SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL

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NO POVERTY

UNIVERSITY OF DHAKA

Sustainability Progress Report 2025

SDG 1: NO POVERTY

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1. Executive Summary

Poverty remains a significant barrier to equitable access to higher education, particularly for students who face financial hardship, inadequate housing, medical expenses, and other socioeconomic vulnerabilities. For a public university with a large and diverse student population, addressing these challenges requires more than providing academic opportunities. It also requires establishing institutional mechanisms that protect students from financial exclusion and enable them to continue their education with dignity.

During 2025, the University of Dhaka continued to advance its contribution to Sustainable Development Goal 1 (No Poverty) through a range of financial assistance programmes, institutional scholarships, trust fund allocations, disability support, residential infrastructure development, and welfare initiatives. These activities demonstrate the University's commitment to reducing the economic barriers that affect students' participation, academic performance, and overall well-being.

A significant feature of the University's approach is its decentralized welfare structure. Different departments, residential halls, faculties, alumni associations, and central administrative bodies contribute to student financial protection through dedicated scholarship funds, emergency assistance, and targeted welfare programmes. During the reporting period, several new scholarships were introduced, existing endowment funds were strengthened, and financial support was extended to students experiencing economic hardship.

The University also made progress in addressing the broader cost of student living. Major residential infrastructure initiatives, including the proposed Bangladesh-China Friendship Hall and the University's long-term development master plan, are expected to expand subsidized accommodation significantly. Alongside these projects, residential halls introduced improvements in essential facilities, including drinking water, internet access, furniture, healthcare services, and hygiene infrastructure.

The University's commitment to poverty alleviation also extends beyond its campus. Through an international humanitarian relief initiative for children affected by the Gaza conflict, the University community demonstrated solidarity with vulnerable populations experiencing severe poverty and deprivation.

Collectively, these initiatives reflect a multidimensional institutional approach to SDG 1, connecting financial assistance with access to basic services, social protection, educational continuity, and humanitarian responsibility.

2. Institutional Commitment and Strategic Alignment with SDG 1

2.1 Understanding Poverty in the Higher Education Context

Poverty in higher education is not limited to the inability to pay tuition fees. Students from economically disadvantaged households may experience difficulties meeting accommodation costs, purchasing educational materials, accessing healthcare, maintaining adequate nutrition, and covering other essential living expenses.

These challenges can affect students' ability to participate fully in academic activities and, in severe cases, increase the risk of discontinuing their education.

Recognizing these interconnected challenges, the University of Dhaka approaches student welfare through several complementary mechanisms. These include institutional scholarships, departmental trust funds, emergency financial assistance, disability-specific support, subsidized accommodation, and improvements in residential facilities.

2.2 Alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals

The University's activities during 2025 demonstrate particular relevance to the following SDG 1 targets:

Target 1.3 – Implement social protection systems and measures for all

The University's scholarship programmes, need-based financial assistance, disability support, and emergency relief initiatives provide financial protection to students facing different forms of socioeconomic vulnerability.

Target 1.4 – Ensure equal rights to economic resources and access to basic services

Residential accommodation, affordable living facilities, healthcare support, drinking water, hygiene infrastructure, and other essential services contribute to reducing the financial burden of accessing basic necessities.

Target 1.a – Mobilize resources to implement policies and programmes to end poverty

The establishment and expansion of institutional trust funds, alumni-supported scholarships, departmental endowments, and externally supported infrastructure projects demonstrate efforts to mobilize financial resources for poverty-related interventions.

While the University's activities are primarily focused on its educational community, these initiatives also contribute to the broader objectives of inclusive development and poverty reduction.

3. Financial Assistance and Scholarship Programmes: Strengthening Educational Continuity

3.1 Building a Sustainable Financial Safety Net Through Institutional Trust Funds

For students experiencing financial hardship, even relatively small financial constraints can disrupt their academic journey. Scholarships and institutional endowments therefore play an important role in protecting students from economic pressures.

During 2025, the University continued to strengthen its financial assistance mechanisms through departmental trust funds, residential hall endowments, alumni contributions, and externally supported scholarships.

A notable example was the expansion of the Amar Ekushey Hall Trust Fund on 17 July 2025. The hall administration contributed BDT 20 lakh from its internal revenue sources, increasing the fund's total capital base to BDT 40 lakh. Originally established on 22 October 2007 with an initial capital of BDT 15 lakh, the fund represents a continuing institutional commitment to student welfare.

The annual income generated from the expanded endowment is used to provide academic scholarships to meritorious second-, third-, and fourth-year undergraduate students, excluding readmitted students.

This approach is important because it creates a recurring source of financial assistance rather than relying exclusively on one-time donations. By strengthening the fund's capital base, the hall has expanded its capacity to provide continuing educational support.

3.2 Expanding Need-Based Financial Assistance

Alongside recurring endowment support, several departments introduced or distributed targeted financial assistance to students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

On 14 August 2025, the Department of Law introduced the Muhammad Shah Alam Scholarship, supported by departmental alumnus Advocate Md. Shah Alam. The programme provided BDT 10,000 each to 50 meritorious students experiencing financial hardship, resulting in a total allocation of BDT 5 lakh.

This initiative represents a meaningful example of alumni engagement in supporting students who demonstrate academic potential but face financial constraints.

The University also facilitated other forms of targeted assistance:

- The Department of Economics awarded a BDT 12,000 scholarship under the Shah A.M.S. Kibria Memorial Trust Fund to Lubaba Binte Halim for achieving the highest CGPA in the 2023 BSS Honours examination.

- The Department of Educational and Counseling Psychology awarded BDT 24,000 each to three first-year MPhil students under the Bilkis-Mahbub Trust Fund, amounting to BDT 72,000.
- The Institute of Social Welfare and Research selected six first-year undergraduate students for the Prof. Dr. Golam M. Mathabor Trust Fund Scholarship.
- The Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management awarded the Hena Alam Scholarship to ten first-year undergraduate students.
- The Department of Arabic distributed scholarships to 34 students through the AZM Kutubul Islam Nomani Scholarship Fund and the Khandakar Md. Habibullah Scholarship Fund.

These programmes illustrate how individual departments contribute to the University's broader social protection framework by mobilizing resources through institutional and alumni-supported mechanisms.

3.3 Supporting Students Through Recurring Financial Assistance

One-time grants can address immediate financial difficulties, but recurring financial assistance can provide students with greater financial predictability throughout an academic year.

During December 2025, several departments distributed monthly stipends and scholarships to support students' continuing educational and living expenses.

Examples include:

Scholarship / Trust Fund	Beneficiaries	Financial Support
Prof. Dr. S. H. Mahmud Trust Fund	8 students	BDT 1,000 per month for one year
Abdul Aziz Chowdhury Scholarship	2 students	BDT 600 per month for one year
Dr. Sayed Nurul Alam Memorial Scholarship	2 students	BDT 1,000 per month for one year
Alhaj Shamsuddin Hafiz & Taiba Begum Trust Fund	2 students	BDT 200 per month for one year
Rabeya Mobarak Memorial Scholarship	Eligible students from BSc second year to MS level	BDT 500 per month for one year

The Prof. Dr. S. H. Mahmud Trust Fund, administered by the Department of Psychology, supported eight undergraduate students. The Department of Information Science and Library Management extended the Abdul Aziz Chowdhury Scholarship to two students, while the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology supported two undergraduate students through the Dr. Sayed Nurul Alam Memorial Scholarship.

The Rabeya Mobarak Memorial Scholarship, announced by the Department of Soil, Water and Environment, further demonstrated the University's intention to reach students experiencing financial hardship. The scholarship offered monthly assistance to eligible students upon verification of their financial circumstances.

These recurring programmes help reduce the pressure of regular educational and living expenses, allowing students to focus more effectively on their academic responsibilities.

3.4 Recognizing Academic Achievement While Supporting Financial Welfare

The University also continued to combine academic recognition with financial support.

On 13 November 2025, the Department of Islamic History and Culture distributed special scholarships to 75 students during its 75th anniversary and alumni reunion. The department reported a total of 84 departmental scholars. In addition, 58 children of association members received recognition for their academic performance in SSC and HSC examinations, while 13 outstanding BA and MA graduates received academic awards.

Similarly, the Kabi Sufia Kamal Hall Trust Fund distributed scholarships and awards to female resident students, including merit, general, and co-curricular scholarships.

The Faculty of Pharmacy also distributed Badrunnessa Gafur Memorial Trust Scholarships to eight high-performing students across different years of the professional B.Pharm examinations. A further 16 students received Bangladesh Pharmaceutical Society scholarships, alongside academic gold medals and other recognitions.

The Department of Physics awarded eight students BDT 15,000 each under the Hero Freedom Fighter Amena Zaman Memorial Trust Fund. It also recognized Falguni Biswas with a one-time financial award of BDT 1,47,360 under the Hamida Khan Memorial Award for achieving the highest CGPA in the BSc Honours examination.

Through these initiatives, the University reinforces the relationship between academic achievement, financial encouragement, and educational opportunity.

3.5 Creating Opportunities Through External Scholarship Partnerships

The University also continued to facilitate scholarships supported by external organizations.

On 9 October 2025, an application call was issued for the Sumitomo Corporation Scholarship, targeting ten regular first-year undergraduate students from the 2022–2023 academic session.

The scholarship combines academic eligibility requirements with household income verification. Applicants were required to demonstrate a minimum GPA of 4.80 in both SSC and HSC examinations, without the fourth subject, and submit official guardian income certificates.

The scholarship provides renewable financial assistance for three years, subject to satisfactory academic progress and conduct.

This initiative is particularly relevant because it combines academic performance with socioeconomic eligibility, directing external financial resources towards students who demonstrate both academic merit and financial need.

4. Targeted Social Protection: Reaching Students Facing Additional Vulnerabilities

4.1 Disability-Inclusive Financial Assistance

Students with disabilities may face additional expenses associated with assistive technologies, healthcare, mobility, and accessible learning arrangements. These costs can create further economic disadvantages for students from low-income households.

Recognizing this challenge, the University approved a specialized financial assistance programme for Abdullah Al Naim, a visually impaired first-year undergraduate student in the Department of Political Science.

On 9 October 2025, the University administration sanctioned a monthly stipend of BDT 5,000 for one year, representing total financial assistance of BDT 60,000.

This intervention reflects an important dimension of inclusive poverty alleviation. Rather than treating financial hardship as a uniform experience, the initiative recognizes that disability can create additional economic pressures and require targeted institutional support.

It also demonstrates the importance of integrating disability considerations into student welfare policies.

4.2 Financial Relief for Students Affected by Medical Trauma and Physical Injuries

Unexpected medical emergencies and physical injuries can place significant financial pressure on students and their families. In addition to medical expenses, affected students may face difficulties maintaining their academic activities and meeting daily living costs.

During July 2025, the University introduced targeted financial relief initiatives for students injured during the July Uprising.

On 14 July 2025, Rokeya Hall organized a financial assistance programme during its July Women's Day observances. Financial grants, honour crests, and certificates were provided to Sanjida Ahmed Tonwi and Cynthia Mehrin Sakal, two female resident students listed on the official government registry of individuals severely injured during the July Uprising.

The assistance was intended to support their ongoing medical, rehabilitation, and living expenses.

Similarly, on 17 July 2025, the Department of Banking and Insurance instituted financial scholarships specifically for departmental students injured during the July Revolution.

These interventions demonstrate the University's role in providing institutional support when students experience sudden and exceptional financial vulnerability.

4.3 Strengthening Need-Based Verification and Financial Assistance

Effective social protection requires financial assistance to reach individuals who genuinely need it. The University employs different administrative approaches to identify eligible beneficiaries.

Two approaches are evident in the reported initiatives.

Income-based eligibility verification

The Sumitomo Corporation Scholarship required applicants to submit official guardian income certificates alongside academic records. This approach allows the University to consider household economic circumstances before selecting scholarship recipients.

Individual hardship assessment

Some departmental and residential hall programmes assess financial difficulties through applications and administrative review.

For example, on 11 September 2025, Kabi Sufia Kamal Hall provided special educational financial assistance to two non-resident female students following an official assessment of their financial hardship.

The Department of Law's Muhammad Shah Alam Scholarship also targeted meritorious students identified as financially insolvent.

The Rabeya Mobarak Memorial Scholarship similarly required written applications and hardship declarations from prospective beneficiaries.

Together, these approaches provide a framework for addressing both anticipated financial vulnerability and unexpected hardship.

5. Affordable Housing and Basic Needs: Reducing the Cost of Student Living

5.1 Addressing Accommodation as a Major Component of Student Poverty

For students studying in Dhaka, accommodation is one of the most significant non-academic expenses. Students who cannot secure residential accommodation within the University may need to depend on private rentals, paying for rent, utilities, transportation, and other living expenses.

For economically disadvantaged students, these additional costs can place considerable pressure on household finances.

The University of Dhaka therefore considers residential infrastructure development an important component of student welfare and poverty alleviation.

During 2025, the University advanced major housing initiatives intended to increase access to subsidized campus accommodation.

5.2 Bangladesh-China Friendship Hall: Expanding Female Student Accommodation

One of the major infrastructure developments during the reporting period was the Bangladesh-China Friendship Hall project.

The project, estimated at BDT 244 crore and supported by the Chinese Government, is designed to provide residential accommodation for 1,500 female students.

Following official communications involving the Economic Relations Division and approval from the Chinese Government, a technical feasibility expert team visited Dhaka.

A significant milestone was achieved on 18 December 2025, when Chinese Ambassador Yao Wen and University of Dhaka Vice-Chancellor accompanied by the University Treasurer and DAKSU leadership, conducted a joint site inspection in the Jagannath Hall area.

At the time of reporting, the project was progressing towards construction, which was expected to commence within one to two months.

The project represents an important investment in reducing accommodation-related financial pressure on female students. By expanding access to subsidized residential facilities, the University aims to reduce dependence on private housing and improve students' access to a more affordable living environment.

5.3 University Development Master Plan: Long-Term Investment in Student Welfare

The University also advanced its broader development master plan, estimated at BDT 2,841 crore and covering a five-year development period through 2030.

On 20 November 2025, the University confirmed progress on the plan and secured Ministry of Education approval for an initial BDT 60 crore Annual Development Programme allocation.

The residential component includes:

- Four residential halls for 2,600 female students.
- Five residential halls for 5,100 male students.
- A total of 7,700 additional residential seats.

The broader development plan also includes house tutor quarters, academic buildings, public toilets, and modern waste management systems.

Together with the Bangladesh-China Friendship Hall project, these planned developments represent a potential addition of 9,200 subsidized residential seats.

This expansion could make a substantial contribution to reducing students' living costs, particularly for those from outside Dhaka and households with limited financial resources.

It is important to note that these figures represent planned residential capacity rather than completed accommodation during the reporting period.

5.4 Improving Access to Residential Accommodation

Alongside long-term infrastructure development, the University's residential halls continued to manage existing accommodation capacity.

On 18 September 2025, Kabi Sufia Kamal Hall conducted formal interviews for 450 applicants seeking residential seats.

Amar Ekushey Hall also completed a residential seat allocation exercise on 9 October 2025, assigning seats to 117 students from a total of 225 applicants.

Similar residential allocation activities took place at Bangladesh-Kuwait Maitree Hall and Rokeya Hall.

These activities demonstrate the University's continued efforts to distribute available accommodation among students seeking affordable residential arrangements.

5.5 Reducing Daily Living Expenses Through Residential Welfare Facilities

The University's efforts to reduce student living costs extend beyond accommodation itself. Residential halls also introduced improvements in essential facilities and services that contribute to students' daily well-being.

Healthcare and hygiene support

Female health awareness programmes were organized at Bangamata Begum Fazilatunnesa Mujib Hall on 10 July 2025 and Kabi Sufia Kamal Hall on 18 September 2025, in collaboration with Ad-din Mother Care Limited.

The programmes offered free blood grouping and medical consultations, helping students access basic healthcare services without additional financial expenditure.

On 11 December 2025, the DU Alumni Association donated and installed a sanitary vending machine at Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib Hall. This initiative supports access to essential menstrual hygiene products and helps reduce related out-of-pocket expenses for female residents.

Access to drinking water and digital facilities

Kabi Jasim Uddin Hall upgraded essential student facilities by installing high-speed Wi-Fi routers in reading rooms and student offices on 11 September 2025.

The hall also installed pure drinking water filters, cleaned water reservoirs, and improved dining hall fixtures.

These improvements support a healthier and more conducive residential and learning environment while reducing the need for students to purchase certain basic services independently.

Improving residential room facilities

Amar Ekushey Hall installed 112 ceiling fans in student rooms, with a 12-year replacement guarantee. It also constructed two bicycle stands with capacity for 150 bicycles and added gym equipment.

Bangladesh-Kuwait Maitree Hall supplied 500 new chairs and 40 bunk beds for female resident students on 18 December 2025.

Furthermore, Kabi Jasim Uddin Hall and Amar Ekushey Hall converted administrative quarters to accommodate approximately 70 additional resident students.

These interventions illustrate how relatively practical improvements in residential facilities can contribute to affordability, comfort, and the overall quality of student life.

6. Extending Poverty Alleviation Beyond the Campus: Humanitarian Engagement

The University's contribution to SDG 1 is not limited to its own students and institutional community. It also recognizes the wider responsibility of educational institutions to support vulnerable populations affected by poverty, conflict, and humanitarian emergencies.

6.1 Financial Relief for Children Affected by the Gaza Conflict

On 13 November 2025, the Master of Professional Banking Alumni Association, operating under the Department of Banking and Insurance, organized an international humanitarian financial relief initiative for children affected by the Gaza conflict.

The initiative was led by the Chairman of the Department of Banking and Insurance and supervised by the University Treasurer.

As part of the programme, executive members of the alumni association visited the Embassy of Palestine in Dhaka and formally handed over a financial relief donation cheque to the Ambassador of Palestine to Bangladesh, Youssef Ramadan.

The contribution was intended to support the living, medical, and nutritional needs of children affected by the ongoing conflict.

This initiative demonstrates how the University's academic departments and alumni networks can mobilize resources and contribute to humanitarian efforts beyond national boundaries.

It also reflects the broader principle of SDG 1: poverty alleviation requires collective action and solidarity with vulnerable populations, irrespective of geographical boundaries.

7. Consolidated Progress and Key Institutional Achievements

The initiatives undertaken during 2025 demonstrate progress across several dimensions of SDG 1.

The following summary highlights the principal institutional achievements documented during the reporting period.

Area of intervention	Key progress during 2025
Institutional endowments	Amar Ekushey Hall Trust Fund expanded to BDT 40 lakh
Direct financial assistance	BDT 5 lakh distributed to 50 students under the Muhammad Shah Alam Scholarship
Research support	BDT 72,000 awarded to three MPhil students under the Bilkis-Mahbub Trust Fund
Disability support	BDT 60,000 annual assistance approved for a visually impaired student
Departmental scholarships	Multiple departments distributed scholarships and stipends to undergraduate and postgraduate students
Female student welfare	Kabi Sufia Kamal Hall distributed merit, general, and co-curricular awards
Residential infrastructure	Bangladesh-China Friendship Hall planned for 1,500 female students
Long-term housing development	Master plan includes 7,700 additional residential seats
Existing residential facilities	Improvements in furniture, water, internet, healthcare, hygiene, and room facilities
Emergency assistance	Financial support provided to students injured during the July Uprising
International humanitarian engagement	Financial relief donation delivered for children affected by the Gaza conflict

The figures above represent selected documented achievements and should not be interpreted as a consolidated count of all beneficiaries or total institutional expenditure.

8. Institutional Impact and Contribution to Poverty Reduction

The University's initiatives demonstrate several important pathways through which higher education institutions can contribute to poverty alleviation.

8.1 Protecting Access to Higher Education

Financial assistance reduces the economic barriers that may prevent disadvantaged students from continuing their studies.

Scholarships, monthly stipends, research grants, and emergency financial support provide students with additional resources to meet educational and living expenses.

By supporting both undergraduate and postgraduate students, the University contributes to maintaining access to higher education across different academic levels.

8.2 Strengthening Financial Resilience

The expansion of institutional trust funds demonstrates the importance of developing sustainable financial mechanisms for student welfare.

Unlike isolated donations, endowment-based scholarships can generate recurring income and support successive groups of students.

The involvement of alumni, external organizations, and departmental initiatives further diversifies the University's sources of financial support.

8.3 Promoting Inclusion and Equal Opportunity

Targeted assistance for students with disabilities, female students, financially disadvantaged students, and individuals affected by medical injuries demonstrates the importance of addressing different forms of vulnerability.

Such initiatives help ensure that students' educational opportunities are not determined solely by their economic circumstances or personal challenges.

8.4 Reducing the Cost of Essential Services

Residential accommodation, healthcare services, drinking water, internet access, hygiene facilities, and improved room infrastructure all contribute to reducing students' daily living expenses.

These interventions are particularly relevant because poverty-related pressures are not limited to academic fees. They also arise from the cumulative cost of maintaining an adequate standard of living while pursuing higher education.

8.5 Encouraging Collective Responsibility

The participation of alumni associations, departmental administrations, residential halls, external scholarship providers, government agencies, and international partners demonstrates that poverty alleviation requires cooperation across institutional boundaries.

The University's initiatives provide examples of how different stakeholders can contribute to student welfare and broader humanitarian objectives.

9. Conclusion

The University of Dhaka's progress towards SDG 1 during 2025 reflects a broad understanding of poverty as a multidimensional challenge that affects students' access to education, accommodation, healthcare, and essential living services.

Through institutional trust funds, departmental scholarships, alumni-supported financial assistance, disability-specific grants, emergency relief, and residential welfare initiatives, the University continued to develop mechanisms for supporting students facing economic hardship.

The expansion of institutional endowments demonstrated a commitment to sustainable financial assistance, while targeted scholarships and monthly stipends provided support to students across different academic disciplines and levels. At the same time, major residential development initiatives indicated a longer-term institutional commitment to reducing accommodation-related financial pressure.

The University's humanitarian engagement beyond the campus further demonstrated that its contribution to poverty alleviation extends to broader social responsibilities.

Although continued attention to monitoring, accessibility, beneficiary coverage, and measurable outcomes will be important, the initiatives documented during the reporting period establish a meaningful foundation for further progress.

Ultimately, the University of Dhaka's contribution to SDG 1 is reflected not only in the financial resources it distributes, but also in its efforts to ensure that economic hardship does not become a barrier to educational opportunity, personal development, and human dignity.