SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL

2

ZERO HUNGER

UNIVERSITY OF DHAKA
Sustainability Progress Report 2025

SDG 2: ZERO HUNGER

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1. Executive Summary

Access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food is an essential component of human well-being and sustainable development. For a large urban university such as the University of Dhaka, ensuring food security involves more than making meals available. It also requires maintaining hygienic food preparation environments, preserving perishable ingredients, ensuring access to clean water, and managing food-related organic waste responsibly.

During the year 2025, the University of Dhaka undertook a series of infrastructure improvements, operational interventions, and environmental initiatives across its residential halls and central campus. These activities contributed to the University's efforts towards Sustainable Development Goal 2 (Zero Hunger), particularly in relation to access to safe food, food hygiene, and sustainable resource management.

A significant area of progress was the improvement of residential dining and kitchen facilities. Several halls upgraded their canteens and mess facilities through structural renovation, improved food preparation surfaces, kitchen equipment repairs, and the installation of refrigeration and deep-freezing facilities. These investments support better food preservation, reduce the risk of spoilage, and improve the conditions under which meals are prepared and served to students.

The University also strengthened the connection between food safety and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH). Initiatives included repairing water supply infrastructure, cleaning and disinfecting underground and overhead water reservoirs, servicing existing filtration systems, and installing additional drinking water purification units. These measures are important for maintaining hygienic food preparation environments and reducing exposure to waterborne contaminants.

Another notable development was the introduction of a university-wide initiative to stop the burning of fallen leaves and convert collected organic biomass into natural bio-fertilizer, locally known as *Reb Shar*. Launched on 11 December 2025, the campaign involved several institutional and student organizations and marked an important step towards sustainable campus land management and organic resource recovery.

Collectively, these initiatives demonstrate the University's contribution to SDG 2 through an integrated approach that connects food availability, food preservation, safe water, dining hygiene, and environmental sustainability. While the documented activities primarily focus on the institutional food environment and its supporting infrastructure, they provide a foundation for further progress towards a safer and more sustainable campus food system.

2. Institutional Commitment and Strategic Alignment with SDG 2

2.1 Understanding Food Security in an Urban University Context

Food security is commonly associated with agricultural production, food availability, and access to sufficient nutrition. However, within a large urban university, food security also depends on the quality of institutional catering facilities, the safe handling and preservation of food, access to clean drinking water, and the management of organic waste.

The University of Dhaka operates within a densely populated metropolitan environment where residential halls, dining facilities, kitchens, water supply systems, and campus maintenance operations are closely interconnected.

Thousands of students depend on institutional and nearby food services to meet their daily nutritional requirements. Consequently, the quality of food preparation infrastructure and the availability of appropriate storage facilities have direct relevance to students' food safety and well-being.

Recognizing these requirements, the University's activities during 2025 addressed three interconnected dimensions:

- **Food access and preservation:** Improving dining facilities, refrigeration capacity, and food storage arrangements to support access to safe and affordable meals.
- **Food safety and hygiene:** Upgrading kitchen infrastructure, maintaining cooking equipment, improving water quality infrastructure, and strengthening dining hygiene.
- **Sustainable resource management:** Reducing organic waste burning and converting fallen leaves into organic fertilizer for campus soil improvement.

These interventions reflect a practical interpretation of food security within an urban higher education institution.

2.2 Alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals

The University's documented activities during the reporting period demonstrate particular relevance to three targets under SDG 2.

Target 2.1 – End hunger and ensure access to safe, nutritious, and sufficient food

The improvement of residential dining facilities, installation of refrigeration equipment, and enhancement of food preparation infrastructure contribute to creating a safer and more reliable food environment for students.

Target 2.2 – End all forms of malnutrition

Access to safe drinking water, hygienic food preparation environments, and improved sanitation infrastructure helps reduce exposure to contaminants that can cause foodborne and waterborne illnesses and interfere with nutritional well-being.

Target 2.4 – Ensure sustainable food production systems and implement resilient agricultural practices

The University's initiative to convert fallen leaves into organic bio-fertilizer demonstrates an effort to promote sustainable land management, improve soil quality, and establish a circular approach to organic resource utilization.

Although the reported interventions do not constitute a comprehensive university-wide food security or nutrition programme, they represent meaningful institutional contributions to the supporting systems required for a safe and sustainable food environment.

3. Sustainable Agriculture and Organic Resource Management: Moving Towards a Circular Campus

3.1 From Organic Waste Disposal to Resource Recovery

University campuses generate substantial quantities of organic waste through routine maintenance, landscaping, and the natural shedding of leaves from trees. How this material is managed has implications for air quality, soil health, and the sustainability of campus ecosystems.

Traditionally, the burning of accumulated dry leaves has been used as a means of clearing outdoor spaces. However, open biomass burning releases smoke and particulate matter while removing valuable organic material that could otherwise contribute to soil improvement.

During 2025, the University of Dhaka took steps to replace this practice with a more sustainable approach based on organic waste recovery and composting.

3.2 Launching the 'Stop Burning Fallen Leaves' Campaign

A significant institutional milestone was achieved on 11 December 2025, when the University launched the campaign titled **"Stop Burning Fallen Leaves" (Shorapata Projjalon Bondho Korun)** at the main campus mall.

The initiative was organized through collaboration among the University administration, the University of Dhaka Arboriculture Center, the Dhaka University Central Students' Union (DAKSU), the Green Future Foundation, and the Environment Senate.

The campaign was inaugurated by the Vice-Chancellor and established an explicit institutional prohibition on burning fallen leaves.

Beyond raising environmental awareness, the initiative introduced a practical alternative for managing organic biomass. Instead of treating dry leaves as disposable waste, the University encouraged their collection, processing, and conversion into organic bio-fertilizer.

This represents an important change in campus environmental management: organic materials generated through routine campus activities are increasingly being viewed as resources that can support the University's own green spaces.

3.3 Converting Fallen Leaves into Organic Bio-Fertilizer

Following the launch of the campaign, several residential halls implemented organic waste recovery activities.

On 11 December 2025, Kabi Jasim Uddin Hall organized a systematic leaf collection initiative involving hall administration, staff, and student representatives.

Dry leaves accumulated across the hall premises over the preceding year were collected, stored, and processed through aerobic decomposition to produce organic bio-fertilizer, locally known as *Reb Shar*.

The resulting fertilizer was subsequently used in the hall's gardens and campus landscaping activities.

Similarly, Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib Hall and Rokeya Hall formally adopted the leaf-burning prohibition and integrated their maintenance staff into the organic waste recovery initiative.

These activities demonstrate how a university-wide environmental policy can be translated into practical action through the participation of individual residential halls and their communities.

3.4 Environmental and Agricultural Significance

Converting fallen leaves into organic fertilizer provides several environmental and agricultural benefits.

When dry leaves are burned, organic carbon and other valuable nutrients are released or lost. In contrast, composting allows organic matter to decompose naturally and return nutrients to the soil.

The resulting bio-fertilizer can contribute to:

- Improving soil organic matter and overall soil quality.
- Returning essential plant nutrients to campus gardens.
- Supporting beneficial soil microorganisms.
- Improving soil structure and water retention.
- Reducing dependence on externally purchased fertilizers.
- Diverting organic waste from open burning.

The initiative also establishes a practical connection between campus landscaping and sustainable agricultural practices.

By using organic materials generated within the University to maintain its own green spaces, the institution demonstrates the potential of a small-scale circular resource management system.

Importantly, this initiative aligns with the broader principles of sustainable food production under SDG Target 2.4, particularly through soil improvement, organic resource recovery, and more responsible land management.

4. Food Preservation and Dining Infrastructure: Improving Access to Safe Food

4.1 Strengthening the University's Institutional Food Environment

For residential students, dining facilities are an important part of daily campus life. Ensuring access to safe and affordable meals requires appropriate kitchen infrastructure, clean food preparation surfaces, functioning cooking equipment, and suitable storage conditions.

Inadequate food storage can accelerate the deterioration of perishable ingredients, while poorly maintained kitchen surfaces and equipment can create hygiene risks.

During the year 2025, the University implemented several dining infrastructure improvements across its residential halls. These interventions focused on upgrading food preparation environments, improving storage facilities, and maintaining essential cooking equipment.

Three major residential dining facilities received notable infrastructure improvements: Bangamata Begum Fazilatunnesa Mujib Hall, Kabi Jasim Uddin Hall, and Amar Ekushey Hall.

4.2 Improving Dining and Kitchen Facilities

Bangamata Begum Fazilatunnesa Mujib Hall – July 2025

On 10 July 2025, the dining facility at Bangamata Begum Fazilatunnesa Mujib Hall underwent a series of physical and operational improvements.

The renovation included:

- Installation of new floor tiles.
- Deep mechanical cleaning and chemical restoration of existing mosaic surfaces.
- Repainting of interior walls.
- Appointment of new catering personnel.

These improvements were intended to create a cleaner dining environment and improve the overall conditions under which meals were prepared and served.

The involvement of new catering personnel also represented an operational component of the intervention, complementing the physical renovation of the dining facility.

Kabi Jasim Uddin Hall – September 2025

On 11 September 2025, the University undertook structural hygiene improvements at the Nimontron mess of Kabi Jasim Uddin Hall.

The food distribution and serving counter areas were upgraded using smooth, high-density concrete surfaces. This replaced previously unsealed surfaces with materials that are easier to clean and maintain.

The hall also repaired damaged gas cooking stoves to restore their proper functioning and improve cooking conditions.

These interventions addressed two important aspects of food safety: maintaining clean food-serving surfaces and ensuring that cooking equipment operates effectively.

Kabi Jasim Uddin Hall – December 2025

A more extensive renovation was completed on 18 December 2025 at the hall's canteen.

The project involved several structural and operational improvements:

- Replastering of interior walls and ceilings to address cracks and deteriorated surfaces.
- Installation of new floor tiles inside and outside the canteen.
- Interior and exterior painting and protective surface finishing.
- Repair and technical recalibration of four major commercial gas stoves.
- Removal of the partition wall between the canteen and adjacent laundry facility to expand dining space.

The hall also renovated its laundry facility and constructed a dedicated concrete water house to support clean water provision for laundry and sanitation.

By combining dining area renovation with improvements in cooking equipment and supporting facilities, the project represented a comprehensive effort to improve the residential food service environment.

4.3 Expanding Cold Storage and Food Preservation Capacity

Food preservation is particularly important in Bangladesh's climatic conditions, where high temperatures and humidity can accelerate the deterioration of perishable ingredients.

Refrigeration and deep-freezing facilities help maintain appropriate storage conditions for raw ingredients, reduce spoilage risks, and support more effective food inventory management.

During the reporting period, the University expanded cold storage capacity in several residential dining facilities.

Amar Ekushey Hall

On 18 September 2025, Amar Ekushey Hall purchased and installed a commercial 300-litre deep freezer in its Roshona dining hall.

The installation increased the hall's capacity to preserve perishable food ingredients and provided additional support for bulk food storage.

Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib Hall

On 13 November 2025, Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib Hall implemented a broader refrigeration improvement programme.

Five floor-level refrigerators were installed across the residential floors through the Hall Union initiative. An additional refrigerator was installed on the administrative floor.

The hall also installed a dedicated commercial refrigerator inside its dining facility to preserve raw ingredients before food preparation.

This intervention expanded cold storage access at both the residential and dining facility levels.

Taken together, the initiatives documented during 2025 included:

Cold storage improvement	Number
Commercial deep freezer	1
Floor-level residential refrigerators	6
Dedicated dining refrigerator	1
Total refrigeration and deep-freezing units	8

These investments support the University's efforts to improve food preservation and strengthen the operational reliability of residential dining services.

4.4 Why Food Preservation Infrastructure Matters

Appropriate food storage and kitchen infrastructure are essential for reducing food safety risks.

Refrigeration helps slow microbial growth and preserve the quality of perishable ingredients. Similarly, clean and properly maintained food preparation surfaces make routine cleaning and sanitation more effective.

Functional cooking equipment is also important because appropriate heat treatment helps reduce biological hazards associated with inadequately cooked food.

The University's investments in cold storage, kitchen repairs, and structural renovation therefore contribute to a more reliable food preparation environment.

These improvements are particularly important in high-density residential settings, where large numbers of students depend on shared dining facilities.

5. Water, Sanitation and Hygiene: Safeguarding the Food Supply Environment

5.1 Connecting Clean Water with Food Security

Food safety does not begin and end in the kitchen. The quality of water used for drinking, cooking, washing ingredients, and cleaning utensils is equally important.

Contaminated water can introduce harmful microorganisms into food preparation processes, undermining the benefits of otherwise hygienic kitchen facilities.

Recognizing this connection, the University undertook several water supply, storage, and filtration improvements during the reporting period.

These initiatives contributed to the objectives of SDG Targets 2.1 and 2.2 by strengthening the supporting infrastructure required for safe food preparation and consumption.

5.2 Repairing Water Supply and Storage Infrastructure

On 14 August 2025, Bangladesh-Kuwait Maitree Hall completed major maintenance work on its primary water supply infrastructure.

Engineering teams repaired incoming water supply pipelines and underground water reserve tanks. The work included sealing damaged sections of pipelines and addressing structural problems in the water storage facilities.

These repairs were intended to improve the reliability of the water supply system and reduce the risk of external contamination.

A further intervention took place at Kabi Jasim Uddin Hall on 9 October 2025.

The hall conducted a comprehensive water storage cleaning and sanitation programme covering its main underground reserve tank and overhead storage tanks.

The underground reservoir was drained, mechanically scrubbed, and chemically disinfected. Overhead tanks serving the North Block, South Block, hall canteen, and residential teachers' quarters were also cleaned and sanitized.

These activities reflect the importance of routine water infrastructure maintenance in maintaining a hygienic residential and dining environment.

5.3 Expanding Access to Purified Drinking Water

Alongside reservoir maintenance, the University improved point-of-use drinking water purification facilities.

On 9 October 2025, Kabi Jasim Uddin Hall carried out technical servicing of its existing student-accessible drinking water filtration units.

The maintenance activities included internal core backwashing and replacement of filter media to support the continued operation of the purification systems.

During the same period, Kabi Sufia Kamal Hall installed four heavy-duty pure drinking water filtration units across key residential buildings.

These installations expanded access to purified drinking water within student residential areas.

The initiatives are particularly relevant to food security because clean water is an essential requirement for safe drinking, cooking, washing food ingredients, and maintaining kitchen hygiene.

5.4 Improving Dining Environment Hygiene

Water quality and food safety are closely connected to the cleanliness of dining environments.

On 9 October 2025, Kabi Jasim Uddin Hall undertook additional cleaning and hygiene improvements in its mess and canteen facilities. Window curtains across the hall's mess and dining canteen were removed, laundered, disinfected, and reinstalled.

Bangladesh-Kuwait Maitree Hall also completed targeted deep-cleaning activities in its mess and canteen facilities. In addition, the hall conducted administrative consultation sessions focusing on catering hygiene and operational standards.

These activities demonstrate that maintaining food safety requires regular attention not only to kitchens and storage facilities but also to the wider dining environment.

5.5 The Role of WASH in Nutritional Well-being

Access to safe water and hygienic surroundings is essential for protecting public health.

Repeated exposure to contaminated food and water can contribute to gastrointestinal infections and other illnesses. Such conditions can interfere with the body's ability to absorb nutrients, even when sufficient food is available.

Consequently, maintaining clean water storage facilities, functional filtration systems, and hygienic food preparation environments contributes to the broader objective of improving nutritional well-being.

The University's WASH-related interventions therefore represent an important supporting component of its contribution to SDG 2.

However, the documented activities primarily demonstrate improvements in infrastructure and maintenance. Water quality testing results and reductions in waterborne illness have not been quantified in the available reporting data.

6. Consolidated Progress and Key Institutional Achievements

The University's activities during the year 2025 demonstrate progress across food preservation, dining infrastructure, water sanitation, and sustainable organic resource management.

The following table summarizes the principal documented achievements.

Area of intervention	Key progress during 2025
Sustainable organic waste management	University-wide Stop Burning Fallen Leaves campaign launched on 11 December 2025
Organic fertilizer production	Fallen leaves processed into Reb Shar at Kabi Jasim Uddin Hall
Institutional participation	Arboriculture Center, DAKSU, Green Future Foundation, Environment Senate, and residential halls involved

Dining infrastructure	Major renovations completed at Bangamata Begum Fazilatunnesa Mujib Hall, Kabi Jasim Uddin Hall, and Amar Ekushey Hall
Food preservation	One 300-litre commercial deep freezer installed
Refrigeration capacity	Seven additional refrigerators installed across residential and dining facilities
Cooking infrastructure	Repairs and technical recalibration of six major commercial kitchen stoves reported
Water infrastructure	Main water supply pipelines and underground water reservoirs repaired
Water sanitation	Underground and overhead water storage tanks cleaned and disinfected
Drinking water access	Four heavy-duty filtration units installed at Kabi Sufia Kamal Hall
Existing filtration facilities	Student-accessible filtration systems serviced and filter media replaced
Dining hygiene	Mess and canteen cleaning, surface upgrades, and curtain disinfection undertaken

The reported achievements represent selected institutional outputs during the reporting period. They should not be interpreted as evidence of measured reductions in hunger, malnutrition, foodborne illness, or food waste, for which separate outcome data would be required.

7. Institutional Impact and Contribution to Zero Hunger

The University's initiatives demonstrate several important ways in which a higher education institution can contribute to SDG 2 through its operational and environmental management practices.

7.1 Supporting Access to Safe and Reliable Food

The renovation of residential dining facilities and expansion of cold storage infrastructure contribute to improving the conditions under which food is stored, prepared, and served. These improvements are particularly relevant for students who depend on shared residential dining arrangements for their daily meals. By strengthening food preservation and kitchen infrastructure, the University supports a more reliable institutional food service environment.

7.2 Reducing Food Spoilage Risks

The installation of commercial refrigeration and deep-freezing equipment strengthens the University's capacity to preserve perishable ingredients. Appropriate storage arrangements can help reduce deterioration and wastage, improve inventory management, and support the availability of food ingredients for residential dining facilities. The potential financial benefit is also important, as reduced spoilage can help limit avoidable procurement losses.

7.3 Improving Food Safety and Public Health Protection

The renovation of food preparation surfaces, repair of cooking equipment, cleaning of dining areas, and improvement of water infrastructure collectively contribute to a safer food environment. These measures help address common operational risks associated with food handling, storage, preparation, and consumption in shared dining facilities.

The University's approach recognizes that food security requires not only access to food but also attention to the safety and quality of the food being consumed.

7.4 Strengthening the Relationship Between Water and Nutrition

The maintenance of water supply systems, cleaning of storage tanks, and expansion of drinking water filtration facilities support access to safer water within residential halls. These interventions are important because water quality influences both direct consumption and the hygiene of food preparation processes.

By treating water sanitation as an integral component of food safety, the University demonstrates a more comprehensive approach to student nutritional well-being.

7.5 Promoting Sustainable Land Management

The Stop Burning Fallen Leaves campaign demonstrates how environmental management practices can contribute to sustainable resource utilization. By converting collected organic biomass into bio-fertilizer, the University reduces dependence on open burning and returns organic nutrients to campus soil.

The initiative also provides a practical example of circular resource management, where materials generated through routine campus activities are reused to support the maintenance of the University's green spaces.

This approach strengthens the environmental foundation for sustainable land management and complements the objectives of SDG Target 2.4.

8. Conclusion

The University of Dhaka's progress towards SDG 2 during 2025 demonstrates an institutional effort to improve the systems that support food access, food safety, nutritional well-being, and sustainable environmental management.

Through improvements in residential dining facilities, expansion of refrigeration capacity, renovation of kitchen infrastructure, maintenance of water supply systems, and installation of drinking water filtration facilities, the University strengthened several essential components of its campus food environment.

The launch of the Stop Burning Fallen Leaves campaign represented an additional step towards sustainable resource management. By converting collected organic biomass into bio-fertilizer, the University demonstrated how routine campus operations can be aligned with environmental sustainability and soil improvement.

These initiatives highlight an important principle: addressing hunger within an urban university requires attention not only to food availability but also to the quality, safety, preservation, and sustainability of the systems through which food reaches students.

Although further progress is needed in measuring nutritional outcomes, food affordability, food waste reduction, and water quality, the initiatives documented during 2025 provide a meaningful foundation for strengthening the University's contribution to SDG 2.

Ultimately, the University of Dhaka's contribution to Zero Hunger lies in its efforts to create a campus environment where access to food is supported by safe preparation, reliable preservation, clean water, and responsible management of the natural resources that sustain the food system.