

A young woman with long, wavy blonde hair is smiling at the camera. She is wearing a maroon long-sleeved top, dark grey jeans, and a black backpack. She is sitting on a light green bicycle on a bridge. A brown suitcase is on the ground next to her. In the background, there are traditional European buildings with gabled roofs and a canal with a white van.

Train or plane?

A study of options and opportunities for sustainable internationalisation

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nuffic
meet the world

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Key Findings

Internationalisation is necessary to improve international solidarity and shared responsibility for the climate. At the same time, internationalisation activities (activities associated with internationalisation) have an undesired effect on the climate because of the travelling that is typically involved. This apparent contradiction poses a challenge to internationalisation. How can we ensure that internationalisation activities make a positive contribution to the quality of education in the long term, without having too great an environmental impact?

This exploratory research answers the question of how higher education institutions can stimulate students to form their international experience in a (more) sustainable way. To this end, 109 Dutch higher education students were asked by means of a survey about, among other things, the role that sustainability played in their international experiences. The following findings emerge from the investigation:

- **Students are divided on the importance of sustainability for an international experience.** 39% of the students thought it was (very) important to design their international experience in a sustainable way, compared to 44% who thought it was not (at all) important.
- **Almost three quarters (71%) of the students travelled by plane to their destination.** 14% opted for the train. For most students who flew, speed of travel was the main reason for choosing to fly, followed by ease of planning. Sustainability and travel comfort were important considerations for train passengers.
- **More than three quarters (76%) of the students would probably or definitely opt for a sustainable mode of transport if they received a contribution towards their travel costs.** However, a grant for greener travel must be sufficient and easy for the departing student to find information about.
- **76% of students would like guidance from their institution in planning and booking a sustainable trip.** Furthermore, students need information and practical tips about making their own international experience more sustainable.
- **Almost half (45%) of the students felt that an experience abroad cannot be replaced by (online) alternatives closer to home.** Students who do see *Internationalisation at home* (IaH) as a sustainable alternative to mobility, were most interested in learning a foreign language at their own educational institution.
- Half of the students (50%) indicate that their **study or internship period abroad has contributed to their awareness** of sustainability.

Recommendations for higher education institutions:

- Inform students early in the process about possible ways to make their experience abroad more sustainable.
- Offer a grant for sustainable travel and make sure it is in line with the costs of green travel.
- Make the trip to the foreign destination part of the international experience.
- Make sustainable travel the standard.
- Do not present IaH (exclusively) as a substitute for physical mobility.
- As a higher education institution, set a good example by encouraging employees to travel sustainably.

Introduction

Climate change is one of the most urgent challenges of our time. It is a problem that can only be solved through international collaboration. Internationalisation activities equip students with the international competencies they need for cross-border collaboration. However, international mobility – the most common form of internationalisation in the Netherlands (Kommers et al., 2021) – also exacerbates the climate problem. For example, in 2018, about 15,000 Dutch students travelled abroad through the Erasmus+ programme (Nuffic, 2018).¹ According to research by the Green Erasmus Partnership (2022), three quarters of Erasmus students travel to their destination country by plane. These students are often also visited by friends and family during their time abroad, and the students themselves usually travel in and around their host country. All of these activities exacerbate the growing climate problem.

Previous Nuffic research (Kommers et al., 2021) has shown that Dutch higher education institutions tend to overlook the unintended climate impacts of internationalisation. Higher education institutions are very alert to the Sustainable Development Goals – and specifically to SDG 13, on climate action – but they tend to engage with this in the context of their own organisational operations (for example, by cutting back on air travel for staff or providing sustainable catering services on campus). There are far fewer initiatives relating to sustainable internationalisation.

This begs the question of whether – and how – internationalisation can be designed in a more sustainable way and whether internationalisation could also play a part in raising awareness of sustainability among students.

In conversation with a higher education institution

“Sustainability and internationalisation are both areas that we are working on as an institution. These issues might overlap as part of individual initiatives, but the institution itself hasn’t set any fixed deadlines or policy plans on sustainable internationalisation.”

Research questions

This study focuses on answering the following key research question:

How can higher education institutions encourage students to make their international experience more sustainable?

This research question is broken down into the following sub-questions:

1. To what extent do higher education students consider sustainability when opting to participate in internationalisation activities?
2. To what extent are students open to more sustainable types of internationalisation?
3. What do students need to make their international experience more sustainable?

¹) We are referring here only to destinations within the EEA. No data are available on credit mobility to countries outside the EEA.

Literature review

Higher education institutions in the Netherlands do not place much emphasis on sustainable internationalisation, and even amongst researchers, little attention has been paid to the topic of international student mobility in the context of the global climate problem (Shields, 2019).

Sustainability within higher education institutions

Much of the research around sustainability in higher education has focused on the role of higher education institutions in sustainable development (Žalėnienė et al., 2021; MacDonald et al., 2015; Jadhav et al., 2014). Sustainable behaviour among students has also been researched multiple times, but this research has mainly looked at the choices made by students in their day-to-day lives, for example in relation to how they travel to their university or recycle their waste (Dana Boca et al., 2019; Whitley et al., 2016; Müderrisoglu et al., 2011), rather than in relation to international experiences. We found several studies that investigated the question of how higher education institutions could reconcile international aspirations with sustainability challenges (Dvorak et al., 2011; Ilieva et al., 2014). Green Erasmus (2022) also carried out research earlier this year into issues such as the travel behaviour and consumption patterns of Erasmus students and linked this to their personal perceptions of climate and environmental issues. In this study, we look specifically at the perspective of Dutch students when it comes to sustainability and internationalisation. We also investigate how higher education institutions could help students to make their international experience more sustainable. As such, this study neatly complements the existing literature.

The link between awareness and sustainable behaviour

Several factors are key to incentivising people to act more sustainably. First, an understanding of sustainability is an important factor in guiding decision making. Students see this as an area where higher education institutions have a role to play. The research by Green Erasmus (2022), for example, revealed that, for 36% of students, their educational institution was a source of information on the climate problem. For students, the role of the institution is in fact broader than just imparting information: 71% of students think that their higher education institution should actively promote sustainability.

The sharing of knowledge is not, however, enough to trigger behavioural change. Dietz et al. (2005), for example, propose that it is not just knowledge transfer but also other factors such as standards, values and beliefs that play a role in encouraging (more) sustainable behaviour. According to 2021 figures from Statistics Netherlands (CBS), students are convinced that the climate problem is real, with 65% of Dutch young people considering climate change to be a major problem at the moment. Compared to the population as a whole, young people in the Netherlands are also more worried about climate change (I&O Research, 2019).

While young people claim to be very climate aware, there is a disparity within this age group between what they think about sustainability and what they do about it. For example, 71% of young people claim that they know what they can do to combat climate change, but the same research also reveals that young people are more likely to fly and take longer showers when compared to older age groups. Finally, most students (64%) feel they should be leading more climate-aware lives (CBS, 2021).

The current study

The current study focuses specifically on sustainable internationalisation, a topic that so far has been largely overlooked. We know from previous research that young people are engaged with the climate problem but do not necessarily act on it. This study responds to that finding by investigating what higher education institutions can do to help students make more sustainable choices when taking part in internationalisation activities.

Method

To answer the research question, we compiled a questionnaire and distributed it amongst higher education students who have had international experiences. The questionnaire took into account input provided by various higher education institutions. The survey was made available for students to complete between 13 April and 2 May 2022 and was shared through various social media channels, such as the LinkedIn and Facebook pages of Erasmus+, Nuffic, and WilWeg. The questionnaire was also shared directly with Dutch higher education institutions so that they could distribute it amongst their students.

Description of the survey

The questionnaire was completed by a total of 123 students. Some of those who completed it were not part of the target group as they had not had any international experience. We also excluded from the analysis respondents who had not completed enough of the questions to add value to the research. The results of this study are therefore based on 109 responses.

Type of study programme and specialisation

Of the survey respondents, 74% were enrolled in a higher professional education (HBO) bachelor's programme, 13% were enrolled in a university (WO) master's programme, and 7% in a university bachelor's programme. The other 6% were doing something else or were already working (see Figure 1). No respondents were enrolled in an HBO master's programme.

Most of the students who completed the survey were enrolled on a study programme related to economics (37%), followed by technology (24%) and cross-sector programmes (12%).

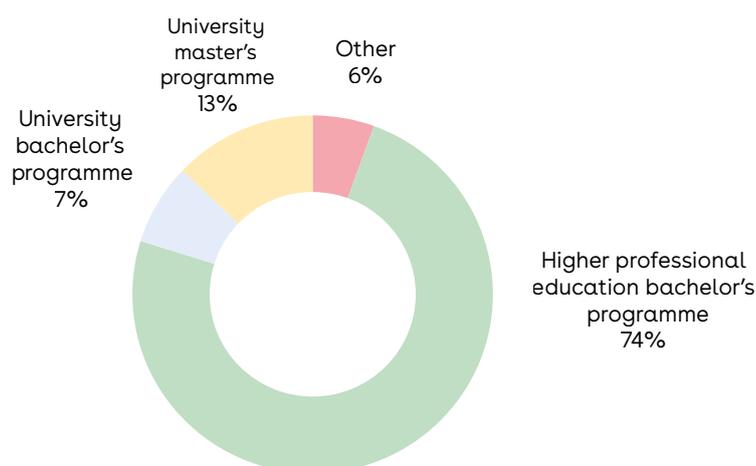
International experience

Of the 109 respondents, 79% had completed part of their studies abroad. The other 21% had done an internship abroad. For 71% of the students, their international experience was voluntary, while for the other 29% it was a required part of their study programme.

About three quarters (74%) of the students who completed the survey had had an international experience lasting 3 to 6 months. 8% of respondents had spent a maximum of 3 months abroad, and the other 18% more than 6 months.

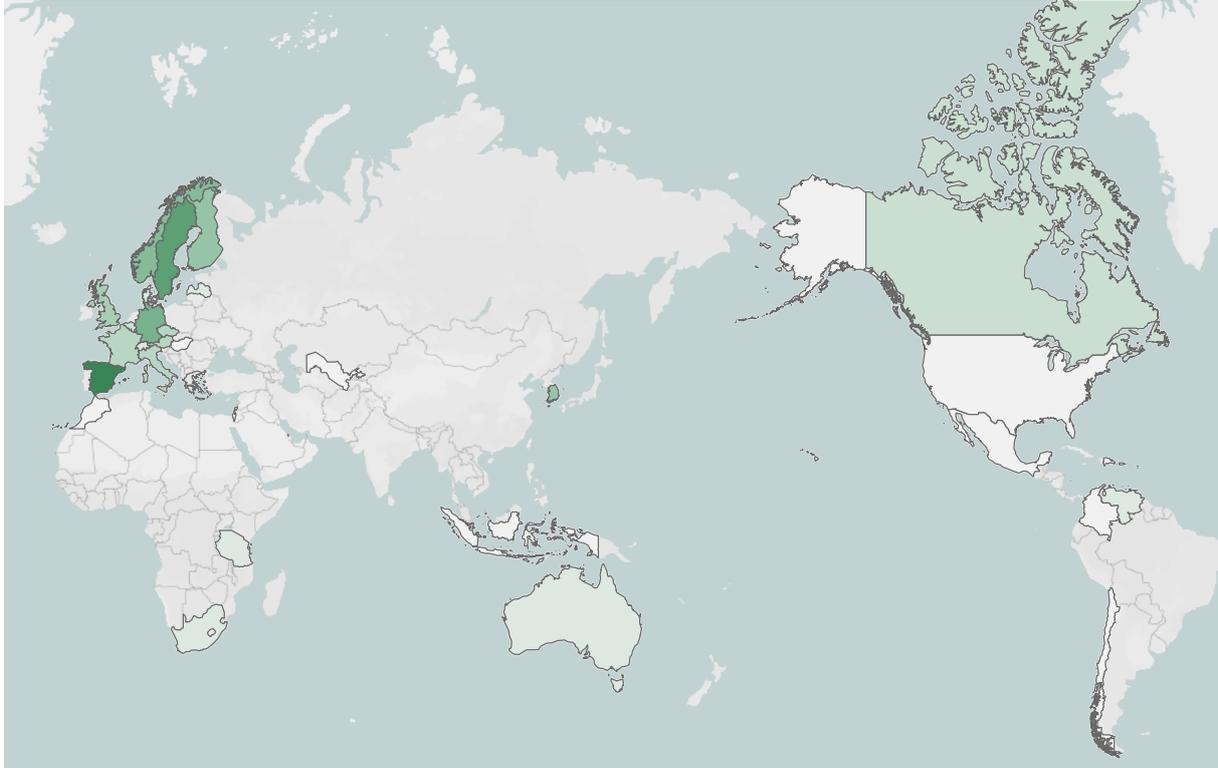
The students had travelled to 36 different countries for their international experience, and 2 out of 3 students (67%) completed their international experience in a country within the European Economic Area (EEA). This is an important finding, bearing in mind the accessibility

Figure 1. Respondents' type of study programme (N = 109)



of these countries by sustainable methods of transport, such as the train. The top 3 destinations for students in this survey were Spain, Sweden, and Germany. Figure 2 provides a visual representation of the students' destination countries.

Figure 2. Overview of the destination countries of the students in this study. The darker the colour, the greater the number of students who studied or did an internship there. (N = 109)



Representativeness

It is important to bear in mind several points when interpreting these results:

Those students who are interested in the topic of sustainability and have also had an international experience are probably going to feel more engaged with this research and will have been more inclined to complete the questionnaire. This means that the results cannot be generalised to all Dutch students, particularly the questions about how important sustainability is to students.

Furthermore, the institutions and study programmes included here are not representative of the country as a whole. One specific educational institution is in fact over-represented in the results. The results discussed in this report therefore cannot be applied in general terms to the entire student population of the Netherlands.

Finally, the objective of this research was not to report on the student population of the Netherlands as a whole, but rather to illustrate ways of thinking among students. This exploratory research offers an initial glimpse into student perspectives on sustainability and international experiences and brings to light new information on the subject. The results of the report could help institutions consider effective ways of addressing the overlooked topic of sustainable internationalisation with students and encouraging them to think more about it.

Results

This chapter outlines the survey results. We start by examining how relevant the issue of sustainability was to students as they organised their international experience. We then discuss the support that students need if they are to make their international experience more sustainable, and the extent to which their international experience made students more aware of sustainability issues. Finally, we look at whether students are open to alternatives to physically travelling abroad for an international experience.

Students do not necessarily associate internationalisation with sustainability

In conducting this research, we started by looking at the role that sustainability plays in the choices made by students as part of their international experience. 39% of respondents indicated that they thought it was important or very important to apply the principles of sustainability to the way they organised their international experience (see Figure 3²). They did this by, for example, choosing to study subjects related to climate change and sustainability or by opting not to fly to their destination. For 26% of respondents, sustainability was actually a consideration in their choice of destination.

“I wanted to take part in an exchange within Europe, so that I could get to my destination without flying. Another factor was that I knew people would want to visit me during the exchange.”

Figure 3. Result for the question ‘To what extent did you think it was important to take sustainability into account when designing your experience abroad?’ (N = 105)

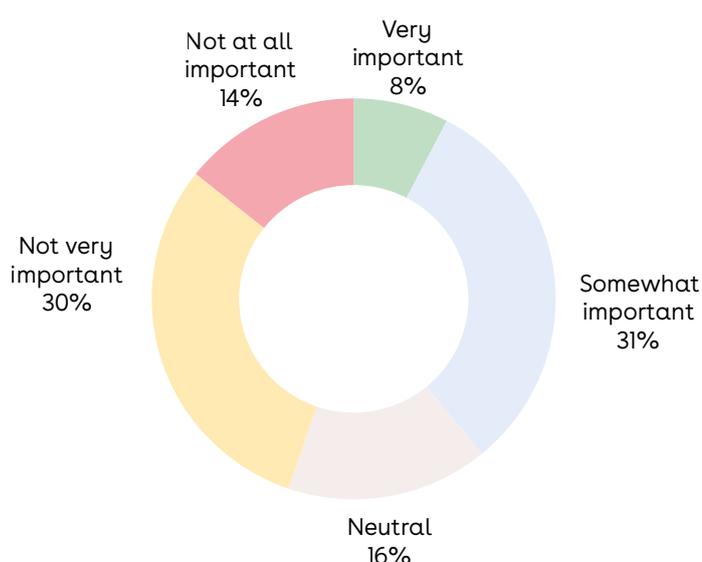
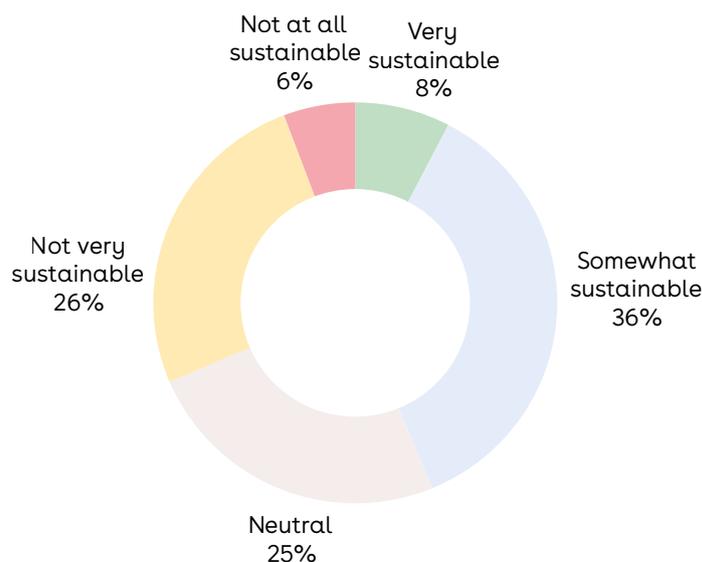


Figure 4. Result for the question ‘To what extent did you feel that your international experience was sustainable?’ (N = 105)



2) Due to rounding, the percentages in this figure do not add up to exactly 100%.

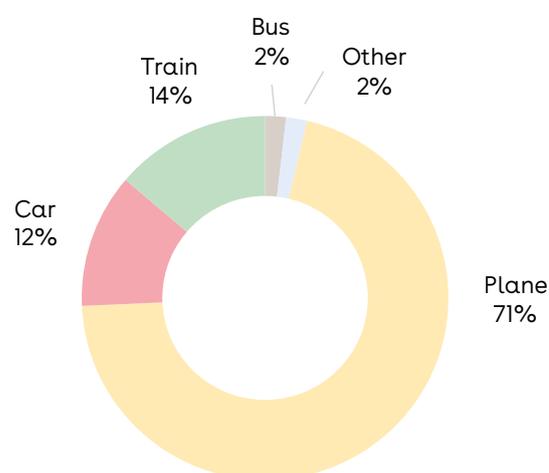
The group that said sustainability was not very or not at all important to their international experience is, at 45%, slightly larger than the group that said it was important. This number is comparable to previous research conducted by Nuffic, in which 51% of respondents said that climate change or other sustainability issues played no part in their plans to go abroad (Verhoeff et al., 2022). A number of respondents in the current study commented that sustainability was something they simply did not consider when planning their international experience. It is striking that 44% of respondents nevertheless felt that their international experience was sustainable to a certain extent, in contrast to a significantly smaller number (31%) who felt that their international experience was not very or not at all sustainable (see Figure 4³).

Flying is the most popular mode of transport for students going abroad

One way of substantially reducing the climate impact of an international experience is to make the journey there more sustainable. That means avoiding air travel and opting for greener alternatives, like the train, where possible. 63% of respondents heading to a European destination chose to fly to and from their destination. This percentage rose to 71% when applied to every destination covered in the survey. 14% took the train, 12% drove and 2% went by bus (see Figure 5⁴). The remaining 2% (other) used different modes of transportation for their outbound and return journeys.

Flying is by far the preferred mode of transport for students. The main reason for this is speed, with 40% of people who flew saying it was the fastest way of reaching their destination. Going abroad for an extended period of time does not seem to mean that students will be more able or inclined to take their time with the journey. Many of those who flew (35%) actually said that flying was the only realistic option for reaching their destination. A third important reason for flying was that it was the easiest form of transportation to organise (12%). Those travelling by train took other factors into account. Most (33%) cited sustainability as the key reason for choosing this form of transportation. 27% of those travelling by train chose this mode of transport primarily for the comfort it provides (see Figure 6). Other reasons for choosing a particular mode of transport included being able to bring more luggage and being able to travel with other people.

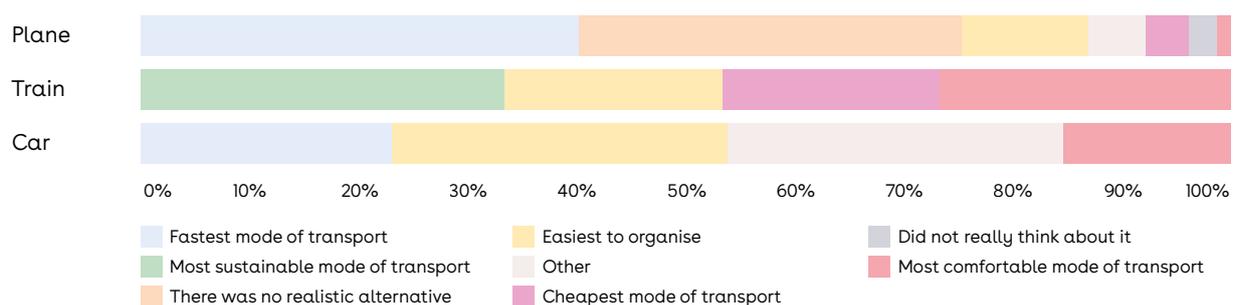
Figure 5. Result for the question 'What was the most important mode of transport you used for getting to and from your destination country?' (N = 109)



3) Due to rounding, the percentages in this figure do not add up to exactly 100%.

4) Due to rounding, the percentages in this figure do not add up to exactly 100%.

Figure 6. Result for the question 'What was the most important reason for choosing this mode of transport?' (Answers for the 3 most popular modes of transport, N = 105)



We also asked the respondents how important sustainability is to them in general, on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 signifying not important at all and 10 signifying very important. As already noted, the survey included a relatively high number of respondents who thought sustainability was important to a certain extent (6 or higher). What is striking, however, is that, within the group giving it a 6 or more, 38% said it was only slightly important or not at all important for their own international experience to be sustainable, as opposed to 46% who said it was important. A student might therefore value sustainability without necessarily applying that standard to their international experience.

"It should have been important, but at the time, it felt like I was living in a different world and that sustainability was something that would be important again when I got back to the Netherlands. That's absolutely not a good argument, but that's how it was for me."

Students want their educational institution to provide them with information and practical advice

Although most of the students in this survey said that sustainability is important to them, it does not seem to guarantee that they will make green choices when it comes to their own international experience. This suggests there could be untapped opportunities for educational institutions and other stakeholders. We proposed to the respondents 10 possible ways for educational institutions to help students make their international experience more sustainable (see Figure 7). It is striking that students are particularly keen to receive information and practical support. For 4 of the options, more than 70% of the students indicated that this option was either somewhat or very appealing:

- offering support in planning and booking a sustainable journey (76%);
- sharing tips and tricks for a sustainable lifestyle during the international experience (74%);
- providing information on how students could make their trip abroad more sustainable (74%);
- pairing up students who want to travel together in a more sustainable way (72%)

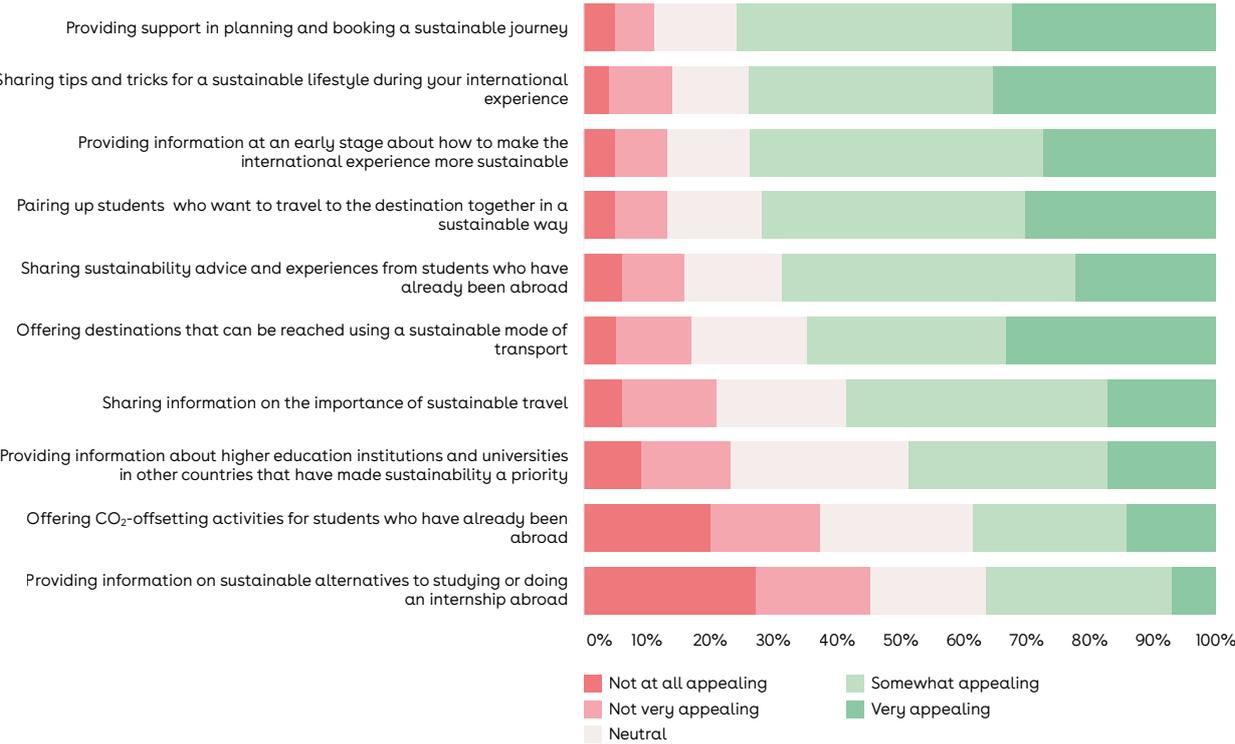
In the open question, which gave respondents the opportunity to offer their own suggestions, the provision of information on sustainable travel also came up repeatedly:

“I wasn’t given any information on how to travel more sustainably, and it wasn’t pointed out as something to think about. Being so pre-occupied with preparing in other ways and thinking about what it would be like when I got there, the question of sustainability didn’t even occur to me. Being given information and advice would have made me more conscious.”

On the other hand, some suggestions about what educational institutions could do to support students in making their international experience more sustainable were found to be less appealing. These included:

- providing information on sustainable alternatives to studying or doing an internship abroad (45%);
- organising a day for students who have been abroad, where they can do something to offset the CO₂ emissions associated with their trip (37%);
- providing information about higher education institutions and universities in other countries that have made sustainability a priority (23%).

Figure 7. Result for the question ‘How could your educational institution help you make your international experience more sustainable?’ (N = 99)



Students feel that there is insufficient financial support for sustainable travel

The suggestions made by students with regard to how their institution could support them included the need for information on grants designed to encourage sustainable travel.

“Provide clear information on the grants available to support sustainable travel, for example.”

Students reiterated their need for better information when questioned about the types of grants they came across when they were preparing for their trip. Only 17% of students said they came across any form of financial support for sustainable travel (such as travelling by train, bus, or carpooling) when they were preparing for their trip. No more than 5% of students took advantage of initiatives such as the Erasmus+ Green Travel Top-Up. Some of reasons commonly given by students for not using these initiatives included the low value of the grant in relation to the time and effort required for sustainable travel or that they did not qualify under the terms of the allowance.

Grants for sustainable travel

The **Erasmus+ Green Travel Top-Up** is an extra grant on top of the standard travel allowance. This Green Travel Top-Up provides students with a one-off bonus of €50 and a maximum of 4 extra travel days to travel by train, bus or car.

Some **Dutch higher education institutions** offer an additional allowance for sustainable travel on top of the Erasmus+ grant.

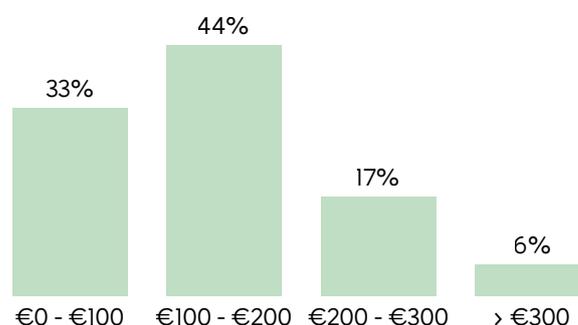
“If I hadn’t flown, it would have taken so long to get to my destination that I would have had to spend a night somewhere, and the allowance wasn’t enough to cover that.”

“A greater contribution towards using sustainable transport to reach the destination, including for countries not covered by Erasmus+.”

Although financial reasons were a relatively minor factor in opting to fly, receiving some financial contribution towards travel costs could persuade many students to take a sustainable mode of transport. No less than 76% of respondents said they would probably or certainly opt for a sustainable mode of transport if they received a financial allowance for the cost – assuming there was a choice in how to reach the destination.

It is striking that students would be willing to make their own financial contribution to sustainable travel, alongside a travel grant. For example, 44% said they would be willing to pay between €100 and €200 towards sustainable travel, on top of a grant received for that purpose. 23% would even be prepared to contribute more than €200 to a sustainable journey (see Figure 8). This shows that students are prepared to make a financial contribution to cover at least some of the cost of sustainable travel, as long as they also receive an adequate allowance for that purpose.

Figure 8. Result for the question: ‘If you were to receive a grant for sustainable travel, how much would you be willing to contribute to the journey yourself?’ (N = 109)



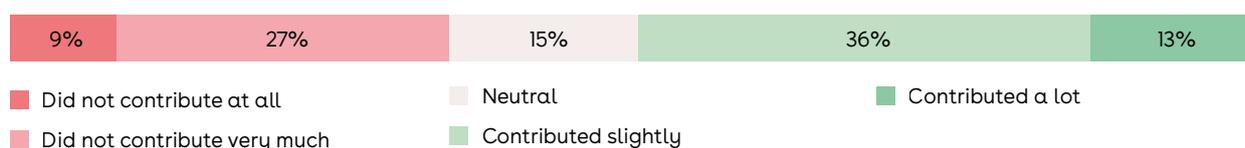
International travel can raise awareness of sustainability

International mobility has negative consequences for the climate due to the CO₂ emissions associated with, for example, the transportation used to reach another country. However, an international experience can also have a positive impact on the climate, for example by raising awareness among students of sustainability issues. 50% of respondents reported that their experience of studying or doing an internship abroad contributed to their awareness of sustainability. 35% said this was not the case for them (see Figure 9).

“When I actually got to Sweden, I noticed how people there were engaged with the issue. This did influence my semester abroad.”

“The things we consider to be sustainable might not be relevant at all in other countries. Why would you focus on electric vehicles or something like that when you don’t have a reliable electricity supply and the rivers are dry all summer? You might have other priorities when it comes to sustainability.”

Figure 9. Result for the question: ‘To what extent did your international experience contribute to your awareness of sustainability?’ (N = 105)



Those respondents who said sustainability was generally important to them were noticeably more likely to report that their time abroad had a positive impact on their awareness of sustainability issues. The opposite is also true: those respondents who said sustainability was not generally so important to them were clearly also less likely to have become more aware of the issue during their international experience.

Students feel that there is no real substitute for an international experience

There are ways for students to have an international experience that do not require physically travelling abroad. For example, *Internationalisation at home* (IaH) helps students work on international competencies without having to physically cross a border. The activities organised through IaH are perceived as being more sustainable and inclusive than a physical international experience.

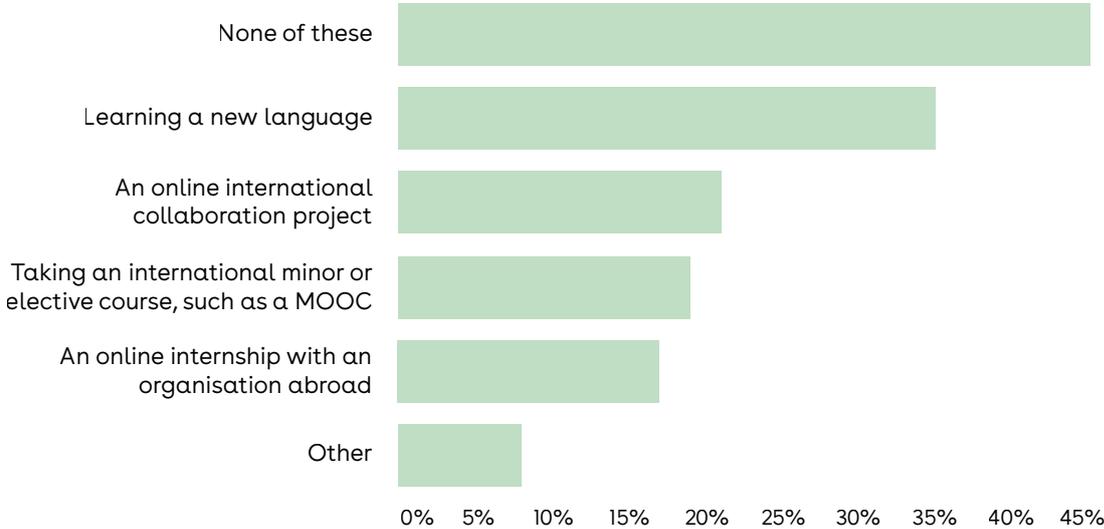
We had students consider 6 alternatives to an international experience and asked them to indicate how appealing these alternatives were (see Figure 10). It is striking that 45% of the students said that none of the suggested options appealed to them as an alternative to an international experience. This percentage is relatively low compared to the figures revealed earlier this year in a Nuffic study into Dutch students’ international plans. That study by Verhoeff et al. (2022) found that 84% of respondents did not consider an online international experience to be a substitute for physically going abroad. The questions were phrased differently in the 2 studies, and the percentages vary, but the message is the same: a significant proportion of students do not think that online or other alternatives are a viable substitute for physically travelling abroad. One possible explanation is that the studies were

carried out after a period of COVID-19 restrictions. Having been through a period where it was not possible to physically undertake an international experience, students may now value actual travel more than ever. Some of the students who participated in our research explained why there is no substitute for physically going abroad:

“For me, the international experience isn’t about what you study while you’re there, it’s about the culture and people you meet, the place you’re visiting and learning to live independently in a new place. There isn’t really any online equivalent to that.”

“I don’t consider these to be alternatives to an international experience. They’re interesting options in their own right, but I don’t see them as a substitute.”

Figure 10. Result for the question: ‘Which of the following options appeal to you as a sustainable alternative to an international experience?’ (N = 93)



Out of all the sustainable alternatives proposed to the students, learning a new language at their own educational institution was the most appealing. More than 1 in 3 (35%) of the students surveyed said this appealed to them. A second alternative that was found to be appealing was to participate in an online collaborative project with a partner in another country (21%). Finally, 19% of students said that taking an international minor or elective course at their own institution was a possible alternative. However, a number of students who chose the ‘other’ option noted that the suggested activities were already often part of the curriculum, so they would not consider these an alternative to an actual international experience.

“These aren’t international experiences. I do all of this already as part of my normal study programme, so it’s really just part of the programme anyway.”

Conclusions

This study has shown that there are a number of different options for encouraging students to make their international experience more sustainable. Below, we discuss the 6 main conclusions and propose recommendations for higher education institutions.

Students are divided about the importance of sustainability to their international experience

Although the respondents in this study reported that sustainability was generally important to them, students seem to be more divided when it comes to the importance of a sustainable international experience. 39% said it was important or very important to organise their international experience in a sustainable way, whereas 45% said it was of little or no importance.

There are opportunities with regard to sustainable travel and the use of grants

A substantial share (71%) of respondents had chosen to fly to and from their destination. For European destinations, the figure was 63%. According to some (35%) of the respondents, there was no other realistic option, but for a greater number (40%), it was speed that led them to choose this form of transportation. Far fewer respondents chose to travel by train (14%) or bus (12%). There is room for improvement here, not least because students indicated that they were open to more sustainable forms of travel. For example, 76% said they were likely or certain to use a sustainable mode of transport - assuming it was possible to reach the destination that way - as long as there was some kind of financial allowance to help cover the cost. There are existing initiatives such as the Erasmus+ Green Travel Top-Up that provide funding for sustainable travel, but not enough students are aware of them or making use of them, partly because the amount being offered is seen as too insubstantial to be worthwhile.

Students want information and practical support to help make their international experience more sustainable

Many respondents said that sustainability was important to them, but only 39% of the students actually made sustainable choices when it came to their own international experience. There is therefore a discrepancy between perceptions and actions when it comes to sustainability. For educational institutions, there is an opportunity to make students aware of the ways in which they could make their trip abroad more sustainable and the associated financial resources that are available to them. 70% of the students surveyed would like to receive advice during their time away and help with booking sustainable travel.

International mobility can contribute to sustainability

Internationalisation in the form of international mobility has a very clear and direct impact on the environment due to the CO₂ emissions that usually result from travelling to another country. However, an international experience can also have a positive impact on the climate challenge by making students more aware of sustainability issues. This was true for 50% of the respondents to our survey. It was striking that this effect was reported more widely among students who expressed a general concern for sustainability, compared to those who generally find sustainability less important. It may be that students become more aware of sustainability issues during their international experience if it is a topic they were already engaged with before they travelled.

***Internationalisation at home* is not considered to be a substitute for a physical international experience**

Internationalisation at home is seen by some as a sustainable and inclusive alternative to physical travel. However, this is not a widely-held view amongst students: 45% of the students surveyed did not consider *Internationalisation at home* activities to be a substitute for physical travel. According to them, there is no way for online activities to match the experience of actually going abroad. Of the IaH activities proposed, the most popular were learning a language and participating in a collaborative online international learning (COIL) project. However, some respondents noted that these are often already part of the curriculum and are therefore not an enticing alternative to actual travel.

Follow-up research

This research has found that, although students value sustainability, there is a discrepancy between their values and their actions. Follow-up research could investigate this further. What exactly is it that makes students overlook sustainability when it comes to their international experience, even though it is important to them in their day-to-day lives? And how can higher education institutions respond to this? Another finding of this study is that an international experience can have a positive impact on the climate challenge by raising awareness of sustainability issues among students. Follow-up research could investigate the factors at play there. Finally, it could be interesting to widen the scope of this research to include lecturers and staff members at higher education institutions. Many higher education institutions started introducing green travel policies for their staff some time ago. What lessons can we learn from that, and are they applicable to students?

Recommendations

Based on the results of this study and consultation with higher education staff, we recommend that higher education institutions do the following to encourage sustainable internationalisation among their students:

- **Speak to students during the planning phase.** It is up to students themselves to opt for sustainable travel. While they are planning their international experience, show students how they could travel in a sustainable way and what the benefits are. Engaging with students in this way will also encourage them to think more widely about sustainable internationalisation. It also helps if students can get some support with things like booking and planning sustainable travel.
- **Share information on financial support and widen the scope of travel grants.** Students are having difficulty finding out about existing grants that support green travel. Discuss these grants with them at an early stage of planning their international experience and, if possible, include them in the application form for the international experience. Higher education institutions could also consider offering their own grant for sustainable travel. However, it is important for any such grant to accurately reflect the real cost of sustainable travel.
- **Make the train or bus journey part of the international experience.** Rather than seeing the journey simply as a means of reaching the destination as quickly as possible, higher education institutions could frame it as a real component of the international experience. A slowly changing landscape will give students a more visceral feeling of heading towards an entirely new environment. Cultural exchange can also start on the journey itself, through interaction with other passengers from different countries. Students may find it exciting to go on a long trip, possibly involving several transfers. Higher education institutions could match up students heading to the same destination so that they can share a sustainable and possibly challenging travel experience.
- **Make sustainable travel the norm.** When we talk about travel, we often take flying for granted. So make sure that any verbal or visual forms of communication about the international experience include sustainable options, such as travelling by train and bus. Higher education institutions can also draw more attention to destinations that are accessible by sustainable modes of transport or make a greater effort to increase their appeal as destinations. Finally, it is also worthwhile to share students' success stories about their sustainable trip, so that other students can see examples of how to travel sustainably.
- **Do not present *Internationalisation at home* as a substitute for physical travel.** IaH offers a wealth of opportunities for building international competencies, and it has advantages in terms of inclusion and sustainability. IaH activities can be part of the curriculum and prepare students for their international experience. Promote physical travel and IaH as complementary to each other, rather than making students choose one over the other.
- **Set the right example.** Higher education institutions are working on improving their sustainability in different ways. Place these efforts front and centre, so that students can see that lecturers and other staff members follow sustainable travel policies wherever possible. Institutions can also ask their partners to travel to them in a sustainable way.

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