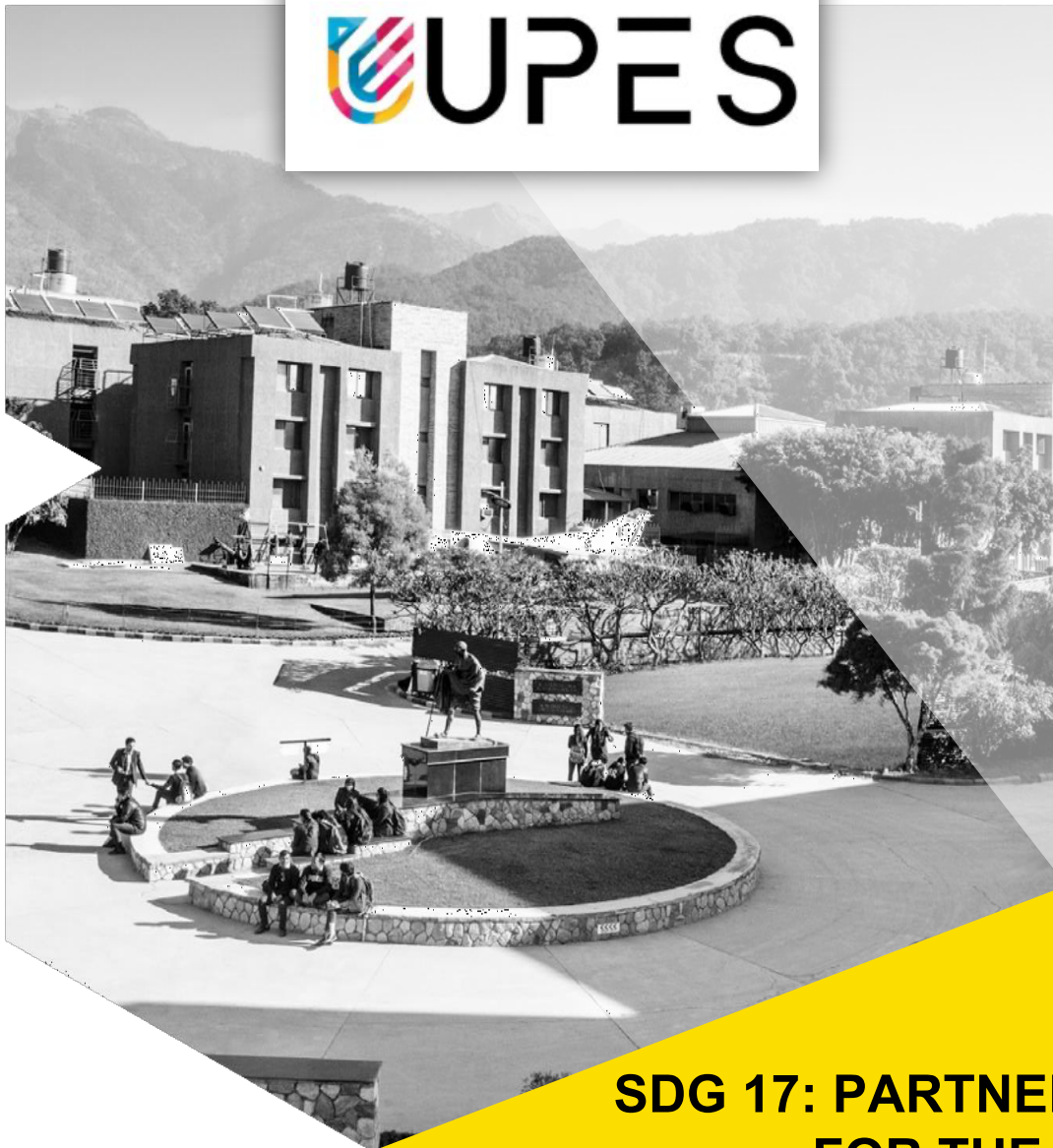




# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



## SDG 17: PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

2025

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## 17.2.5 Does your university as a body collaborate with NGOs and/or businesses to tackle the SDGs through: student volunteering programs, research programs or development of educational resources?

### UPES Collaboration with NGOs and Businesses to Advance the SDGs

**UPES (University of Petroleum and Energy Studies)** demonstrates a strong commitment to Sustainable Development Goal 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) by actively collaborating with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), industry partners, and other institutions. In line with **Times Higher Education (THE) Impact Rankings** criteria for SDG 17, the following report evaluates how UPES engages in **student volunteering programs, research initiatives, and development of educational resources** through such partnerships.

Evidence from official UPES sources and third-party documentation shows that these collaborations not only mobilize resources and expertise but also yield tangible outcomes (e.g. trained students, research outputs, community benefits) that directly advance various SDGs. Key examples, metrics, and case studies are outlined below, illustrating UPES's role in fostering multi-sector partnerships for sustainable development.

### Student Volunteering Programs with NGOs and Industry

UPES has institutionalized student volunteerism by partnering with numerous social sector organizations. These programs immerse students in community service projects that address real-world challenges, thereby contributing to SDGs while building student skills and empathy. Notable collaborations and their impact include:

#### Srijan Social Internship Program (1000+ NGO Partnerships)

UPES has signed MoUs with over **1,000 NGOs** to facilitate “Srijan” social internships for first-year studentsupes.ac.in. Through this program, students work with grassroots NGOs across India on issues like education, healthcare, livelihood and environment. In the **2022–23** academic year alone, **3,090 students** completed internships at approximately **770 NGOs**, and since inception about **9,100 students** have participated – contributing an estimated **25.22 crore (252 million) man-hours** of service to community development projectsupes.ac.in. These extensive volunteer placements (averaging dozens of hours per student) tackle local SDG challenges (e.g. teaching in rural schools for **SDG 4**, assisting in livelihood projects for **SDG 1** and **8**). The internships also cultivate social leadership in students, aligning with SDG 17's call for multi-sector partnerships in action.

## Community Outreach Events (Daan Utsav – “Joy of Giving” Fair)

Beyond formal internships, UPES students engage in volunteer-led events in collaboration with NGOs. For example, in October 2021 the UPES Social Internship Team (under the Career Services Dept.) partnered with several **Dehradun-based NGOs** to host a two-day “*Joy of Giving*” Diwali fair on campus [1]. NGOs exhibited handicrafts, candles and other products made by orphaned children, marginalized women and local artisans, while students and faculty helped organize and promote the fair [1]. The response from the campus community was overwhelming, with robust sales whose **profits were channeled to the social causes** of the participating NGOs [1]. This partnership event provided a platform for small NGOs and disadvantaged groups to showcase their work, directly supporting **decent work and economic growth (SDG 8)** and **reduced inequalities (SDG 10)**. As one student volunteer noted, the initiative “*help[ed] less privileged people and small-scale businesses by promoting their work... UPES gave a wonderful platform for showcasing their work.*” [1]. Such collaborative outreach imbues students with a spirit of civic engagement while delivering material benefits to vulnerable communities.

## Health and Hygiene Outreach (Women’s Health Initiative)

UPES also collaborates with social enterprises to address community health needs through volunteer efforts. Notably, the university funded an NGO **DivIn Pro** – a women-led impact organization – to implement a project aimed at **eliminating “period poverty”** in local underprivileged communities [1]. As part of this initiative, UPES volunteers and health workers distribute **1,200 reusable menstrual cups** to women (including university support staff and women in nearby villages) and conduct educational sessions on safe menstrual hygiene practices [1]. This partnership empowers women with a sustainable health solution (each menstrual cup can last up to 10 years), fulfilling basic needs for sanitary protection and reducing menstrual waste (supporting **Good Health & Wellbeing, SDG 3; Gender Equality, SDG 5; and Responsible Consumption, SDG 12**) [1]. Training workshops and a 90-day follow-up support program accompany the distribution to ensure effective usage and behavior change [1]. By collaborating with an NGO on this volunteer-driven project, UPES addresses a critical social issue in line with the SDGs, while students and staff directly engage in improving community wellbeing.

In addition to the above, UPES’s status as a National Service Scheme (NSS) **Nodal Centre** (for the state of Uttarakhand) further expands its volunteer network. Since 2018, UPES has coordinated NSS activities with **250 government-supported student volunteers** (and additional self-financed volunteers), organizing blood donation camps, road safety drives, village clean-ups, primary school teaching, tree plantations and more [1]. This NSS partnership with government bodies exemplifies the “**partnerships for the goals**” approach: it connects the university, public sector, and student society for volunteer programs addressing a range of SDGs (from **health to environment**). Overall, through large-scale NGO collaborations, community events, and national service schemes, UPES leverages student volunteerism as a powerful vehicle to advance sustainable development objectives in its region [2] [1].

## Collaborative Research Initiatives for Sustainable Development

UPES actively engages in collaborative research and innovation projects with both industry and non-profit partners, focusing on sustainability challenges. These research partnerships bring together academic expertise and external knowledge to drive progress on SDGs such as clean energy, climate action, and innovation (SDGs 7, 13, 9, etc.). Key initiatives and outcomes include:

### RISE Centre for Sustainability & ESG Research (UPES–Aspire Impact Partnership)

In 2024, UPES launched the **RISE Centre** (Research Initiative for Sustainable Energy) in partnership with **Aspire Impact**, a social enterprise specializing in impact leadership [3]. This center is dedicated to **sustainability and ESG (Environmental, Social, Governance) impact research**, serving as a hub for studies on climate change, renewable energy, and sustainable development solutions [3]. In collaboration with Aspire Impact and **Mahindra University**, the RISE Centre also introduced an executive education program called the *“ESG, Sustainability, and Impact Specialist Programme (ISP)”* in late 2024 [3]. The ISP program, delivered across UPES (Dehradun) and Mahindra University (Hyderabad) campuses, comprises 20 thematic sessions and 50+ case studies on global sustainability issues, all co-developed by industry experts [3]. Aimed at training mid- and senior-level professionals as future “Chief Impact Officers,” this program exemplifies how UPES’s research collaboration is building human capacity to tackle SDGs at leadership levels [3]. The RISE Centre thus operates at the nexus of **academic research and practical training**, leveraging partnerships to drive innovation in ESG and to disseminate knowledge that directly contributes to SDG targets (for example, improving climate leadership aligns with **Climate Action, SDG 13**).

### Industry R&D Collaboration – Organic Recycling Systems (ORS) MoU

UPES has forged research partnerships with companies to co-develop green technologies. A notable example is the **Memorandum of Understanding signed in Feb 2024 between UPES and Organic Recycling Systems Ltd.**, a waste-to-energy technology company. This MoU establishes a *“groundbreaking partnership focusing on joint research and collaboration in the realms of material science, sustainability, engineering, and renewable energy.”* [4]. The alliance is geared toward developing innovative solutions for waste management and clean energy, leveraging ORS’s industrial expertise and UPES’s research capabilities to address complex environmental challenges [5]. Key areas of cooperation under this partnership include **joint R&D projects, dissertation opportunities for UPES students at ORS**, co-organizing seminars/conferences, **joint publications**, and student internship placements with the company [5]. By pooling academic and industry resources, UPES and ORS aim to pioneer advancements in green technology (such as improved biomethanation processes or sustainable materials), contributing to **Affordable & Clean Energy (SDG 7)** and **Industry, Innovation & Infrastructure (SDG 9)**. This collaboration illustrates how UPES directly aligns its research with sustainable development needs – creating a pipeline for lab-to-market solutions and skilled graduates in the environmental sector [5].

## Research with International and Governmental Agencies

UPES researchers also contribute to global sustainability efforts through partnerships with international organizations. For instance, **UPES has worked with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** on clean energy initiatives – **research by UPES has fed into UNDP’s clean energy projects**, and the university has conducted capacity-building programs and social impact assessments in the field of renewable energy [6]. These engagements support policy implementation and technology adoption for clean energy access, directly furthering **SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy)** on an international scale. Domestically, UPES has collaborated with government-backed bodies like the **Power Sector Skill Council (PSSC)** (promoted by India’s Ministry of Power and Renewable Energy) to integrate research with skill development. The MoU with PSSC provides a framework for **“designing, developing and conducting consultative policy dialogue and business research”** in the power and renewable energy domain, alongside faculty training and student research opportunities [7].

Such collaborations ensure UPES’s research output is translated into practical impact – e.g. informing energy policy, enhancing technical training, and aligning academic projects with national sustainable development priorities. Furthermore, interdisciplinary research projects at UPES have yielded sustainable product innovations (often in partnership with industries or local communities), such as **developing value-added products from bamboo and textile waste, designing electric vehicles for eco-tourism, and prototyping solar-powered devices** [6]. Many of these projects address multiple SDGs (for example, converting waste to products touches **SDG 12: Responsible Consumption & Production**, and solar innovations relate to **SDG 7** and **SDG 13**).

Through these research partnerships, UPES exemplifies the **“knowledge-sharing and cooperation”** ethos of **SDG 17**. The university not only expands its research capabilities by working with NGOs, industry, and government, but also ensures that the resulting knowledge and technologies directly support sustainable development outcomes. Metrics of engagement include the establishment of dedicated centers (like RISE), joint programs launched, MoUs signed (with at least **one major industry MoU in 2024** focusing on sustainability [4]), and the number of collaborative projects or student researchers involved (e.g. ORS offers internships and dissertation slots to UPES students under its partnership [5]).

These cooperative efforts have started yielding tangible outputs – for example, the **RISE ISP program graduated its first cohort of ESG specialists in 2024**, and the ORS collaboration is expected to produce joint research publications and prototypes in waste-to-energy technology in coming years. By aligning research initiatives with external partners, UPES accelerates progress on the SDGs while enriching its academic environment with real-world problem solving.

## Development of Educational Resources through Partnerships

UPES leverages partnerships to develop and disseminate educational resources that benefit both its students and the wider community. These resources – ranging from digital learning facilities in rural schools to sustainability-focused curricula – are crucial for advancing **Quality Education (SDG 4)** and building awareness of sustainable practices. Key collaborative initiatives include:

## Digital Smart Classrooms with Lotus Petal Foundation:

UPES has partnered with the **Lotus Petal Foundation (LPF)** – an education-focused NGO – to implement a “*Smart Class*” program in local underserved schools. This state-of-the-art digital learning initiative is “*equipped with interactive multimedia content and engaging teaching aids*”, aiming to make learning immersive and joyful for young students [2]. In one pilot deployment, UPES and LPF set up a Smart Classroom at the Government High School in Upper Kandoli, Uttarakhand, providing literacy support and modern teaching tools to a school that previously lacked such resources [2]. The program benefited an initial cohort of **22 eighth-grade students** with improved educational content delivery [2]. UPES faculty and volunteers regularly monitor the progress – ensuring hardware functionality, conducting reflective sessions with students, and coordinating with school stakeholders on lesson plans [2]. This collaboration addresses disparities in education quality by bringing technology-enabled learning to government schools, directly contributing to **SDG 4 (Quality Education)**. It also exemplifies SDG 17 in action: a private university and an NGO combining strengths to enhance local educational infrastructure.

## “LearnShala” Learning Centers in Government Schools

To make primary education more engaging and effective, UPES has been **building Learning Centres (called LearnShalas) in partnership with local government primary schools** around its campus. Four such schools – *Kandoli, Misraspatti, Donga, and Phulsani* in Uttarakhand – have been targeted for LearnShalas featuring lively learning spaces painted in vibrant colors and filled with interactive educational material [1]. Through these centers, UPES aims to nurture curiosity, creativity, and critical thinking in young learners. Importantly, **UPES student volunteers operate the LearnShalas**, conducting various learning activities for the children [1]. They use storytelling, relatable content, and a questioning-based approach in the local language to make the classroom experience interesting and inclusive [1]. In addition, UPES organizes periodic **learning camps in Math and Science** at these centers to strengthen foundational skills [1]. As of the latest update, one learning centre (at Upper Kandoli village) is fully established and running, while the other three are in progress [1]. This initiative, done in collaboration with school administrations and community members, directly tackles **SDG 4** by improving educational outcomes in rural schools. It also advances **Reduced Inequalities (SDG 10)**, as it gives children from underprivileged areas access to quality learning environments. The LearnShala model is a case study in university-community partnership: UPES provides the physical infrastructure, training, and volunteer manpower, while the schools provide space and integrate the resources into their curriculum. Early outcomes have been positive, with more joyful engagement observed among students, and plans are underway to expand the model to additional villages.

## Digital Literacy and Community Education Programs

UPES extends its educational outreach beyond formal school subjects to build capacity in digital skills and other life skills among the community. One such program is “**DigitalDhaam**”, intended to teach basic computer and internet usage to a broad segment of the local population – including school teachers, middle-school students, homemakers, and others in nearby villages [1]. In collaboration with local volunteers and community groups, DigitalDhaam workshops cover how to access online

information and use digital tools for everyday tasks [1]. By imparting digital literacy, this initiative contributes to **SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation & Infrastructure)** and **SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities)**, helping bridge the digital divide for rural residents. Another community educational event is the annual “**DaanUtsav**” **donation drive and fair** (described earlier), where UPES and partner NGOs set up activities like book and clothes donation drives, upcycling (“Best-out-of-waste”) contests, and street plays to spread awareness [1]. Through these events, educational resources in the form of awareness and knowledge are shared with the public – e.g. promoting recycling, sanitation, and cultural inclusion – aligning with goals like **Responsible Consumption (SDG 12)** and **Sustainable Communities (SDG 11)**.

## Curriculum Development and Knowledge Sharing for SDGs

As part of its SDG 17 strategy, UPES collaborates with academic and professional bodies to enrich its curriculum and disseminate sustainability knowledge. The university’s **Sustainability Cluster (School of Engineering)** annually organizes an international *Sustainability Conference and Fair* that convenes experts from academia, industry, and non-profits [2]. This conference (most recently held in 2023) features presentations and workshops on innovative approaches to global challenges, effectively creating an open educational resource: the published *conference proceedings* serve as a knowledge base on best practices and emerging technologies for sustainable development [2]. UPES also has over **200 active academic/research partnerships** with other institutions, through which it conducts student/faculty exchanges, joint courses, and comparative studies on sustainability topics [2]. For example, an ongoing collaboration with the **Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI)** has involved virtual exchange programs on the UN SDG agenda, allowing students from UPES and IUPUI to jointly learn and develop solutions for specific goals [8]. Additionally, UPES’s partnership projects under its CSR “*EduDharma*” policy focus on capacity-building in education: **Project Dronasthali**, for instance, organizes teacher training workshops (in collaboration with local education authorities) to improve pedagogy in government schools, and plans to establish a *Centre of Excellence for Teacher’s Development* to continually train educators in new teaching methods [1]. By developing such educational programs and materials with partners, UPES is directly enhancing the quality of education both within and outside the university. These efforts not only address SDG 4 but also strengthen the **global partnership for sustainable development (SDG 17)** by sharing educational resources widely.

It is evident that UPES’s collaborations in creating and spreading educational resources have measurable impacts. To date, at least **eight local schools** have received infrastructural or content support through UPES projects (e.g. smart classes, learning centres, or improved facilities) [1]. Dozens of teachers have been trained in new techniques (the first Dronasthali workshop trained over **30 teachers from 15 schools**, who reported high satisfaction with the training) [1]. Hundreds of community members have gained access to knowledge – be it through digital literacy sessions or awareness fairs. These outcomes contribute to a more informed and skilled community capable of advancing sustainable development.

By prioritizing partnerships – whether with NGOs like Lotus Petal Foundation, community organizations, or other universities – UPES ensures that educational innovations and resources reach the populations that need them most, multiplying the university’s impact on the SDGs.



## Conclusion

From the above analysis, it is clear that **UPES actively collaborates with NGOs, businesses, and other institutions** across all three areas highlighted by the SDG 17 Impact Rankings criteria. Through **student volunteering programs**, UPES engages thousands of students in community service with partner NGOs, yielding significant social impact (in education, health, livelihood) while instilling SDG values in the next generation [2] [1]. Through **research initiatives**, the university works with industry leaders and international agencies to drive sustainability-focused innovation – whether establishing joint research centers (e.g. the Aspire Impact partnership) [3], co-developing green technologies with companies (e.g. ORS MoU) [5], or contributing academic expertise to global projects (UNDP clean energy programs) [6]. And through **development of educational resources**, UPES teams up with NGOs and community stakeholders to improve educational quality and access (digital classrooms, learning centers, teacher training) for underserved communities [2] [1], as well as creating platforms to share sustainability knowledge broadly (conferences, exchange programs) [2].

In terms of scale and metrics, UPES's partnership efforts are far-reaching: thousands of students and community members are involved annually, hundreds of organizations (NGOs, schools, companies) are engaged, and multiple SDG-oriented projects are sustained every year. The outcomes include tangible improvements such as better educational outcomes in adopted schools, empowered women and youth, published research on renewable energy, and new programs producing sustainability professionals. Each collaboration directly maps to advancing specific SDGs – for example, volunteer programs addressing **poverty, education, gender equality**, research addressing **clean energy and climate**, and educational initiatives building **resilient communities and partnerships**. Moreover, UPES documents and publicizes these efforts via institutional reports, press releases, and SDG dashboards [2] [4], underlining its transparency and commitment to the 2030 Agenda.

In conclusion, **UPES exemplifies the spirit of SDG 17** by leveraging partnerships as a cornerstone of its strategy to create social impact. The university's integrated approach – combining student action, scholarly research, and community education – shows that higher education institutions can be key enablers of sustainable development when working in concert with NGOs, industry, and government. Through sustained collaboration, UPES not only advances the global goals locally but also provides a model for how academia can “walk the talk” in building a better and more sustainable world [1] [3].

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