

# Status report



## *Report on the current work of the Nordic Forum*

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This report describes the status of the work in the Nordic Forum after its first meeting in Copenhagen on the 25<sup>th</sup> of November 2015. The Nordic Forum is the reference/expert group for the *Nordic Lighthouse Project on research for the use of Nordic practitioners*. The Nordic Forum meets twice a year and consists of up to 15 representatives for each Nordic country representing key interest groups, unions, research institutions and local and national educational authorities within the field of pre-primary, primary and lower secondary education.

The Nordic Lighthouse Project was launched by the Danish Presidency of the Nordic Council in 2015. It is managed the Danish Ministry for Children, Education and Gender Equality and it is financed by the Nordic Council of Ministers and it expires ultimo 2017. The aim of the Nordic Lighthouse Project is to strengthen the cooperation and sharing of educational research between the Nordic countries and to enhance the use of research based knowledge by Nordic pre-school, primary and lower secondary practitioners.

### **Outline**

1. Mapping current challenges and strategies
2. Mapping central initiatives and networks already out there
3. Ideas and suggested solutions put forward on the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Nordic Forum

# 1. Mapping current challenges and current strategies

At the first meeting in Nordic Forum the members were asked to map current challenges as well as strategies with regard to: (A) supporting research communication between researchers and practitioners and the use of research in practice and (B) sharing educational research between the Nordic countries.

Below we have summarized and organized the inputs put forward at by the Nordic Forum. In the attached pdf-file “Photo\_documentation\_Nordic\_Forum\_25thNov2015” you will find pictures of the actual poster-mappings generated at the first meeting in the forum.

## **(A) Challenges with regard to research communication between researchers and practitioners and the use of research in practice**

- The language barrier –both English as a foreign language and the academic language used in research publications is a challenge for practitioners when reading research
- Time – it is difficult for practitioners to find the time to read and search for research based knowledge
- Applicability to practice and policymaking – practitioners find that new research is often not directly applicable to practice (nor policymaking)
- Practice-translation - in order for research knowledge to be relevant to practitioners it often needs to be remediated/translated into practice, and explicitly address how this knowledge can be applied in the classroom or what it implies for the practice
- Teachers value practical experience higher than evidence based knowledge
- No incentive for academics to communicate with practitioners (no reward system)
- There are no meeting points/arenas for practitioners and researchers where they can exchange views and ideas
- There is a clash of cultures between practitioners and academics, It is not a question of spreading knowledge but of making a working culture on schools where knowledge based change is possible

- It is hard to get an overview of relevant research and accessibility
- Researchers and practitioners must work together, school-university partnerships is one solution. “Practice must be research informed – but research must also be practice informed”

**(A) Current national *strategies* with regard to research communication between researchers and practitioners and the use of research in practice**

- Providing a new research based teacher education
- University organized in-service training programs (state financed)
- Continual professional development
- 5 year research based teacher education (NO +FI)

**(B) *Challenges* with regard to sharing research across the Nordic Countries**

- The focus is on international or national research – not on Nordic research. Does it make sense to prioritize Nordic research? Does it hold any special potential compared to research from other European countries? Is the Nordic region a reverent category with regard to research-based knowledge on educational matters?
- Limited knowledge about education policies in other Nordic countries
- Nordic journals not indexed/included in international databases – thus difficult to locate
- Difficult to get an overview of Nordic research on children and education. Lack of accessibility to Nordic research. Practitioners do not know where to find relevant research. No common Nordic platforms or databases for research on primary level/lower secondary level education
- Lack of open access academic journals
- Lack of Nordic research and of funding for Nordic research
- Problem with research transferability between Nordic countries
- Lack of incentives for common Nordic educational research

- Different learning goals in the Nordic countries is a barrier to the idea of specifically Nordic research

**(B) Current *strategies* with regard to the challenge of sharing research across the Nordic Countries**

- Entities working with research sharing across the Nordic countries: The Nordic educational research association (NERA), The Nordic educational research journal and Nordic educational research funding (NORDFORSK), Nordic Database on Early Childhood Education and Care (NB-ECEC)
- Making international reviews for use in policymaking and practice
- Nordic research journals

## 2. Mapping Nordic communities, institutions, networks, arenas and databases working on similar and overlapping issues

Based on the workshops held at the first meeting of the Nordic Forum, we have mapped out some of current communities, networks, arenas and databases with relevance for the ambitions of the Nordic Lighthouse Project:

### **NordForsk – Education for tomorrow**

- NordForsk is a platform for and facilitator of Nordic research-collaborations that span across at least three Nordic countries.
- The platform was created back in 2005 and is run by the Nordic Council of Ministers. The purpose of NordForsk is to strengthen Nordic research within all academic fields and topics.
- NordForsk is built on principles of mobility, equality and development of common Nordic policy-agendas across the Nordic region.
- Visit NordForsk's [website](#).

### **Nordic Centre for Welfare and Social Issues (Nordens Velfærdscenter NVC)**

- NVC, run by the Nordic Council of Ministers, is a pan-Nordic collaboration aiming to strengthen social policies in the Nordic countries through education, research and networking.
- NVC work across five key areas; alcohol and drugs, labour market inclusion, handicap, welfare policy and welfare technology.
- NVC have, among other things, developed the [The Nordic knowledge base on dropout from upper secondary education](#) in which researchers, practitioners and others interested in the field can for knowledge and good practices in preventing school dropouts from Upper secondary educational institutions.
- Read more about NVC's social policy-work on their [website](#).

### **NFPF/NERA (Nordisk Forening for Pædagogisk Forskning / Nordic Education Research Association)**

- NFPF/NERA was founded back in 1972 as an association for Nordic research within the field of education.
- NFPF/NERA has been active in gathering and publishing Nordic research in the [IDUNN journal](#), facilitating a larger annual conference and bringing together researchers in [researcher-networks](#) spanning across a wide range of topics pertaining to the field of education.
- NFPF/NERA is institutionally situated at Södertörn University where Carl Anders Safström is president for the association. Visit their [website](#) for more information.

### **Nordic Base of Early Childhood Education and Care (NB-ECEC)**

- NB-ECEC is a Nordic research-database for research within the area of Early Childhood Education and Care. The database was established back in 2011 as the first of its kind gathering all Nordic research available in the area in one place. The database is administered by the Danish Institute for Evaluation (EVA). All the research presented on the site has been peer-reviewed.

- The research-studies presented in the database are selected through a screening-process of the major research-databases in the Nordic countries; Norbok, Bibsys, Forskdok publikasjoner, Libris, Skolporten, Dansk pædagogisk base, Forskningsdatabasen, ERIC, Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research, Nordisk Pedagogik and Nordisk Barnhageforskning.
- NB-ECEC present research in a wide range of areas pertaining to Early Childhood Education. Among these areas of research appears a section on [research communication and implementation](#) which bears relevance for the work of the Nordic Lighthouse Project.
- Read more or browse through research on the NB-ECEC [website](#).

### **Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research**

- Scandinavian journal of educational research is an academic, peer-reviewed journal published by Routledge.
- The journal communicates some of the most recent research projects taking place within the field of education across the Nordic countries.
- The Journal can be downloaded and contacted at Taylor and Francis' [website](#).

### **Nordic Teachers' Council (Nordisk Lærerorganisationers Samråd NLS)**

- NLS is a co-operative organization for the Nordic Teachers' unions. NLS consists of 18 national organisations, representing 600 000 members from 7 Nordic countries and territories: Denmark, Faeroe Islands, Finland, Greenland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden.
- The platform is dedicated to sharing information and experiences between the sister-organizations and to develop new, fruitful pan-Nordic collaborations between the Teachers' Unions of the Nordic region. They work in three sectors; Early Childhood Education and Leisure, Primary education, and Secondary education. Their work consists mainly in facilitating conferences and publications addressing current policies or research within the three areas.
- The secretariat is situated in Helsingfors, Sweden. To read more, visit the NLS [website](#).

### **Scandinavian Education Research Alliance (SERA)**

- SERA is a research collaboration between three central educational research institutions;
  - LSP (Laboratory for research-based school development and pedagogical practice), located at the Institute for Learning and Philosophy at Aalborg University, Denmark.
  - SePU (Senter for Praksisrettet Uddanningsforskning), located at Høgskolen i Hedmark, Norway.
  - RCIW (Research and Capability in Inclusion and Welfare) located at Högskolan i Borås, Sweden.
- Among many activities, SERA collaborates on publishing the biannual journal PAIDEA (Journal for Professional Pedagogical Practice) oriented towards researchers, practitioners, school administrators and students in the Nordic countries working in the field of education. Furthermore, the collaboration has led to the establishing of the *Nordic Capacity Building Network* in 2012 which is a network of schools collaborating with LSP on integrating some of the newest research in school inclusion and leadership into their institutions, as well as a developmental project in the municipality of Essunga.
- Visit the websites of [LSP](#), [SePU](#) or [RCIW](#).

### **FLiK (Research-based learning environment development in Kristiansand Kommune)**

- An example of a Nordic collaboration in research-sharing and implementation, the FLiK project aims to strengthen the development of learning environments in the 38 schools and 71 pre-school offers in the municipality of Kristiansand.
- The project is a collaboration between LSP (Laboratory for research-based school development and pedagogical practice) in Denmark, Senter for Praksisrettet Utdanningsforskning (SePU) and Kristiansand Kommune in Norway. The project is based on the experiences of a similar developmental program in Denmark with more than 500 Danish schools, wherefore the program is a model program for how to share knowledge across the Nordic region.
- To learn more, visit the project's [website](#).

### **NOKO (Nordic Committee/Nordisk Komité)**

- The Nordic Committee NoKo is a network for parent organizations in the Nordic countries to share experiences and initiatives.
- Every second year, NoKo hosts a large conference with representatives from all the Nordic parent organizations.
- The secretariat is situated in Finland (Hem och Skola), who facilitate [contact](#) to the network.

### **EIPPEE (Evidence Informed Policy and Practice in Education in Europe)**

- Although not a specifically Nordic database, EIPPEE is an important actor in terms of sharing educational research, focusing on making transnationally useful educational research accessible to a wider public. EIPPEE is anchored in the European Commission, where their purpose is to [strengthen the link between theory and practice](#) as well as map out some of the barriers hindering this linkage.
- EIPPEE started in 2010 and has 36 involved partners spread out in 23 member countries.
- EIPPEE is institutionally situated at the IoE (London University's Institute of Education). To read more or browse through their vast database with educational research – of which some of it is highly relevant in or produced for the Nordic context – visit their [website](#).

## **3. Ideas and suggested solutions put forward on the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Nordic Forum**

The following list is based on ideas and suggestions on *how to reinforce the use of research based knowledge by Nordic practitioners* and *how to support the sharing and cooperation on educational research across the Nordic region* that were suggested by members of the Nordic Forum at the first meeting in the forum. On the next meeting in Oslo members will be invited to elaborate further on these ideas and come up with new ideas.

- Video as a media for research communication to practitioners. Videos like TED-talks with educational researchers.



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- Focus on new social media solutions for research communication with practitioners.
- Sharing already existing Nordic public service TV and radio programs across the Nordic Countries.
- School-chat on Twitter – moderated discussions on pre-decided topics.
- No new portals.
- Establishing arenas/meeting points for communication between practitioners and researchers.
- A Nordic educational research database – maybe on Wiki.
- Making universities and teacher colleges responsible for digital platforms – creating Nordic hub linking to institutional websites.
- Cooperation between existing Nordic research portals such as Danish Clearinghouse, Kundskabscenteret for Utdanning, Udanningsforskning.no, Senter for IKT I utdanning.
- Cooperation between existing remediating agencies and institutions such as EVA, Norway's 10 national research centers etc. (see NIFU report for complete list).