the Best Article of the Year Award in collaboration with the Forum editors. We have invited the editors to join our board meeting at least once a year.

9. Budget

The past few years we have run a deficit. This has been done to revamp the website and restructure the Board activities with a coordinator. We have also been able to cut some costs, such as the EADI meetings and the Best Article award. Although we have had a healthy bank balance, this has been gradually reduced the past few years. We are now striving to balance the budget, although the budget for 2014 was planned with a deficit, we have nearly doubled the deficit. The deficit in 2014 is the result of a declining membership base as well as of costs incurred in 2013, from the 30th anniversary. The association needs to recruit more members, otherwise we must discuss the need to cut or reduce the coordinator position.

	Accounts 2014	Budget 2015
Income		
Membership fees	38 900	55000
Interest	206	200
Other		
<i>Total income</i>	<u>39106</u>	<u>55200</u>
Expenditure		
Board meetings	5836	2500
Forum for Development Studies	24 400	35 000
NFU Web-site	7563	7600
EADI/Nordic cooperation	2056	2100
NFU MA thesis award	10000	10000
Anniversary seminar 2013	15963*	0
Honorarium auditor	700	700
Coordinator	24000	24000
Costs Nordic planning/participation	0	3500
Other (stamps, bank etc)	2590	2600
<i>Total expenses</i>	<u>93108</u>	<u>88 000</u>
Result	<u>- 54 002</u>	<u>- 32 800</u>

*including travel costs, food and Litteraturhuset