



## **NFU General Assembly 2020/2021**

Time: 15 February 2021, 18:30 – 20:00

Venue: Zoom

### **Item 1. Agenda**

#### **1. Constitute meeting and approve agenda**

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

#### **2. Board changes**

#### **3. NFU Annual Report 2020**

#### **4. Annual plan and budget for 2021**

#### **5. Master thesis award**

#### **6. Debate: NFU strategic planning for development research**

#### **7. Incoming business**

## Item 2. Board changes

Covering the period December 1<sup>st</sup> 2019 – February 15 2021

### 2.1. General

The current year covers the period December 1<sup>st</sup> 2019 – February 15 2021 due to postponement of the General Assembly meeting.

### 2.2. The NFU Board members 2019-2020

The NFU GA 2020 was held via Zoom. Following the elections at this meeting, the composition of the NFU Board has this year been as follows:

#### **Board members**

Randi Solhjell (Co-chair,), Research Department at the Norwegian Police University College, Oslo

Ingunn Bjørkhaug, Fafo, Oslo

Frida Bjørnstad, NUPI

Darley Kjosavik, Noragric, NMBU, Oslo (EADi representative)

Rachel I. Djesa, Senter for samiske studier (SESAM), UiT – The Arctic University of Norway, Tromsø

Teklehaymanot Weldemichel, Department of Geography NTNU, Trondheim

Arnild Leer-Helgesen, co-chair, Institute for Global Development and Planning, Agder University, Kristiansand

Jason Miklian, Co-chair, Centre for Development and the Environment (SUM)

Kaja Borchgrevink, Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO)

#### **Coordinator**

Christina Tamang

<b>Nomination Committee:</b>	<b>EADI Representative</b>	<b>Auditor</b>
Erlend Eidsvik Arve Hansen	Darley Kjosavik, Noragric, NMBU	Hans-Jørgen Oppi- Christiansen, UiT

The chair position in 2020 was supposed to be Jason Miklian, but due to family circumstances the NFU have instead practiced a co-chair situation where Randi Solhjell, Arnild Leer-Helgesen and Jason have divided tasks between them. Randi can continue with the accounting duties but wishes to step down from the co-chair position and act only as board member. Both Randi and Arnild will be on leave in 2021. Kaja Borchgrevink and Rachel Djesa have decided to withdraw from the NFU board. Rachel has suggested Ibrahim Larry, PhD student at the University of Tromsø, who has expressed interest (22 February 2021) in joining the NFU board. Ibrahim will be invited to the next board meeting. In addition, Jason has proposed Jostein Jakobsen at SUM as new board member, which the NFU board members unanimously supported and Jostein has accepted.

Valerinne P. Hutagalung wished to step down as coordinator. The board would like to acknowledge the devoted work carried out by Valerinne. Through SUM-student recruitment, NFU has a new coordinator, Christina Tamang, who has already done a significant job in

updating the webpage and social media accounts and keeping track on the master thesis award. The NFU is very pleased to have Christina on board.

#### Elected board of 2021 is

- Randi Solhjell, Research Department at the Norwegian Police University College, Oslo (board member extended)
- Ingunn Bjørkhaug, Fafo, Oslo (extended)
- Darley Kjosavik, Noragric, NMBU, Oslo (EADi representative, extended)
- Teklehaymanot Weldemichel, Department of Geography NTNU, Trondheim (extended)
- Arnhild Leer-Helgesen, Institute for Global Development and Planning, Agder University, Kristiansand (extended)
- Jason Miklian, Centre for Development and the Environment (SUM) (extended)
- Jostein Jakobsen (SUM) (new board member)
- Frida Bjørnseth, NUPI, (extended)

<b>Nomination Committee:</b> Arve Hansen, SUM Erlend Eidsvik, Western Norway University of Applied Sciences <i>One open seat</i>	<b>EADI Representative</b> Darley Kjosavik, Noragric, NMBU	<b>Auditor</b> Hans-Jørgen Oppi- Christiansen, UiT
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### Item 3. NFU Annual Report 2020

#### 3.1 NFU Board meetings

Most of the board's discussions and communication have taken place via email and Skype.

The NFU Board has conducted one official board meeting in 2020. Formal minutes have been written by the chair. Darley Kjosavik and Randi Solhjell took part in the annual EADI conference online.

In addition, the co-chairs have met regularly for the application to Norglobal (conference support) and Solhjell have met with the Nordic development associations and networks applying arranging the biannual NorDev conference, to be held in Finland in 2021.

#### 3.2 Division of labour within the board 2020

The NFU co-chairs were active in writing the NORGLOBAL proposal for the envisioned NFU conference 2020 (postponed), led by Arnhild Leer-Helgesen and Agder University, who were lead in budgeting and submitting the proposal through their institutional affiliation.

Randi Solhjell participated in one Nordic meeting in Oslo this year representing NFU. The outcome was the planning for the Nordic conference 2021 in Finland. Jason Miklian also took on the role as co-guest editor for a special issue for Forum for Development Studies based on submitted conference articles. Darley Kjosavik have been NFU's representative to EADI.

### 3.3 NFU Membership

NFU had a total of 67 members in November 2020. We continue to have a large email list with 67 subscribers. For the past 15 years, the number of paying members has fluctuated between 20 and 180. Since 2015, the board had a focus on recruitment of members, and visibility i.e. social media. This has continued. As of 2020, NFU decided that membership will be free for 2020 and 2021, especially due to limited activity/offers, while simultaneously recruiting members through master student programs, universities, institutes and others and building the social media strategy, led by the coordinator and co-chairs.

Due to low membership numbers, NFU has asked board members to find support through their institution. SUM have been the only one who offered their institutional support, but in turn provided double support, namely for 2019 and 2020. This has led to a better balanced account and enabled NFU to offer a Master thesis award, with the winning prize 5000 NOK.

### 3.4 NFU Permanent Panels

Three permanent panels were endorsed in 2019 by the NFU board. They are as follows for the period 2019-2021:

- Religion and Development (led by Philipp Öhlmann, Humboldt University Berlin, Germany / University of Pretoria, South Africa)
- Political Ecology: Politics, Power, and Environmental Change (led by Connor Joseph Cavanagh, Department of International Environment and Development Studies Noragric, Norwegian University of Life Sciences)
- Challenging Actors in International Development (led by June Fylkesnes, University of Agder)

The groups planned for the NFU conference, which is postponed until further notice, but also to the NorDev conference to be held in Finland/online in June 2021.

### 3.5 Strengthen and consolidate Nordic and international networking

There is broad consensus that the Nordic conferences should be continued every second year. The last Nordic conference was successfully held in 2019 and hosted by the Copenhagen Business School, 27-28 June, 'Knowledge Production in North-South Collaboration: Challenges in an era of a new global divide. The next conference will be organised online via Finland 2021, followed by Sweden 2023 and Norway 2025. The upcoming NorDev conference (online conference) includes a combination of working groups, plenary panels and keynote presentations. NFU needs to consider how to actively involve more scholars, students and practitioners in these conferences for the future.

### 3.6 Communication and the visibility of the NFU and Development

#### Research

NFU used its website, Facebook, Twitter and email newsletters for updates. The information work has been carried out by the coordinator with some activity from the board members (e.g. suggesting relevant conference events and stipends). Our updates on relevant institutions in Norway and Nordic countries concerning conferences, seminars, vacancies, NFU events, EADI events. Invitations for networking and future plausible collaborations has been sent to multiple institutions working in the broad sector of development across Norway. NFU has received positive gestures from some in this regard.

### 3.7 Consolidate the functioning of the NFU Board

The past ten years the Board has had a coordinator to assist with administrative tasks, such as updating the accounts, writing minutes from board meetings, and composing and disseminating webpage and social media updates and newsletters. This arrangement has worked well. Christina Tamang will continue for the academic year 2020-2021 and will be able to work part-time in this position, while writing her Master thesis at SUM.

NFU has had a large board for the past few years. The size of the board means that the association interacts with many different environments – and always has a critical number of people participating in board meetings. As is also stated in our statutes, it is pertinent that we continue with a combination of people representing the different research environments and institutions in Norway. Thus, we aim to secure board members from different institutions and contexts, e.g. approaching members from CMI.

### 3.8 Accounts 2020

Membership income was low and will be zero for the remaining of 2020 and 2021. However, the institutional support by SUM in early 2020 has enabled NFU to secure some critical funding. We will continue this way of securing funding from the institutions.

## Account 2020

	Budget 2020	Account 2020
<b>Income</b>		
Membership fees	18000	1940
Interest	8	10
Other (external and institutional funding)	8000	16000
Funds from 2019	15030	
<i>Total income</i>	24830	32980
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Board meetings	0	0
Forum for Development Studies	0	0
NFU Web-site	2850	2259
EADI/Nordic cooperation	2445	2530
MA thesis award*	1000	0
Honorarium auditor	700	0
Coordinator**	1000	1000
DNB expenses***	550	720
Other/miscellaneous	0	0
<i>Total expenses</i>		6509

<b>Results</b>	26471
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\*MA thesis award will be added to the 2021 budget, 5000 NOK (financed by SUM)

\*\*Valerinne received one symbolic payment for her coordination efforts 2018-2020

\*\*\*DNB started charging 90 NOK instead of 40 NOK in mid-2020, a considerable increase without warning!

## Item 4. Annual Plan 2021

### 4.1. NFU Board meetings

The Board plans for two meetings in 2021. If possible, the board and coordinator plans to meet physically in fall 2021.

### 4.2. NFU Membership

The membership situation of the association requires an active recruitment for 2021. Clearer work responsibilities within the board and coordinator, and a well-functioning and active information group could be key in this work. The board will continue applying for external funding and institutional support as way to increase NFU activities and visibility and hence recruit more members .

The cuts in funding to development research and to development organisations recent years have led to an increased focus on the field of development in general. Given the situation, the public visibility of the NFU is pertinent and the board needs to continue to voice the interests of development research. In addition, regular email announcements, an updated and relevant website, relevant events, and job posts.

Active recruitment is not the only explanation as to why NFU has decreasing membership base. There are also some system faults; therefore a well-functioning system should be made as well.

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

The NFU biannual conference postponed until 2022 is conditioned on funding from NFR (Norglobal) or other conference support. The UiA received funding for the planned conference of 2020, but due to the Covid19 situation, the conference was postponed for two years and thus funding had to be returned. The conference provides the main networking, participation and North-South collaboration for long-time and new members. If conference support is not achieved, NFU is committed to arrange a seminar in collaboration with partners and permanent panels.

The NFU will continue to maintain an updated website, offer regular email announcements, and take part in relevant events. A main task for the Board will be to try to secure funds for upcoming conferences, and to increase the membership base. The decision to go for a 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle of Nordic Conference collaboration (Finland 2021, Sweden 2023 and Norway 2025) will of course depend on funding, which is coordinated jointly with the Nordic partners. Members of the Board and FORUM continue discussions with NFR (NORGLOBAL), MFA and NORAD on prioritizing these types of events.

During the conferences, it is crucial that the attendees can sign up to become a member of NFU (or get a reduced price as a member). It is also possible that all attendees automatically becomes a member of NFU and hopefully continue as member following years.

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

The NFU will continue to provide input to hearing documents and will aim to be better at drawing on the broader membership in providing this input. In addition, it is necessary to be

active in national forums and networks, such as SAIH and the National Council for Development Studies.

#### 4.5. Strengthen and consolidate Nordic and international networking

We will continue our communication with the Nordic development associations and also with EADI. One board member should also be the EADI representative. Darley Kjosavik (NMBU/Noragric) has been the EADI-representative the last six years. Kjosavik participates in the EADI Executive Committee meeting and EADI Director's meeting and seminar, and the tri-annual General Conference. The General Conference that was planned to be held at ISS Hague in late June 2020 had to be postponed due to the pandemic. The GC is now planned to be held online 5-8 July 2021. Kjosavik is also a co-convenor of the EADI Working Group on Climate-Resilient Development and Transformational Change (CRD-TC), which organises a panel at the GC.

#### 4.6. Consolidate the functioning of the NFU Board

Maintaining a coordinator function is intended to help the Board continue to strive towards a more efficient handling of membership and external communication. With the assistant of a coordinator, NFU must aim to continue to provide an updated website and regular newsletters. A clearer division of work within the board will also ensure a well-functioning association. The board should continue to clarify roles and responsibilities.

#### 4.7. Forum for Development Studies

NFU board member Jason Miklian together with Søren Jeppesen (Danish FAU) were guest editors for a special issue in Forum for Development Studies, based on the NorDev conference 2019. NFU board members Frida Bjørneseth, in charge of book reviews and essays in Forum, has also offered support to the MA thesis award winner 2019-2020 to transform their thesis into a publishable article. Furthermore, whenever there is a new issue, there should be included links in our newsletter and website and Facebook, and NFU could spend more time on promoting Forum for Development studies so that their articles are available and read.



## 4.9. Budget

	Account 2020	Budget 2021
<b>Income</b>		
Membership fees	2000	0
Interest	8	8
Funds from 2020	26316	26316
Other (external and institutional funding)	8000	8000
<i>Total income</i>	36324	34324
<b>Expenditure</b>		
NFU Web-site	2850	2850
EADI/Nordic cooperation	2445	2445
MA thesis award	5000	5000
Honorarium auditor	700	0
DNB expenses	550	720
Other/miscellaneous	0	0
<hr/> <i>Total expenses</i> <hr/>	11545	11015
<hr/> <b>Results</b> <hr/>	24779	23309

## Item 5. Master thesis award

The NFU will announce a winner for the master thesis award in spring 2021, which also includes a 5000 NOK award secured by SUM. Darley has approached the EADI Secretary and the conference organization team has agreed to accommodate presentation of the thesis award. The presentation can be a short introductory speech by NFU representative and a short speech by the winner. It is recommended that the evaluators of the award present the award highlighting motivation and importance of the award. The other Nordic Development Associations do not have any scheme of providing thesis award in their program. Randi have asked if they can write about NFU Master's Thesis Award on their website and will follow up with the Finnish hosts.

## Item 6. Debate: NFU strategic planning for development research

### **The NFU is seeking a new chair:**

- Someone who can also direct and strategize for broadening NFU and its network.
- Someone who can bring energy and spark in this association
- The desirability is such that the person can hold the responsibility of a chair as well as director.
- Preferably someone in senior position. However, as most of senior position personnel are probably already engaged with other commitments, it is unlikely that they will take on board to chair NFU. Therefore, it is acceptable that personnel of assistant professor/post-doc level are approached.

Randi and Jason is able to be a point of contact for some of the issues in NFU, strongly supported by coordinator Christina. However, it is necessary that NFU finds a more permanent chair who is able to lead and secure the interest of NFU in the future.

## Item 6. Incoming Business

Initiatives to engage NFU with events and webinars are valued and welcome. However, it is to be noted that NFU has financial limitation.