

NUS-USI and NIC-ICTU partnership agreement

May 2015



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This protocol outlines the development of a new partnership between the National Union of Students – Union of Students in Ireland (NUS-USI) and the Irish Congress of Trades Unions Northern Ireland Committee (NIC-ICTU) based on joint campaigning and support and sets out ten ways in which we will work together over the next year.

NUS-USI and the NIC-ICTU are affiliate-based, democratic organisations committed to representing the best interests of their members.

The Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) is the single umbrella organisation for trade unions on the island of Ireland. Congress is the largest civil society organisation on the island. It is the apex body representing 832,000 workers affiliated through 64 trade unions in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. The organisation is required, through its mission statement, to strive to achieve economic development, social cohesion and justice by upholding the values of solidarity, fairness and equality.

The Northern Ireland Committee (NIC) of the ICTU is the representative body for 34 trade unions with over 215,000 members across Northern Ireland. In membership terms, it is the largest civil society organisation in Northern Ireland.

The National Union of Students-Union of Students in Ireland (NUS-USI) was established in 1972 under a unique arrangement where both the British and Irish national student unions, the National Union of Students (UK) and the Union of Students in Ireland (USI) respectively, jointly organised in Northern Ireland to promote student unity across the sectarian divide.

Through its eleven member students' unions in further and higher education, it represents the interests of more than 200,000 students.

This agreement represents recognition by both NIC-ICTU and NUS-USI of a shared belief in social justice, collective organisation and democratic participation on campuses, in workplaces, and within the wider community.

Both the trade union movement and the student movement are committed to developing a new generation of activists who are engaged in the political process, participants in their local communities and campaigners to create a fairer, more prosperous society. Our vision is underpinned by the principles of social justice and environmental sustainability.

NIC-ICTU priorities are set out in the campaign plan and those of NUS-USI/NUS in our strategic plan. These documents reflect a shared objective of a society in which there is an education system that allows everyone to fulfil their potential; where there is guaranteed employment and quality jobs; and where workers enjoy strong collective and individual rights at work.

To pursue these joint ambitions and to provide support to each organisation's campaigning and strategic priorities, the NIC-ICTU and NUS-USI will:

1. Work together to promote equality and fight discrimination in all its forms on campuses, in workplaces and society in general.
2. Work together to deliver training for youth and student activists in organising and campaigning on campuses, in workplaces and in our communities.
3. NUS-USI will support NIC-ICTU's work commissioned on the impacts of the Stormont House Agreement on students and young people through research and campaigning.
4. Work together to build a nationwide campaign to spread the living wage in further and higher education, and workplaces beyond.
5. Work together to defend the public value of further and higher education, challenging privatisation and outsourcing in colleges and universities.
6. NUS-USI will support the NIC-ICTU Youth Committee and the work of the Committee at local, regional and national level.
7. Work together to fight for women's liberation, including fighting to ensure women are free from all forms of violence, in order to advance gender equality in the student movement, the trade union movement and wider society.
8. Work together to ensure high quality training and decent working conditions for apprentices, and to raise the voice of the National Society of Apprentices Northern Ireland (NSoANI) and apprentices within policy debates, campaigns and within the trade union and student movements.
9. Work together to help students' unions and trade unions develop relationships and form campaign alliances.
10. NUS-USI will support NIC-ICTU's efforts to promote trade unions and trade union membership to students and will assist NIC-ICTU in exploring the potential of a new 'gateway' to union membership for young workers.

To monitor the development and operation of this agreement both organisations will nominate an appropriate national official and staff who will meet regularly throughout the year to review progress.

The Partnership will be reviewed in August 2016

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