

SDG 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities

Adopted in 2015 by United Nations Member States, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are an urgent call to action for all countries, developed and developing, in a global partnership. In this context, ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand in hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality and promote economic growth. At the same time, tackling climate change and its impacts, such as forced migration, and planning efforts to protect the natural environment are all part of the Sustainable Development Goals. Although the Sustainable Development Goals do not focus on higher education, everyone needs to take action to achieve them by 2030. Different sectors and actors need to work together, bringing together financial resources, knowledge and expertise. Universities are one of the stakeholders in this area.

The Times Higher Education Impact Rankings have emerged as an important and innovative way to ensure that more young refugee women and men around the world can access higher education and be part of the movement to achieve the 17 global Sustainable Development Goals. One of these goals is the sustainability of cities and communities. Today, a large proportion of the world's population lives in cities, and cities are often the home of universities. While cities are cradles of innovation and opportunity, they are also centres of intense poverty and inequality. In this context, the relationship between universities and the urban and rural communities in which they are located needs to be positively sustainable. The Times Higher Education Impact Ranking under SDG 11 sets out with such sensitivities in mind, while also exploring and ranking universities globally on how they preserve the history and culture of their communities and what they do to help sustain them for a sustainable community.



The SDG 11 label is structured in 4 main categories, the first of which covers academic activities. Universities are expected to respond to a total of 17 questions under 3 categories excluding academic research. These titles are; Supporting Arts and Heritage, Arts and Heritage Expenditures and Sustainable Practices. Üsküdar University of Republic of Türkiye applied to the Times Higher Education Impact Ranking to evaluate its practices and public services in a total of 17 global sustainable development goals in 2023.

Under the first category of the SDG 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities label, Supporting Arts and Heritage, a total of 6 questions are sought to be answered. Some of these questions include what the university does to ensure public access to buildings of cultural significance, natural heritage, libraries and green spaces. The other part includes public performances of theatres and choirs and efforts to protect intangible cultural heritage. Üsküdar University, Department of Health, Culture and Sports organizes nature and cultural trips throughout the year with the student clubs within the university, aiming to increase students' awareness of natural and cultural heritage while enabling students to socialize.



In accordance with the library and documentation directive of Üsküdar University, the university library is open to the public and there is also remote access to all electronic resources of the university libraries. In addition to library services, Üsküdar University aims to inform the public with the projects it organizes. Projects supported by the governorship and ministry such as Families at the University, Reading University Reading High School can be given as examples in this field. Üsküdar University contributes to local art by organizing artistic events open to students and the public throughout the year. These include theatre plays, musical entertainment, local art samples of international students, classical Turkish art samples such as miniature, and digital art exhibitions. The University also supports projects that aim to record and/or preserve intangible cultural heritage such as local folklore, traditions, language and knowledge. Süleyman Çelebi and Mawlid Program, Şeb-i Arûs Program, Aşık Veysel Commemoration Program, "East West Bridge from Ancient to Future" project organized by the Institute of Sufism Studies are examples of the works in this field. Üsküdar University also names its space arrangements after people who have contributed to the intangible cultural heritage of humanity such as intellectual life. In this context, the names of halls and classrooms in the university campuses are named after people who have taken place in the history of thought such as Ibn-i Sina, Fuat Sezgin, Socrates. High Human Values Awards have been given by the University for 8 years to people who contribute to the protection of cultural heritage. In addition, some books published by Prof. Dr. Nevzat Tarhan,

the founding rector of Üsküdar University, include the common values of humanity and the transfer of the traditions and customs of the society to future generations.

The second category of the SDG 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities label is Arts and Heritage Expenditures. Üsküdar University contributes to the sustainability of activities in this field by allocating a significant portion of its total university expenditures to expenditures on arts and cultural heritage.

The third category of the SDG 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities label is Sustainable Practices. Under this heading, answers to 9 questions are sought. Half of the questions address the university's sensitivity to more sustainable commuting by public transportation. All campuses of the University are located close to public transportation in the city and contribute to more sustainable transportation. Shuttles for students and employees contribute to reducing carbon emissions, while faculty and students are provided with free bicycle and electric vehicle parking. Free parking is also offered to faculty members. Üsküdar University is located in Üsküdar district, which is located in the centre of Istanbul. It is possible to reach Üsküdar district by land, sea and railroad. For this reason, different campuses of Üsküdar University can be reached by bus, ferry and subway. Thanks to the central location of the University, pedestrian access to its different campuses in the city centre is possible. Üsküdar University, under the title of Sustainable Practices, also allows distance education up to 30% in accordance with the distance education regulation. In order to make this process work, the university has purchased licensed personal Zoom accounts for faculty members and improved distance working conditions with distance education modules such as ALMS and STIX. Üsküdar University has a lodging house for the accommodation of the employees of the Faculty of Medicine. Consisting of 6 apartments, the lodging house also accommodates faculty members who need accommodation from time to time. There are also agreements with many hotels for the accommodation needs of university employees. In addition to providing accommodation for its employees, the university also contributes to its students in this field. Nakkaştepe girls' dormitory is 200 meters walking distance from the university. The dormitory consists of 26 rooms and has a capacity of 71 students. Üsküdar University also has an agreement with many male and female student dormitories. Thus, students can stay in contracted dormitories at affordable prices.

Üsküdar University aims to support public policies to eliminate economic inequalities and prevent poverty within the scope of Sustainable Practices. It is important to work on the inequalities created by the global economic system in determining priorities in development plans. In this context, Üsküdar University awarded the High Human Values award to economics professor Muhammed Yunus in 2022. In addition, Üsküdar University Department of Occupational Health and Safety and Department of Construction Affairs carry out studies on housing safety and policies. Üsküdar University produces projects for business life in the planned development process and benefits from national scientific support programs. In this context, a TÜBİTAK scholarship was received in the field of occupational health and safety.

Üsküdar University is located in Üsküdar, one of the historical districts of Istanbul. For this reason, our university transforms old business centres into education and training areas instead of constructing new buildings. Again, old buildings are transformed into educational institutions by respecting the historical heritage of the district. In this way, some historical buildings in Üsküdar district have entered into socio-cultural circulation by preserving their original form. In this transformation, horizontal architecture and sustainable energy forms that will be compatible with the environment where the university is located are preferred. Various arrangements have been made on Üsküdar University campuses based on the idea of sustainability. Solar energy panels, borehole system for garden irrigation, central heating system and sensor lighting systems are some of them. Our university is sensitive to today's global problems such as environmental pollution and overconsumption of natural resources. While the idea of sustainability is taught in different courses at the university, seminars and projects are also organized in this field. Prof. Dr. İbrahim Özdemir, a faculty member of Üsküdar University Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, is a member of the committee that prepared the Al Mizan: A Covenant for the Earth, which was carried out within the scope of the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP). This project has a global perspective on sustainable environmental understanding. Working groups and research centres within the university also develop research projects on sustainable environment.

AL-MİZÂN DÜNYA ÇEVRE SÖZLEŞMESİ



“Göğü Allah yükseltti ve mizânı (dengeyi)
O koydu. Sakın dengeyi bozmayın. Ölçüyü
adâletle tutun ve eksik tartmayın.”
(Kur’ân, 55:7-9)

Üsküdar University continues to work to protect and sustain the natural, historical and cultural environment of the society in which it is located with a holistic perspective within the scope of Supporting Arts and Heritage, Arts and Heritage Expenditures and Sustainable Practices within the SDG 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities label.