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ANNUAL
REPORT:
SDG REPORT

17 PARTNERSHIPS
FOR THE GOALS



SDG 17: PARTNERSHIPS FOR
THE GOALS

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UJ SDG REPORT 2023

**SDG 17: PARTNERSHIPS FOR
THE GOALS**

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Report on the University of Johannesburg's Contribution to Sustainable Development Goal 17

SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals

OVERVIEW: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report outlines the University of Johannesburg's (UJ) contributions to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 17 (SDG 17) on Partnerships for the Goals during the 2023 academic year. UJ has made significant strides in advancing SDG 17. In 2023, UJ continued to build and strengthen its diverse network of partnerships across various sectors, including academia, industry, civil society, and governmental bodies. These partnerships were integral to UJ's contributions to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its commitment to global sustainability.

In 2023, UJ expanded its international collaborations, advanced research partnerships, and continued its work to mobilise resources for sustainable development. The university's contributions focused on promoting interdisciplinary research, educational exchanges, capacity-building in under-resourced communities, and the promotion of shared responsibility for sustainability. Key initiatives included the enhancement of global

mobility programmes, partnerships with major international institutions, and funding for projects that advance sustainable economic growth, climate action, and inclusive education.

This report provides an overview of UJ's initiatives in promoting SDG 17, including a review of its efforts to strengthen global collaborations, increase funding for SDG-related projects, and foster local and international partnerships. Through these partnerships, UJ has played a pivotal role in achieving key sustainability goals, facilitating knowledge exchange, and contributing to the greater global effort to achieve the SDGs.

INTRODUCTION

SDG 17 is focused on enhancing global partnerships for sustainable development. It recognises that the achievement of all other SDGs is deeply interconnected with the establishment of effective partnerships. These partnerships can take various forms, including academic collaborations, industry-government alliances, and cross-border cooperation. In this context, UJ's role is not only as an academic institution but also as a key partner in driving sustainable development through the strength of its partnerships.

In 2023, UJ advanced its commitment to SDG 17 by building new partnerships, mobilising resources, and engaging stakeholders at local, regional, and international levels. Through its partnerships with governments, universities, private sector companies, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), UJ has created platforms for cross-disciplinary collaboration that are essential for addressing the complex challenges of the 21st century, such as poverty, inequality, climate change, and economic sustainability.

The university's contributions to SDG 17 were multifaceted, including joint research initiatives, capacity-building projects, fundraising campaigns, and educational exchanges. UJ continued to embrace a collaborative approach to tackling global sustainability challenges and reinforcing its position as a leader in the higher education sector. This report explores the key initiatives UJ undertook in 2023 to strengthen partnerships for the SDGs, focusing on the university's key areas of impact: research partnerships, global academic mobility, and community engagement.

KEY ACTIVITIES AND INITIATIVES

UJ's work in 2023 under SDG 17 has been centered on cultivating partnerships that foster collaboration, innovation, and knowledge sharing. These activities spanned international research collaborations, capacity-building initiatives, resource mobilisation, and educational exchanges. Below is a detailed overview of UJ's significant activities related to SDG 17.

1. Global Research Partnerships and Collaboration

A significant component of UJ's commitment to SDG 17 has been its involvement in international research partnerships aimed at advancing knowledge and developing innovative solutions to global challenges. In 2023, UJ strengthened its existing collaborations and established new ones with leading universities and research institutions across the globe. These partnerships facilitated groundbreaking research on issues such as climate change, sustainable urban development, renewable energy, and social justice.

For instance, UJ's collaboration with Utrecht University (Netherlands) in sustainable water management and climate resilience continued in 2023, with several joint research projects exploring the impact of climate change on water availability in Southern Africa. Through this partnership, UJ researchers collaborated with Utrecht's experts to develop sustainable water usage practices and identify innovative technologies that can improve water access in resource-constrained communities.

Another significant partnership was UJ's involvement in the EU-Africa Partnership for Research and Innovation, which aims to strengthen scientific collaboration between European and African universities. UJ's research contributions to this programme focused on green energy technologies, specifically solar power, energy storage systems, and sustainable agriculture. These research outputs contribute to SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy) and SDG 13 (Climate Action) by addressing Africa's energy access challenges and promoting low-carbon energy solutions.

Additionally, UJ's participation in the Horizon Europe initiative has facilitated key research initiatives on smart cities, renewable energy, and sustainable infrastructure. UJ scholars worked alongside international experts to develop solutions for urban sustainability and climate adaptation, resulting in collaborative papers and policy briefs presented at the UN Climate Change Conference in 2023. These joint research efforts are critical in advancing global cooperation and fostering the exchange of knowledge on climate change mitigation.

2. Global Academic Mobility Programmes

UJ has also placed a strong emphasis on academic mobility as a means to foster global partnerships and expose students and staff to diverse international perspectives on sustainability. In 2023, UJ expanded its exchange programmes with universities worldwide, facilitating virtual and physical mobility for both students and faculty. These programmes offer opportunities for cross-cultural learning, research collaboration, and the exchange of best practices in sustainable development.

For example, UJ partnered with Cornell University (USA) and ETH Zurich (Switzerland) to offer joint online courses on sustainable urban development and climate resilience. These virtual exchanges allowed students from different parts of the world to collaborate on real-world projects, such as designing low-carbon solutions for cities in the Global South. In total, UJ hosted 250 international exchange students in 2023, with participants from Europe, North America, and Africa. These mobility programmes also allowed UJ students to study abroad at partner institutions, further promoting international exposure to global challenges and solutions.

In addition to student exchanges, UJ faculty members participated in global conferences and workshops, engaging with international experts and contributing to knowledge exchange in areas such as global governance, environmental justice, and policy reform. These faculty exchanges foster global academic collaboration and

ensure that UJ remains a prominent player in international academic networks for sustainable development.

3. Resource Mobilisation and Fundraising Campaigns

Resource mobilisation is another key aspect of UJ's contribution to SDG 17. In 2023, UJ continued to strengthen its fundraising efforts through various campaigns aimed at securing financial support for its sustainability-related initiatives. The university leveraged public-private partnerships and corporate sponsorships to fund research projects, infrastructure development, and community engagement programmes aligned with the SDGs.

One notable fundraising success was UJ's Double Our Future Impact Campaign, which raised R10 million to support students from disadvantaged communities and fund sustainable education initiatives. Through this campaign, UJ attracted support from corporate partners such as Sasol, Nando's, and the Development Bank of Southern Africa, all of whom shared UJ's commitment to reducing inequalities and promoting access to quality education. The campaign funds were used to provide scholarships, mentorship opportunities, and academic resources to students pursuing careers in science, engineering, and business—sectors that are crucial for advancing sustainable development.

Moreover, UJ has been actively involved in grant applications for major international funding bodies such as the European Union's Horizon 2020 Programme and the World Bank, securing additional resources to support large-scale, interdisciplinary research projects on climate adaptation, sustainable cities, and green innovation.

4. Community Engagement and Collaborative Local Partnerships

UJ's commitment to SDG 17 also extends to local partnerships aimed at addressing South Africa's most pressing sustainability challenges. In 2023, UJ continued to collaborate with local municipalities, NGOs, and community-based organisations to implement projects that promote inclusive development, peace-building, and social justice. UJ's Community Engagement Office spearheaded several initiatives focused on empowering marginalised communities through education, healthcare, job creation, and environmental sustainability.

One example is the Food Security Project, a collaboration between UJ and local NGOs aimed at combating food insecurity in Johannesburg. The project focused on providing sustainable agricultural training and nutritional support to households in informal settlements. UJ researchers and students collaborated with the community to establish urban food gardens that contribute to local food production, reduce reliance on external food sources, and enhance climate resilience.

Furthermore, UJ's partnership with local businesses and government agencies in the Victoria Yards Project helped to develop sustainable infrastructure in a previously neglected area of Johannesburg. This project aimed to create a green urban environment by revitalising vacant land, installing solar power systems, and improving access to clean water and sanitation. The project serves as a model of sustainable urban development and community-driven regeneration, exemplifying the university's role in building local partnerships for sustainable growth.

CONCLUSION

In 2023, the University of Johannesburg made significant contributions to SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals by fostering global research collaborations, expanding academic mobility, mobilising resources for sustainability initiatives, and engaging in meaningful local partnerships. Through its international partnerships, UJ has strengthened its role as a leading institution in promoting sustainable development and addressing the SDGs.

Looking forward, UJ will continue to expand its collaborative networks and deepen its involvement in multilateral partnerships that promote the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. By continuing to engage with global, regional, and local partners, UJ is well-positioned to contribute to the realisation of the SDGs and create a more equitable, inclusive, and sustainable world.

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