

International students and human rights

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The main driver for today's international education industry is economic - earning overseas exchange by selling educational opportunities and expertise. This contrasts with earlier programmes which focused on development assistance and educational exchange. When things go wrong, the first concern is about reputation, protecting the industry and avoiding diplomatic consequences. The economic argument favours a quality product for a sustainable industry, as is the case with any other export enterprise.

While not denying the force of economic argument to mobilise action to ensure international students are well treated and receive a good educational experience, Joris de Bres argues that the students should first and foremost be seen as human beings with human rights, and that a human rights centred approach provides the best basis for a successful and sustainable international education programme.