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INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS MISS THE SOUNDS OF HOME THE MOST

- **Three quarters (74%) of international students say they miss sounds of their hometown such as local markets and public transport**
- **Despite feeling homesick, an overwhelming 99% agree moving overseas has a positive, lasting impact**
- **HSBC has created *Sounds of Home* - a series of global soundscapes for Spotify, Apple Music and iTunes designed to transport international students back to their home countries**

Despite technology like Instagram, WeChat and WhatsApp allowing international students to connect with friends and family, 92% of international students say that they miss the familiarities of home while studying overseas, according to research by HSBC. Over half (57%) say it's the sensory experience they miss most, and three quarters (74%) specifically miss the sounds of their hometown.

International students identified the sound of people talking in their native language (50%), the hustle and bustle of local markets (26%), the rumble of public transport (25%), and birds, insects or native animals (20%) are among the sounds that international students say they are most likely to miss.

There are currently 432,001 international students studying in the UK¹. To help international students feel connected to home, HSBC has released *Sounds of Home*, global soundscapes, crowd-sourced and created by international influencers. The tracks feature the sounds of four countries and territories: India, Malaysia, Singapore and Taiwan, and will be available on Spotify, Apple Music and iTunes. HSBC also captured the process behind recording and compiling these evocative sounds. [Click here](#) to listen to the sounds.

While moving overseas is an exciting adventure for students which they say has a positive, lasting impact (99%), it can take some adjusting to. Two in five (43%) international students feel homesick at least once a week or more, nearly half (49%) believe missing family and friends has impacted their academic performance, and for two in five (40%), being away from home has affected their ability to get a good night's sleep. Homesickness is particularly prominent late at night, specifically between the hours of 10pm to 12am.

Baroness Susan Greenfield, former fellow at The University of Oxford and CEO of Nero-Bio Ltd said:

“International students were born into a connected, digital era, but the majority still miss their familiar lifestyles in the real world. Whilst it's reassuring that this young generation is not living in a cyber-parallel universe, the challenge is how to off-set the absence of family, friends, location, and language, in tangible new ways.

“Sounds and smells are - more than the other three senses - the most pervasive and the least contextual. Perhaps sounds are so important in homesickness because they are hard to encapsulate in a specific, single memory, and play a bigger role in our on-going consciousness. Sound also allows room for imagination, conjuring up in your mind a personal scenario. This means sound can be used to good effect to induce a sense of personal well-being.”

Despite facing a range of challenges, including setting up a bank account in their country of study (35%) and setting aside enough money to be able to travel home (40%), independence and new experiences are most commonly seen as benefits of studying abroad (60%). 84% of international students believe they have not only gained new skills but have also become stronger people.

Nathan Donald, Head of International Propositions at HSBC UK, said: “There are many benefits to studying abroad – new adventures, new skills and independence – but that doesn’t stop you missing the familiarity of home. As someone who has lived and worked abroad, I know what it’s like to feel homesick.

“*Sounds of Home* helps international students feel closer to the people and places they love. We created these soundscapes to complement the financial guidance and support we provide as a leading bank for international students all over the world. It’s another way in which HSBC is a reassuring presence for students who are away from home, helping them to navigate the fulfilling and challenging world of international study.”

HSBC is the only bank that can help students set up bank accounts in over 30 countries and territories pre-departure. Once we receive the required documents, an account can be opened within two days. Customers can choose to have their online banking details, debit cards, credit cards and cheque books delivered to their home or an address at their destination.

For more information about HSBC’s International Services visit:

<https://internationalservices.hsbc.com/index/overseas-education/>

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Note to editors:

¹ Source: <http://uis.unesco.org/en/uis-student-flow>

The research

The Sounds of Home is an independent consumer research study into the experience of international students commissioned by HSBC. It provides authoritative insights into the emotional toll of moving to a new country as a student and explores perceptions of homesickness and living in an unfamiliar country.

The findings represent the views of 897 international students from 11 countries and territories: Australia, mainland China, France, Germany, Hong Kong, India, Malaysia, Singapore, Taiwan, UK and USA.

The research is based on a sample of students aged 17 - 29 years old who are current international students or who have studied abroad in the last 5 years and was conducted between 12th June 2019 and 24th June 2019.

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