

Innovation Through Internationalisation

Barriers for going abroad and actions to overcome them

Introduction

International exchange brings new knowledge, shows new perspectives, promotes professional development and is inspiring. It is even necessary in order to be innovative and meet the constantly increasing demands. At NTNU University Library only a few staff members have gone abroad. A survey was conducted among colleagues exploring values and barriers for international exchange. These results form a basis for action proposals to get more colleagues interested in going abroad on study tours.

Going abroad: personal values

- Getting inspired and motivated
- Obtaining new perspectives
- Learning and gaining new knowledge
- Making friends and expanding personal networks
- Improving language skills
- Becoming more confident

Going abroad: professional values

- Gaining new perspectives and learning about international trends
- Expanding professional networks
- Advocating and marketing our library internationally
- Exchanging experiences and learning by comparing with other institutions
- Getting ideas for new projects and services
- Contributing to our institutional development

Barriers for going abroad

- Personal situation (e.g. small children)
- Lack of support and motivation from management
- Shrinking budgets and lack of information about funding
- Situation at workplace (who does my work while I am away)
- No time – too busy with everyday tasks
- Lack of knowledge about opportunities
- “Practical know-how” missing (do not know how to do it)
- Language problems
- Lack of clear professional or institutional benefits
- Not relevant/do not wish to go

Needs to consider before going abroad

- Help in finding a library and a place to stay
- Help with funding
- Knowing that there would be no extra burden on colleagues
- Support and motivation from our own institution
- Time to work on a report or other presentations after the visit



“We need to see the library from a distance and compare with similar libraries”



“Going abroad helps us make the right decisions for students and faculty”



Conclusions

On the basis of the survey findings the following actions are suggested:

- Set up a Wiki with information about funding, reports and tips from colleagues and practical help (i.e. how to approach a library, how to find accommodation)
- Draft an internationalisation strategy document and implement it in the library
- Talk regularly about and remind the management of the importance of staff motivation
- Arrange annual information meetings with NTNU's Office of International Relations
- Cooperate with The Norwegian Library Association and other potential partners
- Establish a position in the library that is in charge of international relations and cooperation



“Achieving background experience for planning and realising...”