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2012

EDUCATE. EMPLOY. EMPOWER

Evaluation

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Introduction

On Wednesday 21 November 2012, NUS held a national demonstration in London under the banner of '*Educate, Employ, Empower*'. In response to a mandate from National Conference 2012 but without a clear parliamentary process to influence, the message of #demo2012 was broad and intended to allow unions to talk about issues their students cared about and to build activists for local and national campaigns in the short term, and in advance of the expected 2015 General Election.

Media coverage of the day reported the number of marchers as anything from 3,000 to 10,000 with numbers on the day most likely being around 5,000. Over 100 students' unions sent students to the demo, which equates to 19% of NUS's constituent members.

This document evaluates the demo and makes a series of recommendations using feedback and reflections from:

- Debrief of those involved in organising various aspects of the day
- Survey of the membership (including free text comments)
- Tracking of resource downloads
- Measuring reach of media and communications
- Brand tracking research

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Mobilising

Consultation over summer

Consultation on the demonstration took place at a series of events and officer development courses and regional meet ups during the summer of 2012.

At each of these events, union officers were updated on progress towards the organisation of the event, given the opportunity to debate the purpose and message of the demo, ask questions and also to hold NUS officers to account. Unlike the 2010 NUS/UCU 'Fund Our Future' national demonstration, there was no clear policy outcome for #demo2012 so there was a gap in terms of messaging which union officers were invited to shape and influence over the summer. The most consistent concern raised over the summer was that the membership felt they didn't know what the purpose of the demo was. Officers and staff continually questioned what the demo was seeking to achieve and if it was being held due to any reason other than a mandate from National Conference. This was particularly noticeable at training events where officers and staff were being taught how to campaign effectively and felt that NUS were encouraging them to campaign in one way whilst campaigning ignoring that advice ourselves.

Many of the announcements and workshops at summer training events were scheduled long after the agenda had been set and colleagues across the organisation were very supportive in accommodating these last minute changes.

The date for the demo was announced at the FE Leadership course on 27 June. This was earlier than NUS has released a date in the past and gave unions over four months to begin planning and mobilising for the day.

The slogan for the demo was announced at the first Lead and Change officer development course on 2 August as '*#demo2012; educate, employ, empower*'. Whilst some officers were unsatisfied with the slogan, most responded well and welcomed the opportunity to explore its relevance to their membership. The lack of campaign aim meant that the slogan had to be intentionally broad in order to allow unions to use the demo to talk about a range of issues affecting current and future students beyond higher education tuition fees in England.

Students' union staff also had a number of opportunities to engage over the summer at events, including Students' Unions 2012, WIDAR Conference and the Campaigns Staff Network. Whilst a number of union staff supported their officers in mobilising for the demo, feedback from campaigns staff members, particularly those who are engaged in NUS' Campaigns Effectiveness work commented that they felt that the demo was the wrong campaign action at the wrong time and would have little impact.

Road to the demo

On 7 September, we held a 'Road to the Demo' event at the University of Manchester Students' Union which gave officers and staff from across the UK the opportunity to come together and share their planning for the demo and their post demo campaigns. Around

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100 delegates attended the day and fed back that it had been useful in helping them take the next steps in their planning. Delegates were given the opportunity to plan in regions and many of them continued meeting to plan locally.

A condensed version of this event was held in Wales as part of a WNEC meeting and shared the resources with colleagues in the nations to support similar events.

In addition to this, there were a number of regional network days for further education unions in England where FE officers were able to plan local mobilisation. These worked well and were a great support for the unions that attended but were quite ad hoc and not consistent across the UK.

The cost of this event was around £1400.

At this point there was still a lot of uncertainty from unions as to what the demo was actually about. Whilst some were on board with the idea of using the demo as a platform to engage students in a conversation about local issues, many expressed that they didn't know how to engage their students in a protest when they didn't know what they were supposed to be protesting about.

Briefings

We sent out a series of briefings supporting unions to plan and mobilise for the demo at weekly intervals during the months leading up to the day. In total, there were 15 briefings uploaded to NUS Connect and circulated via jiscmail. Most of the briefings had been planned in advance with a few being written due to requests from the membership. Some of the briefings had over 300 views compared to some which had less than 50.

Over 300 views	
Getting Started	497
Route, Logistics and Safety	482
<i>(followed by Logistics and Accessibility Update)</i>	294
What's Next	394
Mobilising Students	320
Protest Rights	218
Fewer than 50 views	
Organising a Stunt	39
Can't Make It On The Day	2

"The briefings about different liberation groups and sections were useful in preparing student leaders in the arguments for getting those they represent involved."

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Tips

In the run up to the demo, weekly tips were sent out via jiscmail. These tips aimed to support unions in mobilising and using the demo as a springboard for local activism and shared good practice from across the movement.

The tips were effective in building excitement and resulted in lots of unions getting in touch to let us know what they were doing, however these were often the same unions and a lot of time was spent identifying unions who were doing good work. It became apparent that whilst a lot of unions were planning on coming to the demo, this was more because they didn't want to appear not to be participating rather than because they felt engage by the message of the demo. Only a handful of unions invested a great deal of time and effort into mobilising lots of students.

Resources

In contrast to the 2010 'Fund Our Future' demonstration, we did not have the budget for #demo2012 to produce enough hard materials to distribute across a vast number of unions. Instead, we opted to produce a smaller number of flyers, stickers and pin badges specifically for distribution to further education and small and specialist unions. These materials were available upon request and larger unions were encouraged to use the adaptable materials available on the demo website which many did.

£1200 was spent producing these materials and the dedicated website cost £2000. The majority of unions spent money from their own campaigns budgets producing their own materials though many commented that they couldn't afford to do this.

NEC visits

Unions were able to request for an NEC officer to visit them to support their mobilisation efforts. These visits were coordinated by the Campaigns Manager to ensure that unions weren't visited more than once and to record intelligence from unions. NEC had a standard presentation available to deliver on visits.

Many unions used these visits to get NEC to speak at events such as public meetings and AGMs etc rather than to support more concerted mobilising activity.

The visits were useful centrally in order to identify what support unions needed and to generate best practice case studies.

"The NUS officers were very responsive and keen to get us as engaged as possible."

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Regional Support

For the 2010 Demo, regional organisers in HE and development workers in FE were integral to gathering intelligence from their unions and encouraging mobilisation.

The policy and development advisors (PDAs) in FE provided valuable support in supporting their unions to mobilise for the demo, plan their post demo campaigning activities and provide feedback centrally on how mobilising was going for those unions. Staff in the nations provided similar support.

In the absence of regional organisers, NUS staff who act as contacts for member unions were asked to feed in any information they had on their unions' mobilising but this was quite sporadic.

Block members, with support from Full Time Officers (FTOs) were asked to conduct ring rounds of unions at two points in the run up to the demo in order to find out a) if they were mobilising for the demo and b) how many students they were expecting to bring on the day. This was hit and miss as some officers put a lot of time into the ring rounds and others weren't able to. Nevertheless, by allocating blocks of unions regionally, most unions were contacted in the weeks prior to the demo. Full time officers took responsibility for regions and were effective in encouraging block members to do ring rounds.

In the couple of days prior to the demo, NEC and zones/liberation/sections committee members were invited to come into HQ to conduct final ring rounds to identify final predicted numbers. A number of NEC came in to help with this and were able to contact almost all member unions between them. The final prediction of numbers was very accurate though the majority of unions still fed back that they didn't know what the demo was trying to achieve and weren't planning on mobilising to attend

An intentional effort was made to ensure that, whilst staff inside the organisation were able to support the demo within the realms of their job roles, it would not prevent the organisation from continuing its usual business. Therefore, staff outside of the Political Strategy Unit (PSU) were not expected to take on an unreasonable amount of additional work to support the demo. Staff within PSU began prioritising the demo six months in advance and by September, work on the demo became a dominant part of the workload of the entire unit. The impact of this was a reduced ability for the unit to support unions in running effective local campaigns and building student activists.

The salary costs of staff time working on the demo is an estimated £55,000 and an additional £10,500 was spent funding staff and NEC travel to support unions' mobilisation in the run up to the demo.

Hardship applications

A bursary fund was allocated to support small unions in affording transport to the demo. Unions were encouraged to apply jointly with other local unions in order to support each other to attend the demo. Fifteen unions applied for this funding and we awarded a total

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of £3000 to twelve unions through ten allocations. The application process encouraged unions to identify ways to work together.

Due to a smaller overall budget (as this was a unilateral rather than a joint demonstration) and the fact that not many unions made use of the funding in the 2010 demo, this funding hadn't originally been planned. It became clear early in the mobilisation period that it was politically necessary to make this funding available to support FE and small and specialist unions to attend the demo.

"The money we got from the NUS hardship fund really made a huge difference - without it we simply wouldn't have been able to send any students."

Of the unions who could afford to send a coach down to London, many fed back that they were reluctant to take money out of already stretched campaigns budgets to fund coaches when they weren't confident the demo would have an impact.

Feedback from unions was that it was very difficult to mobilise students to attend the demo. Only 9 per cent said that it was easy or very easy to promote the demo to students:

"The message was really hard to sell to students, it seemed more like it was about general discontentment rather than a concrete issue."

"Because there wasn't an immediate threat of something happening e.g a rise in tuition fees so it was harder to get people to react."

"There was no single message and no vote in parliament so it was difficult to tell students the reason for marching."

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Logistics/the day

Date

Conference mandated a date in the first term. A number of factors were taken into consideration when selecting a date:

- Time needed for unions to mobilise
- Ensuring students weren't on Christmas break, reading weeks or half term
- Allowing time after the TUC A Future That Works Demo so that unions could mobilise for both
- Other NUS events including Zone Conferences, FE Leadership and Activism 2012.
- Selecting a day which would allow greatest attendance and most media coverage.

Once these factors were taken into consideration, the date was announced as Wednesday 21 November 2012.

We received some criticism from members for holding the demo on a Wednesday as it would prohibit some students who play sport from attending. However, many unions acknowledged that this would enable other students who have free Wednesday afternoons to attend.

A briefing was produced on how to involve students who couldn't attend on the day but this received only two downloads.

Route

The march assembled at Temple Place, went down Embankment towards the Houses of Parliament and turned left over Westminster Bridge and down Kennington Road towards the rally point at Kennington Park. The following considerations were taken when deciding on the route:

- Accessible meeting point
- Visibility of march
- Desire to march past a locus of power (Houses of Parliament)
- Threats presented by marching past points which have become negatively associated with previous student demonstrations (30 Millbank)
- Minimising the opportunities for violence and vandalism
- Safeguarding the reputation of NUS and the student movement
- Accessibility of route
- Availability of coach drop off and pick up points
- Risk assessing
- Feedback from unions that the route of the 2010 demo was too short
- Concerns from unions that students wouldn't come if they felt unsafe
- Concerns from many FE unions that their College wouldn't allow them to attend if the route provided a risk for students

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- Rally point that would be big enough, accessible and that we would be granted permission to use.

A small but vocal group of students were dissatisfied with the route and lobbied for it to be changed to march past Parliament. The majority of members were satisfied that this wouldn't be possible and, for some, would discourage them from attending.

Despite some last minute changes, we were able to allocate adequate coach drop off and pick up points and there were no reported instances of unions being unable to get to their coaches.

Costs for the logistics of the event including, park hire, road closure, placards, accessibility requirements, first aid, speakers, photography, health and safety and events management totaled £46,300.

Stewards

The stewarding plan was developed with support and guidance from Alex Burrow Events and the Metropolitan Police. The plan was updated to reflect lessons learned from previous NUS demonstrations and in response to best practice from other similar campaign actions.

The Stewarding Team were organised into three distinct groups with clear roles on the day:

Route stewards – These stewards were each allocated a bloc to march alongside and made sure they could always see the steward in front and behind. They were responsible for encouraging students to stay on the road. These stewards were key in ensuring that gaps didn't appear and that the march kept moving. A number of senior stewards marched along the route with radio contact with each other and the main control point.

Flashpoint stewards – Static teams of stewards positioned at identified flashpoints along the route to ensure that there was extra support when needed. These teams were able to steward flashpoints early on in the route before moving on the later points. These teams proved invaluable when a group of marchers sat down by Big Ben, blocking the rest of the march from crossing Westminster Bridge. They were able to keep the march slowly moving around the sit down protest, ensuring that students who wanted to continue marching were able to do so. There were six flashpoint teams, each with a loudhailer and a Senior Steward team leader who had a radio.

Response teams – Positioned along the route and able to respond to any issues along the way. They were able to provide additional support to stewards during the sit down at Big Ben and help get stewards into Kennington Park at the end of the march. There were four response teams, each with and a Senior Steward team leader who had a radio

Most stewards were volunteers from NUS staff with an additional number of colleagues from the student movement volunteering. Briefings for stewards were given in London,

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Macclesfield and Edinburgh with an additional briefing for those acting as senior stewards.

In response to the evaluation of the 2010 demo, a new communication process was put into place for Stewards and Safeguarders. All Senior Stewards and Safeguarding teams had radios. There were three radio channels; one for Route Stewards and Flashpoint Stewards, one for Response Teams and one for Safeguarders. All three channels were monitored at the rally Control Point by two professional radio comms monitors and the NUS Deputy Director Policy and Delivery who were able to ensure messages were passed across channels. In addition to this, the primary liaison officers with the Police were in contact with the Control Point, Chief Steward (front of march) and Campaigns Manager (back of march). Stewards fed back that this worked really well in helping them keep in contact with each other and ensuring that the march kept moving. Stewards were provided with a list of each other mobile numbers.

At the rally point there was some confusion as to what stewards were expected to do. Many started to return their vests and radios whilst others were helping filter delegates into the park and then back out again once the evacuation had taken place. A small number of stewards remained to support lead staff and safeguarders in clearing the park and tidying up.

All together there were 150 stewards which exceeded the number recommended. The Police were very positive about the stewarding plan and were confident that it would mean that not much policing would need to happen on the day. Due to being notified late in the day of a planned feeder march that was not organised by NUS the Police dramatically increased their numbers on the day in order to police both the feeder march and the NUS march.

The total cost of the stewarding operation including travel, accommodation and professional stewarding support was £9,300 with an additional £24,000's worth of on the day staffing costs.

Safeguarding

At five static points along the route there were pairs of NUS's NCPCC trained safeguarders. Stewards were identifiable from regular route stewards with different coloured high vis vests and their locations were marked on the route map which was available before the demo. There were two lead safeguarding stewards; one at the front and one at the back of the march with two more stationed at the Info Point at the rally. Positioning the safeguarders in pairs up the route plus a safeguarder at front and back of demo worked well as they were able to pick up incidents along the route and as pairs past they were able to monitor. Having a designated radio channel with a contact at the control point was helpful in helping safeguarders communicate between the team and also to understand what was going on along the route.

If at any point a student/group of students felt they needed support from the safeguarding team, route stewards were available to support to leave the demo and access the nearest safeguarding team who dealt with the incident and helped students to

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re-enter or leave the demo as they wished. The lead safeguarders delivered a safeguarding briefing to stewards prior to the event. This led to them being correctly contacted along the route to deal with incidents.

The info point was designated to provide a safe space for incidents to be dealt with and for delegate leaders to collect any individual students from.

The safeguarding plan ran very smoothly until the rally where the direction was less clear. When the park was evacuated, students needed support in leaving the park and help returning to their groups/coaches. Safeguarders didn't have a clear plan for this and, therefore, were less helpful than they could have been.

During the stage invasion, a student in a wheelchair became trapped at the front of the crowd and was unable to escape the violence and aggression of those invading the stage. At this point, a safeguarder put themselves at risk in order to rescue this particular student from the crowd.

Whilst mobilising for the demo, a number of unions expressed that both they and their students were reluctant to attend the demo (and in some cases, were not allowed to by their institutions) because of fear of violence following the NUS/UCU 'Funding Our Future' demonstration in 2010. Feedback from unions following violence at the rally of #demo2012 suggests that this fear has grown and would prevent them from mobilising for similar activities in the future.

First Aid

We planned to use LINKS, the student arm of St John's Ambulance, to provide first aid cover for the demo having used them previously for the 2010 demo. We contacted them early and they agreed to provide cover, however, as the demo approached, they were unable to confirm that they were able to provide the agreed level of cover so we took the decision to use a First Aid Cover Ltd as organised by Alex Burrow.

We let LINKS know about this decision straight away and explained our reasons but following this, they responded extremely negatively and accused NUS of libel.

First Aid Cover Ltd were able to provide all the required cover at very short notice and were effective on the day.

Accessibility

Prior to the demo, we published accessibility information as part of the wider logistics briefing which was one of the most viewed documents on the Demo 2012 page of NUS Connect. The accessibility plan was developed using feedback from the 2010 demonstration and working with the Alex Burrow and the NUS Disabled Students' Campaign.

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A number of steps were taken to ensure that the demo was as accessible as possible:

- Unions were signposted to information about accessible tube stations
- A mobility bus was provided for students who were unable to travel the whole route by themselves. Students were able to book a place on the bus from the assembly point or get on and off the bus at points throughout the march. At points the feeder march and the sit down protest at Big Ben caused problems for the mobility bus and prevented it from moving along with the march. Eventually, the driver was able to get to Kennington Park and students who had used the bus were able to access the rally.
- The Disabled Students' bloc marched in a safe space at the front of the demo, setting a pace for the rest of the march.
- Unions were advised to contact NUS about any additional requirements or questions.
- An NUS staff member walked along with the Disabled Students' bloc providing support where necessary.
- Students were made aware of accessible toilets along the route and a number of Senior Stewards, Safeguarders and the NUS Disabled Students' Officer had RADAR keys available to unlock these toilets. There was an additional accessible toilet at the rally.
- A ramped viewing platform was located at the rally.
- A shorter route of the march was organised and publicised.

Press Coverage

There was a small but significant increase in media coverage of NUS around Demo 2012. Media coverage met all KPIs that were set out. National print coverage included The Observer providing significant coverage of NUS/YouGov polling around parents' fears for their children, a major report in Morning Star on the day of the demonstration and print coverage in the Guardian the day after the Demonstration. Local coverage that was picked up by NUS monitoring included the Evening Standard, Shropshire Star, Yorkshire Evening Post, Northern Echo and Scotsman. NUS officers conducted Demo 2012 related interviews on national broadcasters including BBC News, ITV, Channel 4, Channel 5 and BBC Radio 5Live as well as numerous international broadcasters. NUS officers were also interviewed on local stations including BBC Radio Merseyside, LBC, BBC London and Sky News Radio. Online coverage was obtained on all the major news-sites including BBC, Daily Mail, Huffington Post, Politics.co.uk, Guardian Students, Independent, Times Higher Education, The Voice, East London Lines and Londonist. Students' unions reported coverage on at least 5 BBC local radio stations and television news shows as well as in many local newspapers and other local radio.

Not all of the coverage was positive, and much of it focused on the decision to hold a demonstration and logistics such as the route rather than the issues being discussed. Several journalists reported that they felt there was no clear message or policy ask and therefore the march itself would be difficult to report if it passed without incident. NUS polling around parents' fears and opinions about those MPs who broke the Vote for Students general election pledge received significant coverage on their own and provided an opportunity to mention Demo 2012. There was significant mention of disorder at the

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rally which painted the student movement in a negative light as whole – with the NUS leadership portrayed as out of touch and other groups as volatile and argumentative. It is not possible to say whether the media coverage had any impact, positive or negative, on any group's feelings about NUS or the issues involved.

The costs associated with media training and polling for the press came to £2,830.

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Rally

Planning: In advance

NUS full time officers were consulted in September 2012 about potential speakers and rally participants in light of the launch of the theme and branding. It was decided, based on this consultation, that a roster of mostly younger speakers and activists would be preferable to a list of purely 'usual suspects' from trade unions and other supporting organisations. Speakers were approached through October and November 2012, with the resulting balance: activists and writers Owen Jones and Tim Gee; comedian Josie Long and musician Grace Petrie, as well as speakers from UCU, Unison and Unite. Chosen speakers were quite slow to respond and so arranging these speakers was a time consuming process. The final roster and agenda for speeches was agreed and communicated internally and externally in the week prior to the #demo2012. Meanwhile, a plan was put in place to use both music and videos on the day itself to provide a diversity of content at the rally point. As one of the proposed participants in the rally was a musician and one a comedian, we needed to explore with the relevant local authority whether their performance would be incidental to the main 'political event'. A video competition was held, with the winning video to be played at the event, although there were not many entries submitted.

Preparation: On the day

On the day of the demo itself, speakers all arrived in good time for their allocated slots. It became apparent that the control mobile office and safeguarding tent (info point) were the only sheltered areas backstage. As the weather was adverse with both heavy rain and wind, this presented an unforeseen problem as there were more than 15 rally participants to house backstage. In practice this meant the safeguarding tent was taken over, which was problematic in two respects: first, this presented difficulty for anyone needing safeguarding support; second, the tent was not properly equipped with sufficient chairs, etc. The safeguarding tent was therefore not fully equipped as a 'green room' that there was inadequate space for safeguarding. The agenda was printed and provided to the event manager, sound and visual teams and a discussion was had to ensure the rally was synchronised. The rally stage manager was given a radio in order to receive updates across the piece.

The Main Event

Once students were in the park, they did not move en masse towards the stage. This meant that the rally started with a very small attentive crowd, which grew in time. The rally itself started 15-20 minutes after its planned commencement. This was due to a delay in the march at Westminster Bridge, as the rally had been ready to start on time. A delay in the stage activity needed to be cleared with park/council team to ensure we could finish later. Although the rally Stage Manager had a radio, the sound emitted by both the crowd and speakers, as well as prioritising attention to those who were participating in the stage events, meant it was difficult to judge the response of the crowd to the speakers or any crowd control issues that were occurring. The Stage

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Manager only became aware of the issue after the compere (Josie Long) told him that she was struggling to make herself heard over the critical chanting. After this point it was decided that we would suspend the speaking order to allow Liam Burns to return to the stage to address hecklers and those booing. Following this, speakers from both Unison and Unite made their speeches and as Liam returned to the stage, objects were thrown and then the front barrier and security line was penetrated by a stage invasion. At this point, we decided to ensure that Liam and other speakers were safely in the tent as security regained control. Liam returned to the stage to issue dispersal information using a megaphone after the sound had been switched off. There were a number of NUS stewards grouped in the backstage area, having completed their previous duties. We then put into practice the crisis communications plan and took Liam to the nearest tube (Kennington) in order to return to LSE Students' Union.

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Communications on the Day

A communications plan was developed for the day of the demonstration in order to:

- promote the message of the demo
- communicate important or urgent information to participants on the day
- promote post demo campaigns

The statistical headlines

- #demo2012 reached an audience of over 2 million people on Twitter in 48 hours
- The "*Educate, Employ, Empower*" Thunderclap had a social reach of 446,780 people across Facebook and Twitter
- Over 1 million hits on demo2012.org.uk - 400,000 hits in the 3 days over the demo
- Increased the @nusuk twitter followers by 340 over the 24 hours of the demo
- Increased the National Union of Students 'likes' by 221 over the 24 hours of the demo
- Created 7 #demo2012-specific videos that have collectively received over 10,000 hits
- On the day of the demo, nus.org.uk received 173,170 page views

Communicating NUS Projects

While the key messages for this demonstration were simply what was happening on the day, the article that explained the next few months of campaign activity included information on the following projects:

- Unpaid internships
- Equal marriage
- General election
- The Pound in Your Pocket
- Black Students' Winter Conference
- Disabled History Month
- Reclaim the night
- Accommodation costs
- Shareholder activism training
- Keep FE free
- Child friendly campuses
- FE complaints campaign
- Better timetabling campaign
- Postgraduates who teach
- Stop cutting women out of education
- Postgraduate funding
- Stop and search

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- Student carers research
- Out in education
- Lad culture

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Short Term Legacy of Demo

Member perceptions

In Autumn 2012 NUS ran the first wave of a brand tracking research study. This year, the tracking survey was used to review demo 2012 with simple questions on awareness and understanding and impact included at the very end of the short survey. Headlines from the research are:

- **95%** of students' union staff and officers were aware of the demo.
- **16%** of students were aware of the demo.
- **4%** of the public were aware of the demo.
- Students' union staff and officers were aware that the demo was around educate, employ empower, but there was also a lack of clarity coming through in understanding.
- The majority view from students was that the demo was about tuition fees.
- Awareness amongst students rose from 16% before, to 30% after the demo.
- Following the demo, there was a slight downturn in perceptions, led by perceived effectiveness. However engagement hasn't dropped significantly which suggests that the fall in perceptions came from our stakeholder students right to critique, rather than any move away from the organisation.
- The impact of the demo on NUS appears to be limited to an audience whose engagement with NUS was high anyway.
- **43%** of students said that it was relevant to them.
- The main concern of students, from that detailed in the question, was finance (43%), followed by employability (24%).
- The demo positively influenced over 40% of students in terms of building awareness/consideration of student issues. However, less than a third of students saw the demo as a call to action to campaign nationally or with their students' union.

Post demo campaigning activities

It was intended that the outcome of the demo would be a series of local and national campaigns involving students who had been mobilised to attend. We ensured that there were a range of campaign actions which unions could get involved in after the demonstration and that the actions were coordinated as part of campaigns which, as an organisation, we could communicate as a post demo calendar of priorities and activities.

NUS's Campaigns Effectiveness Officer met with full time officers and staff leads for zone/section/liberation campaign to plan post demo campaigns and to specify any member-facing actions which students and unions could participate in. The campaign actions were communicated to the membership through the lens of the '*Educate, Employ, Empower*' slogan.

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The calendar gave NUS a narrative through which to talk about the short term impact and next steps of the demonstration as not just an end in itself but as a tool to mobilise students for effective local and national campaigns.

The process helped to establish the process of campaign planning within NUS as a step to improve the campaigning effectiveness of the organisation.

40% of those surveyed said that they used the demo to build activists for local campaigns. 11% said they used it to build activists for national campaigns.

"...also it became a platform to talk about the troubles of international students with UKBA, the ability of the government to re-negotiate loan terms at will and the right to recall... The demo gave officers and activists platforms to talk about national issues at students' unions."

"The demo was a great chance for our students to see lobbying on a national scale. Our students had never got the chance to take part in a national piece of action. When we got down to London however, there were so many groups calling for so many things our students got slightly lost in the message of the day and what we were for."

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Summary

'*#demo2012; Educate, Employ, Empower*' was organised in response to a motion from NUS National Conference in 2012 which mandated the organisation to hold a national demonstration in London in the first term of the 2012/13 academic year. Throughout the six month organising and mobilising period the primary barrier faced by NUS was that the demo was a stand-alone activity and not part of a wider campaign.

NUS works closely with students' unions and their elected officers to strengthen the campaigning effectiveness of the student movement. For years we have impressed upon union staff and officers the importance of planning for impact and, most importantly, to always identify a clear and measurable campaign aim before planning for any campaign activity in order to maximize engagement from students and the wider public. The demonstration had no government policy to influence and no clear call 'ask' from the campaign. In spite of attempts to address this problem it was identified by the membership and created a barrier to future engagement. This was a problem that remained right up until the demo and had numerous negative impacts;

- The demo did not achieve any national policy change.
- Any change in public and political perception was very difficult to measure.
- There was almost no local policy change for students as a result of the demo.
- NUS were able to generate only a limited amount of press coverage – much of which was questioning the decision to hold a demo and focus on altercations at the rally rather than promotion of the message of the demo which had no clear 'hook'.
- Many students' unions were reluctant to mobilise for the demo due to not wanting to prioritise participation in a campaign activity with no aim and, therefore, felt less supported by NUS in other areas during this period.
- NUS appeared less credible as an effective campaigning organisation to the student movement, the public and other third sector organisations.

Even for those unions that prioritized the demo, many commented that the lack of campaign aim made it difficult to engage their students:

"...more focus could have been given on the actual purpose to the demo, rather than what was perceived as 'let's just have another demo!'"

"No 'tangible' outcome."

"It was harder to mobilise in general this time due to lack of parliamentary business to focus on."

"On the one hand students were not happy about 9k fees, but it is difficult to motivate people for a protest during no legislative change."

"Lack of clear message about what we were marching for."

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"Unlike demo 2010, you couldn't summarise what the demo was about in one sentence. It was more 'there is a general sense of young people being screwed over'."

"Hard to mobilise people because there weren't necessarily tangible outcomes like 'lobby the government not to pass such and such'."

"Apart from the amount of time spent promoting and organising demo it didn't really have much of an impact on the SU or more importantly our members."

There was an intentionally broad slogan of 'Educate, Employ, Empower' in order to enable unions to use the demo as a catalyst for local campaigning activity. Whilst many unions worked with the activists they mobilised for the demo to campaign on local issues, it was clear that much of this campaigning would have happened anyway and the most useful thing the demo provided was a brand upon which to hang campaigns.

"Overall I think the demo has had a negative impact on the perception of NUS particularly within the Union. Students' generally failed to understand the need for the demo and have since questioned the impact the demo has had on policy and decision makers. The social media on the day was largely questioning who NUS was purporting to represent through the demo. This was in stark contrast to the previous demo which had a clear cause, clear objective, substantial student support and, importantly, substantial public sympathy."

"A waste of time and resources. Took priority for almost a whole term for little return."

Despite some local activity, there was no measurable positive impact of the demo and no changes in local or national policy that can be attributed to it. This was felt acutely by many unions and makes it difficult to justify the financial cost and staff time devoted to the demo.

"The demo had zero impact on our students as they didn't understand what the point of it was."

"It sapped up resources, time, money and energy for 3 months. We achieved some OK media but it wasn't worth it."

"It was a lot of effort for very little benefit."

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Breakdown of costs of #demo2012

Item	Cost
Use of Kennington Park	£5,738.05
Road closures	£3,006.00
Rally/march costs	£18,751.58
Health and safety	£1,488.00
Event management	£1,662.60
Banners and placards	£8,356.80
Steward support	£2,630.47
Steward accommodation	£4,415.93
Steward travel	£2,244.59
NUS steward staff time	£24,000.00
NEC/staff union visits	£10,552.00
Website	£1,987.50
Photography	£150.00
<i>Road To The Demo</i> event	£1,395.00
Polling for demo press	£2,000.00
Legal and professional fees	£6,000.00
Media and comms training	£828.00
Hardship fund	£3,000.00
Access needs	£1,117.69
Promotional material	£1,198.93
Total	£100,523.14

In addition to the £100,523 outright costs the additional salary contribution from staff in NUS was an estimated £55,000. This is the equivalent of employing four additional campaigns staff over the same period of time. The salary and time contribution of NUS officers involved in mobilising for the demo is unquantifiable.

"It is one thing to convince people they should be angry, another though to convince them that the Demo is the answer..."

"A demo, as an action, will be more successful in engaging students if NUS are talking about one consistent and clear message in the public sphere. There's not much point putting time and resources into trying to make a demo a 'one off event'."

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"Sadly students did not leave the demo feeling that NUS was very competent or had a clear direction of where it was going. Unfair I know when you all work hard but that was the feeling by the end of a damp, dispiriting day."

"Probably a more negative effect than positive - the view from students on the day, both from what our media reporters picked up and students from our own union was that the lack of clear coherent message, aims/objectives and expectations led to a couple of thousand students turning out to what lacked a proper community atmosphere, and it wasn't even mentioned in PMQs on the day because of the scale. National Conference should vote on beliefs, not tactics."

In order to meaningfully secure change for students nationally, NUS must practice what we preach to unions about effectively campaigning for change. We must run impact led campaigns and this means identifying clear measurable aims and communicating them widely before planning what actions to take in order to best win.

In order to support students' unions to become effective campaigning organisations and to build capacity locally through developing student activists, NUS must be able to devote time and resources to delivering work which will enable unions to do this independently and through national campaigns which are both engaging and winnable.

"I think that NUS and unions made the best of a bad situation. It was the wrong tactic at the wrong time, but it went ok."

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