



INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' UNION OF NORWAY

International Students'
Union of Norway (ISU)
Bi-Monthly Report
Period:
October – December 2011
Date: 31st December, 2011

Prepared by: John Ganyo

National President

Prepared for: Member branches and
Cooperating Partners

- Norsk Studentorganisasjon (NSO)
- Akademikernes Internasjonale Hjelpfond (SAIH)
- Utviklingsfondet Ungdom (SPIRE)
- Association of Norwegian Students Abroad (ANSA)

ISU General Information 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. ISU member organizations are located at 20 institutions of higher education around Norway. ISU's basic funding is from the Norwegian Government with the annual amount of NOK 500,000.00 (25th May 2011 – 31st March 2012). Local branches also receive funding mainly from LNU and their various institutions. ISU is in partnership with NSO, ANSA, Spire & UngInfo and members of SAIH & LNU.

Overview of Report Period

The period October - December marked another great milestone in the history of ISU Norway. With the election of a full National Board of five, work progressed with lots of excitement and motivation. Since three of the board members continued from the previous board, some only changing portfolios this time, there was not much training required. The two others had also served actively on local boards and organisations in their universities, while the National Secretary was not new to her job, having continued from the previous National Board. The two new NB members were therefore to get training from the predecessors to their various offices. The board consulted past Presidents in matters of technical nature. This ensured the needed continuity in ISU affairs by continuing from where they were before their re-election. The newly elected board reviewed documents of the National Assembly that set the roadmap for their work within the year for years to come, and set to work by implementing campaigns from the Action Plan and successfully holding official meetings with stake holders.

Current Activities and New Developments

The new Board successfully held series of meetings and adopted pragmatic strategies to help achieve set goals from the Action Plan delivered to them at the National Assembly in Bodø. Major decisions were taken to move the organisation forward.

1. **National Assembly:** Our next National Assembly (NAi12) will be hosted by ISU Bergen (ISU UiB) in October, 2012. The date would be jointly decided by ISU UiB and the National Board. Advance plans and strategies have already been forwarded to the President and local Board of ISU UiB. Local branches and cooperating partners would be informed about final arrangements in due course. However, our major focus would be on finding strategies to promote our campaign of opening ISU local branches in all Higher Institutions in Norway. The National Board has been in discussion with Ministry of Education and contribution from NSO President concerning this issue.



INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' UNION OF NORWAY

2. **Meeting with the State Secretary, Ministry of Education:** The National President, Secretary and the President of NSO represented ISU in a meeting with Kyrre Lekve, the State Secretary for Higher Education and Research, on 23rd November 2011. The meeting discussed three major issues, as mandated by the National Assembly:
 - (i) Increased (and equal) Access to English Medium Bachelor Programmes and Master Courses
 - (ii) Residence permits & relevant administrative barriers/ Norwegian Personal (ID) Number
 - (iii) Quota Scheme Students: Increase the number of beneficiaries (from 1100 to 2000), and the funding received per bursary (from 10 to 12months/per year)

The discussions received favorable response

. Full reports, as presented by the National Secretary, appear in a separate document.

3. **Meetings with Partners:** The National Board has represented ISU at a number of meetings with partners. Among them were, SAIH Annual National Meeting, NSO International Officers Meeting, LNU Leaders Conference and ANSA Career Day.

4. **Finding Cheaper Options for Website and Office Space:** As mandated by NAI11, the NB has deliberated and consulted extensively on cheaper options and upgrade of the ISU website. It was finally agreed to make use of ideas from ISU HiOF President and Vice who are both Master students in the IT field. Communication is ongoing for them to work with Pavel, to upgrade the website. Concerning the office space, no suitable cheaper accommodation has as yet been located. While doing this, NP has been mandated by NB to consult former NP who signed the contract with Ness & Co to find out about the possibility of earlier abrogation if it becomes necessary.

5. **Opening of New Local Branches:** In view of the success of the previous board in opening 6 new branches shortly before NAI11 the new National Board was mandated to open at least 4 new branches before NAI12. On the 25th October communications were initiated with the International Officer of Harstad University College, Kathrin Jathe, which yielded very positive results within the space of one month. On the 30th November, ISU HiH was established. The Rector, Bodil Olsvik, officially opened the General Assembly herself, together with the Head of the International Office, Sigrid Ag. Full article can be found on our website at: http://isu-norway.no/isu_in_news.php. Their contacts also appear on our website, pending formal confirmation into the national union at our next National Assembly. Other budding branches are in the offing. The Board has also initiated a number of projects to make ISU visible. With required funding, the results of these projects are expected to manifest before and during NAI12.

6. **Collaboration:** The National Board is also collaborating with 2 Youth Organisations from India on a North-South Project (Applied for funding to LNU):

- (i) UYRDC (<http://uyrdc.org/>)- An organization which has been working with the rural youth in the Himalaya region for more than two decades now.
- (ii) Borderless World Foundation (<http://bwfindia.org.in/>) - An organization that works with the children in militancy affected area of Jammu and Kashmir.

The First Vice President is in charge of this project and would give periodic updates as work progresses. The project would first go on a pilot basis.

7. **National Leadership Meetings:** Delegates at NAI11 were unable to approve proposed dates for the 2 Leadership Meetings. The National Board was charged to send information to all



INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' UNION OF NORWAY

local branches so they could check their academic calendars to agree on tentative dates for the LMs. Since dates were to be decided first and foremost with the hosting branches, advance plans and strategies have already been sent to ISU HiOA and ISU UiT, hosts of the LM1 and LM2 respectively. However, due to examination pressure and lack of foreknowledge of the academic calendars of the universities, no convenient dates could be decided for any of the LMs. The LM1 could therefore not take place in December as expected. The National Board therefore has proposed 27th to 29th January, 2012 for LM1 and 27th-29th April for LM2. Official invitation letters would be sent to local branches in due course.

The National Board has observed that it would always be on the safer side for delegates to approve tentative dates proposed by National Board for the said events at NA, which has been the usual practice, rather than deciding on it later. This would help forestall the danger of any future recurrence.

- Challenges:** Having been mandated to open at least 4 new local branches before next National Assembly, the National Board has encountered financial handicap right after opening the very first one (ISU HIH). There is lack of funds to proceed with those already initiated. The Vice President of Union Development and the rest of the board who initiated these moves have no funds to travel to the schools involved to hold the needed start-up discussions. Secondly, there are no more funds to be given out to new branches as start up funds, without which these branches cannot function effectively. Finally, ISU lacks the needed funds to fulfill the approved 10% remuneration to Vice Presidents to serve as an incentive and motivation for them to carry on the good work being done in line with furthering internationalization in the various institutions. As the size of the organization is growing it is becoming the need of the time to provide the Vice Presidents increased remuneration in order to appreciate their efforts and keep ISU functioning at a much higher level.

ISU therefore appeals to the Ministry of Education and other stake holders to come to their aid sooner to enable them carry on with the various campaigns, especially opening of new local branches in higher institutions in Norway.

Acknowledgements

ISU National Board would like to express sincere appreciation to the Ministry of Education, the Norwegian Government and LNU for their continued financial support to promote the work of ISU, as partners in internationalization of Norwegian Education. ISU also desires to make special mention of Daniel Massie, the Executive for International Affairs, all International Officers and Kim, President of NSO for their support and motivation. We acknowledge SAIH, ANSA and Spire for their unflinching support over the years and hope to work more closely with them in advancing our campaigns, which incidentally fall so much in line with theirs. We offer special appreciation to ISU Bodø for hosting the NAI11, Sebastian Bantow and Anne Buhl Larsson for chairing the National Assembly and to our honoured delegates for attending and making valuable contributions. Finally, we are really grateful to ISU UiB, ISU HIOA and ISU UiT for volunteering to host our NAI12, LM1 and LM2 respectively. We hope to have successful events respectively.

**The National Board wishes all local branches and partners a
Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!**