



**International Students' Union
of Norway (ISU)**

National Assembly's October 2009
WORKSHOP

Local General Assemblies:
'Student democracy & representation'

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Prepared for:

- Local ISU Branches/ ISU members
- Local Student democracies
- Cooperating Partners

Aim and objectives of the workshop

The workshop's aim has been to enhance local student democracy, through the adoption of organisational procedures and the establishment of strategic steps that would ensure better democratic representation at each of ISU's members (local branches).

To this end, the further strengthening of the local ties with NSO local branches (Studentparlamentet, Studentinget, Studentorganisasjon, etc.) has played a central role, and has been based in the past long-term effective cooperation (& agreements) between ISU and its main partners, that is Studentenes Landsforbund (StL) and Norsk Studentunion (NSU) [which will merge, from July 1st 2010, and become 'Norsk studentorganisasjon' (NSO)].

Methodology adopted for the workshop

The participants with delegate status in the National Assembly have been equally distributed in four (4) different working groups, each and every one of which has been assigned a task to elaborate (and later present in the plenary session of the Assembly) what does an ISU and NSO local branch needs before and after a (local) General Assembly.

The above groups have been chaired by four (4) participants with observer status in the National Assembly, who have been experienced in (& with) student democracies and relevant needs in the local level.

Implementation

I. Before an ISU (local) General Assembly, ISU local branch needs to:

- A) Prepare for the General Assembly by
- Providing and/or making easily accessible (through the ISU local website) to all members basic information on ISU generally, as well as on the branch's functions/activities, Constitution, last Action plan, structure/ members of the Board and budget; those information must be made also made available and easily accessible to the NSO local Board members.



- Preparing and disseminating a final Report and an appropriate agenda for the General Assembly (reporting of past year/semester, election of new Board members, issues/cases to be discussed/ agreed); such Report must be disseminated to each of the NSO local Board members as well, but especially to the Leader and the International Affairs advisor.
 - Contacting the Institution and the NSO local branch (and/or other local student democracies) for help and support (organisational, financial, etc.), as well as for their attendance (through a representative each). Within this framework, ISU local branch might find useful to ask from the Institution/NSO local branch to:
 - (1) Promote the General Assembly through their website, contacts and networks.
 - (2) Provide practical support (through lending equipment & voting signs, booking an appropriate room, chairing the session & minute-taking, printing, preparing posters/ads, etc.) and information on the organisational aspect.
 - (3) Facilitate and/or provide funding.
 - (4) Address to the student/electorate body a greeting and a short presentation.
- B) Contact and/or inform members, ensuring maximum attendance and participation. In this respect, any available communication channel should be used (local press, website, e-mail/contact lists, social networking tools such as Facebook, Twitter, etc., word of mouth, and so on).
- C) Contact and/or inform partners and other local organisations.

II. *Before an ISU (local) General Assembly, NSO local branch could:*

- A) Approach ISU local Board members/ President, and inform the latter of their interest to help.
- B) Be prepared to offer know-how and support for the organisation of the General Assembly (through lending equipment & voting signs, booking an appropriate room, chairing the session & minute-taking, printing, preparing posters/ads, etc.), information on the organisational aspect and preparation of the agenda.
- C) Ensure the availability & attendance in the General Assembly of at least one representative from the NSO local Executive Board, with the aim to greet, present and/or chair the session(s).
- D) Offer visibility and promote the General Assembly through any available communication channel (local press, website, e-mail/contact lists), contacts and networks.
- E) Offer funding, or direct appropriately ISU local Board members/ President.



III. *After an ISU (local) General Assembly, ISU local branch needs to:*

- A) Finalise the minutes (and protocol of election, if relevant) of the General Assembly and circulate them among present representatives from NSO local branch, Institution and previous ISU local Board for approval (& signature); consequently, such document(s) must receive necessary publicity/availability (through ISU local website).
- B) Ensure –through at least one meeting- that the previous ISU local Board member(s)/ President would provide all necessary and relevant (access &) information to the new (elected) Board members through both a hand-over of all documentation (including the ISU Handbook, local past archives, other documents, etc.), as well as an appropriate training (*‘transfer of knowledge’*). Within this framework, ISU previous Board must ensure the following to the new local Board:
- Accessibility to the organisation’s bank account and balance, as well as relevant financial information (such as –but not limited to- funding application instructions & deadlines) and previous bank statements.
 - Accessibility to the organisation’s premises (keys, etc.), facilities (telephone, computer & printing passwords, drawer/ locker keys, etc.), archives, documents (including ISU Handbook) and relevant information.
 - Information of/on the organisation’s (organisational) number, and on the (new) President’s obligation to update the *Brønnøysund Register Centre* (Register of Non-Profit organisations) with his/her details at the soonest possible.
 - Introduction and information on the organisation’s/previous Board’s political/ academic (directed either to the Institution, Samskipnaden and/or NSO local Board) and social work & activities for the past year/semester, and an evaluation/road-map for the future.
 - Information on the local stakeholders (such as the Institution’s International Office, the Students’ Association/Samskipnaden, the Students’ Society/Samfunnet, the Welfare Council/Velferdstinget, the NSO Board member on International Affairs and NSO local secretary, etc.) and their contact details.
 - Information on the organisation’s status as a member of ISU of Norway (and ISU’s national website – www.isu-norway.no), as well as of its (local) cooperating partners (SAIH, Spire, ESN, Red Cross, etc.) and, especially, of the NSO local Board and Parliament (Studentparlamentet, Studentinget, Studentorganisasjon, etc.).
 - Information on the organisation’s operational regulative framework, either direct (General Assembly’s decisions, ISU local branch’s Constitution, regulations, etc.) or indirect (ISU of Norway’s national office), structure and Board members’ responsibilities and tasks.
 - Information on the daily running of the organisation and the (ordinary & extraordinary, organisational & financial) procedures to be followed (and deadlines).
 - Training in teambuilding and leadership.



- C) Provide to the ISU national office as well as NSO local branch and secretary the new ISU local Board's (and especially, the President's) contact details.
- D) Establish communication with ISU national office and relevant Regional Cooperation Group of ISU; in case it would be economically viable, a training meeting from ISU national office/ Board should be arranged (while if there is not such possibility, a phone/skype communication is recommended as a first approach).
- E) Request for (& attend) an introduction (first) meeting with NSO local Board members, and especially with the NSO Board member for International Affairs, where expectations, interests and common projects/ ways of cooperation must be –among other- explored.
- F) Arrange at least one meeting with local stakeholders (Institution, Studentparlamentet, NSO local Board & members, the Students' Association/Samskipnaden, the Students' Society/Samfunnet, the Welfare Council/Velferdstinget, etc.), and contact local partners and other local organisations.
- G) Attend local democracy's (Studentparlamentet, Studentinget, Studentorganisasjon, etc.) meetings as observers, and especially the session(s) relevant to international students and internationalisation.
- H) Prepare a contact list of students that attend ISU local activities ('active members').

IV. After an ISU (local) General Assembly, NSO local branch could:

- A) Offer help with the drafting & finalisation (signing) of the minutes (and protocol of election, if relevant) of the General Assembly, as well as with the organisation's (organisational) number and the (new) ISU President's obligation to update the *Brønnøysund Register Centre* (Register of Non-Profit organisations) with his/her details.
- B) Arrange a (first) meeting with the new ISU Board members, during which information on the following could be provided:
 - Brief introduction of the local political structure and stakeholders (Institution, Studentparlamentet, NSO local Board & members, the Students' Association/Samskipnaden, the Students' Society/Samfunnet, the Welfare Council/Velferdstinget, etc.) and their work, as well as the way appointed ISU Board member will participate in relevant processes (under an 'observer' status). In this respect & additionally, a list with contact details of persons relating with the above organisations would be very helpful to be provided to ISU local Board by NSO local Board/ secretary. (Some information could be also provided for other major local organisations, such as SAIH, ESN, etc.).



- Basic information on the previous ISU Board's work and outcomes, as well as hand-over of any documents/ passwords etc. available to NSO local branch for ISU's use.
 - Short training ('*transfer of knowledge*') on handling political work/cases, approaching the local (student-run) media and following organisational procedures (relevant to the office's premises and use, such as fire safety, security regulations, etc.), where and when available.
 - Availability and sources of funding.
- C) Arrange a (second) meeting where the basis for new year's cooperation on a political/academic case could be further explored, according to the needs and understanding of both the local ISU and NSO Board.
- D) Facilitate ISU local Board to arrange at least one meeting with local stakeholders (Institution, Studentparlamentet, the Students' Association/Samskipnaden, the Students' Society/Samfunnet, the Welfare Council/Velferdstinget, etc.), and attend local democracy's (Studentparlamentet, Studentinget, Studentorganisasjon, etc.) meetings as observers, and especially the session(s) relevant to international students and internationalisation (through information of the issues/cases in english, advance notification of meeting dates and venue, translation services before and during the meeting, etc.).
- E) Offer help and expertise in establishing an effective and easy running website and file sharing system for ISU, so that visibility of the local work and continuity of documentation could be ensured for the future.
- F) Offer help with translation, when needed/requested.

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