

Erfahrungsbericht Erasmus+ STT Mitarbeitermobilität im August 2024 an der Universität Stavanger

Job Shadowing Experience in Stavanger

During my time in Stavanger, I had the opportunity to shadow my colleague, Kjetil Andersen, who oversees similar responsibilities. Our collaboration led to an engaging exchange of ideas and best practices regarding the execution of our tasks. One key observation I made was Mr. Andersen's preference for a more centralized approach to managing his work, which has proven to be highly effective in several ways. This method of centralization, with its clear structure and streamlined processes, was one of the valuable insights I took away from my experience in Stavanger.

Staying in Stavanger and Dealing with the Language

Since I booked my flight and accommodation at the last minute, my options were limited, and what I secured was very much a "take it or leave it" deal. The hotel, located in the center of Stavanger, was surrounded by cafés and restaurants. This became particularly noticeable on Friday evening, when the lively party atmosphere continued well into the early hours of the morning.

The hotel itself was quite basic, but it was also relatively inexpensive compared to other places. There was no reception, so there isn't much to say about the hospitality. Check-in and check-out consisted of simply signing a notebook made of recycled paper. I did have some safety concerns, as the electrical wiring didn't seem to meet the standards I'm used to in Germany. However, it didn't seem to bother anyone else and appeared to be the norm in many places.

Traveling around Stavanger was easy and intuitive, thanks to satellite technology and an app that tracked when you got on and off the bus. This was a huge surprise for someone like me, used to Germany's stringent privacy laws. However, it was very convenient not having to worry about keeping a ticket or carrying cash to travel.

The Norwegian language posed quite a challenge for me, despite my background in German and Dutch. I could barely understand a word. Thankfully, most Norwegians are proficient in English, so getting by with English alone was not a problem.

The working culture

I was pleasantly surprised by the direct and open lines of communication within the team. The organizational hierarchy feels quite flat, and the informal nature of interactions allows for seamless communication between colleagues. It is quite common for team members to simply walk over to one another's desks, without the need for scheduling formal appointments, to address and resolve minor issues quickly. This spontaneity fosters a collaborative and efficient work environment, something I found very refreshing and inspiring.

Another noteworthy aspect of Mr. Andersen's work is his use of Microsoft Teams. He manages almost all tasks remotely through the platform, which has proven to be extremely efficient, especially considering the mobility of EMMIR students who frequently travel. This remote-first approach not only simplifies coordination but also ensures that tasks are handled effectively, regardless of location. It was clear that adopting such digital flexibility significantly improves productivity and communication within a highly mobile team.

There were a few other things at the university of Stavanger that caught my attention.

The campus of the University of Stavanger is thoughtfully designed to create an ideal environment for both work and recreation, catering to the diverse needs of students and staff. Its layout promotes a balanced lifestyle, combining academic spaces with opportunities for physical activity, relaxation, and quiet reflection.

One of the standout features of the campus is the fully integrated gym, which is easily accessible to both students and staff. This on-campus facility encourages a healthy, active lifestyle by making sports and fitness activities convenient and affordable. Whether for a quick workout between classes or regular training sessions, the gym provides a wide range of equipment and services to support physical well-being.

In addition to promoting physical health, the University of Stavanger also recognizes the importance of mental and spiritual well-being. At the heart of the campus, there are dedicated quiet rooms designed to serve the needs of students and staff from diverse religious backgrounds. These spaces are available for prayer, meditation, or quiet reflection, offering a sanctuary amidst the often hectic pace of university life. This provides students with a valuable opportunity to find peace and relaxation in a serene environment, helping them recharge and maintain a sense of balance.

Interestingly, the university does not have designated breastfeeding rooms, as breastfeeding is considered a normal and natural part of life in Norway. It is fully accepted in public spaces, and the university's inclusive culture reflects this norm. This open approach allows mothers to breastfeed wherever they feel comfortable, integrating parenting naturally into campus life without the need for specialized spaces.

The University of Stavanger is also committed to accessibility and inclusivity. The entire campus is equipped to support individuals with disabilities. Hallways, stairs, and other pathways are designed with accessibility in mind, featuring metal tactile guides embedded in the floor to assist visually impaired individuals in navigating the campus safely. These tactile spots also mark stair landings, further enhancing safety and accessibility for all. Ramps, elevators, and wide pathways are also part of the campus infrastructure, ensuring that everyone, regardless of physical ability, can fully participate in university life.

Overall, the campus at the University of Stavanger is a well-rounded space, carefully designed to accommodate the physical, mental, and emotional needs of its diverse student body and staff. By integrating fitness, spiritual reflection, and accessibility, the university creates a supportive and inclusive environment where everyone can thrive.

The International Office – One of the most notable aspects of the International Office in Stavanger is their unwavering readiness to address student concerns. The housing situation in Stavanger can be challenging, yet the International Office is deeply involved in supporting students in finding suitable accommodation. Recognizing the difficulties of securing housing in a foreign country, they provide personalized guidance on apartment options, including university housing, private rentals, and shared living arrangements. They also offer valuable insights into the local rental market, helping students understand lease agreements and ensuring they are aware of their rights and obligations as tenants.

In addition to housing support, the International Office plays a crucial role in assisting students with family responsibilities, particularly in finding appropriate daycare services for their

children. They help students navigate the application process, locate nearby daycare centers, and understand the Norwegian childcare system. Their commitment ensures that international students and their families feel welcomed and well-supported as they adjust to life in Stavanger. For instance, we previously had an EMMIR student with a child, and these topics were particularly pressing.

For EMMIR (European Master in Migration and Intercultural Relations) students, the International Office has taken additional steps to streamline their academic experience. They have developed a dedicated registration platform tailored specifically to EMMIR students, allowing them to register for courses and manage their academic profiles with ease. This platform simplifies administrative processes, ensuring that students can enroll in their courses smoothly.

Moreover, the International Office offers personalized assistance in selecting the appropriate modules from the EMMIR curriculum. Given the program's interdisciplinary nature, which covers topics such as migration, intercultural relations, and human rights, students often need guidance in choosing modules that align with their academic interests and career goals. The office staff is knowledgeable about the curriculum and offers valuable advice, ensuring that each student makes informed decisions that enrich their educational experience. This support helps students navigate the complexities of the program and make the most of the opportunities it offers.

However, one of the recurring challenges the International Office faces is dealing with students who do not submit their applications on time. This issue is especially prevalent among EMMIR students, where delays in submitting applications for housing, daycare, or course registration can disrupt both academic and personal plans. Despite these challenges, the staff works diligently to accommodate late submissions, although it can result in limited availability of resources such as housing options or spots in preferred courses.

To mitigate this, the International Office staff consistently provides reminders and guidance to encourage timely submissions. When faced with late applications, they proactively find alternative solutions, such as helping students secure last-minute housing or enroll in available courses. Their flexibility and problem-solving approach demonstrate their dedication to ensuring all students receive the necessary support to succeed in their studies and transition smoothly into life in Stavanger.

During discussions, we explored several strategies to improve communication between team members and with students to streamline processes. My exchange with the team in Stavanger has given me valuable insights into enhancing our communication methods, both with students and within our own team, which will help improve and accelerate our work.

Library - The library is a central hub of university life in Stavanger, offering a range of quiet study spaces, including private rooms, study cabins, and open, silent areas adorned with books from the city's heritage collection. Additionally, there are corners with wash stations, microwaves for heating food, and kettles to make tea.

Children are warmly welcomed, with a large area dedicated to them, filled with books and plenty of space to play. Some students even choose to stay overnight for their studies, as the

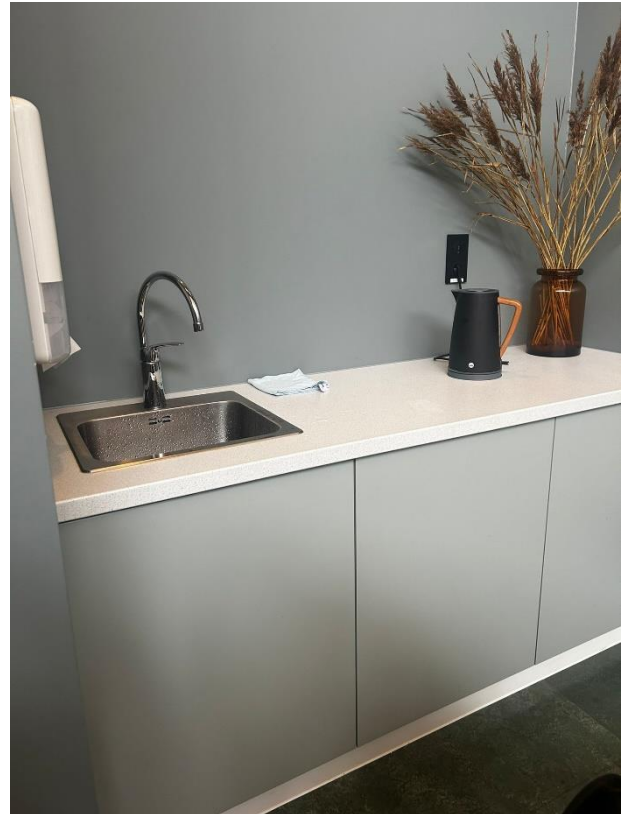
library is open to all. If a book is taken without borrowing, security detectors at the exit will sound an alarm. Borrowed books are automatically renewed unless reserved by someone else.

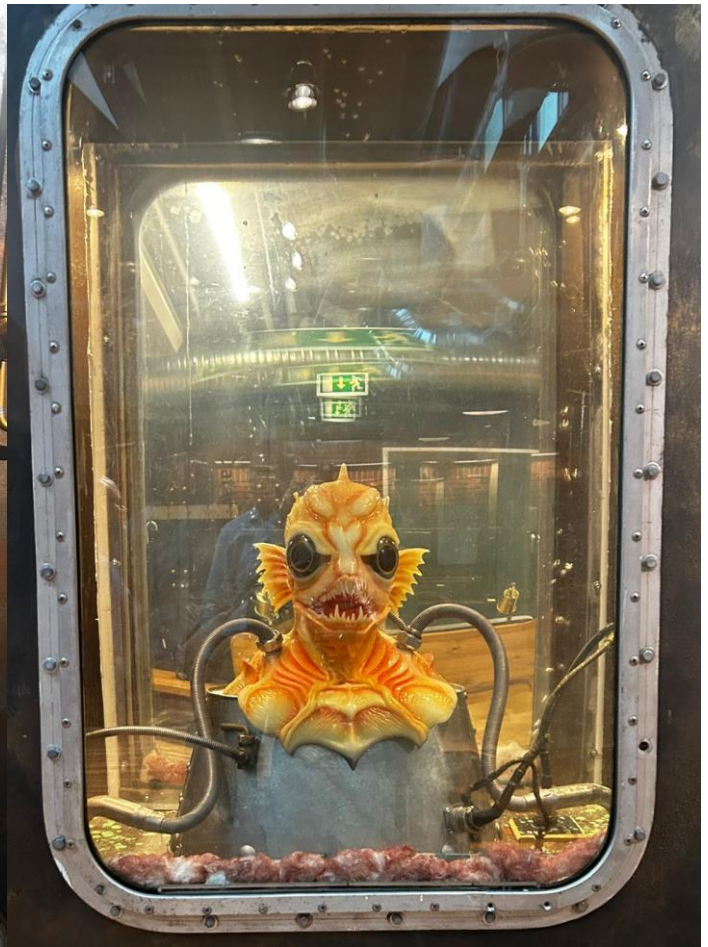
In addition to the quiet study areas, the library also offers spaces designed for events, gatherings, video conferences, and group work. These flexible, multi-purpose areas make it not only a place for individual study but also a hub for collaboration and community activities. With its modern amenities and diverse facilities, the library stands as a sustainable and future-oriented model, accommodating various needs for students, researchers, and the wider community.

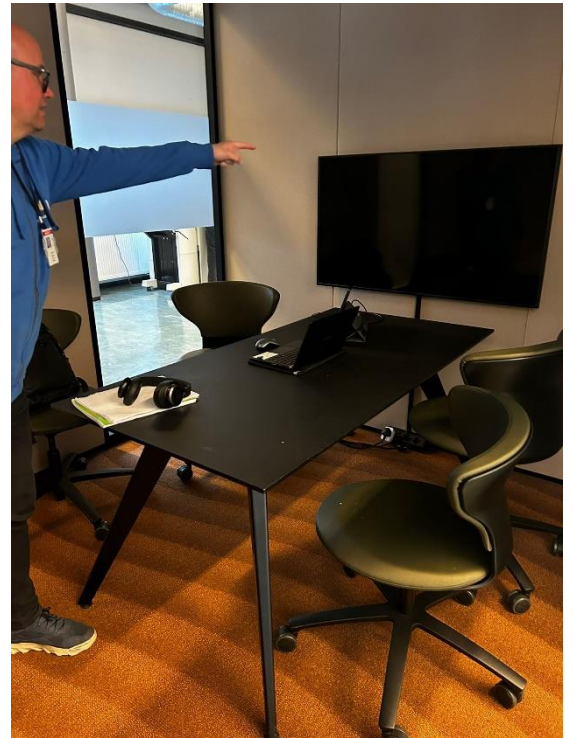
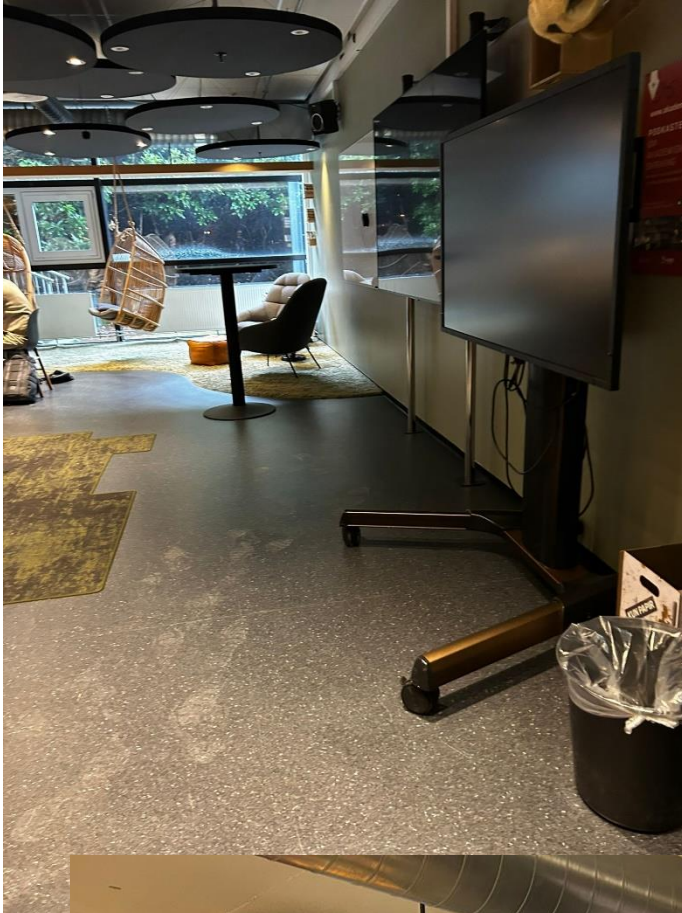
For Emmir students, this welcoming and adaptable library model could serve as an inspiration. We could explore how much of this inclusive and versatile approach can be adopted in other contexts, particularly in creating spaces that foster both individual learning and group collaboration, while also supporting accessibility for everyone—from students to families. Its commitment to sustainability and community engagement makes it a great example of a forward-thinking educational environment.

With the following photos I will try to share my experience with you:











It was a very inspiring journey and it contributed to my growth as a person and a professional.
Thank you for this opportunity!

K.A-Tu

Keti Antadze-Tamminga

09.09.2024. Leer