

Norwegian Association for Development Research (NFU)

ANNUAL REPORT September 1999 – October 2000

Introduction

The period under review has been important for Norwegian development research. The operational responsibilities for research co-operation with the South has shifted from the Foreign Ministry to NORAD; an important evaluation of NUFU has been completed; the preparations for a new NUFU programme have begun; and the Norwegian Research Council is preparing new initiatives to increase the support to development research.

The NFU Board has concentrated its activities on discussing key issues in research policies related to development studies, and has attempted to profile NFU's role in these issues. Furthermore, the Board has been involved in the planning of the annual conference and in the publication of the Forum for Development Studies. Through these and other initiatives and through its newsletter and web site the Board has also aimed to recruit new members.

The Board and its composition

NFU's 1999 annual meeting was held 16 September in Oslo. Minutes from the meeting were distributed in NFU-Nytt No 3, 1999.

The annual meeting elected the following as members of the board:

Elling N. Tjønneland, political scientist, CMI (chairperson)

Odd Helge Fjeldstad, economist, CMI

Benedicte Bull, political scientist, SUM – UiO

Cathrine Brun, geographer, NTNU

Anne Margrethe Brigham, political scientist, NTNU

Hege Gulli, geographer, NHH

Elisabeth Molteberg, anthropologist, Noragric

Håkon Fottland, biologist, SEMUT, UiTø

Harald O. Skar, anthropologist, NUPI

Alternate members:

Øyvind Jensen, NTNU

Frank Olsen, UiTø

Arve Ofstad, CMI

There was some uncertainty regarding the alternate member from the Agricultural University (NLH). It was agreed that Noragric should be allowed to identify a

candidate. The Board was later informed that Grete Benjaminsen (Noragric) had been appointed.

The annual meeting elected Guri Stegali as auditor and appointed Axel Borchgrevink, SUM (now NUPI), Turid Bøe (CMI) and Kjersti Larsen (Noragric) as members of the election committee, with Axel Borchgrevink as chair.

At its first meeting the Board elected Fjeldstad as Treasurer and Secretary. Cathrine Brun was elected editor of NFU-nytt.

Harald Skar took up a new position in Nepal and withdrew from the Board in April. Grete Benjaminsen, the alternate member from the Oslo-region, then became a full member.

The Board has had 4 meetings in the period. 3 were held in Oslo and 1 in Bergen.

CMI has provided a number of services to NFU and its secretariat free of charge, including servicing the homepage.

Members

The number of NFU-members is (now) 265. The downward trend seems to have stopped and there has been a considerable increase in the number of new members in 2000. Many have joined NFU in connection with the registration for the conference. The Board is of the opinion that a significant higher membership level can be reached.

NFU-nytt and NFU's web site

3 issues of NFU-nytt have been distributed to all members. In Cathrine Brun's absence (due to fieldwork in Sri Lanka) one issue was edited and produced at CMI by Benedicte Solheim.

The NFU web site page is, assisted by CMI's computer department, fully operational. NFU-nytt is also accessible from the homepage.

EADI

Desmond McNeill, SUM, University of Oslo, was elected as Norway's representative on the Executive Committee of EADI at the Annual EADI meeting in September 1999. He replaced Arne Tostensen, CMI, who by then had served as Board member since 1996. The Norwegian representative's expenses are covered by the Norwegian Research Council through NFU.

Economic situation

The economic position of NFU remains satisfactory with a comfortable own capital situation. The account for 1999 is balanced with a minor operational deficit (NOK 1064). This is mainly due to a shortfall in expected membership fees at the annual

conference in Oslo in 1999 (cf. audited accounts). In 2000 the economic situation has improved, partly because of an increase in new members in paying the annual fees, and partly due to modest travel expenses in connection with the board meetings

Forum for Development Studies

NUPI in co-operation with NFU (and with financial support from the Research Council) publishes *Forum for Development Studies* (FDS). Some 600 copies are distributed to members and other subscribers. Harald Aspen currently serves as NFU's representative in the editorial committee.

The NFU Board has one formal meeting with the FDS editor and the NFU representative in the editorial committee. Regular and formalised meetings will continue.

The Board has agreed to maintain the current practice where papers presented at the annual conferences are considered for publication in Forum. The conference organisers may make a "grey" publication available with a reprint of all papers presented.

Annual conference 1999 and 2000

The 1999 conference focused on *Conflict and Development*. It was organised by NUPI and had some 100 registered participants. The 2000 conference on *The State under Pressure* is organised by CMI. CMI has full responsibility for the conference, but there have been regular consultations between the NFU Board and CMI both in the conceptualisation and planning of the conference.

The conferences are financially supported by the Norwegian Research Council. This also follows the Foreign Ministry's recent strategy paper on development research where the Ministry has stated its commitment to support, through the Research Council, an annual conference on development research under the auspices of NFU.

A proposal for a topic and organiser for the 2001 conference will be presented at the annual meeting.

Research policy

NFU has not yet been in a position to play a strong and pro-active role in the debate about the evolving policy on development research. The Board has made some attempts to improve this. Key issues have been discussed at the Board-meetings, some aspects have been raised in "NFU-nytt", and the NFU chairperson and other members of the Board have had formal and informal meetings with various milieus. The chairperson is also an observer in NUFU and takes part in the meetings of the "NUFU Programme Board".

The NFU Board expects to play a more active role in these issues, especially related to the role of NORAD.