

## 2023 Annual Report from Nordic Cognition Network in Relation to Deafblindness

### Membership:

**NO:** Kirsten H Costain, Joe Gibson, Torill Gullvik, Annika Maria Johannessen, Jude Nicholas, Anne Nafstad, Magnus Tollefsrud, Camilla Lyngar, Eline F Melhuus, Gro-Anita Nummedal,

**SE:** Maria Nilsson, Sofia Hansdottir (new member).

**FI:** Emmi Toumi

**DK:** Ulrik Skov Hansen, Lone Rømer, Tanja Christiansen.

**NL:** Saskia Damen, Erika Pranger-Boers (new member).

**GB:** Jacky Smith, Jonathan Reid, Paul Hart, Steve Rose (new member).

*(22 members across 6 countries).*

### Members leaving the network:

SE: Vuokko Einarsson, NO: Lynn Skei, Elena Hauge

### Meetings and activities in 2022

Cognition Network meetings held online on:

- 13<sup>th</sup> September 2022: Online meeting to discuss priorities and developments across the Cognition Network. Within this we outlined the last period of work and discussions for future planning. We also discussed the input from the Network at the upcoming NVC conference in Finland.
- 21<sup>st</sup> September: The Nordic Cognition Network presented a seminar to the NVC conference in Tampere, Finland. Within this presentation we developed themes from the last three years of work, including presentation of various publications, encouraged notes of interest from those interested to work with the network from other related fields and linked our work closely to that of the Self-Regulation Network.
- 8<sup>th</sup> December 2022: We reported on the NVC conference in Finland, and held discussion on the future priorities and direction of the network. Erika Pranger-Boers from Royal Dutch Kentalis delivered a lecture on the Tactile Working Memory Scale and her work with video analysis. Following an intense period of writing, publication and a series of webinars, we developed thinking around how best to optimize this

work in practical terms and cascade it further within a professional context. We planned our first in-person meeting post-Covid, for March 2023.

## **Activity**

The Nordic Cognition Network in Relation to Deafblindness was established in 2008. The main aim of the network is to promote professional competency in understanding cognitive development and identifying cognitions and their relation to learning and everyday functioning of individuals with congenital deafblindness (CDB).

Some members of the network are affiliated to different universities, conducting research, and collaborating with other professionals in the field of CDB. The other members are clinicians and practitioners working in the field, consisting of psychologists, educational specialists and supervisors who are involved in conducting assessments and intervention planning in the different countries. Since congenital deafblindness comprises a diverse, small-scale and heterogeneous group it is important that the collaboration and knowledge sharing of Cognition in Relation to Congenital Deafblindness takes place in a Nordic and international manner. Furthermore, the knowledge developed from this network is considered feasible in its application to other related fields.

The Cognition Network operated well throughout 2022 and several members contributed to knowledge and discussion around themes such as AI and intersubjectivity, Tactile Working Memory, Arousal and Assessment. We completed our series of online webinars which are available on the NVC website here:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLBjRXGXUXsRtcIXG7BRt1utL0v4FgyyVv>

During the last two years, throughout the Covid pandemic, the Network has been involved in a concentrated period of writing, publication and dissemination of work. We have had chance, this year, to regroup as a Network and develop some focused conversations on the direction of travel for the group, to welcome some new members from Nordic countries and beyond and to lay plans for the next tranche of work.

Erika Pranger-Boers, a new network member from The Netherlands and a special researcher in deafblindness from Royal Dutch Kentalis, gave a fascinating lecture on her research on the Tactile Working Memory Scale and Video Analysis.

We have also had chance to discuss building on the publication of the book 'Revealing Hidden Potentials – Assessing Cognition in Individuals with Congenital Deafblindness' (2020), and exploring how we may optimize the knowledge within this book for the wider professional field.

We have agreed a date to meet as a network in person at The University of Groningen and plan a daylong workshop exploring the topic of optimizing our work, to be held in March 2023. Within this session we will also connect with other professionals within the deafblind field, including those from the Master's in deafblindness at the University of Groningen. The

network will use this opportunity to develop planning towards our next webinar in the Autumn on 2023.

In September 2022 the Cognition Network presented to the NVC conference in Tampere, Finland and linked closely with the Self-Regulation Network in co-delivering a presentation on cognition and arousal within deafblindness.

The Cognition Network aims to continue to develop important links and collaboration with other groups and networks across the Nordic countries and beyond and to refine our output for those working in the field of deafblindness. The network plans to meet regularly within the coming year, delivering a new webinar in the Autumn of 2023 and developing further opportunities to share our work and collaborate.

Furthermore, a collaborative project on the notion of conceptualizing brain related visual and auditory impairment (BAVI) was initiated after Professor John Ravenscroft from the University of Edinburgh gave a presentation at our Cognition Network meeting in 2021. John Ravenscroft and Jude Nicholas will be giving a workshop on Brain Related Auditory and Visual Impairment: An Approach to a Complex Relationship at the Deafblind International World Conference in Ottawa, Canada.

On behalf of the network, I would also like to warmly welcome Gøran Forsgren to his new role as Senior Advisor and Project Manager on Deafblind Issues within NVC, and we very much look forward to working alongside him.

On behalf of members of the network,

Jonathan Reid,  
Coordinator of the Nordic Cognition Network on Congenital Deafblindness,  
Glasgow, March 2023,

Deafblind Scotland.