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ANNUAL
REPORT:
SDG REPORT

3 GOOD HEALTH
AND WELL-BEING



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AND WELL-BEING

Our Future
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UJ SDG REPORT 2023
SDG 3: GOOD HEALTH AND
WELL-BEING

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Report on the University of Johannesburg's Contribution to Sustainable Development Goal 3

SDG 3: Good Health and Well-Being

OVERVIEW: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The University of Johannesburg (UJ) demonstrates a firm commitment to advancing the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 3 (SDG 3) on Good Health and Well-Being, which focuses on ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all at all ages. This report highlights UJ's extensive contributions through health sciences education, impactful community health initiatives, pioneering research, and institutional policies that prioritise health and wellness. By leveraging its academic, research, and community engagement capabilities, UJ is creating transformative impacts on health and well-being both locally and globally.

INTRODUCTION

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a universal call to action, addressing critical global challenges such as poverty, inequality, and health disparities, while fostering sustainable economic, social, and environmental development. SDG 3 emphasises the need for universal health coverage, the prevention of communicable and non-communicable diseases, and the promotion of mental health and well-being. UJ aligns its strategic initiatives with these objectives through its multidisciplinary approach, combining educational programmes, research innovation, and community outreach.

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

UJ's Strategic Plan 2035 serves as a foundational guide for addressing SDG 3. Central to this plan is the emphasis on societal impact and sustainability. The university's alignment with these priorities ensures that its efforts are holistic, spanning from academic programming to community-based initiatives. This integrated approach reflects UJ's ambition to remain a leading institution in addressing global health challenges.

FACULTY OF HEALTH SCIENCES

The Faculty of Health Sciences at UJ is at the forefront of addressing health challenges through innovative education and research. The faculty's curriculum is meticulously designed to produce healthcare professionals capable of addressing the multifaceted challenges of modern health systems. By incorporating courses that tackle emerging issues such as pandemic preparedness and health equity, UJ prepares its graduates to make substantial contributions both locally and globally.

The Faculty of Health Sciences has spearheaded numerous research projects addressing significant health challenges. A notable project is the **Biomedical Engineering and Healthcare Technology Research Centre (BEAHT-RC)**, which focuses on advancing medical technologies to enhance patient care. Additionally, extensive research on non-communicable diseases (NCDs) aims to identify preventive strategies tailored to South Africa's diverse populations. Another impactful initiative involves the development of mobile health applications, designed to improve healthcare access in remote areas and urban informal settlements. These advancements reflect UJ's commitment to combining academic excellence with practical solutions to improve public health outcomes.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND PUBLIC HEALTH INITIATIVES

UJ has a longstanding tradition of community engagement, playing a pivotal role in improving health outcomes for underserved communities. The **Eastern Cape Water Provision Project** exemplifies this commitment by addressing water scarcity and its associated health risks. Utilising advanced hydro-panel technology, the project ensures sustainable access to clean water, significantly reducing the prevalence of waterborne diseases in the region.

The university also conducts comprehensive health education campaigns, particularly targeting pressing health issues such as HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and NCD prevention. These campaigns aim to empower communities by equipping them with knowledge and resources to address these challenges proactively. For instance, UJ's Community Engagement Unit collaborates with local organisations to conduct workshops on nutrition and preventative healthcare.

UJ's student-led health initiatives further amplify its impact. Partnerships with the Student Representative Council (SRC) and the **Centre for Student Health and Wellness (C-SHAW)** enable the implementation of mental health support services, free health screenings, and vaccination drives. Peer-led workshops focusing on sexual and reproductive health have also proven instrumental in raising awareness and promoting responsible behaviours among young people. These initiatives are designed not only to address immediate health concerns but also to build long-term capacity within communities.

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS INITIATIVES

Recognising the growing importance of mental health, UJ has implemented several initiatives aimed at promoting psychological well-being among students and staff. The establishment of the **Centre for Psychological Services and Career Development (PsyCaD)** has been a cornerstone of these efforts. PsyCaD provides professional counselling services, mental health workshops, and career guidance to support the holistic development of UJ's community.

The university has also introduced training programmes for mental health first responders, ensuring that individuals across the campus are equipped to provide initial support during crises. Awareness campaigns such as the Mental Health Awareness Week are designed to reduce stigma surrounding mental health issues, encouraging more people to seek help when needed.

To enhance access to mental health services, UJ utilises technology by offering virtual counselling platforms and digital resources for stress management. These tools are particularly beneficial for students who may face barriers to accessing in-person

services, ensuring that support is both accessible and inclusive. Additionally, PsyCaD collaborates with the Faculty of Health Sciences to integrate mental health topics into health promotion activities across campuses.

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION IN HEALTH SCIENCES

UJ is at the forefront of health sciences research, leveraging advanced technologies to address critical health challenges. One of its groundbreaking projects involves the development of 3D-printed medical devices, including customised prosthetics. This innovation not only reduces costs but also enhances the quality of life for patients requiring assistive devices.

Artificial intelligence (AI) plays a significant role in UJ's health research. AI-driven diagnostic tools have been developed to enable the early detection of communicable diseases, improving treatment outcomes and reducing healthcare costs. Collaborative research with BRICS nations focuses on global health priorities such as antimicrobial resistance and pandemic preparedness. The university's 4IR Health Innovation Programme further underscores its leadership in integrating cutting-edge technology with healthcare delivery. This programme explores applications ranging from wearable health monitors to telemedicine platforms, ensuring that advanced healthcare solutions are accessible to a broader population.

GLOBAL RECOGNITION AND IMPACT

UJ's contributions to SDG 3 have earned it significant recognition on the global stage. In the 2023 Times Higher Education (THE) Impact Rankings, UJ achieved first place globally for SDG 1 (No Poverty) and ranked among the top 400 universities for SDG 3. This accolade reflects the university's leadership in addressing health and well-being challenges and its role as a catalyst for sustainable development.

The university's international student exchange programmes further enhance its global impact. By facilitating knowledge exchange and collaborative problem-solving, these programmes enable UJ to contribute to innovative solutions in public health and healthcare delivery. Additionally, UJ's partnerships with institutions in Africa and the Global South highlight its commitment to addressing regional health disparities through shared expertise and resources.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

UJ is poised to deepen its impact on health and well-being through several strategic initiatives. The establishment of a medical school represents a significant step forward. This facility will expand UJ's capacity to train healthcare professionals and advance research in critical areas such as infectious diseases and health systems management.

Scaling up existing health interventions is another priority. By strengthening partnerships with governmental and non-governmental organisations, UJ aims to broaden the reach of programmes such as mobile health clinics. These clinics play a vital role in delivering healthcare services to remote and underserved areas, addressing a critical gap in South Africa's health system.

Mental health will remain a focal point for UJ's initiatives. Plans include increasing funding for mental health services and integrating mental health education into academic curricula. By embedding these efforts within its broader health strategy, UJ seeks to create a comprehensive approach to well-being that addresses both physical and mental health.

CONCLUSION

The University of Johannesburg's unwavering commitment to SDG 3 is evident in its multifaceted approach to promoting health and well-being. Through innovative educational programmes, cutting-edge research, and impactful community engagement, UJ addresses pressing health challenges while contributing to global health solutions. These efforts position UJ as a leader in the pursuit of a healthier, more equitable world, underscoring its dedication to creating sustainable and transformative impacts.

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