

American International University-Bangladesh

Sustainable Development Goals Report



SDG 17: PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS



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AIUB Sustainable Impact Report – SDG 16:

Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

Introduction

American International University-Bangladesh (AIUB) is committed to the principles of peace, justice, and strong institutions as outlined in UN Sustainable Development Goal 16. The university has fostered **transparent, inclusive, and accountable governance**, actively involving stakeholders in decision-making and strategic planning aiub.edu. AIUB adheres to robust **anti-corruption and anti-bribery policies**, ensuring that all operations are conducted with integrity and fairness aiub.edu. It also guarantees **academic freedom**, protecting the rights of faculty and students to pursue open inquiry, teach, research, and engage in public discourse without fear aiub.edu aiub.edu. These values of transparency, ethical governance, and intellectual freedom are embedded in AIUB's institutional policies and culture, aligning the university's mission with SDG 16's vision of peaceful, just, and inclusive institutions. This report highlights key initiatives undertaken in recent years, the outcomes and impacts of those initiatives, and AIUB's plans to further advance SDG 16.

Key Initiatives

AIUB has implemented a range of initiatives to promote peace, justice, and strong institutions both within the university and in the broader community. Major focus areas include strengthening governance and ethics, enriching legal education and civic awareness, encouraging research on justice and human rights, and building partnerships for social impact. Key initiatives are outlined below:

- **Strengthening Governance and Transparency:** AIUB has established clear policies and committees to uphold integrity. A dedicated **Anti-Corruption Policy** is in place, with zero tolerance for bribery or unethical practices aiub.edu aiub.edu. An Anti-Bribery & Anti-Corruption Committee – comprising representatives from the Vice Chancellor's office, Human Resources, Accounts & Audit, Student Affairs, Quality Assurance, and other units – oversees compliance and promotes a culture of ethics aiub.edu. The university also operates an Office of Finance and Audit to ensure financial transparency and accountability. **Inclusive governance** is practiced by soliciting feedback from students, faculty, alumni, and external stakeholders in university planning aiub.edu. This inclusive approach helps AIUB remain accountable and responsive to the needs of its community.
- **Upholding Academic Freedom and Integrity:** AIUB's policies strongly protect academic freedom and freedom of expression. The student Code of Conduct explicitly **guarantees fundamental rights and freedoms**, affirming students' rights to free thought, speech, and respectful debate in line with constitutional rights aiub.edu aiub.edu. Faculty are equally assured freedom in teaching and research, creating an environment where controversial ideas and scholarly opinions can be explored openly. The university also conducts workshops on academic integrity and ethical practices (e.g. plagiarism prevention) as part of its quality assurance programs aiub.edu. By

safeguarding academic freedom and integrity, AIUB nurtures critical thinking and honest scholarship, which are cornerstones of just and strong institutions.

- **Legal Education and Access to Justice:** As a part of its contribution to SDG 16, AIUB's Department of Law spearheads initiatives to enhance legal awareness, practical training, and access to justice. **Legal awareness programs** are regularly organized – for example, in 2023 a special talk on “Legal Awareness for the Entrepreneurs in Bangladesh” was held to educate business students on legal responsibilities and rights in commerce aiub.edu aiub.edu. Such sessions equip future entrepreneurs with knowledge to operate ethically and within the law, thereby promoting a culture of lawfulness in society. The Department of Law also provides students with **hands-on exposure to the justice system**. Law students undertake court visits to observe proceedings; in 2022, groups of LLB students visited local District and Sessions Courts (e.g. in Madaripur and Narsingdi) to gain insight into judicial processes aiub.edu. These experiential learning trips help demystify the legal system and encourage students to later serve in providing legal aid or public defense. On campus, the **AIUB Moot Court Club** and Department of Law host regular moot court competitions, where students simulate court arguments. The 3rd and 4th Intra-Department Moot Court Competitions (2022 and 2023) trained dozens of aspiring lawyers in advocacy skills aiub.edu. Additionally, workshops and seminars – such as “*May It Please The Court: Unmasking the Art of Mooting*” – have been organized in collaboration with international partners to sharpen students' trial advocacy abilities aiub.edu aiub.edu. Through these initiatives, AIUB is **improving access to justice** by preparing a new generation of skilled, ethical legal professionals and raising legal literacy among the youth.
- **Civic Education and Student Engagement:** AIUB actively promotes civic education, human rights awareness, and inclusive dialogue through co-curricular activities. The university encourages students from all faculties to engage with social and political issues. Notably, AIUB held an “*Intrdepartmental Poster Competition on Human Rights, Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace*” in December 2022, where student teams created educational posters addressing discrimination, violence, and human rights protection aiub.edu. Such events foster peer learning on peace and justice topics and amplify student voices on societal challenges. Earlier, in 2018, a similar day-long poster presentation event titled “*Eliminate Discrimination, Cruelty & Immorality: To Protect Human Rights and Dignity*” featured **47 student-created posters** on social issues in Bangladesh aiub.edu aiub.edu. These competitions – often judged by faculty and external experts (e.g. officials from embassies or NGOs) – create awareness and inspire students to become advocates for human rights and ethical governance. Debate and public speaking are also integral to AIUB's civic education efforts. The **AIUB Oratory Club** has been a platform for students to debate national issues and democratic values. In 2022, the AIUB Oratory Club team won the national “*ATN Bangla Debate for Democracy*” championship, demonstrating exceptional skill in parliamentary-style debate aiub.edu. This victory not only showcased students' communication skills but also underscored AIUB's emphasis on informed citizenry and free expression. Through debates, public speaking events, and creative competitions, AIUB cultivates an engaged student body that is informed about justice, rights, and governance.
- **Research on Public Policy and Human Rights:** Research is a critical component of AIUB's impact on peace and justice. Faculty members across disciplines – especially in law, social sciences, and business – are conducting research that addresses governance challenges, human rights issues, and public policy in Bangladesh and beyond. Recent scholarly contributions include studies on **citizens' charters in public services, legal mechanisms to combat communal violence, and enhancing access to**

justice through e-judiciary systems aiub.edu. By examining topics like digitization of courts and protections for vulnerable groups, these researches propose practical solutions for improving transparency and equity in institutions aiub.edu. Another significant area of AIUB research is in **human rights and humanitarian law**. For instance, AIUB researchers contributed to publications on “*The Rohingya Crisis: Humanitarian and Legal Approaches*,” analyzing how international law can ensure justice and accountability for the Rohingya refugee situation aiub.edu. Studies on topics such as witness protection laws, media’s role in democracy, and documenting land rights via blockchain technology further highlight AIUB’s innovative approach to strengthening institutions aiub.edu aiub.edu. Over the past few years, at least a dozen research papers and book chapters from AIUB faculty have directly aligned with SDG 16 themes, ranging from anti-corruption data analysis to communal harmony and governance reforms aiub.edu aiub.edu. AIUB also disseminates knowledge through conferences and seminars – for example, the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences hosted an *International Conference on Sustainable Development* in 2022, where scholars presented on peace and governance challenges aiub.edu. By generating research and dialogue on public policy, human rights, and institutional effectiveness, AIUB contributes evidence-based insights to policymakers and civil society.

- **Partnerships Promoting Peace and Justice:** AIUB recognizes that partnerships are crucial for advancing SDG 16. The university actively collaborates with international organizations, academic institutions, and government agencies to amplify its impact. In May 2025, AIUB joined a **landmark partnership with the International Labour Organization (ILO)** and the Government of Bangladesh’s Ministry of Labour, alongside a dozen other universities aiub.edu. Through a Memorandum of Understanding, this collaboration aims to integrate International Labour Standards into legal education nationwide, thereby strengthening labor rights and social justice in Bangladesh. AIUB’s Department of Law is embedding these global labour standards in its curriculum, reflecting the university’s commitment to promoting human rights and fair labor practices aiub.edu aiub.edu. Another key partnership is in the area of legal training: AIUB has worked with **Jessup Bangladesh and the International Law Students Association (ILSA)** to host national-level moot court workshops. Notably, in August 2022, AIUB hosted a two-day *Pre-Jessup International Moot Court Workshop* titled “May It Please The Court: Unmasking the Art of Mooting,” in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Justice’s Office of Overseas Prosecutorial Development (OPDAT) aiub.edu newagebd.net. This workshop brought together experienced legal advisors from the United States and Bangladesh to train students from universities across the country.

*Local and foreign dignitaries at AIUB’s “May It Please The Court” moot court workshop (2022), organized with Jessup Bangladesh, ILSA, and the U.S. Department of Justice to prepare students for international law competitions newagebd.net. Over **140 law students from 29 universities** participated as trainees and observers newagebd.net, underscoring AIUB’s role as a hub for capacity-building in legal advocacy.*

AIUB also pursues academic partnerships to broaden its impact on peace and justice. In 2022, AIUB signed an MoU with **Gujarat National Law University (GNLU) in India** to facilitate exchanges of knowledge and joint research, recognizing the transnational nature of legal education and human rights issues aiub.edu. The university engages with professional bodies like the Bangladesh Bar Council (e.g. hosting webinars on bar admissions) to bridge the gap between academic training and legal practice aiub.edu. Furthermore, AIUB is a signatory to

the global **SDG Accord** and a participant in the International Association of Universities' *Higher Education for Sustainable Development* network, collaborating with institutions worldwide to share best practices in governance, gender equality, and community resilience aiub.edu aiub.edu. Through these diverse partnerships, AIUB amplifies its contributions to peace and justice, learning from global peers and extending its influence beyond campus.

Outcomes and Impacts

AIUB's sustained efforts toward SDG 16 have yielded significant outcomes and demonstrable impacts in recent years. These outcomes can be observed in the university's internal governance improvements, student achievements, research influence, and broader recognition:

- **Enhanced Institutional Integrity:** The implementation of strong governance policies (like the anti-corruption and transparency measures) has reinforced a culture of integrity at AIUB. The strict anti-bribery stance and active monitoring have helped ensure that no major incidents of corruption or malfeasance are reported within the university, thereby maintaining trust among students, staff, and partners. Decision-making processes have become more participatory – for example, strategic plans now routinely incorporate stakeholder feedback sessions aiub.edu. This inclusive governance approach leads to policies that are better attuned to student and community needs, such as the Lifelong Learning Access policy that guarantees non-discriminatory access to AIUB's educational resources aiub.edu aiub.edu. By embedding fairness and accountability in its operations, AIUB is contributing to stronger institutions starting with itself as a model.
- **Student Success in Civic and Legal Arenas:** AIUB students have translated the university's training into success in national platforms, reflecting the impact of civic education and legal skill development. The victory of AIUB's Oratory Club in the 2022 **Debate for Democracy** competition is a case in point – students debated governance and policy issues on national television, showcasing informed discourse and critical thinking aiub.edu. This win brought pride to the institution and spread a message of youth engagement in democratic dialogue. Similarly, AIUB law students have excelled in moot court competitions. AIUB teams reached the quarter-finals in inter-university moot contests such as the Bangladesh University of Professionals (BUP) Moot Court Competition and performed strongly in the Henry Dunant Memorial national rounds (a competition focused on international humanitarian law) aiub.edu aiub.edu. Hosting the *Jessup pre-competition workshop* at AIUB had a multiplier effect: over 140 students from various universities enhanced their advocacy skills newagebd.net, and AIUB's own team gained valuable experience that helped them compete internationally. These outcomes indicate that AIUB's co-curricular programs are effectively building student competencies in law and civic leadership, who in turn will contribute to society as **capable lawyers, debaters, and advocates for justice**.
- **Improved Legal Awareness and Services:** The community-focused initiatives of AIUB's Department of Law have started to yield impact in terms of greater legal awareness. Through seminars like the entrepreneurs' legal awareness talk, hundreds of students (especially non-law students) have gained practical knowledge about business law, rights and responsibilities aiub.edu aiub.edu. Attendees of such programs are better prepared to run enterprises ethically and handle legal issues, contributing to a more just business environment. Moreover, law students who visited courts or participated in advocacy training have in several cases gone on to intern or volunteer with legal aid organizations. Although specific numbers are anecdotal, AIUB law alumni are entering

the workforce with a **service mindset**, with some joining the judiciary track or NGOs focusing on human rights. The “**Webinar on Bar Council Enrollment**” hosted in 2023 helped demystify the process of becoming a lawyer in Bangladesh, likely increasing the number of AIUB graduates pursuing legal careers and thereby bolstering the country’s legal institutions aiub.edu. These outcomes contribute to improved access to justice as more qualified, socially-conscious legal professionals begin serving the public.

- **Contributions to Policy and Society:** AIUB’s research and advisory efforts under SDG 16 have begun influencing policy discussions and societal awareness. Faculty research on e-judiciary and digital access to justice, for instance, comes at a time when Bangladesh’s judiciary is exploring online court hearings and case management. AIUB’s study on *Enhancing Access to Justice through E-Judiciary* provided insights cited in dialogues about modernizing the court system aiub.edu. Likewise, research on communal violence and Islamophobia has been shared in academic and policy forums, informing strategies to combat hate speech and promote communal harmony. AIUB faculty have been invited to offer **expert advice to government bodies**; for example, AIUB experts provided policy guidance on managing climate-induced migration and economic development as part of local and national consultations aiub.edu. The university has also served as a **neutral platform for political dialogue**, hosting round-table discussions where diverse political and civil society leaders discuss current issues in a non-partisan setting aiub.edu. Such dialogues, often facilitated by AIUB’s Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, have fostered mutual understanding on topics like election processes and governance reforms. Although these impacts are less quantifiable, they illustrate AIUB’s growing role as a convener and think-tank for peace and justice in the community.
- **Global and National Recognition:** AIUB’s progress on sustainability and social impact has been recognized in reputable rankings and accords. In the Times Higher Education (THE) Impact Rankings – the only global ranking assessing universities against the UN SDGs – AIUB has rapidly risen in standing. In the **Impact Rankings 2025**, AIUB is placed in the 601–800 tier globally, which makes it the **second-highest ranked university in Bangladesh** for overall SDG performance newagebd.net. This achievement is driven in part by strong results in areas like “No Poverty” and “Decent Work & Economic Growth” (ranked in the global top 200) and high scores in “Quality Education” and “Partnerships for the Goals” newagebd.net. AIUB’s work on peace, justice, and strong institutions under SDG 16 is a key component of this success, as THE Impact Rankings measure universities’ research on law and peace, their advisory roles in policy, and their internal governance. AIUB’s performance sends a signal that Bangladeshi higher education can contribute meaningfully to societal progress. Additionally, AIUB’s involvement in the **SDG Accord** has earned it international visibility, as it publicly reports on its sustainability initiatives in annual SDG Accord reports. These accolades and memberships not only acknowledge AIUB’s impact but also encourage the university to continue and expand its work on SDG 16.

Future Plans

Building on its current achievements, AIUB is charting an ambitious course to deepen its contributions to peace, justice, and strong institutions in the coming years. Key future plans include:

- **Deepening Ethical Governance:** AIUB plans to further institutionalize transparency and inclusivity in its governance model. By 2030, the university aims to publish annual **Governance and Sustainability Reports** detailing its progress on SDG targets, financial integrity, and inclusion efforts. There is an initiative to introduce student and alumni representatives into certain governance committees (such as the anti-corruption committee or academic council) to ensure broader participation in decision-making. AIUB will also periodically update its Anti-Corruption Policy and **conduct trainings for faculty and staff on ethics and anti-bribery compliance**, in collaboration with national bodies like the Anti-Corruption Commission. These steps will solidify AIUB's reputation as a transparent and accountable institution.
- **Expanding Access to Justice Programs:** The Faculty of Law is poised to establish a **Legal Aid Clinic or Center for Pro Bono Services** as a next step in community engagement. This center, planned in partnership with legal aid NGOs, would allow law students and faculty to offer basic legal advice and assistance to low-income communities (e.g. on campus or via outreach camps). Not only will this provide invaluable real-world experience to students, it will directly contribute to SDG 16 by expanding access to justice for vulnerable populations. AIUB also plans to increase the frequency of legal literacy workshops – not just for students, but for local entrepreneurs, school students, and community leaders. Topics will range from cyber law and digital rights to environmental justice, aligning legal awareness with emerging societal needs. Furthermore, AIUB intends to partner with the **Bangladesh Bar Council and Supreme Court** on internship and moot court programs, giving students the opportunity to intern with judges or court administrations. Such initiatives will create pathways for graduates to enter public service in the justice sector.
- **Integrating Peace and Civics in Curriculum:** On the academic front, AIUB is reviewing its curriculum to integrate peace, ethics, and civic education across disciplines. The university plans to introduce a **General Education course on “Ethics, Citizenship, and Sustainable Development”** mandatory for all undergraduates, which will cover topics of human rights, governance, and social responsibility. This will institutionalize civic education in the classroom for every AIUB student. In addition, specialized modules on **anti-corruption, conflict resolution, and human rights law** will be developed within relevant degree programs (for instance, business students learning about corporate ethics and law students studying transitional justice). AIUB's goal is to ensure that graduates from every field – engineering, business, science, or arts – have an awareness of how they can promote peace and strong institutions in their professional lives. The university's **Office of Student Affairs** will also expand co-curricular offerings by organizing annual festivals or competitions themed around SDG 16 (e.g. debate tournaments on justice issues, art contests on peace). These efforts will cultivate a campus culture that consistently reinforces the values of tolerance, equity, and rule of law.
- **Advancing Research and Policy Impact:** AIUB will continue to incentivize and support research that addresses SDG 16 challenges. Plans are underway to establish a dedicated **Center for Governance and Policy Research**, which would bring together faculty experts and students to conduct interdisciplinary research on public policy, governance innovation, and human rights. This center would host policy dialogues and publish policy briefs to directly inform lawmakers and public institutions. AIUB also aims to secure grants for research in areas such as digital governance, peacebuilding in South Asia, and climate justice (acknowledging that climate change impacts can exacerbate conflicts). By partnering with international research networks and think tanks, the university hopes to increase the global visibility and impact of its research.

Moreover, AIUB faculty will be encouraged to serve on national committees or as advisors to government when opportunities arise – for example, contributing expertise to legislative reforms or national action plans on human rights. Through these measures, AIUB plans to translate academic knowledge into concrete policy outcomes that strengthen institutions and uphold justice.

- **Strengthening Partnerships and Global Engagement:** Looking ahead, AIUB recognizes the importance of collaborative action for SDG 16. The university intends to forge new partnerships with organizations such as the **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)**, Transparency International Bangladesh, and human rights organizations to jointly host conferences, training programs, or community projects. For instance, AIUB is exploring an MoU with the National Human Rights Commission of Bangladesh to collaborate on research and internship opportunities for students in the field of human rights law. Regionally, AIUB seeks to co-organize a **South Asian Peace and Justice Summit** with partner universities in India, Nepal, and beyond, facilitating cross-border learning and projects (this aligns with AIUB's strategic goal of internationalization). Internally, AIUB will maintain its engagement with the global SDG Accord and attempt to improve its standing in the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings by focusing on weaker areas and showcasing its SDG 16 initiatives more prominently. The **Sustainable Development Advancement Committee** at AIUB, led by the Vice Chancellor, will oversee progress on these commitments and ensure that by the end of this decade, AIUB's contributions to peace, justice, and strong institutions are even more substantial and well-documented.

In summary, AIUB has made notable strides in supporting SDG 16 through transparent governance, robust academic freedom, anti-corruption measures, enriched legal education, civic engagement, rigorous research, and meaningful partnerships. The outcomes – from empowered students and scholarly impact to policy influence and recognition – attest to the university's role as a catalyst for peace and justice. With planned future initiatives, AIUB is dedicated to amplifying this impact, continually aligning its institutional goals with the broader quest for a peaceful, just, and inclusive society where strong institutions uphold the rule of law and the rights of all people.