

Nordic Educational Research Association NERA/ Nordisk förening för pedagogisk forskning NFPP

The Board's report 2013

1. General remarks

The board has been working on the NERA/NFPP's main tasks: The annual congress, the journal and the networks within the overall aim of developing educational research in the Nordic countries. The Board wants to express its cordial appreciation to the cashier and the auditors for an excellent job for the good of NERA/NFPP.

2. The Board as elected at the general Assembly in Reykjavik 2013:

Denmark: John Benedicto Krejsler, Niels Kryger.
Deputy member: Karen Ida Dannesboe

Finland: Sirpa Lappalainen, Anna Slotte-Lüttge.
Deputy member: Satu Perälä-Littunen

Iceland: Gestur Gudmundsson
Deputy member: Thuridur Johannsdottir

Norway: Elisabeth Bjørnstad, Hans Petter Ulleberg
Deputy member: Gry Paulgaard

Sweden: Carl Anders Säfström (president), Robert Thornberg
Deputy member: Linda Rönnberg

Auditors: Daniel Petterson, Gunnar Engvik

The election committee

Denmark: Kasper Kofolt, Deputy member: Søren Langager

Finland: Fritjof Sahlström, Deputy member: Joel Kivirauma

Iceland: Kristin Jonsdottir

Norway: Gerd Stolen (convenor), Deputy member: Mary Brekke.

Sweden: Ylva Odenbrink, Deputy member: Johan Liljestränd

3. Members and administration

At the end of 2013 there was in total 655 individual members and 11 organisations (university departments) . In 2012: 598 members, 2011: 481 members, in 2010: 555 members, in 2009: 623 members and in 2008: 749 members. The drop from 2010 to 2011 was explained by the relatively small

numbers of participants in Jyväskylä. The increase of members from 2012 to 2013 is explained by the relatively good attendance at the congress in Reykjavik.

4. The Congress in Reykjavik

The annual congress of NFPF/NERA was hosted by School of Education at University of Iceland. The theme was "Disruptions and eruptions as opportunities for transforming education".

The congress in Reykjavik attracted 667 participants as compared to 600 in 2012 and 348 participants in 2011. Due to extreme weather conditions another 30 participants could not attend since a flight from Norway was cancelled. Three pre-conferences were held, organized by network 3 (Early Childhood Research); network 14 (Multi-Cultural Educational Research), and network 16 (The Nordic Society for Philosophy of Education). The congress was evaluated as successful in all terms (despite the weather conditions!), and the Board wants to thank the planning committee for their excellent work.

5. The work of the Board according to the Board plan for 2013

Recruitments of members: The board continued to discuss ways of improving the quality of the congresses as a main source for recruiting members. During the year especially three issues have been discussed. Firstly to strengthening the association itself through among other things include a board panel in the congresses, a panel in which important concerns and issues discussed in the board are shared with members. The suggestion for 2014 meeting in Lillehammer is to include a panel on the theme "The Nordic model" and its changing conditions. Thereby it is the hope of the board that not only important issues are dealt with in "The Boards Panel" but also that discussions across networks will increase the feeling of being member of an association of scholars in which issues are raised that concerns us all, regardless of network.

Secondly, a continuous discussion has been about how to decrease the costs for the congresses especially since NERA congresses tend in comparison to be on the expensive side. One of the suggestions was to see if there is possible to exclude lunches, which mean that only larger cities can host a congress, but also to look into costs for the congress dinners, that is to look over the ways the congresses traditionally have been organised. A third main discussion was to establish procedures for opening and closing networks. The idea is that opening new networks brings energy into the association, but if there are too many networks the association tends to fell apart. Therefore, the board has made a suggestion for the General Assembly for establishing a procedure for how to open and how to close networks. The idea is to make it relatively easy to open a network but also to have clear procedures for closing down inactive networks. In consequence that means that certain networks reflecting important but time-bound issues will come and go, while others, reflecting a more substantial core of

educational research will remain over time. This will most certainly both increase the quality of the congresses as also attracting more members.

Networks: By the end of 2013 there were 25 active networks operating within NFPF/NERA, 14 of them were able to provide the obligatory network report. See also the report from the Network Coordinator.

Due to an economical surplus from the two last congresses the board was able to welcome applications for support of pre-conferences in Lillehammer 2014. Three applications from network 3, 13 800NOK, network 14, 16 000NOK and network 17, 10 250NOK were accepted by the board 07.10.2013 per capsulam.

Web page: The web page www.nfpf.net has been administrated by PhD research fellow Sverre Tveit, Department of Education, University of Oslo. The web page and network pages have for the most part been updated promptly when content have been provided. The administrator sees a challenge in maintaining activities on the web page and believes it can be more useful for members when more activity and content are developed within the networks. He is therefore working together with senior engineer Shane Colvin (also at Faculty of Education, University of Oslo), to find a solution which makes it easier for network leaders to share information and facilitate discussions without assistance from the web page administrator. For both 2013 and 2014 the web page administrator has only claimed 5.000 NOK of the 10.000 NOK internet budgets; in order to have 10.000 NOK available for developing a better solution for the network pages. This will be developed following discussions at the Lillehammer conference.

Nordic studies in education: during 2013 Fritjof Sahlström, with help from assistant editor Tuuli From, has acted as editor-in-chief for Nordic Studies in Education in an excellent way, and will do so to the end of 2014. The board wants to express its gratitude for a work well done!
See further the editorial report.

In 2013 the position as editor-in-chief for Nordic Studies in Education was announced. The first deadline for applications was set to October 1st, 2013. Passing deadline there were no application for the position. The board then decided to postpone deadline to December 15. Two applications were presented before second deadline. The board decided on the following procedure: All members of the board read both applications. A working group was elected with Carl Anders Säfström as president, Sara Salameh as representative for UF, and Gestur Gudmundsson as representative for the board and with great experience from being editor of research journal. The working group met over skype and discussed the applications, resulting in a report and suggestion for the board to take decision on during meeting in Lillehammer 4/3, 2014.

8. International activities

John B Krejsler is the representative of NFPPF/NERA at the EERA board meetings. See further his report.

Although NFPPF/NERA was not able to give financial support to a NFPPF/NERA symposium at AERA, the Board invited the network coordinators to send in an application in order to use the slot NFPPF/NERA has in the program. Only one network responded, Network 5, The Curriculum Research Network. The proposal was accepted and they will present the symposium "Curriculum reform on the Nordic policy agenda: for whom and by what?" at the AERA congress in April 3-7, 2014.

9. Future congress

Department of education and special education at Gothenburg University has accepted to arrange the congress in 2015. The dates are March 4-6, and the theme: *Marketization and Differentiation in Education*.

10. Concluding remarks

If 2012 started as a challenge for the board, particularly since members as well as economy seemed to be declining, the beginning of 2013 rather showed the beginning of a positive trend. At the end of 2013 and the beginning of 2014 we can now see that NFPPF/NERA is stabilising its finances as well as memberships at a good level, which means that the Boards plans are working. This doesn't mean that the Board can relax, but rather be a welcomed confirmation of that we are on the right track. To monitor the development of the membership is still a task highly prioritized for the Board, but also to continuously strengthening the spirit of NFPPF/NERA as a special and unique association for all Nordic educational researchers and scholars.