
10 reasons to be involved!

The benefits of international student work to the local church

Thousands of students come to our church (Jesmond Parish Church, Newcastle upon Tyne) from dozens of countries across the globe. We have two international student workers who are also Friends International Associates. It's been exciting to see international student work grow. But we do have to make a substantial investment of time, effort, money and facilities. So why do it? Here are 10 good reasons:

1. **Vulnerable students are helped.** Internationals can be lonely. To offer unconditional friendship in the name of Christ is reward in itself.
2. **Enriching friendships are created.** Many greatly enjoy meeting others from different cultures. Continuing friendships often result.
3. **Effective evangelism happens.** Non-Christian internationals are often very ready to listen. We don't see all the fruit, but some turn to Christ, and that's thrilling.
4. **UK student work is strengthened.** There's a close partnership between UK student work and international work. Both would be poorer without the other.
5. **International students get involved in the life of the local church.** A bridge is built into other activities and areas of service. Internationals often give as much as they get.
6. **People learn about the universal scope of the gospel.** It's obvious that the gospel isn't culturally or ethnically bound. Christ is for everyone.
7. **Support of worldwide mission work is encouraged.** Internationals bring home to us world needs vividly.
8. **Christians develop a vision for international gospel ministry.** Some develop a commitment to work with internationals in this country. Others go overseas.
9. **Other work can develop.** Some Chinese students, who had benefited from local support, decided to reach out to Chinese people resident in Newcastle. There's now a thriving church!
10. **God is pleased because the Great Commission is being obeyed.** This alone is enough reason. How could we turn our backs on such a God-given opportunity?

Developing international student ministry is hard work. There are disappointments and difficulties. We could close our eyes to the need. The costs are considerable. But they are overwhelmingly outweighed by the benefits.

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