



NFU General Assembly 2017

Time: 12th of December 2017, 16:00 – 18:00

Venue: Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI),
C. J. Hambros plass 2, 0164 Oslo, Norway

Item 1. Agenda

1. Constitute meeting and approve agenda

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

2. NFU Annual Report 2017

3. Annual plan and budget for 2018

4. Board changes

5. Incoming business

Item 2. NFU Annual report 2017

(Covering the period November 1st 2016 – November 30th*, 2017)

*Note that the standard NFU year is November 1st – October 31st, however many expenses were paid November 23rd which should be included in the 2017 expenses.

2.1. General

The current year covers the period December 1st 2016 – November 30rd, 2017. For practical reasons we have adopted flexible business years for reporting and accounts. The General Assembly (GA) is as a general rule conducted in connection with the Annual Conference. Since this year's conference (EADI Nordic 2017) was held in Bergen as early as August, the GA is held in December, at NUPI in Oslo.

2.2. The NFU Board members 2016-2017

The NFU GA 2016 was held in Oslo at Håndverkeren Kurs og Konferansesenter, Rosenkrantz gate 7, Oslo, at the second day of the NFU Conference 2016 (hosted by SUM). Following the elections at this meeting, the composition of the NFU Board has this year been as follows:

Board members

Erlend Eidsvik, Western Norway University of Applied Sciences, Bergen (Chair)

Ingunn Bjørkhaug, Fafo, Oslo

Arve Hansen, SUM, UiO

Hanne Haaland, University of Agder, Kristiansand

Rachel Issa Djesa, SESAM, The Arctic University of Norway, Tromsø

Silje Mathisen, NTNU, Trondheim

Darley Kjosavik, Noragric, NMBU, Ås

Randi Solhjell, Norwegian Police University College, Oslo

Ingvild Aagedal Skage, University of Bergen

Coordinator

Andrea Fritsvold

Nomination Committee:	EADI Representative	Auditor
Petter Andersen, UiB	Darley Kjosavik, Noragric,	Hans-Jørgen Oppi-
Morten Bøås, FAFO	NMBU	Christiansen, UiT
Trond Vedeld, NIBR		

Silje Mathisen from NTNU and Ingvild Aagedal Skage from UiB have communicated that they wish to resign from the board. Mathisen has suggested Teklehaymanot Weldemichel from Department of Geography, NTNU as replacement.

Erlend Eidsvik, HVL, expressed to the board and the nomination committee that he planned to step down as NFU chair after this year. He wishes to continue as a general board member. The nomination committee has contacted NFU board members to enquire for a new chair. A new chair will be elected at the GA.

The board would like to acknowledge the devoted work carried out by the former board members who resign, and thank them duly for their involvement in NFU. The board also wishes to acknowledge and thank Erlend Eidsvik for his big involvement in NFU as a chair.

2.3. Progress towards Annual Plan for 2017:

2.3.1 NFU Board meetings

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

The NFU Board has conducted three official board meetings since the last GA (February 23rd, June 28th, October 11th). 3– 6 board members have participated in the meetings. Formal minutes have been written from all the formal meetings by the coordinator. All formal meetings this year have been hosted on Skype. The last meeting in October experienced technical problems, which excluded two board members from attending. A tight schedule made a formal board meeting difficult during the EADI Nordic conference, but informal meetings was held during the conference.

In discussions at the EADI Nordic conference in August, it was suggested that a representative from the journal "Forum for Development Studies" (Forum) attends the NFU board meetings throughout the year. This was brought for discussion at the board meeting in October, and it was agreed that such an arrangement is beneficial for all parts. We welcome a representative from Forum to the forthcoming board meetings, communication with Jon Harald Sande Lie is established. He is familiar with the work of NFU, and has also attended other NFU general assemblies.

The plan for 2017 was to arrange for 5 meetings. This was not met. However, the NFU chair has attended several coordinating meetings in preparation of the EADI Nordic conference, and disseminated information from the meetings to the board. In hindsight, the workload could have been distributed better within the board.



Arve Hansen, Andrea Fritsvold, Hanne Haaland, Darley Kjosavik and Erlend Eidsvik at the EADI Nordic 2017, Bergen 20-23 August.

2.3.2 Division of labour within the board 2017

The NFU chair was project leader for the EADI Nordic 2017 conference, which included four partners: EADI (European Association of Development Research and Training Institutes), UiB, CMI and NFU. The EADI representative (Darley Kjosavik) has also been instrumental in planning and executing the conference from her position in the EADI executive committee. The chair has also represented NFU at the GLOVAC 2017 conference in Trondheim, with the aim to bridge health sciences with NFU. Board members present at the EADI Nordic 2017 did also take part in a network-to-network meeting with different European associations for development research, as well as a specific meeting with Nordic associations on the future of the Nordic biennial development conferences. Two members of the board (Hanne Haaland and Ingunn Bjørkhaug) was in the evaluation committee for the NFU Master Thesis Award 2017. The call for Master Thesis Award was sent out late, which was unfortunate.

2.3.2 NFU Membership

NFU had in November 2015 a total of 105 paying members, and in November 2016 a total of 85 members. November 30th, 2017, it is 48 paying members (two members will have their membership extended to 2018). We continue to have a large email list (through MailChimp: 13 newsletters sent out in 2017) with 273 members. For the past 15 years, the number of paying members has fluctuated between 85 and 180. In The period 2015-2016, the board had a focus on recruitment of members, and visibility i.e. social media. This has continued. The NFU facebook-group has now 940 followers, and the NFU-twitter-account 78 followers. The information group has not been as active as in 2016, however, a newsletter was circulated to all research institutions and universities in order to get members to pay their membership fee.

The main focus on attracting members to NFU has been to host a relevant and high quality conference that provides the main networking arena for Norwegian development researchers, along with subscription to Forum for Development Studies. Invoices should be sent via regular mail in addition to reminders via newsletter and email.

During the EADI Nordic, it was not an option to become a member of NFU, which was unfortunate for the membership base this year.

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

Throughout 2017, the main focus and workload has been to organise for the EADI Nordic conference. As such, there have been few additional activities. For the coming year, it could be a good idea to take up the initiative of a development research seminar during spring 2018. This was carried out in 2015 (Critical Development Research in Crisis?) at Fafo. The intention of such a seminar is to gather researchers and the policy field discussing the current status of development research and the way forward.

2.3.4. EADI Nordic 2017 and NFU Permanent Panels

Four permanent panels were endorsed in the 2016 General Assembly, which last for three years. They are as follows:

- Asian Transformations: Theories, Challenges, Opportunities (Maren Aase, Arve Hansen, Jostein Jakobsen, Kenneth Bo Nielsen, Karina Standal, Harold Wilhite, SUM, UiO)
- Food in a changing world (Mariel Aguilar-Støen and Desmond McNeill: NMBU, Ola Westegen, Noragric, NMBU)
- Power, Resistance, and Development in the Global South (Alf Gunvald Nilsen, UiB; Hanne Haaland, Hege Wallevik, UiA)
- What Works in Development? (Dan Banik, SUM, UiO)

All four panels were present at the EADI Nordic 2017 and arranged highly interesting panels. The board extends their appreciation of the work of the panels to promote NFU at the conference.

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 as well. The deadline was set to August 5th, 2017. There were 6 entries submitted this year, where 2 were not eligible for evaluation. Thus, 4 eligible theses were submitted. The evaluation committee consisted of Ingunn Bjørkhaug and Hanne Haaland. The winner was Andrea Aleman-Andrade, from the Development Management Master programme at the University of Agder, Norway. The prize was announced at the EADI Nordic conference dinner. The winner could not attend the dinner, but there was a thank-you-note read up from her at the dinner. A diploma of recognition will be sent out to the winner shortly.

2.3.5 Strengthen and consolidate Nordic and international networking

There is broad consensus that the Nordic conferences should be continued every second year. This was agreed upon at a meeting between Nordic partners held in Bergen during the EADI Nordic 2017.

The last Nordic conference was successfully held in 2015 and hosted by School of Global Studies at the University of Gothenburg, from November 5th to 6th. The overall title was "A changing Global Development Agenda" and about 170 people from the Nordic Countries, the UK, Germany, The Netherlands and from the Global South participated. 100 papers were presented, 5 roundtables were organised and 19 working groups took place. A special issue from the conference was published in Forum for Development Studies, Vol 44, Issue 1 (2017): *A Changing Global Development Agenda?*

2.3.6 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 our coordinator. Our newsletters include updates on relevant institutions in Norway and Nordic countries concerning conferences, seminars, vacancies, NFU events, EADI events, NFU MA Thesis Award. 13 newsletters were sent out this year, on average 35 % of the 273 subscribers opened the newsletters.

Regardless of the notice in NFU newsletters where members are encouraged to submit events, activities and vacancies to the coordinator, very few members do this. The content of the newsletters reflects mostly what the coordinator finds on websites, facebook (following the institutions), network newsletters as well as input from board members.

During the EADI Nordic 2017 conference NFU was visible by beach flags in the plenary hall, as well as tweets and social media activities during the conference. The chair had the responsibility of being host, and held opening and closing remarks on behalf of NFU. NFU board members organised panel sessions during the conference. The coordinator was present during the conference and was also highly active disseminating news from the conference on diverse social media platforms.

2.3.7 Consolidate the functioning of the NFU Board

The past five years the Board has hired a coordinator to assist with administrative tasks, such as updating the accounts, sending out payment reminders, writing minutes from board meetings, and composing and disseminating newsletters. We have recruited a Master's student for this, and offer a stipend in return. This arrangement has worked well. Andrea Fritsvold at SUM, UiO, has been our coordinator for the past three years. She has many good ideas of how to interact with the members. This year she has not had the opportunity to be as proactive as the past years (however still conducted the work tasks and responsibilities assigned in the work description). The coordinator job involves a substantial amount of work in certain periods of the year. Andrea has worked to establish an improved structure for the coordinator's work, in order to facilitate for a potential change of coordinator, she has been the contact point for the chair, the board members, the academic journal Forum for development, Routledge (Taylor and Francis), and members' inquiries. She has also coordinated the Master Thesis Award-work, paid bills, and continuously updated the membership list/sent out invoices to new members signing up, throughout the year.

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, and as a part of this, the board is positive for a representative from the academic journal Forum for Development Studies to attend the board meetings. A representative from FORUM will be included in the list invited for the board meetings for 2018.

2.3.8 Accounts 2017

Membership income is lower than last year. We have not met our ambitious goal of a membership base of 120. Instead, we are down to only 48 paying members.

15.000 NOK was allocated to the NFU expenses within the EADI Nordic conference budget at UIB, to arrange for the coordinator to attend and assist, as well as coordinating expenses for NFU. Less than half of this allocation was spent at the conference, leaving the rest to be spent for traveling expenses to the board members in order to attend the GA. The GA is the only face-to-face meeting throughout the year.

	Budget 2017	Account 2017
Income		
Membership fees*	50000	20787
Interest	50	47
Other (external funding)	26000	15000
<i>Total income</i>	<u>76050</u>	<u>35834</u>
Expenditure		
Board meetings**	3000	0
Forum for Development Studies	25000	8046
NFU Web-site	2250	5605
EADI/Nordic cooperation	2500	2222
MA thesis award***	10000	15000
Honorarium auditor****	2800	1400
Coordinator	29000	29000
Other/miscellaneous	1500	577
EADI Nordic		5216
<i>Total expenses</i>	<u>76050</u>	<u>67066</u>
Result	<u>0</u>	<u>-32670</u>

*Note that one full member paid 450, and two members (250 and 490) are included in next years membership base, thus the membership paid for 2017 was based on 42 members.

**The expenses for the GA will be visible in the budget 2018

***Winner 2016 was paid over the 2017 budget (10000). The adjusted amount (5000 NOK) will only be visible from the 2018 budget.

****The auditor was not compensated for 2014-2016, hence the budgeted 2800 NOK for 2017 is including those years (700 NOK annually). The audit has not been conducted in 2015 – 2016, and the payment are adjusted to payment for 2014 and 2017 only.

Balance as of November 30th: 22.178,63 NOK

Annual Plan 2018 (item 3)

3.1. NFU Board meetings

The Board plans for 5-6 meetings in 2018. Due to problems with Skype, it will try out the Norwegian platform Appear.in or Jitsi Meet (no software) for business meetings. Skype is a backup. Online business meetings are cost- and time efficient. NFU will attempt to have at least one face-to-face meeting, possibly at the next NFU conference (not been decided yet).

3.2. NFU Membership

The Board has the ambition of increasing our membership base in 2018, from 48 to approximately 100. 20 students/retired members (250 NOK), and 100 full membership (490 NOK). The economic situation of the association requires an active recruitment for 2018 to avoid more deficits. Clearer work responsibilities within the board, and a well-functioning and active information group could be key in this work. For compensating the deficit in the budget, it should be considered to apply for external funding.

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 the offer of Forum for Development Studies will be key.

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.

Furthermore, it is critical to know a longer time in advance where the NFU Conference, and Nordic Conference will be. The hosting community institution needs to apply for funding, and most deadlines for that is in April. April 2018 will get acceptance December 2018, for a conference in 2019. It is crucial for NFU to set in a rule system so the hosting institution can apply for funding to i.e. FRI-PRO (open call for NFR) and HumSam. Good rotating system; Oslo, Bergen, Trondheim, Agder?

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

NFU will continue to offer Forum for Development Studies to its members. Forum will be contacted for the possibility of adding the NFU invoice inside every journal, or the third issue each year.

The NFU will continue to maintain an updated website, offer regular email announcements, and take part in relevant events. We will continue the Nordic collaboration, and the membership in EADI. And NFU will hold its signature conference, the NFU Conference 2018 (the open call was sent out October 27th, with deadline December 10th). We also aim to organise a separate event in spring 2018. During the conference, 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, receive FORUM, and hopefully continue as member following years.

We will continue with the master thesis award, with the prize 5.000 NOK. All candidates must have top grades in order to be reviewed for the prize. NFU will also organize “Best paper award” as a combined effort together with Forum for Development Studies, where papers of the last two years are considered. It should be strived for sending out the call for Master Thesis Award early, to avoid last minute evaluations (however, the students need to have the grading in order to submit). The winner, and other good contributors to the NFU Master Thesis Award should be stimulated to make the thesis into a published article that can be included in FORUM.

A main task for the Board will be to try to secure funds for upcoming conferences, and to increase the membership base.

3.4. 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.

3.5. 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 three years. For the Nordic network, a meeting among the Danish, Finnish and Norwegian associations will take place 19 January to organise for the next Nordic conference in Denmark in 2019.

3.6. 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, our relationship to Routledge/Forum 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.

3.7. National council for development studies

The national council for development studies (Nasjonalt fagråd for utviklingsstudier) has not arranged for meetings in 2017. NFU was invited for a meeting in 2016 (at HiOA), however, none of the board members had the opportunity to take part. NFU should be active in re-establishing contact for the national council. The council is an advisory unit under the Norwegian Association of Higher Education Institutions (UHR).

3.8. Forum for Development Studies

NFU will be in closer dialogue with the editors 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 meetings as well as the general assembly.

3.9. Budget

The past few years NFU has run with a deficit. We have been able to cut costs, such as the EADI meetings and the Best Article award. However, increased activities have also resulted in increased costs. Changing the platform of the webpages to Wordpress has added some extra one-time costs, in particular to add a plug-in to the webpage that allows for direct online payments and easier membership management. The idea is that this will pay off in a long-term perspective.

The bank balance has been gradually reduced the past few years. We are now striving to balance the budget. The large deficit in 2017 was for the most part due to decreasing amount of members, and consequently less member fee income. In 2017, there were no invoices sent by mail (instead it was sent via email). In 2016 the work of sending out invoices via post was divided among the board members and their respective institutions to save costs, this worked well, and the NFU will strive to do the same in 2018.

In the long run, if the economic situation does not improve, the board needs to look closely whether the relation to FORUM adds sufficient value to continue offering the journal as part of the membership.

	Account 2017	Budget 2018
Income		
Members 250 NOK	1750	5000
Members 490 NOK*	17600	49000
Interests	47	50
Other (external funding)	15000	20000
<i>Total income</i>	<i>34397</i>	<i>74050</i>
Expenditure		
Board meetings**	0	5300
Forum for Development Studies	8046	24000
NFU Web-site	5605	400
EADI/Nordic cooperation	2222	2500
MA thesis award	15000	5000
Auditor	1400	700
Coordinator	29000	29000
DNB expenses	5767	600
Other/miscellaneous	0	1500
<i>Total expenses</i>	<i>67066</i>	<i>69000</i>
Result	-32670	+5050

*One full membership paid 450 NOK (before we announced the adjustments).

**Expenses for the GA 2017

4. Board changes

During 2017, Silje Mathisen and Ingvild Aagedal Skage have expressed that they resign from the board. Erlend Eidsvik has notified the board that he steps down as NFU Chair. The nomination committee was assigned to ask for a new Chair. The new chair Randi Solhjell was elected at the GA. Teklehaymanot Weldemichel has been suggested as a replacement for Silje Mathisen, and will be contacted.

5. Incoming business

There were no incoming business.