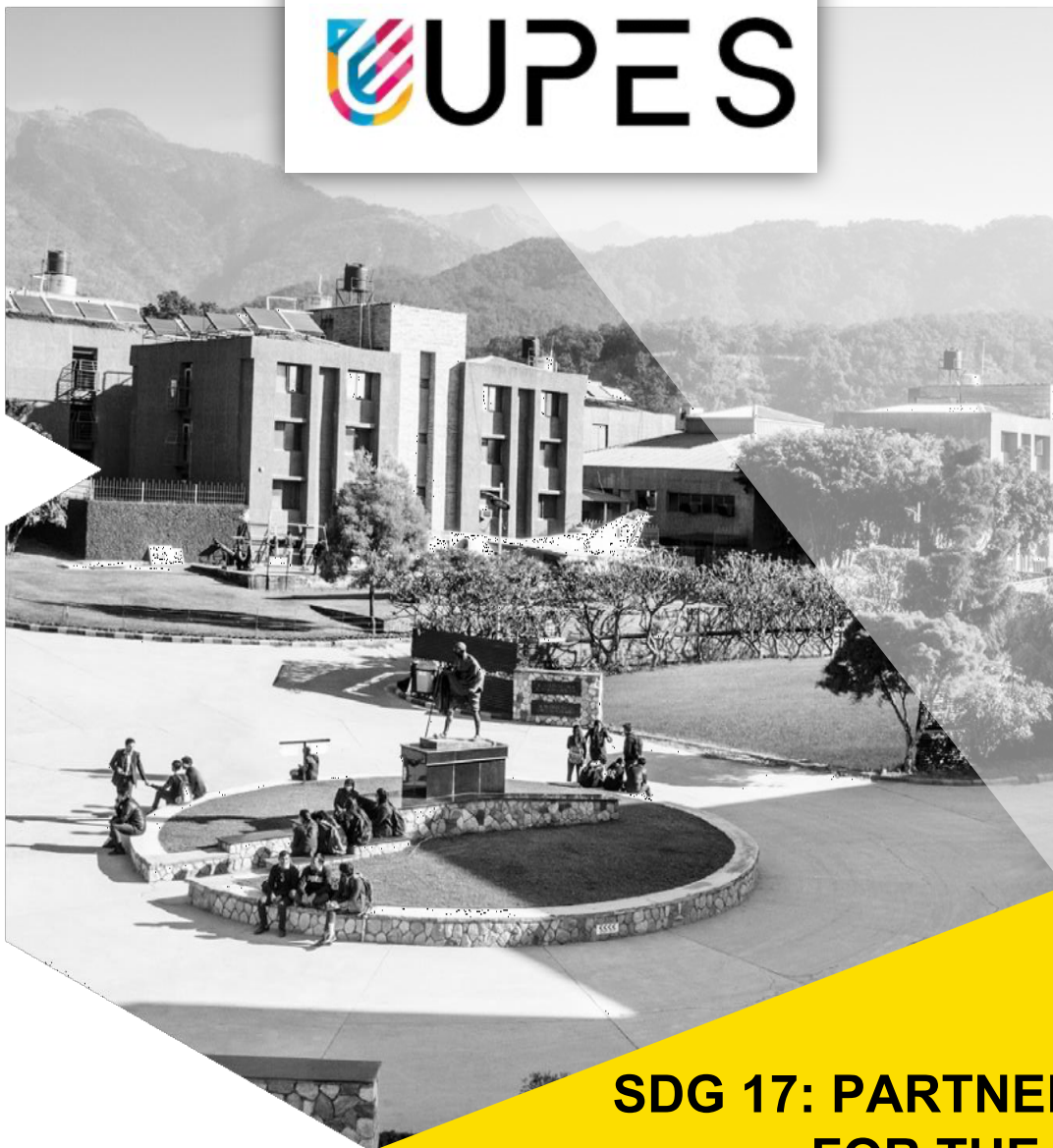# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

UPES

SDG 17: PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

2025

Table of Contents

UPES SDG Outreach and Education in the Wider Community

Introduction and Alignment with Impact Rankings

The University of Petroleum and Energy Studies (UPES) has embraced the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a guiding framework for its community initiatives. In line with *Times Higher Education (THE) Impact Rankings* – particularly **SDG 4 (Quality Education)** and **SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals)** – UPES demonstrates a strong commitment to educating and empowering the wider community. This report evaluates UPES's outreach and public engagement efforts beyond its campus, focusing on how the university delivers meaningful SDG-related education to local schools, villages, and underprivileged groups. It highlights key programs, partnerships, community events, and the impact of these initiatives, drawing on documented evidence and success stories.

Educational Outreach in Local Communities (SDG 4)

UPES actively extends quality education to those outside its student body, embodying the spirit of SDG 4 by promoting inclusive and equitable learning opportunities in the community. Key educational outreach initiatives include:

Adoption of Local Schools:

UPES has **adopted five government schools** in neighboring villages, creating vibrant "Learning Centres" (LearnShalas) to enhance primary education [1]. These learning spaces – for example, in Kandoli and Misraspatti villages – are equipped with colorful, interactive materials that inspire curiosity. Teachers report *"significant improvement in learning outcomes"* as children become more engaged and eager to participate in class [1]. The university provides computer literacy and even some higher education support at these schools [1], bridging urban-rural education gaps.

Teacher Training (Project Dronasthali)

Recognizing that quality education requires empowered educators, UPES runs *Project Dronasthali*, a Centre of Excellence for teacher development. Under this program, UPES faculty trained primary teachers from **17 different schools in Dehradun district** on digital teaching tools during the pandemic [2]. One workshop, inaugurated by the state Education Directorate, taught teachers to use WhatsApp for effective online teaching [2]. Participants praised it as *"well-designed"* and noted it *"broadened our outlook"* on virtual pedagogy [2]. Such capacity-building helps local teachers improve learning delivery, aligning with SDG 4 targets on teacher training and quality outcomes.

Scholarships and Educational Access

To further equitable education, UPES provides a range of scholarships and fee concessions for underrepresented groups. Notably, **Project Protsahan** offers **fully sponsored higher education at UPES for bright students from underprivileged backgrounds** [2]. This ensures that talented youth from low-income families can access university degrees (which indirectly benefits their communities). In addition, as a policy, all bonafide Uttarakhand residents receive a 33% tuition fee concession at UPES, with special *"Shakti"* scholarships earmarked for female students [3]. These measures demonstrate UPES's commitment to inclusive education in practice.

Holistic School Development (Project Utkarsh)

Through *Project Utkarsh*, UPES works on the overall development of its adopted schoolsgarhwalpost.in. This can involve improving school infrastructure, providing learning materials, and enhancing co-curricular opportunities. By uplifting the learning environment in government schools, the university helps ensure **"inclusive, equitable quality education"** (SDG 4.1) for children in rural and suburban areas who might otherwise lack such resources.

Student Social Internships

UPES leverages its students as ambassadors of education and change. The flagship **Srijan Social Internship** program requires first-year students to intern with NGOs and social enterprises, directly benefiting local communities [1]. Over **5,000 students** have participated, contributing a collective **200,000 human-days** of service on impact projects with **1,230 partner NGOs** [1]. These projects often involve teaching, community awareness, and capacity-building at the grassroots. By embedding students in social work, UPES not only nurtures empathetic future leaders, but also extends educational outreach (computer classes, tutoring, workshops, etc.) to numerous community members. This massive scale of engagement demonstrates how a university can be a force-multiplier for SDG 4 through its students.

Partnerships and Collaborative SDG Initiatives (SDG 17)

True to **SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals**, UPES collaborates extensively with external organizations to amplify its social impact. The university's approach is to build multi-sector partnerships that support community education, healthcare, sustainability, and more:

NGO Partnerships

UPES's network of **1,230 partner NGOs** is at the heart of its community engagementthecsruniverse.comthecsruniverse.com. Through these partnerships, the university channels student interns, volunteer efforts, and resources into diverse social projects. For instance, UPES has worked with local NGOs such as the **Goonj** foundation during the annual *DaanUtsav* (Joy of

Giving) festival. Since 2022, *DaanUtsav @ UPES* has been conducted in partnership with Goonj, involving donation drives that benefit nearby villages, slum areas, and an old age homethecsruniverse.comthecsruniverse.com. By collaborating with experienced NGOs, UPES ensures its outreach programs are well-targeted and sustainable.

Government and Community Partnerships

The university coordinates with local government bodies and community leaders for grassroots initiatives. Under *Project Utthan* – UPES's smart village project – the university partners with **Gram Panchayats** (village councils) in the villages of Koti and Dhalani to improve education, healthcare, and livelihoods [4]. UPES celebrated the regional **"Harela" environmental festival** in these villages by planting 100 fruit tree saplings with the villagers, local school principals, and the Gram Pradhans (village heads) [5]. Village leaders expressed gratitude for the "focused efforts" of the UPES CSR team in **"improving the lives of the village residents"**, and even requested expanded university support for other local issues [5]. This example illustrates a deep partnership where UPES is seen as a trusted development "guardian" in the community. It aligns with SDG 17 by mobilizing local stakeholders and knowledge for sustainable development.

Academic and Industry Collaborations

UPES also joins forces with other universities and industry partners on sustainability education. A recent collaboration with **Mahindra University** and **Aspire Impact** led to an Executive Education program for training Sustainability and Impact Specialists [1]. Likewise, the *Himalayan Institute for Learning and Leadership (HILL)* at UPES convenes academia, research institutions, and local communities to co-create solutions for challenges in the Himalayan region [1]. While these programs target professional audiences, they reflect UPES's broader partnership ethos – creating coalitions across sectors to advance the SDGs.

Social Impact Programs for Women

UPES engages partners in women's empowerment initiatives as well. *Project Vikalp*, for instance, established a **Rural Women Technology Park** in villages around the campus, with support for women artisans and entrepreneurs [3]. This project provides training in making recycled paper products, using ICT for craft design, and cultivating medicinal plants, in collaboration with local women's groups. By encouraging **"budding entrepreneurs"** and connecting them with markets, UPES and its partners help improve livelihoods while addressing SDGs like quality education, gender equality, and decent work [3].

These partnerships underscore how UPES exemplifies the *"Partnerships for the Goals"* ideal – leveraging NGO expertise, government support, academic knowledge, and community participation to maximize impact. The result is a multiplier effect, where the university's resources and know-how are extended far beyond campus to achieve shared sustainable development objectives.

Community Engagement Programs and Advocacy

Beyond formal projects, UPES organizes **public engagement activities, workshops, and campaigns** to raise awareness on sustainable development issues. Many of these outreach events are **conducted in the community (outside the university)** and often involve collaborations with NGOs or local institutions:

Awareness Drives in Schools and Villages

UPES frequently conducts awareness campaigns in government schools and rural areas to educate the public on key SDG themes. For example, the university's volunteers ran an **equality awareness drive in 16 local government schools** around Dehradun, teaching children about gender equity and inclusion [3]. This initiative, falling under SDG 5 (Gender Equality), helped sensitize hundreds of young students to the importance of equal rights and opportunities. In the realm of health education (SDG 3), UPES has organized **multiple health camps and awareness drives** in villages, promoting topics such as **menstrual hygiene** and nutrition. Volunteers distributed menstrual cups and held sensitization sessions on feminine health, improving awareness and sanitation practices among village women [3]. Similarly, *Project Swachhata* engages local youth in regular **cleanliness drives** in areas adjoining the campus, in support of India's Clean India Mission [3]. By involving community members (especially students) in clean-ups and waste management, the project instills a lasting sense of environmental responsibility. These advocacy campaigns illustrate how UPES uses education as a tool to drive behavior change on sustainable practices in its surrounding community.

Digital Literacy and Empowerment

To address the digital divide, UPES launched **DigitalDhaam**, an outreach program bringing digital literacy to nearby villages. Through hands-on workshops in community centers, faculty and student volunteers train **teachers, students, and homemakers** in basic computer and internet skills [1]. Initially, some participants were apprehensive about technology, but by tailoring training to community needs, the program achieved notable successes. In one village, a group of school students who went through DigitalDhaam later created digital presentations that improved their academic performance [1]. Such success stories show the transformative power of digital education – empowering villagers with new skills and opportunities (supporting SDG 4 on quality education and SDG 9 on innovation). Importantly, DigitalDhaam was implemented in partnership with local schools and was adapted to local language and context, making it a model for culturally appropriate community education.

Community Fairs and Public Events

UPES also engages the public through fairs, festivals, and cultural events centered on sustainability and social causes. A standout example was a **two-day "Joy of Giving" fair** organized by the UPES Social Internship Team in October 2021, in collaboration with multiple Dehradun-based NGOs [6]. This *Diwali Mela* (fair) invited orphanages, women's self-help groups, and local artisans to campus to exhibit and sell products made by underprivileged communities [6]. Stalls featured handicrafts, candles, and gifts made by orphaned children, marginalized women, and promising rural artists [6]. Other attractions –

a rangoli contest, "best-out-of-waste" competition, and *nukkad naatak* (street play) – drew in students and faculty, who turned out in large numbers to support the cause [6]. The response was overwhelming, with many purchases and donations made. Students expressed that the fair gave them a **"chance to give back to society"**, promoting empathy and awareness [6]. One student volunteer reflected, *"We need to bring wisdom to remove ignorance… This can happen if we all help each other however we can,"* emphasizing the educational impact on the volunteers themselves [6]. The fair also provided a **platform for small NGOs and social enterprises** – five partner NGOs (I.D.E.A.L Foundation, Building Dreams, Him Foundation, Shuruwat, Vichar Samiti) participated, each promoting causes from climate resilience to education for disadvantaged children [6]. By facilitating such university-community fairs, UPES raises public awareness of SDG issues (like poverty alleviation, education, and sustainable living) and strengthens the capacity of local NGOs through exposure and sales.

Public Lectures and Campaigns

UPES regularly hosts guest talks, seminars, and campaigns open to the public to spread knowledge on sustainable development. (For instance, experts in renewable energy, environmental policy, and social entrepreneurship are invited to speak at UPES events, which community members and local students attend. *[Note: Specific examples of public lectures can be inserted if documented]*.) Furthermore, UPES students themselves lead advocacy campaigns such as street plays on cleanliness and skits on gender equality in nearby communities, aligning with the idea of global citizenship education (SDG 4.7). These activities complement formal programs by fostering a culture of sustainability awareness beyond campus.

Impact, Outcomes, and Success Stories

UPES's community-focused SDG education initiatives have yielded measurable outcomes and positive feedback, underlining their effectiveness and alignment with global targets:

Reach and Scale

Through its various programs, UPES has impacted thousands of lives in the region. The *EDUDHARMA* social impact program alone (encompassing projects like Protsahan, Utkarsh, Dronasthali, Utthan) has improved the lives of **over 100 families** and numerous government school students and teachers in Dehradun [3]. The Srijan internships, as noted, contributed **2,00,000+ hours** of community service, addressing needs ranging from education to healthcare [1]. During the COVID-19 lockdown, UPES's outreach extended to crisis relief as well – the university provided *"Dry Ration Family Packs"* to **1,000 migrant worker families** (about 4,000 individuals) in six rural locations, ensuring no one went hungry [3]. This multi-pronged reach speaks to a comprehensive approach in community engagement.

Educational Upliftment

Feedback from beneficiaries indicates real improvements in educational quality and access. In the adopted primary schools, teachers have observed more enthusiastic participation and better learning outcomes among students after UPES's interventions [1]. The technology training for school teachers under Project Dronasthali was lauded by participants as highly relevant and confidence-building [2]. Similarly, women involved in Project Vikalp's skill workshops have gained new income-generating abilities (e.g. crafting products from recycled materials), which can uplift families from poverty. By **elevating local education levels and skills**, these initiatives contribute to long-term community development in line with SDG 4 goals (such as literacy, numeracy, and relevant skills for all).

Social and Cultural Impact

UPES's programs also foster social inclusion and empowerment. Initiatives like *Project Payal* specifically promote **girl child education in the local community**, helping to change mindsets that might discourage girls from schooling [3]. Community events (fairs, clean-up drives, festivals) have helped build trust and solidarity between the university and local residents. For example, after repeated engagements in Koti and Dhalani villages, community leaders have come to see UPES as a reliable partner for solving local problems [5]. The Vice Chancellor's personal involvement in village events (and even his spouse volunteering at the village school) further reinforced mutual respect [5]. This social capital is an intangible yet critical outcome, strengthening the *"peaceful and inclusive societies"* aspect of sustainable development.

Student and Volunteer Growth

An important outcome is the transformative experience for UPES students and staff who participate. By stepping outside the campus to teach, train or help others, they develop greater empathy, leadership, and practical understanding of sustainability challenges. According to Dr. Ram Sharma (UPES Vice Chancellor), engaging students in meaningful social projects through internships and volunteerism *"cultivat(es) a sense of responsibility and leadership"* in them [1]. Many student volunteers remain engaged beyond one-off events, creating a ripple effect of youth-led social impact. In essence, the community outreach doubles as experiential learning for UPES students, aligning with SDG 4's emphasis on education for sustainable development and global citizenship [7].

Recognition and Reporting

UPES documents and publicly shares these activities, which aids in transparency and allows for benchmarking against global standards. News outlets and university reports have covered the teacher training workshops [2], smart village developments, and other success stories, providing evidence for THE Impact Rankings submissions. Such documentation (including media articles, blog posts, and PDFs on each SDG) shows that UPES is actively monitoring its contributions to the SDGs and is willing to be held accountable. Notably, in the context of THE Impact Rankings, the described efforts support relevant indicators – for example, **number of educational outreach programs (SDG 4.3.3)**, **life-long**

learning measures like community skill classes, and **number of local partnerships (SDG 17.2.1)**. The **holistic impact philosophy** at UPES – *"creating measurable impact across education, research, societal well-being, environment, economy, and policy"* – is explicitly aligned with being a *"university for impact"* [1].

Conclusion

UPES's extensive outreach and engagement in the wider community illustrate a deep commitment to educating for sustainable development and forging partnerships to achieve it. The university's approach, characterized by **education for all ages**, **empowerment of the underprivileged**, and **collaborative action**, resonates strongly with the criteria of THE Impact Rankings for SDG 4 and SDG 17. From adopting village schools and training local teachers, to partnering with NGOs for community fairs and village development, UPES integrates social responsibility into its core mission. These efforts not only advance the SDGs in the region – improving quality education, gender equality, health, and environmental awareness – but also enrich the educational experience of UPES students, shaping them into socially conscious leaders. In summary, UPES stands out as an institution where academic excellence meets altruism, **demonstrating that meaningful SDG education can transcend campus boundaries to uplift communities and create lasting impact** [1].

The UPES case exemplifies how a university can leverage its knowledge, human capital, and partnerships to drive sustainable development at the grassroots level – a model that aligns perfectly with global expectations for higher education's role in our shared sustainable future.

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