 **NFU General Assembly 2022**

Time: 15 May 15.00-16.30

Venue: Zoom

<https://uiano.zoom.us/j/64606027203?pwd=S1FEWTlGWHE1VmFPSDV4YmNDYmZIQT09>

# 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 2021-22**

**4. Annual plan and budget for 2023**

**5. EADI membership**

**6. Debate: Future seminars and conferences**

**7. Incoming business**

# Item 2. Board changes

## 2.1. General

Due to a delayed Annual Assembly new board candidates will be elected for a period starting from 1.6.2023.

## 2.2. The NFU Board members 2021 and 2022

Since 2020 the chair position has been shared by Randi Solhjell, Jason Miklian and Arnhild Leer-Helgesen. Both Randi Solhjell and Arnhild Leer-Helgesen were partly on leave in 2021. From June 2022 Arnhild Leer-Helgesen took the main responsibility as chair of NFU, supported by the board in a board meeting. Both Jason and Randi have continued as co-chairs, and Randi continued with the accounting until December 2022.

Through University of Agder’s student recruitment, NFU has a new coordinator, Julia Baldanza de Mattos, who has re-actived the social media accounts and website as well as carried out a mapping of possible institutions and researchers related to development in Norway.

Elected board of 2022 was as follows:

● 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)

● Arnhild Leer-Helgesen, Institute for Global Development and Planning, Agder

University, Kristiansand (extended)

● Jason Miklian, Centre for Development and the Environment (SUM) (extended)

● Frida Bjørnseth, OsloMet, (extended)

Board 2023: New candidates and candidates for re-election will be presented in the meeting.

**Coordinator**Until June 2021: Christina Tamang

Since September 2022: Julia Baldanza de Mattos

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Nomination Committee:** Erlend Eidsvik  Arve Hansen | **EADI Representative** Darley Kjosavik, Noragric, NMBU | **Auditor** Hans-Jørgen Oppi- Christiansen, UiT |

# Item 3. NFU Annual Report 2021-22

### 3.1 NFU Board meetings and responsibilities

The board’s discussions and communication have taken place via email and Zoom.

The NFU Board conducted three official board meetings in 2022. Formal minutes have been written by Randi Solhjell (June 2022) and the student coordinator (September and November).

The NFU co-chairs divided taks between them in the first part of the year. When Arnhild assumed the main responsibility as chair from June 2022, Jason and Randi continued as co-chairs. Among other things, Jason took a particular responsibility for introducing the new coordinator to social media communication, while Randi continued with the accounting until December 2022.

Darley Kjosavik and Randi Solhjell took part in the annual EADI conference online in 2022.

### 3.2 NFU Coordinator

Through internal funding from the University of Agder (UiA), NFU recruited a new coordinator in September 2022. Nine master students applied and based on the application and interviews (conducted by Randi Solhjell and Arnhild Leer-Helgesen), Julia Baldanza de Mattos was selected. She is a student at the Master in Development Management at UiA.

### 3.3 Network activities

On 24 May 2022 Arnhild took part in the first Network-to-Network meeting, initiated by the EADI secretariat, to increase collaboration between networks in different countries. Such meetings will be held on a regular basis, twice a year. During the fall 2022 Arnhild has also participated as a member of the organizing committee for the 7th Nordic Development Research Conference, organized in Uppsala, Sweden, 21-23 August 2023.

Darley Kjosavik has been NFU’s representative in EADI’s Executive Committee.

### 3.3 NFU activities

With a new NFU coordinator in place, the social media accounts and webpage were reactivated and Julia regularly posted news and events of interest to global development researchers and students. NFU used its website, Facebook, Twitter for updates. There is a project to re-activate the use of the email newsletter for the year 2023. 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 have been centered on relevant institutions in Norway and Nordic countries offering conferences, seminars, and vacancies.

Julia also did a mapping of key persons and institutions working with global development research and teaching. The list will be used (early 2023) to send out a letter aimed at creating awareness of NFU’s existence, purpose and ask them to share events and vacancies with us. The NFU email list is being re-built.

In previous years, NFU have regularly got funding from Norglobal (through applications from partner institutions) for national and Nordic conferences on development research. From 1.1.2022 such funds from Norglobal are no longer available. Arnhild has been in contact with both NFR, MFA and Norad regarding this, arguing that it weakens the co-creation of knowledge highly relevant and necessary for international development. The support from Norglobal has been key to secure attendance of researchers from the Global south at national and Nordic conferences, among other things.

The NFU board decided to put the bi-annual national conferences on hold, both due to the funding/economic situation as well as the limited persons engaged in NFU at the moment. The board decided to focus on co-organizing events with other institutions, preferably twice a year. The first event was organized 10 October in Kristiansand, together with UiA and Strømme Foundation. The topic was “The global backlash against gender equality” and about 60-70 participants where present and approx. 30 digitally.

### 3.4 Master Thesis Award 2019-20 (awarded late 2021)

The master thesis award 2019-2020 went to [Clara Julia Reich](https://www.oslomet.no/en/about/employee/clarajul/) for her thesis “[Exploring Placemaking in Oslo – Critical perspectives on the ‘making’ of places](https://www.duo.uio.no/handle/10852/79253).” Clara holds a Master’s degree in Development, Environment and Cultural Change from the University of Oslo. The award prize was 5000 NOK, funded by The Centre for Development and Environment (SUM) at the University of Oslo. The committee consisted of Frida Bjørneseth and Jason Miklian. They praised the thesis as a clear example of how global issues of “development” play out in local contexts:

“Clara’s master thesis explores the concept and practices of ‘placemaking’ in Oslo. With Oslo’s former status as the European Green Capital in 2019, and ongoing debates of urban development in the city today, the different people and places engaged in ‘placemaking’ are no doubt relevant issues to study. On a global level, UN Sustainable Development Goal 11 aims to “make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable”, linking the thesis’ topic to larger debates as well. The also thesis illustrates how issues of ‘development’ are not bound to particular locations on the planet. […] In short, Clara’s thesis provides a fascinating, grounded, and deeply insightful window about how to think about urban development and the many practices and interests shaping cities today”. Read more here: http://nfu.no/nfu-master-award/

### 3.5 NFU Membership and strategic discussions

Due to falling numbers of individual members since 2015, the board has struggled with finding the right path forward. The pandemic also affected the work of NFU. As of 2020, NFU decided that membership will be free for 2020 and 2021, and this has continued in 2022. NFU did not ask for any institutional support in 2022 (as had been given by UiA in 2019 and SUM in 2019 and 2020), mainly due to limited activities and offers from NFU. The lack of funding and human resources also led to the Master thesis award being put on hold.

At the September board meeting Fredrik Söderbaum from Swedish Association for Development Research (SweDev) was invited to share their experience. SweDev was established at the end of 2019 as a response to interest from the development research community. SweDev got funding by the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) for 3 years, but the funding situation is very unpredictable. The advice from Söderbaum was to make network as cheap as possible to be able to survive in the long run with small amounts of money. The NFU board followed up with a discussion on the way forward for NFU in the board meeting in November. The conclusion is that NFU for the time being keeps a low-cost network, re-build activities and network to have something to offer, and looks for opportunities for stable funding (i.e. NFR) and possibly institutional support.

### 3.6 Account 2021 and 2022

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Account 2021 | Account 2022 |
| **Income** |  |  |
| Membership fees | 0 | 0 |
| Interest |  |  |
| Other (external and institutional funding) |  |  |
| Funds from 2020 | 20030 | |
| *Total income/available funds* | 20030 | 12585 |
|  |  |  |
| **Expenditure** |  |  |
| NFU coordinator\* | 0 | 0 |
| NFU Web-site | 2445 | 2685 |
| EADI/Nordic cooperation | 0 | 0 |
| MA thesis award\*\* | 5000 | 0 |
| DNB expenses\*\*\* | 0 | 0 |
| Other/miscellaneous | 0 | 0 |
| *Total expenses* | 7445 | 2685 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Results 31.12.22** | 9900 |

\*The coordinator was funded through internal UiA funds (Student in research project)

\*\*SUM funded the Master Thesis Award 2020-21

\*\*\*The bank account was closed in 2021 and the remaining funds transferred to an NFU project account at UiA early 2023, approved by the NFU board. This was done to reduce the cost of having an account and to ease the administration of small funds. When/if NFU starts to increase their income, another arrangement has to be found.

# Item 4. Annual Plan 2023

## 4.1. NFU Board meetings

The Board plans for two meetings in 2023. If possible, the board and coordinator plan to meet physically in the fall 2023.

## 4.2. NFU Membership

The membership situation of the association requires an active recruitment for 2023 and the work with attracting attention and showing the relevance and benefits of connecting with NFU, will continue. The board will continue to search for external funding opportunities and institutional support as way to increase NFU activities and visibility and hence recruit more members. Individual membership is still free in 2023.

The cuts in funding to development research and education has worsened the last year, with for example cuts of Norglobal funds and implementation of school fees for non-European students. Given the situation, the public visibility of NFU is pertinent and the board needs to continue to voice the interests of development research and studies.

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

The NFU biannual conference is put on hold and replaced by co-organized seminars/events with partnering institutions. Together with Fagråd for utviklingsstudier (National Council for Development Studies), NFU intends to arrange a seminar during the fall.

In August NFU is co-organizing the 7th Nordic Development Conference (NorDev) in Uppsala. During this conference NFU will invite Norway-based researchers and students attending the conference, to a short session to discuss NFU and network.

The re-start of the communication channels has met several difficulties and delays due to lack of passwords etc. In 2023 we had a default with the webpage that took a while to clear up. NFU will strive to maintain an updated website, re-start 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 made several years ago, to go for a 2nd cycle of Nordic Conference collaboration, with Norway coming up in 2025, will of course depend on funding. Members of the Board and FORUM will continue discussions with NFR, MFA and NORAD on prioritizing these types of events.

## 4.4. Strategy for strengthening role of NFU

NFU will continue to seek alliances and cooperation with institutions that have common interests, such as for example SAIH and the National Council for Development Studies. NFU will also advocate for increased focus and funding for knowledge production and research that involve researchers from the Global south.

## 4.5. Strengthen and consolidate Nordic and international networking

We will continue our communication with the Nordic development associations and also with EADI. As mentioned above, Arnhild Leer-Helgesen is part of the organizing committee for the Nordic Development Conference in Uppsala 21-23 August.

One NFU board member should also be the EADI representative. Darley Kjosavik (NMBU/Noragric) is currently the EADI-representative. Kjosavik participates in the EADI Executive Committee meeting and EADI Director’s meeting and seminar, and the tri-annual General Conference. Arnhild Leer-Helgesen is also representing NFU in the newly established Network-to-Network meetings, initiated by the EADI secretariat. One meeting was held in February 2023 and another is to be held physically during the EADI Conference in July.

## 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. However, funding has been and continue to be key to uphold a good function of a coordinator. The first semester this funding is secured by internal UiA funds. However, the board must strive to find long-term solutions to this. 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 Randi Solhjell, together with Søren Jeppesen (Danish FAU), will be guest editors for a special issue in Forum for Development Studies, based on the NorDev conference 2023. Furthermore, whenever there is a new issue, there should be included links in our (forthcoming) newsletter, website and Facebook, and NFU could spend more time on promoting Forum for Development studies so that their articles are available and read.

## 4.8 Budget 2023

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Budget 2023** |
| **Income** |  |
| Membership fees | 0 |
| Interest |  |
| Other (external and institutional funding) |  |
| Funds pr.31.1.23 | 9900 |
| *Total income/available funds* | 9900 |
|  |  |
| **Expenditure** |  |
| NFU coordinator\* |  |
| NFU Web-site | 3000 |
| EADI/Nordic cooperation | 0 |
| MA thesis award\*\* | 0 |
| Bank charges | 0 |
| Other/miscellaneous | 0 |
| *Total expenses* | 3000 |
| **Result** | 6900 |

# Item 5. EADI membership

The last two years NFU has not been a paying member of EADI due to lack of income. This has not affected the representation in the ExCo Committee. NFU does not have any income, and an EADI membership must be financed. The General Assembly should discuss if NFU should continue to be a member of EADI and if so, how to secure the payment.

# Item 6. Debate: Future seminars and conferences

In accordance with the decision made in the Nordic network, the Nordic conference should be held in Norway in 2025. Dialogue has already been established with the National Council of Development Studies on a possible cooperation to arrange this conference. Ideas on the process, potential partnering institutions, funding etc. are welcome.

As mentioned above, NFU are interested in co-organizing events with relevant actors. Ideas and initiatives are welcome.

# Item 7. Incoming Business