

## **Update from the cognition network, the spring 2016**

The cognition-network, established in 2008, runs a project on assessment of cognition related to congenital deafblindness, (cdb), mainly with early onset. Hardly any adapted and standardized methods are available. The network is connected to the Nordic Welfare Center (NVC).

The point of view is essentially practical, about developing professional competence. We further hope to expand the knowledge about cognitive development in this population by merging theories about brain-functioning with perspectives that stresses distributed aspects of cognition and communicative prerequisites.

The network has 20 members, predominantly psychologists and pedagogues in the field of deafblindness, whereof 10 are actively participating. Some participants are also affiliated to universities, conducting research about deafblindness. All the Nordic countries, except Iceland, are at the moment represented in the network. In addition individuals from Switzerland and the Nederland's take part.

During the years, 12 meetings have been conducted, most of them at the previous site in Denmark, Dronninglund, but lately also in Stockholm. We have, in addition, presented our ongoing project at both Deafblind International (DbI) – and NVC - conferences. We also invited to an international seminar in the fall 2013, where guidelines for assessment of cognition in deafblindness were presented. The guidelines were published in the spring 2014. In the autumn last year an NVC course for professionals was conducted in Sigtuna, outside of Stockholm. The course attracted professionals within our field, aiming to develop competence to assess cognition, but also professionals involved in assessment of other disabled populations. Positive feedback was given during the evaluation.

A planning meeting was conducted this spring in Copenhagen. It was then stressed that active membership in the network is connected to a responsibility for a partial project, and that undersigned continues to coordinate the work. The goal for our network, over the next three years, is to continue developing scales, for assessment of cognitive abilities in individuals with cdb. In addition we would like to convey knowledge to other professionals from closely related areas, and to develop the exchange with other networks. As a first step we have, during the two last meetings, organized an exchange with the Nordic tactile network. At the meeting in Copenhagen Flemming Ask Larsen presented his doctoral thesis about individuals with cdb, activities and development of communication.

A course, planned to take place in Finland this year will expectantly contribute to our ambition to convey and exchange knowledge. We would in addition like to contribute at the European DBI conference EUK 2017 in Ålborg, by presentations during the Nordic day at the preconference. We further aim to develop the connection to relevant University departments. Several members already have a connection to a university, and three thesis's have recently been completed by members in our network, connected to the addressed topic.

On behalf of our network I would finally like to express gratitude for all support NVC has given, and then specifically addressing Maria Creutz. We hope for continuing cooperation.

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Hans Erik Frölander  
Coordinator, the cognition network