

REPRESENTING AND MOBILIZING THE UK STUDENT MOVEMENT



YOUTH CASE STUDY: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL UNITED KINGDOM

SUMMARY

Amnesty International United Kingdom's (UK) Student Action Network Committee (STAN) is made up of eight university students elected each year by the Amnesty International UK student movement at their annual National Student Conference. STAN's primary role is to support, develop, grow and mobilize the Amnesty student movement across the UK. They also serve as a crucial resource and sounding board for Amnesty International UK, providing a youth and student perspective on movement wide issues.



DESCRIPTION

STAN works to support and develop Amnesty International student groups throughout the UK and represents these groups within Amnesty International UK, providing a youth and student perspective on everything from campaign planning to events or how to make issues more relatable to young people. STAN members support roughly 10-12 student groups each. Throughout the year they build relationships with those students and act as a key communication channel between Amnesty International UK and the UK student movement, reaching out to students for their opinions and ideas, as well as bringing student concerns directly to Amnesty International staff. Each year, STAN sets their own objectives. For example, in 2016/17, STAN set objectives to increase the retention rates of University graduates within the Amnesty movement and making Amnesty International policy positions more accessible to student activists. Over the year STAN has six weekend meetings to work together on these objectives and to plan upcoming national events. Students self-nominate for the election process and new members attend a training workshop where they meet with the previous committee, learn from their evaluation, and set their objectives for the year. STAN is just one example of how youth leadership and participation strengthens Amnesty International and brings the movement together!

"STAN are immensely proud of what student activists can achieve. You can't really help but be inspired by them."
-Ruth (Student Group Organizer)

OBJECTIVES

- Support, develop, grow and mobilize the Amnesty International student groups across the UK.
- Serve as a bridge between the student groups and the Amnesty International UK office and staff.
- Act as a sounding board for Amnesty International UK staff and other lead activists, providing a youth perspective on various issues.
- Encourage student-led campaigning.
- Provide an experience of personal growth and development for STAN members.



IMPACT

- The number of Amnesty International student groups in the UK has increased from 30 to 65 between July 2015 and January 2017.
- STAN nominations increased to 24 in 2016 from around a dozen in previous years.
- The 2015/2016 STAN Committee revolutionized the Amnesty International UK student social media network, allowing greater collaboration across the movement.
- Four current Amnesty International UK board members are former STAN members.

TIPS AND TRICKS

- *Build intergenerational relationships!* The opportunity for STAN members to work closely with Amnesty International UK staff paves the way towards youth presence and representation that is not tokenistic.
- *Develop easily and accessible modes of communication!* Amnesty International UK's Student Group Organizer has set contact hours every week to ensure STAN members can always reach her.
- *Be sure to evaluate!* Each STAN committee has a full day evaluation meeting at the end of their term.
- *Make your work known!* STAN and the Student Group Organizer are constantly updating Amnesty International UK staff on their work to make it known they are available to help.
- *Allow time for consultation!* Think ahead and ask young activists and leaders to consult with their peers and networks on important youth issues.
- *Create and encourage pathways for continued participation!* Many STAN members continue to become leaders of local groups or on the national level.



“I’ve really enjoyed it. I feel like I’ve gained a lot of experience and confidence by being a part of STAN. I’ve loved it and I will really miss it!”

RONA IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Rona is a former STAN member: “Being on the Student Action Network Committee 2015/16 was a truly inspiring experience. Although I had been involved with Amnesty for a while, the level of involvement that the Committee gets took my passion for the work to a new level. It was amazing to feel like a real part of some of the campaigns, as well as community organising in general. One of the most surprising aspects of my time on STAN were the chances we got to bring our own interests into the role. As a result, I was able to help build a relationship between Amnesty UK and Reelnice Production, a production company I have been involved in for a while who make documentary films about death penalty in America. This was a level of support I was not expecting, but one which I was very pleasantly surprised by! I am very grateful for the experience STAN gave me.”

STAKEHOLDERS

- Amnesty International UK provides support and funding for STAN activities.
- Each February STAN collaborates with the Student Action for Refugees to organize a week of activism on refugee rights.
- STAN works collaboratively across student networks in various ways. For example, by attending student conferences across the country.
- Amnesty Student groups across the UK benefit from the key role that STAN plays in supporting the movement.
- Amnesty International UK staff directly benefit from STAN's contribution and representation of the Amnesty student movement.

LEARN MORE!

- Contact Ruth at Amnesty International UK for more information: Ruth.Taylor@amnesty.org.uk.

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