SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL

17

PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

UNIVERSITY OF DHAKA
Sustainability Progress Report 2025

SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals

1. Executive Summary

Partnerships are essential to achieving sustainable development. Universities increasingly depend on collaboration with governments, international academic institutions, research organizations, industries, development agencies, civil society organizations, and philanthropic networks to strengthen their institutional capacity and contribute to wider development priorities. Sustainable Development Goal 17 (SDG 17) recognizes this importance by emphasizing the role of multi-stakeholder partnerships, technology transfer, capacity building, knowledge sharing, and resource mobilization.

As one of Bangladesh's leading public universities, the University of Dhaka has an important role in building partnerships that connect academic knowledge with national development priorities and global sustainability challenges. Its contribution to SDG 17 involves more than formal institutional agreements. It also includes collaborative research, international academic exchange, industry engagement, public-sector cooperation, external funding, professional development, and partnerships with civil society.

The available institutional records for July–December 2025 demonstrate a broad range of partnership activities across these areas. During this period, the university expanded its international academic engagement through consultations and academic exchanges with universities and organizations in Australia, Canada, China, India, Italy, Japan, South Korea, the United Kingdom, and the United States. These engagements addressed areas such as artificial intelligence, biomedical research, environmental studies, climate resilience, language education, information science, and interdisciplinary research.

The university also strengthened cooperation with national public institutions and technical organizations. Notable examples included collaboration with the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) on structural safety assessments, engagement with the Sustainable and Renewable Energy Development Authority (SREDA) on renewable energy policy, and cooperation with the Bangladesh Maritime University on marine science and oceanographic research. A major resource-mobilization achievement was the approval of a BDT 244 crore grant from the Government of China for the construction of Bangladesh-China Maitree Hall, planned to accommodate 1,500 female students.

Industry and private-sector partnerships contributed to student development, research collaboration, and financial support. Initiatives included a professional communication certificate course, industry-academia engagement in pharmaceutical and material science research, corporate scholarships, alumni-funded financial assistance, and health awareness programmes for female residential students. The university also continued to engage with civil society and non-governmental organizations through programmes on democracy, social inclusion, anti-corruption, environmental sustainability, and volunteerism.

International research and knowledge-sharing activities further expanded the university's academic networks. These included an international conference involving participants from 18 countries, a multi-institutional research winter school involving 70 student researchers from 30 universities, international scientific seminars, and research grants and scholarships amounting to BDT 5.8 million for 18 scholars through the Darul Irfan Research Institute.

The university's international standing also improved during the reporting period. It entered the 801–1000 band in the Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2026 and ranked 52nd globally in the Times Higher Education Interdisciplinary Science Rankings 2026. These achievements provide evidence of the university's performance in areas including research, international outlook, and interdisciplinary collaboration, although rankings alone do not establish the direct impact of any individual partnership.

Overall, the documented activities demonstrate that the University of Dhaka's approach to SDG 17 extends across international cooperation, national development partnerships, private-sector engagement, research funding, and community collaboration. Sustaining these efforts will require moving beyond individual meetings and events towards long-term partnerships with measurable outcomes, shared research programmes, sustained funding, and institutionalized mechanisms for collaboration.

2. Institutional Approach and Alignment with SDG 17

SDG 17 focuses on strengthening the means of implementation and revitalizing global partnerships for sustainable development. For universities, this goal is particularly relevant because research, teaching, innovation, and institutional development increasingly depend on cooperation across organizational and national boundaries.

The University of Dhaka's partnership activities during 2025 reflect an approach built around several complementary dimensions:

- **International academic cooperation:** Building relationships with foreign universities, academic institutions, embassies, and international organizations to support research, teaching, academic mobility, and knowledge exchange.
- **Public-sector and inter-institutional collaboration:** Working with government ministries, public universities, regulatory agencies, and technical institutions to address national development needs and strengthen institutional capacity.
- **Industry-academia partnerships:** Connecting academic research and student development with private-sector expertise, professional requirements, technological innovation, and employment opportunities.
- **Civil society and NGO engagement:** Collaborating with non-governmental organizations, development partners, and community groups to promote civic participation, environmental sustainability, social inclusion, and ethical governance.
- **Research and knowledge networks:** Hosting international conferences, scientific seminars, interdisciplinary programmes, and collaborative research activities that connect local researchers with international academic communities.
- **Resource mobilization:** Securing external grants, corporate scholarships, alumni endowments, research fellowships, and philanthropic contributions to support education, research, and infrastructure development.

These activities are particularly relevant to SDG Targets 17.3, 17.6, 17.9, 17.14, 17.16, and 17.17. Together, they illustrate how the university can mobilize external knowledge, expertise, finance, and institutional support to advance its academic mission and contribute to sustainable development.

3. International Academic Partnerships and Global Cooperation

3.1 Expanding International Academic Networks

International cooperation enables universities to access new research methods, exchange academic expertise, improve teaching practices, and develop joint responses to global challenges. For the University of Dhaka, engagement with international institutions provides opportunities to connect its academic departments and research centres with a wider global knowledge network.

During the second half of 2025, the university undertook a series of bilateral discussions, academic visits, and knowledge-sharing activities with institutions across several regions.

On 10 July 2025, the Department of Islamic Studies organized an international guest lecture titled *"Islamic Psychology,"* featuring Prof. Dr. G. Hussein Rassool, Director of the Centre for Islamic Studies and Civilizations at Charles Sturt University, Australia, and Director of Islamic Psychology and Counselling at Al Balagh Academy, United Kingdom. The Vice-Chancellor attended as Chief Guest, and the engagement included discussions on developing specialized joint research frameworks.

On 17 July 2025, the Vice-Chancellor held bilateral discussions with Prof. Dr. Moses Naga of North Eastern Hill University, Meghalaya, India. The meeting established mutual understanding regarding a proposed formal Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) covering student, faculty, and researcher exchanges, alongside joint regional research programmes.

A further engagement took place on 14 August 2025, when the Vice-Chancellor met with the Vice-President of Peking University, China. Discussions covered cooperation in science, technology, environmental studies, language, and culture. The meeting established a roadmap for teacher, student, and cultural troupe exchanges under a proposed formal MoU.

The visit was accompanied by academic lectures at the Professor Abdul Matin Chowdhury Virtual Classroom. Prof. Wu Jiewei delivered a lecture on comparative labour mobility in the age of globalization, drawing on Bangladesh, Vietnam, and the Philippines. Prof. Dr. Wang Xu delivered a lecture on people-centred economic development and national security, focusing on China's experience and its relevance to Bangladesh.

The university also engaged with Kansai University, Japan, on 14 August 2025. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic) met with an Emeritus Professor to discuss joint research protocols and academic exchange visits. The visiting scholar subsequently delivered a lecture titled *"Learning Assessment in the Age of AI"* at the Institute of Education and Research.

These engagements indicate the university's interest in expanding academic cooperation beyond traditional subject areas. Topics such as artificial intelligence, labour mobility, environmental studies, and educational assessment provide opportunities for interdisciplinary learning and research.

3.2 Strengthening Cooperation with International Universities and Knowledge Institutions

The university continued its international engagement during December 2025 through academic visits and specialized lectures.

On 11 December, the Department of Information Science and Library Management hosted an international guest lecture titled *"Beyond the Library: The Future of LIS Careers?"* The lecture was delivered by Prof. Emily Drabinski, Professor and Chair at the City University of New York Graduate School of Information Studies and former President of the American Library Association. The session provided an opportunity to engage with international professional perspectives on the changing role of library and information science.

On 18 December, the Vice-Chancellor received courtesy calls from Dean Prof. Dr. Javed Mostafa of the University of Toronto, Canada, and Prof. Dr. Sam Oh of Sungkyunkwan University, South Korea. The visits included two technical presentations. Prof. Mostafa discussed artificial intelligence and machine-learning approaches for improving biomedicine and healthcare, while Prof. Oh presented strategies for developing beneficial AI and coexisting with artificial intelligence.

These engagements connected the university with international expertise in emerging technologies and their applications in healthcare, research, and society.

On the same date, the Vice-Chancellor consulted with Prof. Dr. Olaf Muralink of Central Queensland University, Australia. The discussion focused on developing joint research projects in coastal disaster management and early childhood education in Bangladesh. The proposed cooperation also included technical capacity-building workshops for early-career faculty members and students.

The university also engaged with the British Council on 18 December. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic) held executive consultations with Deputy Director Mariya Rehman and the Head of Education. The discussion focused on expanding joint research funding, co-publishing academic journals, facilitating student and faculty mobility, and organizing skill-development workshops in cooperation with UK universities.

These engagements demonstrate the university's efforts to connect its research and teaching priorities with international academic networks. They also identify potential areas for future cooperation, particularly in research funding, academic mobility, technology, and professional development. However, the available records describe several of these activities as consultations and proposed arrangements; their longer-term outcomes will depend on the development and implementation of formal collaborative programmes.

3.3 Diplomatic and Cultural Partnerships for Academic Development

Embassies and diplomatic missions can serve as important channels for developing academic cooperation, language education, cultural exchange, and international research relationships.

On 10 July 2025, representatives of the Pakistan High Commission, including Deputy High Commissioner Mohammad Wafeeq and Counsellor Kamran Dangal, met with the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic). Discussions focused on expanding joint higher education programmes, bilateral exchange visits, and opportunities for Pakistani diplomats to enrol in Bengali language diploma courses at the university's Institute of Modern Languages. The meeting also addressed the expansion of the Computer Lab at the Department of Urdu, which had received support from the High Commission.

On 18 September 2025, the Deputy Head of Mission of the Embassy of Italy in Dhaka met with the Vice-Chancellor to discuss expanding the Italian language programme at the Institute of Modern Languages. The proposed arrangements included recruiting native Italian language instructors and establishing joint research and educational partnerships with leading Italian universities.

These engagements demonstrate how diplomatic relationships can support internationalization at the institutional and departmental levels. They also create opportunities for language learning, cultural understanding, and academic mobility.

3.4 Overall Contribution of International Academic Cooperation

The international engagements undertaken during the reporting period covered a wide geographical and thematic range. Partnerships and consultations involved institutions from Australia, Canada, China, India, Italy, Japan, South Korea, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

Their collective significance lies in the range of knowledge and expertise made accessible to the university community. The activities addressed artificial intelligence, biomedical research, environmental management, climate resilience, language education, information science, and interdisciplinary research.

These engagements contribute to SDG Target 17.6 by promoting international cooperation in science, technology, and innovation. They also support Target 17.9 by creating opportunities for academic capacity building in a developing-country context.

The next stage should focus on converting consultations and proposed arrangements into sustained research collaborations, faculty and student mobility, joint publications, structured training programmes, and formal agreements with clearly defined implementation responsibilities.

4. Public-Sector, Government and Inter-Institutional Partnerships

4.1 Strengthening Cooperation with National Government Institutions

Universities contribute to national development not only through independent academic work but also by collaborating with public institutions and aligning research with national policy priorities.

On 15 July 2025, the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Dhaka held a high-level meeting with the Chief Adviser of the Interim Government at State Guest House Jamuna. The Vice-Chancellor presented reports on DUCSU election preparations, campus security, academic stabilization, and convocation planning. Discussions also addressed the need for expedited approval of major residential hall construction projects through the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC), as well as increased government budgetary allocations for scientific research.

The meeting reflected the university's engagement with national policy and public resource mobilization. It also demonstrated the importance of communication between public universities and national decision-making institutions in addressing infrastructure, research, and governance priorities.

4.2 Mobilizing International Grant Support for Student Infrastructure

A major example of international resource mobilization during 2025 was the foreign grant for the Bangladesh-China Maitree Hall construction project.

On 9 October 2025, the university reported formal approval of a BDT 244 crore grant from the Government of China for the construction of the proposed residential hall, which is planned to accommodate 1,500 female students. The project proposals had been processed through the Economic Relations Division (ERD) of Bangladesh.

On 18 December 2025, a Chinese technical delegation, accompanied by Chinese Ambassador Yao Wen and representatives of the University of Dhaka, including the Vice-Chancellor and Treasurer, conducted an on-site feasibility study near Jagannath Hall. The visit included technical inspection and discussion of spatial allocation and pre-construction engineering arrangements.

This partnership demonstrates how international development finance can support the expansion of public university infrastructure. The proposed hall is intended to address residential capacity needs for female students. The grant approval and feasibility study represent important project milestones, although they should not be interpreted as completion of the construction itself.

The project illustrates the contribution of international partnerships to SDG Target 17.3 through resource mobilization and Target 17.9 through support for institutional capacity and infrastructure development.

4.3 Technical Cooperation with BUET for Campus Safety

Inter-institutional technical partnerships are particularly important when universities face challenges that require specialized engineering knowledge and independent technical assessment.

Following regional seismic activity, the University of Dhaka collaborated with the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) to assess the structural safety of selected residential halls. The collaboration involved the university's Central Coordination Committee, chaired by the Treasurer, and a technical sub-committee comprising BUET experts.

The assessments, reported in December 2025, covered several residential facilities and informed repair and maintenance activities.

The documented progress included:

- **Haji Muhammad Mohsin Hall:** Structural repairs were completed in 112 of 175 rooms. Additional ferrocement roof repair work was underway, covering areas such as third-floor rooms, balcony drop-walls, parapet walls, the mosque, dining hall roof, and reading room ceiling.
- **Surya Sen Hall:** Structural repairs were completed in 96 of 141 rooms across the third, fourth, fifth, and sixth floors. Repairs were also completed in the canteen, ground-floor washrooms, and corridors.
- **Muktijoddha Ziaur Rahman Hall:** Repairs were completed in 32 of 121 rooms. The reported work included room repairs and painting in the South Block, repairs to fourth-floor rooms and balconies, washroom and reading room improvements, and roof ferrocement casting.
- **Shamsun Nahar Hall and Kabi Jasimuddin Hall:** Re-inspections were completed by BUET experts and the university's Chief Engineer to inform short-, medium-, and long-term structural maintenance plans.

This partnership demonstrates the practical value of cooperation between public universities. BUET's engineering expertise supported technical assessments and repair planning, while the University of Dhaka coordinated implementation within its residential infrastructure.

The collaboration is relevant not only to institutional safety but also to the broader role of universities in sharing specialized expertise to address public infrastructure challenges.

4.4 Collaboration with National Agencies on Energy and Environmental Policy

The University of Dhaka also engaged with national regulatory and technical agencies to connect academic research with public policy.

On 13 November 2025, the university's Energy Institute organized a national knowledge dissemination workshop titled *"EnDev's 16-Year Journey."* The programme featured the Chairman of the Sustainable and Renewable Energy Development Authority (SREDA) as Chief Guest. Academic researchers and public-sector energy representatives participated in discussions on renewable energy implementation and policy development.

The workshop created a platform for exchanging experiences from renewable energy initiatives and considering evidence-based approaches to national energy policy.

On 18 December 2025, the university also received national recognition from the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change for its environmental governance initiatives. The recognition was presented to the Vice-Chancellor by the Environment Adviser at the Department of Environment. The documented basis included the university's policy measures relating to fireworks, sky lanterns, sound pollution, and plastic waste.

Although this recognition primarily reflects the university's environmental initiatives, it also demonstrates the value of cooperation and policy alignment between a public university and national environmental authorities.

4.5 Research and Policy Collaboration under the UGC HEAT Project

The University Grants Commission's Higher Education Acceleration and Transformation (HEAT) Project provided another platform for connecting university research with national policy concerns.

On 11 December 2025, the Department of International Relations organized a national policy seminar titled *"A Study on the Foreign Policy of Bangladesh to Address the Challenges of Globalization in the Domains of National Security, Climate Change and Labor Migration."*

The seminar brought together university researchers and institutional leadership to discuss research-based foreign policy options. The subject matter connected academic inquiry with practical national concerns, including climate displacement, labour migration, and national security.

This activity illustrates the importance of public-sector-supported research programmes in strengthening the relationship between higher education institutions and national policy formulation.

4.6 Cooperation with Bangladesh Maritime University

On 10 July 2025, the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Dhaka held an inter-university planning meeting with the Vice-Chancellor of Bangladesh Maritime University.

The meeting established institutional agreement to explore cooperation in sharing scientific infrastructure, conducting joint marine science studies, and integrating oceanographic research programmes.

This engagement is particularly relevant to Bangladesh, where marine resources, coastal ecosystems, and maritime development are important national priorities. Collaboration between universities with

complementary expertise can strengthen research capacity and improve access to specialized scientific infrastructure.

The proposed cooperation provides a foundation for future joint studies and academic programmes. Its longer-term contribution will depend on the development of specific research projects, shared facilities, and implementation arrangements.

4.7 Cooperation with Fire Service and Civil Defense

Public-sector partnerships also contributed to campus emergency preparedness.

On 9 October 2025, the Fire Service and Civil Defense Department conducted practical fire safety training and emergency response exercises at the Faculty of Social Sciences. The activities included fire suppression exercises, rescue procedures, and building evacuation drills for university officers and staff.

This collaboration demonstrates the value of working with specialized public agencies to improve institutional readiness. It also creates opportunities for the university to strengthen safety practices through professional guidance and practical training.

5. Industry-Academia Partnerships and Private-Sector Engagement

5.1 Connecting Higher Education with Industry Skills and Employment Needs

Partnerships with industry can help universities respond to changing labour market requirements, strengthen graduate employability, and ensure that academic programmes remain relevant to professional practice.

On 13 November 2025, the Industry Collaboration and Employment Committee (ICEC), working jointly with the Institutional Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) and the Student Promotion and Support Unit (SPSU), launched a specialized certificate course titled *"Effective Professional Communication."* The Vice-Chancellor formally inaugurated the programme on 20 November 2025.

The initial cohort comprised 50 fourth-year undergraduate and Master's students from different departments.

The course was designed to address professional communication and workplace skill requirements. Its curriculum covered:

- Professional business writing;
- CV and cover letter preparation;
- Executive presentation delivery;
- Digital communication practices;
- Group problem-solving; and
- Adaptability in corporate workplaces.

This initiative represents an institutional effort to connect academic learning with practical professional competencies. By involving multiple university units, it also demonstrates the importance of coordination within the university when developing programmes in response to external labour market needs.

5.2 Promoting Research Collaboration in Healthcare and Material Science

Industry-academia collaboration is particularly important in research-intensive sectors where scientific knowledge must be connected with industrial processes, testing facilities, and commercial applications.

On 18 September 2025, the Faculty of Pharmacy and the Faculty of Engineering and Technology organized a national symposium titled *"Strengthening Industry-Academia Partnership in Healthcare and Material Science."* The programme involved leading domestic pharmaceutical firms.

The symposium focused on establishing operational frameworks for joint industrial research, specialized pharmaceutical material formulation, and commercial product testing.

The engagement created a platform for university researchers and pharmaceutical industry representatives to identify areas of shared interest. It also reflected the potential for interdisciplinary collaboration between pharmacy and engineering in addressing research and innovation needs.

The longer-term value of this initiative will depend on whether the discussions lead to funded research projects, joint laboratories, technical testing arrangements, patents, or other documented outputs.

5.3 Mobilizing Corporate Support for Student Scholarships

Private-sector financial support can help improve access to higher education by reducing financial barriers for students and providing resources for academic continuity.

On 9 October 2025, Sumitomo Corporation Asia & Oceania Pvt. Ltd. announced the continuation of its scholarship programme for ten regular undergraduate students at the University of Dhaka from the 2022–2023 session.

The programme requires recipients to have achieved a minimum GPA of 4.80 in their Secondary School Certificate and Higher Secondary Certificate examinations, excluding the fourth subject. It provides renewable financial support for three subsequent academic years, subject to satisfactory academic performance.

This corporate scholarship arrangement demonstrates how private-sector resources can contribute to student support and educational access. Its multi-year structure is particularly relevant because sustained assistance can help students plan for the continuation of their studies.

5.4 Alumni-Led Philanthropy and Educational Support

Alumni networks are another important source of institutional support. Former students and graduates can contribute to their university through scholarships, research funding, endowments, mentorship, and professional networks.

On 14 August 2025, the Department of Law Alumni, funded by Alhaj Advocate Md. Shah Alam, handed over the *Advocate Muhammad Shah Alam Law Scholarship*. Under the programme, 50 selected underprivileged and high-achieving first-year LL.B. students each received a one-time grant of BDT 10,000.

The grants were handed over by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic) to support students' educational expenses.

This initiative demonstrates the contribution of alumni philanthropy to educational access. It also highlights the potential of departmental alumni networks to mobilize resources for students who may face financial challenges.

5.5 Corporate Partnerships for Student Health and Well-being

Partnerships with private healthcare providers can complement university services by expanding access to preventive health information and awareness activities.

During 2025, Ad-din Mother Care Limited partnered with the university to sponsor health awareness, preventive care, and wellness programmes for female residential students.

The activities were held at Bangamata Begum Fazilatunnesa Mujib Hall on 10 July and Kavi Sufia Kamal Hall on 18 September.

These programmes demonstrate how corporate partnerships can contribute to student well-being beyond traditional academic activities. They also provide an example of cooperation between university residential administrations and external healthcare providers.

5.6 Developing Multilateral Scientific and Industrial Networks

On 9 October 2025, the Vice-Chancellor met with the Head of the Science and Technology Department of the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO). The discussions focused on plans to establish an ICESCO Chair at the University of Dhaka.

The proposed initiative was intended to support regional scientific, industrial, and technological networking.

The consultation reflects the university's interest in developing institutional platforms that can connect researchers and professionals across countries and disciplines. The proposed Chair could provide a framework for future cooperation, although its establishment and operational activities would require subsequent implementation.

6. Partnerships with NGOs, Civil Society and Community Organizations

6.1 Supporting Democratic Participation and Civic Education

Partnerships with civil society organizations can strengthen the university's role as a platform for public dialogue, civic education, and democratic engagement.

On 17 July 2025, the DU Applied Democracy Lab partnered with International IDEA under the Students of Youth Democracy Academy programme to organize a special lecture titled *"Democracy and Constitutional Reform."* The programme engaged 90 student leaders representing 25 academic departments.

The partnership provided an opportunity to connect university-based civic education with the expertise of an international organization working on democracy and institutional development.

The initiative illustrates how collaboration with civil society and international organizations can strengthen student understanding of governance and encourage informed participation in public affairs.

6.2 Cooperation with JICA on Technical Capacity Building

On 17 July 2025, the Vice-Chancellor and Treasurer held technical consultations with a delegation from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

The discussions focused on designing a multidisciplinary technical capacity-building project for young faculty members and students. The proposed areas included:

- Artificial intelligence;
- Renewable energy;
- Financial technology;
- Environmental management; and
- Science and technology.

The consultation identified areas in which international development cooperation could support the university's technical and research capabilities.

The proposed initiative is relevant to SDG Target 17.9, which emphasizes capacity building, particularly in developing countries. Its impact will depend on the development of a formal project framework, the mobilization of resources, and the delivery of the proposed training and technical activities.

6.3 Promoting Social Inclusion through Debate and Youth Advocacy

On 9 October 2025, ActionAid Bangladesh and the Dhaka University Debating Society jointly organized the two-day ActionAid-DUDS Inter-University Debate Festival at the Teacher-Student Centre.

The festival was organized around the theme *"Proposing Policies for Social Inclusivity."* It brought together debaters from universities across Bangladesh to develop and present policy proposals relating to social and economic inclusion.

The initiative demonstrates how partnerships between civil society organizations and university-based student groups can provide opportunities for youth participation in policy discussions.

By encouraging students to formulate evidence-based proposals, the programme connected academic and extracurricular activities with broader social development concerns.

6.4 Recognizing Volunteerism and Community Contribution

On 11 December 2025, the Institute of Disaster Management and Vulnerability Studies (IDMVS) partnered with Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) Bangladesh to host the International Volunteer Day Convention at the Nawab Ali Chowdhury Senate Bhaban.

Organized under the theme *"Every Contribution Matters,"* the convention brought attention to the role of volunteerism and collective action in addressing development challenges.

The partnership reflected the importance of cooperation between universities and international development organizations in promoting community engagement and volunteer participation.

It also provided an opportunity to recognize the contribution of individuals and organizations working towards social and sustainable development.

6.5 Collaborating on Environmental Sustainability and Campus Action

Partnerships with local environmental organizations can help universities translate sustainability principles into practical campus activities.

On 11 December 2025, the DU Arboriculture Center, DUCSU, Green Future Foundation, and Poribesh Sangsad jointly organized the *"Stop Burning Fallen Leaves"* campaign at Mall Kallyan Chattar.

The campaign focused on reducing air pollution and promoting improved campus waste management. Residential participation included Kabi Jasimuddin Hall, Bangamata Begum Fazilatunnesa Mujib Hall, and Rokeya Hall.

A notable example of practical implementation was the work undertaken by Kabi Jasimuddin Hall, which collected and preserved fallen leaf biomass and converted it into organic fertilizer for campus gardens instead of burning it.

This initiative demonstrates how cooperation between university bodies, student representatives, and environmental organizations can turn public awareness into practical environmental action.

6.6 Strengthening Anti-Corruption Awareness through Civil Society Engagement

On 11 December 2025, Transparency International Bangladesh partnered with the Faculty of Fine Arts to organize the Anti-Corruption Cartoon Competition, Awards Ceremony, and Exhibition 2025 at Bokultala and Zainul Gallery.

The programme used visual art to engage students and the wider university community in discussions on corruption, institutional transparency, and ethical governance.

The partnership demonstrates the potential of civil society organizations and academic departments to use creative and educational platforms to promote public awareness of governance issues.

6.7 Overall Contribution of Civil Society Partnerships

The university's engagement with International IDEA, JICA, ActionAid Bangladesh, VSO Bangladesh, Green Future Foundation, Poribesh Sangsad, and Transparency International Bangladesh demonstrates the diversity of its civil society partnerships.

These collaborations addressed democracy, technical capacity building, social inclusion, volunteerism, environmental management, and anti-corruption awareness.

They also demonstrate that partnerships need not be limited to formal institutional agreements. Joint programmes, public campaigns, student engagement, and knowledge-sharing activities can also contribute to the implementation of SDG 17.

7. International Knowledge Sharing, Research Networks and Cultural Exchange

7.1 Hosting International Cultural Exchange and Knowledge-Sharing Programmes

Universities contribute to international cooperation not only through scientific research but also through cultural exchange and the sharing of artistic and intellectual traditions.

On 10 July 2025, Dhaka University Mime Action organized the three-day 6th International Mime Festival at the Teacher-Student Centre. The festival brought together international mime artists from Denmark, South Korea, Turkey, and India alongside Bangladeshi performance groups.

The programme included public performances, technical workshops, poster displays, mime competitions, and the release of the festival publication *Naibashabda*.

The festival provided a platform for international artistic exchange and cultural interaction. It also demonstrated how university-based cultural organizations can contribute to global cooperation through creative and non-formal educational activities.

7.2 Advancing Scientific Cooperation and Research Awareness

On 18 September 2025, the Department of Microbiology and the Bangladesh Society of Microbiologists jointly organized International Microorganism Day 2025. The programme featured the Executive Director of icddr,b as a key speaker.

The seminar aimed to promote public awareness of microbiological research and global biosecurity.

The involvement of a national scientific society and a leading research institution strengthened the connection between university-based education and the wider scientific community. Such engagement can support knowledge exchange and raise awareness of research issues with implications for public health and global development.

7.3 Building International Research Networks in Humanities and Social Sciences

On 13 November 2025, the Department of Urdu hosted a two-day international conference titled *"Philosophy of Awakening in Iqbal and Nazrul"* at the Senate Bhaban.

The conference brought together academic delegates from 18 countries and featured 18 specialized sessions. A total of 133 research papers were presented on philosophy, literature, and social awakening.

The event demonstrated the university's capacity to convene international academic networks in the humanities. It also provided a platform for scholars from different countries to exchange research findings and perspectives on shared intellectual traditions.

The conference illustrates that international research cooperation is not limited to science and technology. The humanities and social sciences also contribute to global knowledge exchange, cultural understanding, and interdisciplinary dialogue.

7.4 Mobilizing Philanthropic Research Funding

Research funding is a central component of SDG 17 because strong research institutions require sustained financial resources and opportunities for researchers at different academic levels.

On 13 November 2025, the Darul Irfan Research Institute (DIRI), in collaboration with the Department of World Religions and Culture, awarded BDT 5,800,000 in research grants and scholarships to 18 scholars.

The endowment included the Syed Delawar Hossain Maizbhandari Memorial Scholarship and the Syed Emdadul Haq Maizbhandari Research Fellowship.

The support was distributed across different levels of academic research:

- Two PhD researchers;
- One MPhil researcher;
- Two MA research monograph students; and
- Thirteen undergraduate scholars.

This initiative demonstrates the role of philanthropic and research-oriented organizations in supporting academic work. The funding also provides opportunities for researchers at different stages of their academic careers, including undergraduate students.

The initiative is particularly relevant to SDG Target 17.3, which emphasizes mobilizing additional financial resources for developing countries, and Target 17.9, which focuses on capacity building.

7.5 Promoting Inter-University Research Capacity through International Winter School

On 11 December 2025, the Bangladesh Institute of Islamic Thought (BIIT), the Department of World Religions and Culture at the University of Dhaka, the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT), USA, and the Fairfax Institute, USA, jointly organized a four-day international Winter School programme at the university.

The programme brought together 70 selected student researchers from 30 public and private universities across Bangladesh. It focused on interdisciplinary research training and contemporary global issues.

The initiative created a shared learning platform across institutional boundaries and connected students with international research organizations.

Its significance lies in the opportunity to strengthen research capabilities among students from different universities, encourage interdisciplinary thinking, and build networks among emerging researchers.

7.6 Supporting International Humanitarian Cooperation

International partnerships also extend to humanitarian concerns. The University of Dhaka's alumni and academic networks participated in an initiative to mobilize financial support for children affected by the conflict in Gaza, Palestine.

On 13 November 2025, the Master of Professional Banking Alumni Association of the Department of Banking and Insurance raised financial relief funds for war-affected children. Under the supervision of the University Treasurer, alumni representatives handed over the relief funds to the Palestinian Ambassador at the Embassy of Palestine in Dhaka.

This activity demonstrated the capacity of university-linked alumni networks to mobilize resources for humanitarian purposes and engage with international partners.

It also reflects the wider role of universities in promoting global citizenship, solidarity, and cooperation in response to humanitarian challenges.

8. International Institutional Recognition and Research Performance

8.1 Improvement in the Times Higher Education World University Rankings

The University of Dhaka's international institutional standing improved during the reporting period.

On 9 October 2025, the Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings 2026 were published. The University of Dhaka entered the global 801–1000 performance band, improving from its previous position in the 1001–1200 band.

The university maintained its position as the joint top-ranked university in Bangladesh among the 3,118 institutions evaluated globally.

The ranking assessed institutional performance across five core areas:

- Teaching;
- Research environment;
- Research quality;
- International outlook; and
- Industry collaboration.

The improvement provides an international benchmark of the university's performance across teaching, research, international engagement, and industry-related activities.

8.2 Strong Performance in the Times Higher Education Interdisciplinary Science Rankings

A further milestone was achieved in the Times Higher Education Interdisciplinary Science Rankings 2026, published on 20 November 2025. The University of Dhaka ranked 52nd globally among 911 universities across 94 countries. It also secured the first position in South Asia and ranked first among the 12 participating Bangladeshi public and private universities included in the assessment.

The ranking focused on interdisciplinary scientific integration, research funding, and collaborative research infrastructure. This result provides evidence of the university's international performance in interdisciplinary science. It also highlights the importance of research collaboration and institutional capacity in supporting cross-disciplinary scientific work.

8.3 Significance for the University's Partnership Strategy

These ranking achievements strengthen the university's international profile and provide useful external benchmarks for evaluating institutional performance.

A stronger international standing may help the university attract academic partners, participate in competitive research opportunities, and strengthen its visibility among international research and development networks.

However, rankings should be interpreted as indicators of institutional performance rather than direct measures of the impact of specific partnerships. Demonstrating the contribution of collaboration will require additional evidence, such as joint publications, externally funded research projects, international mobility, research infrastructure development, and measurable collaborative outputs.

9. Summary of Key SDG 17 Initiatives in 2025

The following table provides a consolidated overview of the principal partnership and resource-mobilization activities documented during the reporting period.

Partnership category	Key initiative	Documented contribution
International academic cooperation	Engagement with Charles Sturt University and Al Balagh Academy	Guest lecture on Islamic Psychology and discussion of joint research frameworks
Regional university partnership	North Eastern Hill University, India	Consensus to pursue an MoU covering academic and researcher exchanges
International university partnership	Peking University, China	Cooperation roadmap and specialized academic lectures
International academic exchange	Kansai University, Japan	Consultation on research and academic exchange; lecture on AI and learning assessment
International academic cooperation	City University of New York	Guest lecture on future careers in library and information science
International research cooperation	University of Toronto and Sungkyunkwan University	Technical presentations on biomedical AI and beneficial AI
Research and capacity building	Central Queensland University	Proposed joint research and capacity-building workshops
Internationalization	British Council	Discussion of joint research funding, co-publishing, and academic mobility
Diplomatic cooperation	Pakistan High Commission	Discussions on academic exchange, Bengali language training, and IT infrastructure

Language and academic partnership	Embassy of Italy	Expansion of Italian language programmes and proposed academic partnerships
Public-sector cooperation	Interim Government of Bangladesh	Discussion of university infrastructure, research funding, and institutional priorities
International development finance	Government of China and ERD	Approval of BDT 244 crore grant for a proposed 1,500-capacity female student hall
Technical institutional partnership	BUET	Structural assessments and support for residential hall repair planning
Energy-sector partnership	SREDA	Knowledge-sharing workshop on renewable energy implementation and policy
Higher education policy research	UGC HEAT Project	Research-based policy seminar on globalization challenges
Inter-university research	Bangladesh Maritime University	Agreement to explore shared research infrastructure and marine science cooperation
Public safety cooperation	Fire Service and Civil Defence	Fire safety training and emergency response exercises
Industry-academia cooperation	Pharmaceutical and material science symposium	Framework discussions on joint research and product testing
Corporate student support	Sumitomo Corporation scholarship programme	Continuing scholarship support for 10 undergraduate students
Alumni philanthropy	Advocate Muhammad Shah Alam Law Scholarship	BDT 10,000 grants for 50 underprivileged and high-achieving students
Corporate health partnership	Ad-din Mother Care Limited	Health awareness and preventive care programmes in female residential halls
Professional development	Effective Professional Communication course	Initial cohort of 50 undergraduate and Master's students
Multilateral research networking	ICESCO Chair consultation	Discussion of a proposed scientific and technological networking platform
Democracy and civic education	International IDEA and DU Applied Democracy Lab	Lecture involving 90 student leaders from 25 departments

Technical capacity building	JICA	Consultation on a proposed multidisciplinary capacity-building project
Youth policy engagement	ActionAid Bangladesh and DUDS	Inter-university debate festival on social inclusion
Volunteerism	VSO Bangladesh and IDMVS	International Volunteer Day Convention
Environmental cooperation	Green Future Foundation, Poribesh Sangsad and DU Arboriculture Center	Joint campaign on fallen-leaf management and organic fertilizer
Anti-corruption advocacy	Transparency International Bangladesh	Anti-corruption cartoon competition and exhibition
International scientific cooperation	Bangladesh Society of Microbiologists and icddr,b	Scientific seminar on microbiology and biosecurity
International humanities research	Iqbal and Nazrul Conference	133 research papers across 18 sessions, with delegates from 18 countries
Research philanthropy	Darul Irfan Research Institute	BDT 5.8 million in grants and scholarships for 18 scholars
Inter-university research capacity	BIIT, IIIT and Fairfax Institute Winter School	Four-day programme for 70 student researchers from 30 universities
Humanitarian cooperation	Master of Professional Banking Alumni Association and Embassy of Palestine	Financial relief mobilized for children affected by the Gaza conflict
International institutional benchmarking	THE World University Rankings 2026	University of Dhaka placed in the 801–1000 global band
Interdisciplinary research benchmarking	THE Interdisciplinary Science Rankings 2026	52nd globally and first in South Asia

10. Conclusion

The University of Dhaka's documented partnership activities during 2025 demonstrate its growing engagement with international universities, national government institutions, technical agencies, private-sector organizations, civil society groups, and philanthropic networks.

The period was marked by international academic consultations, collaborative research and knowledge-sharing programmes, public-sector technical cooperation, industry-academia initiatives, external scholarship and research funding, and community-based partnerships. The approval of a BDT 244 crore grant for the proposed Bangladesh-China Maitree Hall, the BDT 5.8 million research endowment through DIRI, the professional development programme for students, and the collaboration with BUET on residential hall safety illustrate the different ways partnerships can contribute to institutional development.

The university's improved performance in international rankings further reflects its standing in areas relevant to research, international outlook, and interdisciplinary science. These achievements provide a useful foundation for strengthening its global academic relationships.

Nevertheless, the long-term value of partnerships depends on more than the number of engagements or agreements. Sustainable collaboration requires clear objectives, shared responsibilities, reliable financing, implementation mechanisms, and measurable results.

By strengthening partnership management, expanding joint research, improving external resource mobilization, and systematically evaluating collaborative outcomes, the University of Dhaka can further advance its contribution to SDG 17 and reinforce its role as an internationally connected public university working towards sustainable development.