



REPORT 090731

International Students' Union
of Norway (ISU)

Bi-Monthly Report

31 July 2009

Prepared by

Farshad Tami, National President

Prepared for

Member Branches

and

Cooperating Partners

- Studentenes Landsforbund (StL)
- Norsk Studentunion (NSU)
- Studentenes og Akademikernes Internasjonale Hjelpfond (SAIH)
- Utviklingsfondet Ungdom (Spire)

ISU General Info and Objective

The International Students' Union of Norway (ISU) is an independent, democratic, non-profit, non-partisan organization run for and by international students. ISU is committed to the social, academic and political interests of all international students studying in Norway. ISU's national administration is located in Oslo, with a National President, two Vice Presidents and an Organizational Secretary. ISU member organizations are located at 13 institutions of higher education around Norway. ISU's basic funding is from the Norwegian Government with the annual amount of NOK 270.000,00 (July 2008 – June 2009). ISU is in partnership with NSU, StL & Spire, and members of SAIH & LNU.

Overview of Report Period

ISU held its first National Assembly (NAi09) during 2009 at Norwegian School of Management (BI) from April 24 to 26 in Oslo. The NAi09 participants successfully discussed concerns, priorities, challenges, success stories, and strategic steps for increasing the inclusion of international students in the Norwegian society. During the NAi09, ISU voted in a new member, ISU Agder (from Kristiansand) as well as made some changes to the constitution. This period also marked an increase in efforts to solve the Quota Scheme Students' challenges. ISU and partners were hoping that the ministry and Lånekassen would have reached a solution during that period by so far they have not. During the past months, both partners NSU and StL held their National Assemblies and both organizations agreed to merge by 2010. Finally, ISU National Board applied for (a) the yearly funds from the Ministry of Research and Higher Education and was successful in getting funds for the whole requested budget of 300,000.00 NOK; and (b) for funds from Norges barne- og ungdomsorganisasjoner (LNU).

Previous and Current Activities

The financial documents of ISU for 2008 were lost by mail due to a mistake by the mail company, Posten, while the accountant was sending them to the auditor. The files were lost in February 2009 and were found again in May. Meanwhile, and for the purpose of getting an approval from the auditor for our finances, we had to reinvent all our documents and we managed to find more than two-thirds of the outgoing financial transactions. The auditor approved on them and the documents were sent to the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research. ISU presented last year's financial budget and balance sheet as well as applied for funds for July 2009 to June 2010 (for more info¹). By the end of June 2009, the ministry replied to our application (earlier than last year), and gave us the full 30,000 NOK financial support requested from them. This again validates the seriousness of the ministry towards ISU, their trust in our work and their understanding that we need more funds since we consist of more branches than last year.

ISU also applied for funds from [LNU](#) called [Frifond](#). For the first time, the latter secured an amount equivalent to 133,000 NOK for ISU. The bulk of this fund is ear-marked for ISU Local Branches as per guidelines of the fund. ISU will explain the guidelines and distribute the funds accordingly in the near future for the ISU Local Branches.

ISU National President attended and presented ISU at partner organizations' National Assemblies. Norsk Studentunion (NSU) had its meeting in Oslo (17-19 April) and Studentenes Landsforbund (StL) held it's in Tønsberg (23-26 April). The main issue that dominated both meetings was the discussion and voting on whether the two main student organizations would like to finally merge. The verdict was for them to merge and the process will start next year (for more info, visit this [website](#)). Meanwhile, ISU made sure that both NSU and StL agree to continue having a similar agreement to what we currently have with each other; mainly, sharing office space, being observers at each others' meetings and getting financial support whenever needed. Another annual assembly, where Erik Evens represented ISU at Norges barne- og ungdomsorganisasjoner (LNU) meeting (24-26 April). Unfortunately, both partners LNU and StL held their meeting at the same time as ours. We will try to avoid such situations in the future.



ISU National Assembly at BI (Oslo), April 2009

ISU held successfully, its second National Assembly during the academic year and first during 2009. The event took place at Norwegian School of Management (BI) from 24 to 26 April. Around 55 students and guests attended the event and the main points discussed among the local branches were concerns, priorities, challenges and success stories. Partner organizations also attended

and each gave a presentation: Ingvild Reymert as leader of NSU and representing both NSU and StL, Elisabeth Veivåg Helseth from Utviklingsfondet Ungdom (Spire) and Eirin Winsnes

¹ http://isu-norway.no/docs/article_merging.pdf

Isaksen vice president of Studentenes og Akademikernes Internasjonale Hjelpfond (SAIH). ISU also voted in a new member from the University of Kristiansand (Agder). The new branch is called ISU Agder and it qualified the requested criterion; that is, democratically elected, shows ability to organize and be sustainable for the years to come and represent all international students at Agder. ISU also voted on changes to both ISU Constitution and Platform (for more info, please visit the documents found on this [webpage](#)). The main changes were that ISU will hold one national assembly per year and two leadership meetings. This would help ease pressure on our finances as well as bring ISU leaders together to work closely on certain activities and or campaigns. The main topic discussed was the establishment of a strategic plan that would help increase and enhance the inclusion of international students in the Norwegian society (Please find a brief of the documents attached to this report as well as the minutes of the NAI09). ISU was short in cash to cover some of the NAI09 expenses and requested from partner StL for some financial support. StL replied positively and the funds were provided.

During the past months, both NSU and StL national steering bodies held joint meetings, together and separately, in order to introduce all the teams to each other. ISU participated in some of those events as well. ISU also attended the NSU Landsstyre (13th to 14th of June), a meeting for all NSU branch leaders and representatives, that took place at Universitetet for miljø- og biovitenskap (UMB) and hosted by NSU Ås.

ISU National President and Secretary held a meeting with Utlendingsdirektoratet (UDI) or Norwegian Directorate of Immigration. The meeting aimed to tackle one of the issues raised by delegates during ISU NAI09. Report of the meeting and concluding points can be found here². As a conclusion, UDI and ISU realized that there many challenges faced by international students when they apply for the renewal of their permits. UDI offered some insights on these challenges and some links and information for all to be aware of in order to avoid future problems.

Table.1 Summary of official meetings that ISU have been invited to and attended:

Meeting	Date	Place
NSU Landsting	17 – 19 April	Oslo
StL Landsmøte	23 – 26 April	Tønsberg
ISU National Assembly	24 – 26 April	Oslo
LNU Møte	24 – 26 April	Oslo
UDI	06 May	Oslo
NSU Landsstyre	13 – 14 June	Oslo
StL and NSU Leaders	19 June	Oslo
Lånekassen	03 July	Oslo
Åsa Elvik	21 July	Oslo

Finally, the last months saw a concluding situation for the expected solutions for the Quota Scheme Students' challenges. Quota Scheme Students (QSS) are students with a scholarship from the Norwegian government. When these students arrive to Norway, they have to wait at least two months until they receive their scholarships from [Lånekassen](#) or Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund. The latter had a solution prepared along with the ministry by end of May 2009 that didn't take place. ISU National President met with Lånekassen and with [Åsa Elvik](#), State Secretary of [Kunnskapsdepartementet](#) (KD) or the Ministry of Research and Higher Education. Ms. Elvik confirmed that there are two aspects related to the overall solution, the first is for the ministry to formulate the necessary regulation and secondly, the Norwegian Parliament has to allocate funds for the process. They are the

² http://isu-norway.no/docs/ART_090519_ISU_UDI.pdf

stage of negotiating and discussing both aspects. Meanwhile, she advised ISU and partners to lobby with the Parliament's Finance Committee. For more info please refer to attached document regarding the history of efforts to solve these challenges (2008 to 2009).

Up-coming Activities and Meetings

Until the next National Assembly, ISU National Board will work to ensure that all ISU Local Branches will conduct their General Assemblies successfully. ISU National Board will follow up on the QSS during that period as well.

ISU will also produce two upcoming documents, the first is related to Office and National Board Conduct and the second one concerning Frifond Application Guidelines for ISU Local Branches.

Summery

Several milestones are ahead of us, organizing the next National Assembly in Nrvik, organizing and distributing Frifond funds, finalizing the last guidelines for the National Board and setting future steps that will ensure a solution for the QSS challenges. But the most interesting is the role of ISU in the upcoming merging process of the two student organizations, NSU and StL.

Acknowledgments

ISU would like first of all to thank the former national boards of both NSU and StL for their dedication to ISU priorities, mainly towards the QSS. ISU would like to especially thank Ingvild S. Reymert, Marte Sendstad, Helge Lundsvoll Andersen, Karsten W. Nielsen, Øistein Ø. Svelle and Ina Tandberg. For coming to our rescue, ISU would like to thank StL for their financial support of our last National Assembly.

Concerning the successful National Assembly, ISU would like to thank Cathrine Li and Lily Chen from ISU BI, Jonas Ådnøy Holmqvist for chairing the meeting and Solveig Aamodt for her incredible work as National Secretary.

ISU would extend its hand in thanks for Eimantas Matulaitis, for his immense contribution that made ISU Agder a very successful new local branch. ISU appreciates the contribution of the former ISU Local Presidents, Chameera Jayarathna, Julia Lavrova and Prakash Dhakal, for their wonderful work during the past academic year.

Attachments:

- *ISU National Assembly NA i09 Minutes*
- *ISU National Assembly NA i09 final budget*
- *ISU Inclusion Strategy (brief)*
- *Brief history of efforts to solve Quota Scheme Students' challenges (2008 to 2009)*
- *Advertisement for ISU National President*

International Students' Union
of Norway (ISU)

Minutes of the
National Assembly at BI in
Nydalen
24-26 April 2009

Prepared by

Solveig Aamodt, National Secretary
ISU National Office

Prepared for

Member Branches
and

Cooperation Partners

- [Studentenes Landsforbund \(StL\)](#)
- [Norsk Studentunion \(NSU\)](#)
- [Studentenes og Akademikernes Internasjonale Hjelpesfond \(SAIH\)](#)
- Utviklingsfondets Ungdom (Spire)

FRIDAY 24 APRIL

*The Assembly started at 13:00 hours with Ice-Breaking activities lead
by Chairman Jonas Ådnøy Holmqvist.*

Initial greeting by ISU President, Farshad Tami

Welcoming all to BI in Nydalen and the first National Assembly in 2009.

Agenda and timetable were approved.

Welcoming speech by Professor Guri Hjeltnes, Provost of BI Nydalen.

Professor Guri Hjeltnes welcomed us all to BI. She gave us some interesting facts about BI. BI is a private management and business school that was started in 1943 and it is currently the second biggest university in Norway, it has 19 000 students, 1000 of them are international students. BI cooperates with many other universities, mainly in European countries, China and East-Asia.

Presentation of Partner Organizations

Utviklingsfondets Ungdom (Spire) – The Development Fund's Youth Organization (Spire)

- Presentation by Elisabeth Helseth, Vice-President of Spire

Spire is the youth organization of the development fund and was founded in 2003. Spire works with development issues and have partner organizations in the South. Most of their work in Norway is information work and lobbying. Spire wants young people to be involved in environmental politics and try to get young people in the South to be part of climate negotiations that concern them. Spire has local chapters on some higher education institutions in Norway.

Studentenes og Akademikernes Internasjonale Hjelpesfond (SAIH)- Norwegian Students' and Academics' International Assistance Fund

- Presentation by Eirin Winsnes Isaksen, Vice-President of SAIH

SAIH works with development cooperation in 5 countries in Africa and Latin-America. Their emphasis is on higher education and solidarity with students in developing countries. Solidarity is important; SAIH thinks students in other countries should have the same opportunities as students in Norway. They have local chapters on most higher education institutions in Norway and a national office in Oslo. In Norway they do information work and lobbying towards MoFA for a holistic Norwegian education policy in development.

The Student Body of BI (SBIO)

- Presentation by Remi Wulff, Vice-President and Ole Steinsholt, Head of Information

SBIO is the Student Body of BI, it is run by and for students on a volunteer basis. 650 people are working voluntarily within SBIO. SBIO was established in 2005 when the different BI branches moved to Nydalen. They organize many different activities for students and have divided the different responsibilities into committees. They have among others a translation committee to translate all SBIO material to English.

ISU National Report and Finance Report by Farshad Tami

A presentation of the work ISU has done lately. Politically we have worked mainly on the quota student case, establishing a good dialogue with the Ministry of Education and Research. We have also become partners with Spire and kept our good cooperation with NSU, StL and SAIH.

The financial report was presented in written in Norwegian and orally in English due to a work overload at the national office caused by that Posten lost all our financial documents. There was some discussion on whether this should have been presented written in English and that is hard to know what you approve when you cannot understand the language. This will be taken into consideration by the National Board. The financial report for 2008 and budget for next year were approved by the NA.

Presentation of ISU Agder

ISU Agder is a new ISU branch at the University of Agder with campuses in Kristiansand, Arendal and Grimstad. They are working closely with the Erasmus Student Network (ESN) in Agder. ISU Agder has 4 elected board members, and they have already organized some activities in campus, for instance building an igloo and movie nights. They are waiting to be recognised as a student organisation within STA.

Voting on ISU Agder membership

The NA unanimously voted in favour of including ISU Agder as an ISU Local Branch and two observers from ISU Agder were thus given delegate status by the NA.

Presentation of Partner Organizations

Norsk Studentunion (NSU)- The National Union of Students in Norway

- Presentation by Ingvild Reymert, President.

NSU represents all students at universities and scientific colleges. Their main goal is education for all. Ingvild emphasised the importance of cooperation between ISU and NSU and that this should continue with the new board. She also talked about the upcoming merge between NSU and StL, meaning that all students in Norway will be represented by one big student organization.

Practicing of voting and debate procedures with Chairman Jonas and Solveig Workshop on group dynamics and team building

SATURDAY 25 APRIL

The Assembly started at 09:30 hours.

ISU Local Branch Presentations

ISU Telemark

They have had success in organizing different activities, among them international food festival and sports activities like swimming and skiing trips; they also sponsor other gym activities. Their vision is to make a culture out of all the cultures present I ISU, keeping all the

identities. Challenges are better education facilities, how to find part time jobs and student funding.

ISU Trondheim

They have rearranged their board in order to work more efficiently, and have divided the work into teams. They arrange activities for students; parties, trips to Lofoten and Geiranger, movies, board games, chill out evenings and cultural activities. They are still working to get more Norwegian courses for international students, updating their website, and trying to find a person who can be responsible for contacts between ISU and cooperation partner and authorities.

ISU Stavanger

They have a newly elected board and they have changed their constitution to get a smaller board with elections once every year instead of twice. They are still working on the deposit case where international students have to pay while Norwegians do not, and they have had progress on this case, but it is still not finished. They are also concerned about the process in UDI which is very slow. They have many activities like salsa night, film nights and Coffee around the world which is very successful.

ISU NHH

At NHH they are called the MEBA council and represent all the international master students. They have some new members in their board, also a Norwegian who helps with translations etc. they have international dinners every month and they have had very successful integration activities like skiing trips, fishing trips and an educational trip to a gas storage plant. They are working on getting a better financial control and on internship possibilities for international students.

ISU UiB

They have increased the board from 6 to 7 members. They have hosted many social activities; welcoming party, goodbye party, Halloween party, football tournament, and quizzes, movie nights etc at Klubb Fantoft. They also have a language café in cooperation with NSU. They have had the Fantoft Student Coalition represented in the Students' Parliament. They have some challenges, including spreading knowledge about ISU, getting members to commit and join the board, high turnover and continuity.

ISU Narvik

To improve the ISU management they have training programs for new ISU members. They have created an advice book for new members. Narvik has 215 international students from 27 countries. They host many social activities; movies, parties, radio program, sports, language courses, pizza debates and "how to find a job". They also have international students' week and ISU Narvik would like to host the next NA in October 2009.

ISU Bodø

They have new board this year. Usually Bodø had 50-200 international students. They want to be a bridge between international and Norwegian students. They have coffee hour each Wednesday with a different team every time, this has been increasingly popular. They have had trips to Kjærringøy and Lofoten for both Norwegian and international students.

ISU Ås

UMB had the highest percentage of international students among Norwegian universities. They can get funding from the university's inclusion fund for activities including both Norwegians and internationals. They have had an international university fair, ski race, chocolate factory trip, cabin trips etc. they have also participated in a trip with Scanbalt experience and met many other student politicians. Their challenges are quota students, integration problems and high turn over in the board.

ISU Tromsø

They showed a video from their office, presenting all ISU Tromsø. They have had many activities like welcome-back party and world peace party. They also have very good cooperation with other student organizations in Tromsø.

ISU HiO

They have a new board for the semester. They arrange coffee hours, trips and international dinners. Some of their activities have been covered by the student press. They have also has trips to Sweden, the chocolate factory and movie nights. It is a challenge to get international students interested in committing to organization work.

Branch cooperation and commit activities

Presentation by Vice-President Mary Korotkova.

Despite what was agreed on the last NA, there has been no progress considering branch cooperation. Mary would like a discussion on what we would like to do about this and if branch cooperation is wanted by the branches. There was some discussion on why this has not been successful before. Regional groups were suggested and it was suggested to make use of facebook, blogs, video etc to communicate between branches.

Workshop on Inclusion

Helge Lundsvoll Andersen from NSU came to hold a workshop on inclusion.

First we had a discussion on topics such as “Are Norwegians cold and is inclusion possible?”, “what is most important for new students to know?” etc. All the participants were then divided into six groups and each had to work out an inclusion plan. The results are presented in a separate document.

SUNDAY 26 APRIL

The Assembly started at 14:00 hours.

Discussion on what should be political priority for the next year

Housing came up as an important issue, especially connected to that universities want to increase the amount of international students while the housing capacity is not increased. It was decided that the four branches that have this problem should work together to make a case.

UDI – it is a big problem for students that the processing time to get a permit and a renewal of permit with UDI takes very much time. This is a problem because students cannot travel out of Norway and come back while waiting for an answer from UDI. It should be a priority to get a dialogue with UDI and find out what can be done to speed up the procedure and make them understand the problem for students that can't leave the country due to the delay in the bureaucracy.

Presentation of the results of the inclusion workshop

All the six groups were given 10 minutes to present their result of Saturday's workshop.

Voting on Changes to the Constitution

Several changes were voted in and the new version of the constitution was approved unanimously.

Voting on Changes to the Platform

Several changes were voted in and the new version of the platform was approved unanimously.

Presentation of the next National Assembly in Narvik in October

Ilya Sizov from Narvik gave a presentation of their university college and the city of Narvik. They have looked at different options for organizing the NA and there were presented in a power point presentation. It was suggested to make a realistic budget and that we can live with the cheapest option. Suggestions from the participants included sightseeing in the area, museums, more time for branch presentations and dividing these presentations in two bulks, and fruit in the coffee breaks.

Budget for ISU National Assembly (NAi09), Oslo April 2009

Item	Description	Cost	Unit	Predicted	Obligated	Covered by
1.a	Hotel Accommodation for ISU Delegates	700	24	16 800,00	16 800,00	ISU BI (Funded by SBIO)
1.b	Hotel Accommodation for ISU Observers	700	2	1 400,00	1 400,00	ISU Local Branches
1.c	Hostel Accommodation for ISU Observers	450	2	900,00	900,00	ISU Local Branches
1.d	Hotel Accommodation for ISU Agder	700	2	1 400,00	1 400,00	StL Expansion Project
2.a	Travel Train and Plane for ISU Delegates	750	27	20 250,00	19 156,00	ISU National
2.b	Travel Train and Bus for ISU Agder	N/A		1 500,00	1 574,00	StL Expansion Project
2.c	Travel To and from Airport & within Oslo	120	27	3 240,00	3 797,00	ISU National
2.d	Travel Free Oslo Passes (within Oslo)	N/A	45	-	-	Visit Oslo
3.a	Gifts Flowers for Guests & Partners	199	10	1 990,00	1 990,00	ISU BI (Funded by SBIO)
4.a	Food Lunch for 3 days & Coffee Breaks	400	45	18 000,00	21 440,00	StL Fund
4.b	Food Dinner Friday Night	80	45	3 600,00	2 750,00	ISU National
4.c	Food Dinner Saturday Night	100	45	4 500,00	4 800,00	ISU National
4.d	Food Lunch for 3 days & Coffee Breaks (incoming)	N/A			(2 225,00)	ISU Local Branches*
4.e	Food Dinner Friday Night (incoming)	N/A			(1 100,00)	ISU Local Branches*
4.f	Food Dinner Saturday Night (incoming)	N/A			(2 720,00)	ISU Local Branches*
5.a	Other Stationary & other urgent expenses	N/A			296,50	ISU National
Grand Total				73 580,00	70 258,50	

Note	
Total Covered by ISU BI (Funded by SBIO)	18 790,00
Total Covered by ISU Local Branches	2 300,00
Total Income from ISU Local Branches*	(6 045,00)
Total Covered by ISU National	30 799,50
Total Covered by StL Expansion Project	2 974,00
Total Covered by StL Fund	21 440,00
Grand Total	70 258,50

* Including some observers from partner organizations.

ISU INCLUSION STRATEGY

Version: April 2009

An important part of studying in Norway is getting to know the Norwegian society and culture. Knowing Norwegians and understanding the culture makes it easier to tackle different challenges an international student encounters in Norway. During April 2009, ISU National Assembly created this Inclusion Strategy to help their fellow students in Norway. This strategy is meant to assist, both ISU Local Branches and relevant Student Organization, in advising and organizing events for inclusion between international and Norwegian students as well as the community as a whole. These ideas will be developed further during the next years and hopefully will continuously be enriched with new ideas, success stories and first hand experiences.

Part 1: Preparation before coming to Norway

- 1) Create a starter package that is available to international students coming to your institution of higher education before they arrive. The package should include information about what the student needs to bring to Norway, which documents are needed and what a student can expect to need during the first couple of days after arrival. There should also be practical information about money currency, banking system, maps, addresses, public transportation and contact persons.
- 2) Try to get access to an e-mail list for all the international students coming to the institution. This can be done through the international office where students interested in social and inclusion activities can sign up when registering during the introduction week. If not possible, you can ask the international office to distribute information for you.

Part 2: Information at arrival, surviving in Norway

- 1) Create a handbook for money saving tips. This can be done in cooperation with other ISU Local Branches and student organizations, but should also include special tips relevant to area of residence. Typical things to be included are which stores and brands are the cheapest, where it is possible to get a student discount and how it is possible to save money buying second hand books, buying tickets from the internet and how to install computer programs to get cheap phone calls etc. The money saving kit should be easy to spread (brochure, calendar, book-mark etc.) and easy to update (electronically).
- 2) Organize a meeting between new and experienced students. Get both Norwegian and international students that have been in Norway for a while to come to an informal information evening. The best is to mix groups of new and experienced students that can talk and share information. The meeting should be held early in the semester when the new students still need information about a lot of things. The event should be organized as some sort of "information café" so it will not be too difficult to get experienced students to volunteer.

Part 3: Inclusion in the student community

- 1) In all institutions of higher education there are a lot of student organizations. One of the best ways to get to know Norwegian students is to participate in a student organization. In order to introduce international students to the different organizations at your institution, you can organize a student organization fair where the organizations can present themselves to attract new members. Some institutions already have this kind of fair, and the job for ISU would then be to make sure all the organizations have information available in English and that the international students get information about the fair and the value of participating in student activities. If you are organizing the whole fair, you first need to contact all the student organizations and find a date and place for the fair. The fair can also be organized

electronically or as a brochure, the main job would then be to get all the organizations to give you a written presentation in English including contact information for interested students.

- 2) One inclusion strategy could be to date a Norwegian. ISU can also arrange cafés and pub nights for both Norwegian and international students. Getting to know the Norwegians at the student housing, class or gym is also a good way to get new friends and a source for interesting information about Norway.
- 3) Prepare a starter package that includes information about where students usually hang out in their spare time, a list of student organizations and some basic Norwegian phrases to start a conversation.

Part 4: Inclusion in the local community and cultural knowledge

- 1) Create an introduction to how and where students can get a part time job close to where they live. A list of places and organizations that hire English-speaking workers should be available to new students.
- 2) Organize a project where international students can spend Christmas with a Norwegian host family. This can be in cooperation with the student parliament, the local municipality and other organizations. Find host families through friends and ads in the local newspaper. Match students with families for Christmas Eve and/or other possible holidays.
- 3) Make a list of local organizations and activities that international students can join. Contact the various organizations, clubs etc and ask them for information in English. This can be in cooperation with the student parliament, the local municipality and other organizations. For distribution of this information, see part 3, point 1.

Background

During the National Assembly (NAi09) that took place at the Norwegian School of Management (BI), 24th – 26th of April 2009, the participants discussed concerns, priorities, challenges, success stories, and strategic steps for increasing the inclusion of international students in the Norwegian society. The discussions were part of the ‘Workshop on Strategic Plan for Inclusion’ that was organized by Helge Lundsvoll Andersen from Norsk Studentunion (NSU).

Inclusion is an integral element in the policy of Internationalization of Education in Norway. ISU aspires to develop ideas and build on them for future work that will aid in better inclusion. This is a brief report of the several ideas that came out of that workshop and that are found at the following webpage along with previous ideas from last year:

a) Links for 6 group presentations with more details found under Inclusion Workshop:

http://isu-norway.no/NAI2009/NAI_2009.php

b) Link found under Language Policy at UMB:

http://isu-norway.no/NAI2008/INFO_081129_UMB_LANGUAGE_POLICY.pdf

c) Link found under Inclusion Fund (application and guidelines) at UMB:

http://isu-norway.no/NAI2008/INFO_081202_NSU_UMB_Inclusion_fund.pdf

We hope that these ideas will inspire ISU Local Branches along with their relevant student organizations to further work on inclusion. We thank all the participants of the National Assembly, our partners and friends that contributed to the making of this document.

Brief history of efforts to solve Quota Scheme Students' challenges (2008 to 2009)

DEMAND: We believe that the situation needs to be seen from a humanitarian perspective rather than just internationalization policy. ISU believes that the situation of Quota Scheme Students (QSS) contradicts the fundamental objectives of providing education for students that are not in a position to afford it; hence, a dignified solution is needed, by 1st of August 2009, to ensure that they will be welcomed properly during their first days in Norway.

SITUATION: ISU discussed the situation at their local higher education institutions with relevant International Offices and some sent letters to their University and Høgskolen boards. We found out that the two institutions that still do not have some kind of a solution were: (a) Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) and (b) Universitetet for miljø- og biovitenskap (UMB). For example, at UMB (Ås) they have 20 Quota Scheme Students arriving every year and they don't have to pay rent for two months but they have to cover the costs of living in Norway until Lånekassens sends them the funds. The students wait up to 2 months and sometimes more. They are not happy about it and have to borrow from friends and sometimes strangers to cover their costs. Other Universities and Høgskolen found solutions outside the mandate of their establishments: where a loan has been provided to the students either directly from the University and Høgskolen's funds or from Studentsamskipnaden. The QSS repay the funds when they get their money from Lånekassen. Although the solution is not legal but it is positive and we appreciate it but we demand something more National and within the mandates of all organizations involved.

POLITICAL SUPPORT: ISU, Norsk Studentunion (NSU) and Studentenes Landsforbund (StL) have been in contact with some political party members and we decided to bring forth one of them. Odd Einar Dørum is prepared to support our demand based on a document recently passed at Venstres Landsstyre (National Board), where QSS issue is addressed as point number 13: <http://www.venstre.no/politikk/skole/21512>

RELEVANT EVENTS:

(1) After the article from VG were released, ISU had two meetings with State Secretary at the Kunnskapsdepartementet (KD), Mr. Jens Revold (October 2008 and 17 February 2009), where he said that a team from the ministry are working on finding solutions but he is not sure when.

(2) I also raised the question to Minister of Education and Research Ms. Tora Aasland twice during NSU and StL conferences (December 2008 and April 2009) where she was very positive about solving the situation and we openly discussed it in front of many students.

(3) NSU and StL brought up the issue of Quota Scheme Students in their list of demands from politicians (during the elections of 2009). They also included QSS among the 3 main student issues in front of the Norwegian Parliament Committee for Education in February 2009.

(4) The Parliament in Norway approved the White Paper concerning the Internationalization of Higher Education Policy including an article asking for an assessment on the situation of Quota Scheme Students by Direktoratet for utviklings samarbeid (NORAD).

(5) ISU, NSU and StL have been meeting with both Ms. Tora Aasland and Ms. Åsa Elvik (new State Secretary) since March 2009 and discussed QSS with them. They were also hoping for a positive answer.

(6) Early May 2009, Lånekassen invited all institutions (University and Høgskolen) to a meeting during the last week of May where they were supposed to reveal the new national positive solution. The solution was confidential because it was not final yet. However, few days before the meeting, Lånekassen canceled the meeting because they found out that the solution did not work.

(7) In June Ms. Tora Aasland met with new NSU and StL Leaders and told them that the ministry is still working on a solution.

(8) In July Ms. Åsa Elvik said that the ministry is at the stage where they are discussing the necessary regulations that would solve the problem as well as presenting to the Norwegian Parliament the funds needed for the process. Approval by the Parliament takes place during autumn 2009.

BACKGROUND OF QSS: The Norwegian government provides scholarships for students from different countries through the Quota Scheme. The objective of the scheme is to promote the internationalization of higher education. Currently, the scheme provides full scholarships for a total of 1100 students, of which 800 are from developing countries and 300 from Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Each year universities and university colleges in Norway are allocated a certain number of quota students. When these students arrive to Norway, they have to wait at least two months until they receive their scholarships from Lånekassen. The reasons are related to the bureaucratic steps required for their relocation to Norway and so far no governmental agency can or is willing to compromise changes favorable to lessen the time span. Such unavoidable time span places the students under a lot of stress that affects their studies and affects their perception of their host country.



The International Students' Union of Norway

Announcement for

ISU NATIONAL PRESIDENT

To be elected during the ISU National Assembly (NAii09) in Narvik
30th October to 1st November 2009

Main Tasks	Main Skills Developed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representing international students towards various Norwegian Government Organizations • Maintaining communication with 13 local branches • Ensuring the election of board members of 13 local branches • Organize with National Secretary: 1 ISU National Assembly and 2 leadership meetings, per academic year • Representing ISU at various partner meetings • Representing ISU at different national and regional conferences • Responsible for ISU National's finances (<i>yearly budget estimated to be around 300,000 NOK</i>) • Responsible for securing yearly funds for ISU from the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research and other sources • Responsible for hiring an National Secretary (if necessary) • Responsible for maintaining and administrating an office shared with the National Secretary • Lead the work of ISU in establishing new ISU branches in Norway and abroad (mainly Nordic and Baltic countries) <p>Salary: ISU National President will be receiving 33% of Level 14 (Stilling på lønnstrinn 14) that amounts to 5,900 NOK per month starting November of each year and for a period of 13 months.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership • Communication • Networking • Organization development • Administration • Team building • Finance and budgeting

If interested in the above position, please be ready to give a presentation including a "power point presentation" (ppt) for no more than 10 minutes during the ISU National Assembly in Narvik (30th October to 1st November 2009). ISU will only provide free food and accommodation during the period of 3 days. Elections will take place on the last day of the National Assembly. If you are unable to attend the National Assembly, you can still provide a ppt and or a video presentation addressing the National Assembly participants.

Note:

(a) Please contact us before the 5th of October 2009 to receive information about time, location, booking and accommodation and

(b) Do not hesitate to contact us if you have questions and or comments, and please visit our website:

<http://isu-norway.no/index.php>