

Why are International Relations Important for Students and Students' Unions?

1. Our Rationale

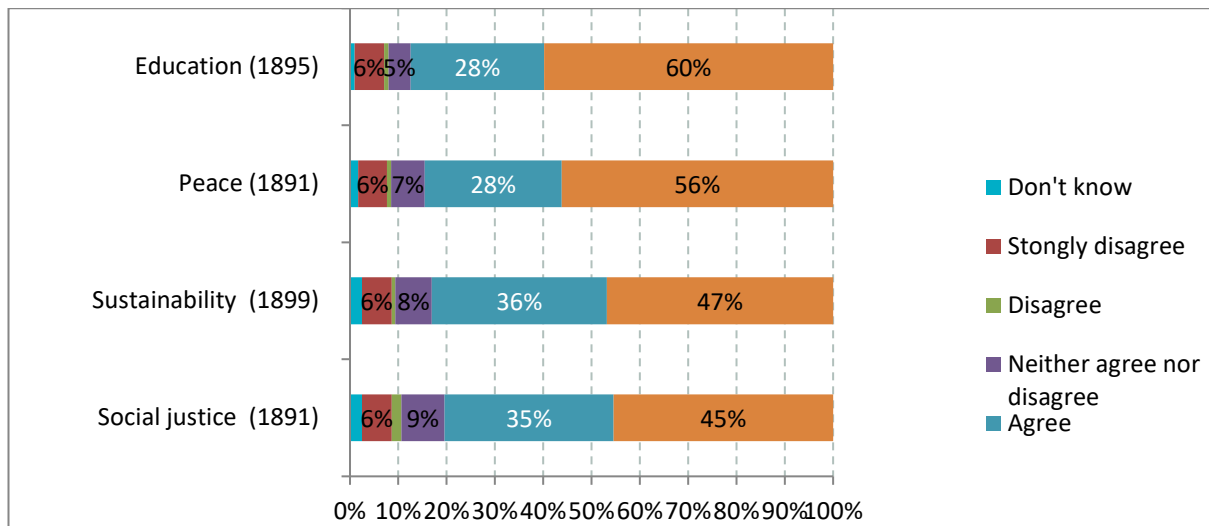
In 2012 NUSUK committed to pursuing the **Global Student Voice** agenda, we believe that international engagement is vital because:

- Our values of equality, democracy and collectivism do not stop at our borders to be dis-engaged would be counter to our organisational values and our historical roots to promote and sustain international co-operation and understanding, we cannot act in isolation from global issues.
- We have much to contribute and gain by working with others, no one organisation can hope to bring about lasting change without collaborating. We should use greater global connectivity to share and learn from each other. All students have the power to transform the world.
- We recognise will be limited in our ability to create a fairer, more prosperous society if we act in isolation from global concerns and pressures.
- We believe that student's ability to drive change and shape the future needs to be applied at both a national and international level.
- We want students to thrive wherever they study and we will work with our students' union members to champion student causes supporting our fellow students who are subject to injustice, we will stand in solidarity with those experiencing repression and act as a champion of human rights.
- We will join with other national student organisations to make the case for increased investment in and access to education
- We will play our part in maintaining the United Kingdom's reputation as an international provider of tertiary education and stand against attempts to limit the mobility of students and academic staff, as well as promoting transferable qualifications
- We will work with our students' union members to ensure student participation in quality assurance and enhancement process in trans-national institutions
- We recognise the transformative impact of international experience and engagement on individual students, student organisations and NUSUK.
- We seek to develop sustainable behaviours amongst students because many of the environmental challenges we face can only be addressed through international co-operation.

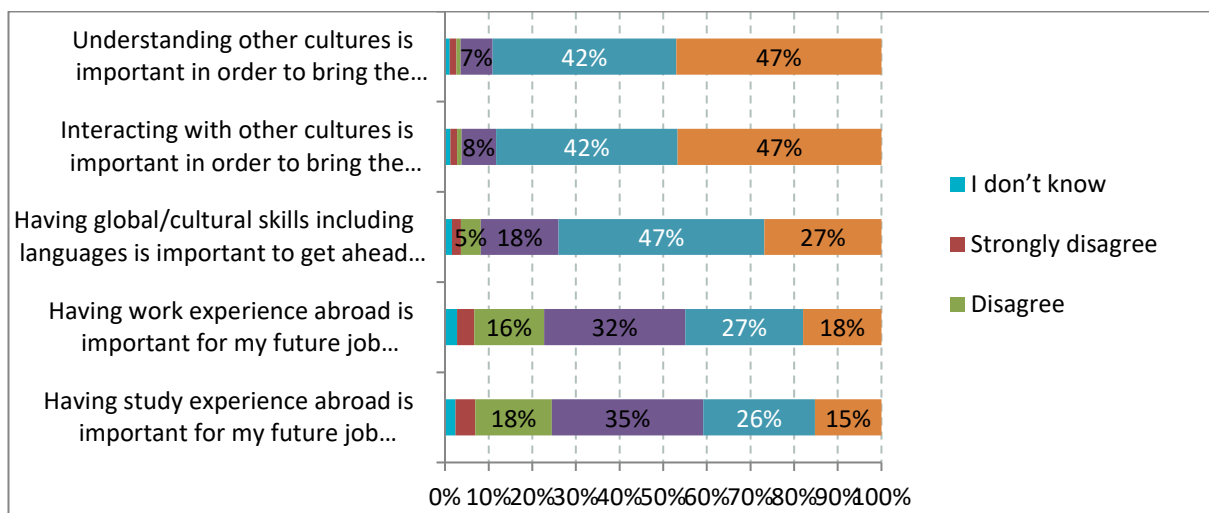
- We believe that through engaging students in this way we will help foster in them progressive values on peace, social justice, sustainability and education developing “Global Citizens” who will seek to forge a better world and who will champion such approaches in their future lives and careers.
- We recognise that our experience and values as requested can support the developmental capacity of other national student organisations through mutual commercial activity and partnerships.
- We have an opportunity to generate income and additional capacity that will enhance opportunities for students studying the UK and those who choose to study abroad
- We believe that if NUSUK can inspire our future leaders to approach global issues in a collective and collaborative way then we will have played and will continue to play a part in bringing about positive and progressive change

The long-term plan was agreed because it was recognised that since the demise of NUSUK’s international department in 1984 our approach to international relations has been inconsistent and lacking in influence. Our record on solidarity and human rights by contrast is one to be proud of, particularly our campaign work on Southern Africa and Chile, more recently however we have tended to focus on domestic issues. We believe there is an appetite amongst students and young people to create a better world and that student organisations provide the infrastructure through which they can engage in issues of human rights, liberation and social justice. In October 2016 the NUS Insight Team conducted a survey, the key findings of which were:

- Over 80% of students agreed there should be global co-operation in all projects, with education being the highest.
- Almost 8 in 10 agreed there should be a forum to create a better world to work together
- Almost 90% of students agreed that understanding and interacting with other cultures were important to bring them closer together.



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Our expressed values are universal and we should not be afraid to stand alongside our fellow students in the struggles and barriers they may face. To rebuild our international reputation and implement our strategy between now and 2022 we have identified three key phases:

Phases	Activity
<u>Phase One:</u> Develop relationships with national student organisations in particular the European Students' Union, the Commonwealth Students' Association and the Association of College Unions International	Providing consistent representation to the identified partners as well as developing new relationships and channels of communication to enable us to develop cross Global co-operation and joint projects that help to develop our aims.
<u>Phase Two:</u> Develop and enhance our credibility with our international partners through participation in and contribution to policy discussions and professional development	Taking part in working groups, communities of practice and policy development processes, developing a reputation for reliability and a collective approach and to explore areas for co-operation
<u>Phase Three:</u> Developing partnerships that help both NUSUK and our international colleagues take forward and develop work on peace, social justice, sustainability and education	Applying for funds to deliver joint initiatives and forming alliances to tackle specific issues of concern to students everywhere.

The pace at which different strands of work will progress will vary, some will be at phase three whilst others remain at phase one. We will go about making change by:

- Understanding the experiences and concerns of students at an international level
- Organising campaigns that impact on international issues, that engage the public, membership and students
- Being responsive to international policy agendas
- Advising students' unions about ways in which they and their members can engage in global solidarity
- Supporting students to understand the importance of human rights, global co-operation and cultural understanding

For all this work to succeed it is important that our representation is consistent so that we can build trust and effective relationships with international student organisations. Our representatives should be briefed on international issues and be sensitive to cultural differences.