



Al Ain University

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Al Ain University's International SDG Collaboration

Al Ain University (AAU) – particularly its Al Ain campus – has actively engaged in international collaborations and research initiatives over the last five years to advance the **UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**. These efforts span academic partnerships, institutional agreements, global networks, policy-oriented projects, and joint research endeavors aimed at comparative learning and best practices. Below is a comprehensive review of AAU's key international SDG-focused collaborations from 2019–2024, organized by category.

Academic-Led International Collaborations

- **Global Research Projects:**

AAU faculty and students have partnered with overseas universities to address specific SDG challenges. For example, the College of Engineering at AAU teamed up with the University of Mount Union (USA) in 2023 on a “**Water and Flood Alarm System**” project – the first global engineering capstone of its kind in the Middle East aau.ac.ae. This project not only produced a practical solution for flood alerts (supporting **SDG 6: Clean Water & Sanitation**), but also fostered cross-cultural engineering experience. Senior AAU students worked with Mount Union peers to design technology for water management, under the patronage of UAE ministers aau.ac.ae, exemplifying how comparative international input can yield innovative best practices in climate resilience.

A Global Engineering Project between Al Ain University and Mount Union University Entitled “Water and Flood Alarm System”

- **Joint Conferences & Publications:**

AAU has hosted and contributed to international academic forums that promote SDG-related scholarship. Notably, AAU convened the *First International Conference of Pharmacy and Biomedical Sciences* in January 2023, a two-day event drawing global researchers to discuss health innovations aau.ac.ae (advancing **SDG 3: Good Health & Well-Being**). Similarly, in March 2023 the university's engineering faculty organized the *AAU Forum for Sustainability in Engineering 2023*, which gathered experts to share sustainable technology solutions aau.ac.ae. Through such conferences, AAU academics exchange research findings and benchmark approaches in fields like public health and sustainable engineering on an international stage.

AAU's commitment to research excellence is also reflected in its **international publications on SDG topics**, which are increasingly co-authored with global partners. A 2024 study on SDG integration in higher education even cited Al Ain University's 2023 efforts as a model example (alongside institutions in Ghana and India) [emerald.com](https://www.emerald.com), indicating that AAU's practices in quality education (SDG4) and partnership (SDG17) are being recognized in comparative research literature.

AAU concludes the First International Conference on Pharmacy and Biomedical Sciences

Al Ain University concluded the First International Conference of Pharmacy and Biomedical Sciences, which lasted for two days, from 18 to 19th of January 2023, at Abu Dhabi campus. More than 170 researchers and participants attended the conference, and more than 100 research papers from 40 academic and non-academic institutions were reviewed from 20 different countries.

The conference discussed research related to various fields of health and medical sciences and addressed proposals and innovative solutions to serve the community and meet its needs through scientific research and workshops presented by a group of speakers, researchers, specialists, professors, pharmacists, nutrition experts, trainees and students. The conference addressed several domains, most notably: Clinical Pharmacology, and Pharmacy Practice, Pharmacology and Molecular Therapeutics, Drug Design and Discovery, Biomedical Sciences, Pharmaceutical Technology and Nutrition and Food Science. The conference included keynote addresses made by: Prof. Marc von Etzstein - Professor of Chemical Biology and Medicinal Chemistry, Executive Director of the Glycomics Institute, University of Griffiths, Queensland, Australia, and Professor Jonathan Laing - Professor of Public Health, University of Sunderland, UK.

On the sidelines of the conference, a competition was organized for graduate students, which aimed to give them the opportunity to present their scientific research and share their knowledge. In this competition, 26 students from various universities from inside and outside the UAE participated, and 9 winners were selected by an experienced jury. Three of the winners were from Al Ain University: Abdullah Abu Hajal (Al Ain Campus) got the first place in the category of 'Best Poster' in terms of 'Best Scientific Quality', Molhm Sakkal (Al Ain Campus) got the first place in the category of 'Best Presenter', and Nour Samani from Al Ain University (Abu Dhabi Campus) got the second place in the category of 'Best Design'.

While the remaining six prizes went to: Aisha Al-Mutairi from the Emirates Health Services Corporation/first place in the category of 'Best Design', Aseel Al-Jawabri from the UAE University / second place in the category of the 'Best Poster' in terms of scientific quality, Aseel Siddiq from Trinity College Dublin/second place in the category of 'Best Presentation', Maram Abbas from the Dubai College of Pharmacy /third place in the category of the 'Best Poster', Maryam Dabbous/third place in the category of the 'Best Design', and Hisham Al-Ashmouni

from the Gulf Medical University/third place in the category of 'Best Presentation'.

Al Ain University organizes the Engineering Sustainability Forum 2023

Al Ain University (AAU) represented by the College of Engineering (CoE), organized the AAU Forum for Sustainability in Engineering 2023, which aims to raise awareness on various sustainable engineering topics by bringing researchers, professors, engineers and students together under one roof to share their knowledge and experiences from various engineering fields, emphasizing the motto that was raised for this year, "Today for tomorrow".

The forum was attended by Prof. Ghaleb El Refae, AAU President, Prof. Amer Qasem, AAU Vice President (Abu Dhabi Campus), Dr. Qutaiba Al Thebyan, Dean of the CoE, Dr. Faten Kharabat, Deputy Dean of the CoE, and a number of academic staffs, students and visitors.

The forum included a number of discussion sessions that contribute to empowering a new generation of pioneering creative engineers, presented by a group of keynote speakers, Dr. Hashem Hamed AlMansoori- (Expert Advisor on ICT and S-Gov., to the G. Authority of Islamic Affairs and Endowment). Eng. Abdel Aleem Khan (Specialist - Policies & Environment Urban Policies – Planning & Infrastructure Sector – DMT) And, Mr. Rafael Villalona (CEO of CEMEX UAE and Country Director of CEMEX EMEA).

The AAU President stated that this forum is a component of Al Ain University's efforts towards promoting sustainability in the UAE, as per the directives of the wise leadership to attain sustainable development. Al Ain University is dedicated to addressing developmental, environmental, and sustainability issues by arranging seminars, conferences, and scientific competitions, as well as advancing scientific research that aligns with the objectives of sustainable development.

Moreover, the forum included a competition for university students across the UAE from a variety of engineering fields, where they competed by presenting scientific posters with sustainable engineering ideas to a jury of professionals and academics. A number of institutions and entities participated in an exhibition organized by the Deanship of Student Affairs (Abu Dhabi Campus) on the sidelines of the forum entitled "Together towards a better future by achieving sustainable development goals", during which they reviewed some of the most important initiatives and projects implemented to achieve sustainable development goals.

such as: Emirates Red Crescent, Zayed Foundation People of Determination, Emirates Scouts Association, Tadweer, Bawabat Al Sharq Bakery Equipment Factory / Milieu / Cemex / Mediclinic.

- **Collaborative Research Centers:**

While AAU is a young institution, it has begun establishing research collaborations that leverage international expertise. For instance, in 2022 AAU leadership met with the United Arab Emirates University (UAEU) – a fellow Al Ain-based institution – to launch joint research programs aligned with national SDG priorities uae.ac.ae uae.ac.ae. This academic partnership (though domestic) was rooted in global best practices: it aimed to **offer joint research projects addressing community needs, develop solutions for local challenges, and achieve the UN SDGs** through combined student–faculty teams uae.ac.ae uae.ac.ae. By pooling resources and ideas in line with international standards, AAU and UAEU sought to enhance research outcomes and build capacity for sustainable development. Such initiatives reflect AAU's strategy of leveraging comparative approaches – learning from each other and from global SDG science – to enrich its research centers and curricula.

UAE University and Al Ain University enhance research collaboration for the best interest of the community

The United Arab Emirates University (UAEU) and Al Ain University discussed the possible research collaboration between the two universities. The meeting was attended by Prof. Ghaleb Awad El Refae, President of Al Ain University and Prof. Ahmed Murad, Associate Provost for Research at UAEU, and a number of Deans and Directors of Research Departments in the two universities. The meeting was held at the headquarter of Al Ain University headquarters to enhance the joint research programs to serve society and address the national needs. The program aims to enhance the research collaboration among the students and faculty members of the two universities. This will help the two institutions to achieve their goals and better serve the community.

Prof. Ghaleb Awad El Refae elaborated that the meeting enhances the strategic partnership between the two universities and addresses the directives of the government to strengthen develop partnerships in the education sector to achieve the national plans. He pointed out that the meeting contributes to strengthening common visions in research activities that promote sustainable development by offering joint research programs addressing the local community needs and focusing on community challenges and difficulties and developing solutions. Such research activities and projects can be funded by the two universities.

Prof. Ghaleb El Refae added that Al Ain University has 6 colleges that attract a large number of students in qualitative academic disciplines that meet their aspirations provide the labor market with high-quality competencies and outcomes. He confirmed that the UAE University remains the national flagship university and this cooperation is a model for national strategic partnerships.

Prof. Ahmed Murad reported that the collaboration in research was discussed to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals and enhance the research outcomes of the two universities. The collaboration will also include students' and faculty research as well as the organization of joint national and international events that support the sustainability. We hope to expand and consolidate the research collaboration and exchange the experience among the two universities. This would allow to develop the national capacity, knowledge and skills to meet the future challenges.

Institutional Partnerships and MoUs with Global Organizations

AAU has signed a number of **Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs)** and agreements with international universities, NGOs, and organizations to formalize cooperation on SDG-related goals. These institutional partnerships typically facilitate exchanges of expertise, joint projects, and sharing of best practices:

- **Educators Without Borders International (EWBI):**

In December 2022, AAU's Al Ain campus hosted the signing of an MoU with EWBI, a Geneva-based educational NGO educatorswithoutborders.com. This partnership focuses on **SDG 4: Quality Education** and **SDG 17: Partnerships**, aiming to improve educational outcomes in disadvantaged communities globally. Under the MoU, AAU's College of Education contributes expert faculty to **train teachers and school administrators in under-resourced regions**, while AAU students and staff volunteer in EWBI's international capacity-building programs educatorswithoutborders.com. The collaboration facilitates joint workshops, research on education challenges, and exchange of experience in teacher preparation and curriculum development educatorswithoutborders.com. By providing qualified lecturers as volunteer trainers and hosting educational workshops, AAU and EWBI work together to **raise teaching standards and expand access to education in areas affected by poverty or crisis** educatorswithoutborders.com. This international link not only benefits vulnerable communities abroad but also allows AAU to benchmark its teacher training practices against global humanitarian standards.

Al Ain University signs an MOU with the "Educators Without Borders" organization

Al Ain University (AAU) has signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Educators Without Borders International (EWBI), to develop partnerships and enhance cooperation with the community.

The MOU was signed by Prof. Ghaleb Al-Refae, AAU President, and Omar Al-Buraiki, the Secretary-General of EWBI, at Al Ain University (Al Ain Campus).

This memorandum aims to attract a number of lecturers and experts working at the university to participate in the volunteer events and activities implemented by Educators Without Borders International as volunteer trainers by providing training programs for teachers, administrators, students, and parents in needy and less fortunate areas.

The terms of the memorandum also aim to train teachers, provide an opportunity for educational and administrative staff and students to participate in various events and activities, support and facilitate conducting research and studies and benefit from capabilities, and exchange experiences. It also aims to provide lessons, lectures, and educational workshops that contribute to the development of education in the targeted areas, and full support in the field of research and scientific publishing, and promote the values of volunteer work among professors and students.

It is worth mentioning that Educators Without Borders International is an international organization based in Geneva. It seeks to provide training, rehabilitation, and awareness services for students, teachers, and administrators to improve the quality of education and enhance access to education for the less fortunate in areas that live in difficult conditions due to poverty, wars, and natural disasters.

- **Murdoch University (Australia):**

In January 2024, AAU signed a landmark MoU with Murdoch University to launch a new chapter of international academic partnership aau.ac.ae. Murdoch (based in Perth) and AAU agreed to cooperate in areas such as **joint research, faculty exchange, and curriculum development**, with the broader aim of enriching educational quality and innovation. The agreement – described as “charting a new course for international educational partnership” aau.ac.ae – paves the way for **comparative research projects** (e.g. possibly in digital health or sustainability, given Murdoch’s strengths) and student exchange programs. By connecting with an Australian institution, AAU seeks to absorb **global best practices in teaching and research** and to give its students a cross-cultural learning experience, thereby furthering **SDG 4 (Quality Education)** and **SDG 9 (Innovation)** through knowledge transfer.

Al Ain University signs an MOU with Murdoch University

In a significant development for global academic collaboration, Al Ain University (AAU) and Murdoch University (MU) have officially signed a comprehensive Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), charting a new course for international educational partnership. The MoU was signed in the presence of Prof. Ghaleb El Refae, President of Al Ain University, and Dr. Mustafa Khairi, the former Dean of the College of Pharmacy at AAU, representing the commitment of AAU to this groundbreaking initiative. From Murdoch University, the signatories included Prof. Simon McKirdy, Deputy Vice Chancellor of Global Engagement in MU,

underscoring MU's dedication to enhancing its global engagement and research impact.

The agreement marks a significant step forward in international educational cooperation, with both institutions committing to a wide range of collaborative activities. These initiatives are designed to enhance the educational landscape, foster cultural exchange, and promote global understanding.

The signing of this MoU between Al Ain University and Murdoch University is not just a testament to their commitment to academic excellence and international cooperation but also a beacon of hope for future generations. It promises to open new doors for students and faculty alike, offering them unprecedented opportunities for learning, research, and personal growth. The collaboration is expected to yield significant benefits for both academic communities, fostering a spirit of innovation and mutual respect that transcends geographical boundaries.

- **German Jordanian University (Jordan):**

In late 2024, AAU expanded its regional network by signing an MoU with the German Jordanian University (GJU) in Amman. This partnership is geared towards **strengthening academic cooperation** and is explicitly structured to produce tangible outcomes: *faculty and student exchanges, joint research initiatives*, and co-organized training workshops and seminars gju.edu.jo. The GJU–AAU agreement aligns with **SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals)** by bridging two cultures and leveraging GJU's German-linked educational model. By implementing joint research projects and mobility programs, both universities aim to share **best practices in curricula, entrepreneurship, and technology**. For AAU's Al Ain campus, this means access to a broader research network and insights from GJU's experiences (for example, GJU's focus on applied sciences), enriching AAU's capacity to tackle development issues with a comparative perspective gju.edu.jo. Early plans under this MoU include collaborative student projects, faculty study visits, and possibly joint publications on topics of mutual interest (e.g. renewable energy or sustainable urban development, which are priorities in both the UAE and Jordan).

German Jordanian University Signs MOU with Al Ain University in the UAE to Strengthen Academic Cooperation

The German Jordanian University (GJU) and Al Ain University in the United Arab Emirates have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to strengthen academic and scientific cooperation between the two institutions.

The agreement was signed by the President of GJU, Prof. Ala'aldeen Al-Halhouli, and the President of Al Ain University, Prof. Ghaleb El-Refae, in the presence of representatives from both sides.

The MoU aims to enhance academic exchange for faculty members and students, implement joint research projects, organize training courses, workshops, and academic seminars, and develop innovative programs focused on technical education and e-learning. Additionally, the agreement emphasizes innovation and entrepreneurship to achieve mutual benefit.

Prof. Al-Halhouli highlighted that the signing of this agreement reflects GJU's commitment to strengthening its partnerships with regional and international universities, aligning with its vision to provide practical and distinguished education.

Prof. El-Refae stated that this cooperation represents a positive step toward achieving academic excellence and enhancing the quality of education in the region.

The agreement stipulates that joint activities and projects will be implemented under detailed agreements to be negotiated later, in compliance with the laws and regulations of both Jordan and the UAE.

- **An-Najah National University (Palestine):**

Also in 2024, AAU established a cooperation agreement with An-Najah National University, one of the leading universities in Palestine (Nablus). While details are emerging, photo releases from December 2024 show the signing ceremony of this agreement education.aau.ac.ae. The partnership likely focuses on academic exchange and research collaboration, potentially in fields like engineering or public health where both institutions have strengths. Such a Middle East–Middle East university collaboration fosters **regional SDG solutions** – for instance, joint studies on water conservation or urban sustainability that benefit arid cities in both countries. It also demonstrates AAU's commitment to South-South partnership, sharing knowledge and best practices with a peer institution to address common challenges in the Arab world.

Al Ain University introduce its programs at NAJAH exhibitions

Al Ain University (AAU) participated in the exhibitions "Najah Abu Dhabi" and "Najah Dubai", the most prominent and leading higher education events in the region, which are held from 27th to 29th October at Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre (ADNEC) Abu Dhabi, and from 31st October to 1st November at Expo Dubai 2020, in order to communicate with larger student audience for introducing AAU's various academic programs and scholarships.

The university exhibited visitors with a variety of its programs licensed by the Ministry of Education in the UAE in the fields of engineering, pharmacy, law, education, business, and media. Where the university offers 17 bachelor's programs and 8 master's programs, in addition to a postgraduate professional diploma in teaching. Through its participation in Najah exhibitions, AAU seeks to reach the largest possible segment of students to review the educational opportunities offered by AAU that enable them to take the next step in their university journey, and to introduce them to academic programs offered, various scholarships,

facilities, and services provided by AAU in order to prepare a unique learning environment for students.

The visiting students were able to meet the staff of the Student Recruitment Unit and clarified their inquiries regarding registration, they also had the opportunity to submit the online admission application.

It is noteworthy that Al Ain University is keen to participate in the Najah exhibition annually, as it is the most important exhibition in the country in the field of higher education, which enhances direct communication with students and reflects a better picture of AAU at all levels. The opportunity to enhance communication with students this year was phenomenal, due to the university's participation in their two exhibitions, especially since the Najah Dubai exhibition was held at Expo 2020, which is an vital platform for university employees to communicate with members of the outside community.

- **Zhejiang Institute of Geology (China):**

Broadening its global reach, AAU's College of Engineering signed an MoU in late 2024 with the Zhejiang Institute of Geology in the People's Republic of China aau.ac.ae. This collaboration is centered on **environmental and geological research** – areas directly tied to **SDG 13: Climate Action** and **SDG 15: Life on Land**. The agreement seeks to promote cooperation in multiple geoscience disciplines, ensuring that faculty experts from both sides work together on issues like groundwater management, mineral resources, and environmental protection. By linking Al Ain (a desert-city context) with Zhejiang's geological institute, AAU gains exposure to **Chinese research methodologies and data** on sustainability, while contributing its own expertise on Gulf region environmental challenges. The MoU likely entails joint field studies, data exchange (e.g. on soil and water conditions), and perhaps collaborative publications on climate resilience. Ultimately, this partnership allows AAU to benchmark its environmental research against international standards and contribute to global best practices in natural resource management aau.ac.ae.

An MOU with Zhejiang Institute of Geology in China

The College of Engineering at Al Ain University has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Zhejiang Institute of Geology in the People's Republic of China, a first-tier public institution under the Zhejiang Provincial Government. The institute specializes in theoretical and applied geological studies, integrating advanced scientific research with practical applications across multiple geological fields. It is committed to developing innovative geology and natural resources solutions and is distinguished by its international collaborations with various academic and research institutions.

The signing ceremony occurred at the Abu Dhabi campus, attended by a high-level Zhejiang Institute of Geology delegation, including senior officials who traveled specifically from China to

the UAE to finalize the agreement.

The MoU was signed on behalf of Al Ain University by Prof. Abdullah Ahmed Al-Shara, Director of the Civil Engineering Program, and on behalf of the Zhejiang Institute of Geology by Dr. Gu Hongwei, Director of Green Development in Mining Research. The event was witnessed by Prof. Amer Qasem, Vice President of the University, along with department heads, directors, and faculty members from both sides.

This partnership aims to establish a strategic collaboration between the two institutions by exchanging academic and research expertise in various fields, particularly civil engineering and geology. The MoU outlines cooperative initiatives in diverse areas, including: Geological surveys, Mineral resource research, Exploration, development, and utilization of mineral resources, Research on sustainable building materials, Geological engineering, Geotechnical engineering, Urban geological safety, Prevention and control of geological hazards, Ecological restoration of land and regions, Resource and environmental assessments

This agreement marks a pivotal step in building academic bridges between the two parties, offering students and faculty opportunities to engage in educational and research exchange programs. These initiatives will contribute to developing scientific and research skills for both sides.

During the visit, the Chinese delegation toured the civil engineering laboratories at Al Ain University, exploring the university's advanced facilities in this field, which reflect the high quality and scientific development achieved by the university in its academic programs and research labs.

Prof. Amer Qasem, Vice President of Al Ain University - Abu Dhabi, expressed his delight at the signing of the MoU, highlighting the importance of international cooperation in advancing education and scientific research. He emphasized that this agreement would be a starting point for new and fruitful partnerships with global academic institutions.

An MOU between Al Ain University and the Environment Agency - Abu Dhabi

Al Ain University (AAU) and the Environment Agency - Abu Dhabi have signed a memorandum of understanding aimed at boosting collaboration in areas of shared interest in research and development. The signing of the agreement was overseen by Her Excellency Dr. Sheikha Salem Al Dhaheri, the Secretary General of the Environment Agency - Abu Dhabi, and Prof. Ghaleb Al Rifai, AAU President.

The MoU aims to promote collaboration in multiple environmental disciplines, benefiting both

parties involved. It also mandates that faculty members possess the expertise, unique research resources, and innovative ideas to bridge any scientific gaps, as well as support the efforts of the Environment Agency - Abu Dhabi and Al Ain University to safeguard the environment and preserve biological diversity. This will enhance the reputation and function of both institutions as centers of scientific excellence, ultimately aiding Abu Dhabi in achieving its sustainability and environmental objectives.

Prof. Ghaleb Al-Refai, President of the University, said this memorandum will strengthen collaboration in the areas of research, service, and development while highlighting the interdependence of environmental, social, and economic systems in addressing environmental challenges and promoting sustainable development. The University is committed to utilizing its academic programs and scientific research to serve all sectors, particularly the environmental sector. Al Ain University is dedicated to preserving the environmental balance and climate and achieving the objectives of sustainable development. The university is making every effort to provide its expertise and resources to achieve these goals.

Ahmed Baharoon, the Executive Director of the Environmental Information, Science and Awareness Management Sector at the Environment Agency - Abu Dhabi, stated that the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between the agency and Al Ain University demonstrates their shared dedication to actively promoting sustainable development through scientific research activities that focus on utilizing modern technologies. He added that this collaboration is one of the essential elements for meeting the developmental needs in environmental conservation and resource management.

By signing the MoUs, the universities' significant research capabilities will be utilized to meet the emirate's environmental research requirements, while also providing the universities with an abundance of meaningful research questions. The strategic priorities of EAD, such as climate change, habitat conservation, ground and marine water, fisheries, and air quality, present exciting research opportunities. Additionally, policy formulation and balancing social, economic, and environmental factors offer valuable areas for research. The results of the collaborative research will be disseminated through various mediums, such as scientific literature, reports, and journals.

- **Siemens Energy:**

In 2024, AAU entered a public-private partnership by signing a “**landmark MoU**” with Siemens Energy LLC – the local branch of the global energy technology company [aau.ac.ae](https://www.aau.ac.ae). This academia-industry collaboration is aimed at **advancing research and innovation in the sustainable energy sector**. The partnership establishes a framework for **joint research projects, technology pilot programs, and student development opportunities** in areas like renewable energy, energy efficiency, and smart power systems. *By partnering with Siemens Energy, AAU is creating a platform for its students and faculty to tackle real-world energy*

challenges, drive green innovation, and prepare for careers in the clean energy field education.aau.ac.ae. The MoU envisions AAU engineering students working alongside Siemens experts on practical projects – for example, designing solar-powered systems or improving energy storage solutions – which contributes to **SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy**. Additionally, Siemens Energy will likely support curriculum enhancements (bringing industry best practices into the classroom) and co-host workshops or hackathons on campus. This collaboration exemplifies how AAU is **leveraging global corporate expertise to benchmark its research output** and ensure its engineering education aligns with cutting-edge sustainable technologies education.aau.ac.ae.

Al Ain University and Siemens Energy collaborate to Foster Research and Innovation in the Energy Sector

Al Ain University (AAU) and Siemens Energy LLC have signed a landmark Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to establish a collaborative partnership to advance innovation, knowledge exchange, and joint research in the energy sector. The MoU was signed by Prof. Ghaleb El Refae (President- Al Ain University), and Dr. Fahad Al Yafei (Chief Technology Officer, Technology and Innovation Center Abu Dhabi, Siemens Energy.). The signing ceremony was attended by Dr. Noor Al Deen Atatreh (Board of Trustees Deputy Chairman- Al Ain University), Mr. Khalid Bin Hadi (UAE Managing Director- Siemens Energy), and staff members from both organizations.

The partnership between Al Ain University and Siemens Energy focuses on collaborative research and pilot projects, with AAU students addressing real-world challenges and providing consulting solutions. At the same time, Siemens Energy experts contribute their knowledge to enhance the academic environment. This collaboration also aims to create new job opportunities for AAU graduates and develop a skilled talent pipeline for Siemens Energy. It involves sharing resources, pursuing joint funding for energy transition research, and working on projects in de-carbonization, energy storage, and blockchain applications.

“This collaboration marks a major advance in aligning academia with industry needs. By partnering with Siemens Energy, we offer our students exceptional opportunities to tackle real-world challenges, drive innovation, and prepare for leadership roles in the energy sector. Together, we are advancing research and developing sustainable solutions for a better future.” said Prof. Ghaleb El Refae, President of Al Ain University.

“Partnership is key to accelerating de-carbonization. Enabling knowledge transfer and fostering innovation in the energy sector is crucial to empowering future generations in the fight against climate change. We’re proud to launch this collaboration with Al Ain University and work with academia to develop and commercialize new technologies that will make a meaningful contribution to reaching net zero,” said Dr. Fahad Al Yafei, Chief Technology Officer, Technology and Innovation Center Abu Dhabi, Siemens Energy.

- **Other MoUs and Agreements:**

AAU's internationalization drive has led to numerous other agreements that indirectly support SDG goals. For instance, AAU partnered with the **Institute of Management Accountants (IMA)** (USA) to offer globally accredited finance training (building capacity for **SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth**), and with **Skyline University College** (Sharjah/UAE) to exchange know-how in business education (enhancing quality education). AAU also maintains student exchange deals with institutions like **Applied Science Private University (Jordan)** and **Menlo College (USA)**, enabling cultural and academic exchanges aau.ac.ae. These programs cultivate global citizenship competencies and professional skills in AAU students, aligning with SDG targets on quality education and reduced inequalities. Each partnership brings a new dimension of international best practice into AAU's operations – whether through **curriculum benchmarking, joint professional certifications, or collaborative student activities** – thus enriching AAU's contribution to sustainable development.

AAU signs Two MOUs regarding student exchange with the (ASPU) in Jordan, and (MSU) in Malaysia

The College of Pharmacy at Al Ain University (AAU) has recently signed two significant student exchange programs with the Applied Science Private University (ASPU) in Jordan, and the Management & Science University (MSU) in Malaysia. This partnership provides our students with an exceptional opportunity to engage in immersive educational experiences abroad.

The collaboration with the (ASPU) in Jordan allows Al Ain University students to participate in a student exchange program that promotes academic and cultural exchanges between the two institutions. The students involved in the AAU-ASPU exchange program are BSc. in Pharmacy, BSc. in Nutrition, and MSc. in Pharmaceutical Sciences.

Through this program, all pharmacy and nutrition students (at undergraduate and postgraduate levels) have the chance to study for an entire academic semester in Jordan, experiencing the vibrant Jordanian culture and engaging with the university's esteemed faculty and students.

On the other hand, the collaboration with the (MSU) in Malaysia allows our pharmacy students to spend a semester at MSU, immersing themselves in a dynamic learning environment and benefiting from the expertise of MSU's renowned faculty. Engaging with Malaysian students and the local community provides Al Ain University students with a global perspective, enhances their cultural competence, and expands their professional networks.

On another note, the joint collaboration agreement strengthens academic and knowledge exchange, including the exchange of information and data between the two institutions, as well as the development of research projects and the organization of joint events.

Dr. Khairi Mustafa (Dean of the College of Pharmacy), commented: "Al Ain University is proud

to offer these opportunities to its students, enabling them to gain valuable experiences, broaden their perspectives, and develop essential skills that will benefit them personally and professionally."

Prof. Mohammad Ghattas (Deputy Dean of the College of Pharmacy), said: "This exchange program not only broadens the student's academic horizons but also deepens their understanding of the Middle East region and fosters cross-cultural dialogue and appreciation". He added, "The student exchange program emphasizes the importance of international education, promoting global understanding, and cultivating well-rounded individuals equipped to thrive in an interconnected world".

Participation in International SDG Networks and Forums

- **Times Higher Education (THE) Impact Rankings:**

Al Ain University has actively participated in the **THE University Impact Rankings**, a global benchmarking initiative measuring universities' performance on each of the 17 SDGs. Through submitting data and case studies annually (2019–2024), AAU has **reviewed its approaches against international metrics and improved practices**. These efforts paid off: AAU achieved top-tier global rankings in multiple SDGs, reflecting its leadership in certain areas. Notably, AAU was ranked **6th worldwide for SDG 4 (Quality Education)** and also earned high global positions for SDG 5 (Gender Equality) and SDG 8 (Decent Work & Economic Growth) aaau.ac.ae. In one recent cycle, AAU secured a #5 global rank for Gender Equality and #11 for Quality Education aaau.ac.ae. Such recognition indicates AAU's strong engagement in inclusive education, gender initiatives, and employability – but importantly, the **Impact Rankings process itself spurred AAU to adopt best practices and partnerships**. To perform well, the university aligned its policies with UN SDG criteria, expanded data gathering (e.g. tracking outreach programs, carbon footprint, research impacts), and strengthened collaborations (like those MoUs under SDG17). This global network has thus been a catalyst for AAU to continuously exchange improvements and success stories with other ranked universities around the world uaeu.ac.ae.

Al Ain University Among Top 100 Global Institutions According to THE Impact Rankings 2024

<https://aaau.ac.ae/en/news/2024/al-ain-university-among-top-100-global-institutions-according-to-the-impact-rankings-2024>

Al Ain University (AAU) has been ranked among the TOP 100 universities worldwide in Times Higher Education Impact Rankings 2024, after being ranked among the top 200 globally last year.

The Times Higher Education Impact Rankings evaluate universities based on the 17 United

Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which include: no poverty, zero hunger, good health and well-being, quality education, gender equality, clean water and sanitation, affordable and clean energy, decent work and economic growth, industry, innovation, and infrastructure, reduced inequalities, sustainable cities and communities, responsible consumption and production, climate action, life below water, life on land, peace, justice and strong institutions, and partnerships for the goals.

Al Ain University also, topped the ranking for three main SDGs by securing; # 11 (SDG 4- Quality Education), # 5 (SDG 5 -Gender Equality), and #37 (SDG 8- Decent Work and Economic Growth) among the 1963 listed universities worldwide by the 'THE Impact Ranking 2024'. These achievements confirm the university's commitment to achieving sustainable development goals and enhancing its positive impact on society and the world.

Prof. Ghaleb Al Refae (AAU President) indicated that the global ranking results confirm the AAU's commitment to achieving the highest quality standards in education in line with the sustainable development goals, in addition to providing a sustainable educational environment for students. He affirmed that the university's progress in the rankings demonstrates its prestigious position as an active contributor to achieving the sustainable development goals through its strategic plans, scientific research, various initiatives, and the continuous diligent work of all university staff to achieve more successes.

Prof. Nazih Khaddaj Mallat (Vice President for Accreditation & QA), stated: "This achievement reflects our commitment to excellence and sustainability and making a positive impact on our global community. This accomplishment is the result of the concerted efforts at the university from all parties. We extend our thanks to the faculty members, staff, students, and partners who contributed to this success. We will continue to strive together to achieve more accomplishments."

Al Ain University aims to enhance its academic standing and reputation both locally and globally in the field of sustainable development by focusing on improving the quality of scientific research, organizing conferences, launching initiatives, and continuing to work towards achieving more goals in the future.

AAU participated in the WEEC 2024

Al Ain university (AAU) actively engaged in the 12th World Environmental Education Congress (WEEC 2024), to emphasize its commitment to environmental issues and sustainable development. AAU's professors presented a variety of research presentations discussing environmental issues, and the university also participated in the accompanying exhibition, showcasing its community initiatives in climate, environmental sustainability, and environmental education.

The hosting of this global conference by the United Arab Emirates reflects its commitment to environmental sustainability. Al Ain University, aligned with this vision, is dedicated to applying the highest standards of environmental sustainability through education, scientific research, community activities, and university infrastructure. The university is committed to providing high-quality education, organizing conferences, workshops, and launching initiatives that serve the youth and contribute to enhancing sustainable entrepreneurship for the future.

Al Ain University takes pride in its ranking as the 5th in the United Arab Emirates in the 2024 QS World Sustainability Ranking. Additionally, the university has achieved advanced positions in Sustainable Development Goals, ranking 6th globally in Goal 4 (Quality Education), 33rd globally in Goal 5 (Gender Equality), and 88th globally in Goal 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth). The university is also a member of the Universities Climate Network, a network of 33 local universities collaborating in education, research, and community service in environmental protection and climate change mitigation.

Al Ain university offers a diverse range of programs and specializations that align with its educational outcomes and sustainable development goals. Al Ain University actively seeks to strengthen its relationships and establish collaborative agreements with external institutions interested in environmental issues, including the Abu Dhabi Environment Agency and the Abu Dhabi Agriculture and Food Safety Authority.

Al Ain University made a notable contribution to COP 28, with its professors delivering oral presentations and research papers addressing environmental, climate, sustainability, and artificial intelligence issues. The university's students also participated in the Climate Ambassadors program, innovation competitions, and entrepreneurship challenges.

The university prioritizes the promotion of scientific research and encourages professors to conduct innovative research that serves the environment, addresses climate challenges, and generates creative solutions.

UAE University and Al Ain University enhance research collaboration for the best interest of the community

United Arab Emirates University (UAEU) - Top Universities in Middle East

The United Arab Emirates University (UAEU) and Al Ain University discussed the possible research collaboration between the two universities. The meeting was attended by Prof. Ghaleb Awad El Refae, President of Al Ain University and Prof. Ahmed Murad, Associate Provost for Research at UAEU, and a number of Deans and Directors of Research Departments in the two universities. The meeting was held at the headquarter of Al Ain University headquarters to enhance the joint research programs to serve society and address the national needs. The

program aims to enhance the research collaboration among the students and faculty members of the two universities. This will help the two institutions to achieve their goals and better serve the community.

Prof. Ghaleb Awad El Refae elaborated that the meeting enhances the strategic partnership between the two universities and addresses the directives of the government to strengthen develop partnerships in the education sector to achieve the national plans. He pointed out that the meeting contributes to strengthening common visions in research activities that promote sustainable development by offering joint research programs addressing the local community needs and focusing on community challenges and difficulties and developing solutions. Such research activities and projects can be funded by the two universities.

Prof. Ghaleb El Refae added that Al Ain University has 6 colleges that attract a large number of students in qualitative academic disciplines that meet their aspirations provide the labor market with high-quality competencies and outcomes. He confirmed that the UAE University remains the national flagship university and this cooperation is a model for national strategic partnerships.

Prof. Ahmed Murad reported that the collaboration in research was discussed to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals and enhance the research outcomes of the two universities. The collaboration will also include students' and faculty research as well as the organization of joint national and international events that support the sustainability. We hope to expand and consolidate the research collaboration and exchange the experience among the two universities. This would allow to develop the national capacity, knowledge and skills to meet the future challenges.

- **UNESCO and UNAI Workshops:**

AAU has contributed to international and regional dialogues on higher education's role in sustainable development. For example, in May 2021 AAU took part in a **national SDG workshop** organized by UNESCO's Regional Center for Educational Planning and the UAE Ministry of Education unesco.org unesco.org. Alongside other UAE universities, AAU representatives discussed integrating the SDGs into university strategy, sharing how AAU's curriculum and campus initiatives align with the 2030 Agenda. Such forums allowed AAU to compare notes with global experts and local peers on implementing SDGs (covering topics from green campus operations to community service learning). Similarly, AAU is a member of networks like **SDGs Universities (SDGsUNI)** – a global forum for academia on Agenda 2030 – where it features its sustainability initiatives and learns from others' experiences. These engagements ensure AAU stays updated on international best practices (for instance, how to embed sustainability in teaching, or how to measure SDG impact) and contributes its own case studies to the global knowledge base.

UAE universities play a pivotal role in achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals

The higher education sector in the United Arab Emirates is built on a solid foundation and plays an important role in consecrating sustainable development plans for 2030, as the country embraces more than 1,200 accredited academic programs in various disciplines in licensed educational institutions, and has the largest number of foreign university branches in a single country in the world. This is what the Minister of Education and Learning in the UAE, Hussein bin Ibrahim Al Hammadi, affirmed, stating that the institutions are characterized by the diversity of their educational systems, with a common national base that they have to abide by through the application of licensing and academic accreditation standards, and the fulfillment of the specifications of the different levels of qualifications, defined by the national system.

The minister made these remarks during a national workshop titled “The Role of Higher Education Institutions in Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the UAE” which was implemented by the Regional Center for Educational Planning in partnership with the Ministry of Education, UNESCO, the UAE National Commission for Education, Culture and Science, the UNESCO Regional Office for Arab States in Beirut and the UNESCO Sub-regional Office for the Gulf states, with the participation of 13 universities in the country.

The workshop aims to provide representatives of higher education institutions in the UAE with various and general aspects of the sustainable development goals and their relationship to the diverse work of universities, and to provide representatives of higher education institutions in the UAE with practical information on how to contribute to the achievement of the sustainable development goals and the role they can play.

In his opening speech, Minister Hussain bin Ibrahim Al Hammadi said that the vital role of higher education institutions is not limited to achieving quality and comprehensive education only, but that it rather extends its impact by achieving the various goals, through teaching, learning, research outputs, campus initiatives and higher education institutions, to facilitate social, environmental and economic development. He noted that higher education institutions have become one of the most important incubators of ideas and solutions to global problems, mainly with their central location between government networks, civil society and industry partners, which means that they have enormous potential to generate a positive impact.

He also stressed that the steps taken by the Ministry of Education and the setup of an education road map that derives from national visions and targets, their path, tasks and goals, and that is in line with the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, is unfolding according to a well-established and clear methodology with specific features, and is bearing fruit as it stems from a deep vision and extensive studies.

He also pointed out that the national strategy for higher education in the UAE aims to develop an innovative and high-quality educational system in both academic and professional tracks, that achieves effective research outputs and contributes to supporting the knowledge economy. He added: "The National Strategy for Higher Education 2030 is based on 4 main axes, which are quality, alignment, efficiency and innovation. The UAE has the largest number of foreign university branches in one single country in the world, which contributed to achieving global

competitiveness indicators through the proportion of non-citizens students in the UAE”.

Thirteen universities participated in the workshop, and five universities in the country, namely the Emirates, Khalifa, Zayed, the American University of Sharjah, and the Higher Colleges of Technology in Sharjah, presented specialized presentations, in which they reviewed their strategies and their connection with the national strategies and the sustainable development goals in order to integrate these goals in the universities societal programs, activities and research programs, and how to implement these goals at the levels of the university building, the student activities and academic and research programs, so that the challenges of implementing these goals are overcome nationally, regionally and globally. The universities also presented their strategic and technical partnerships in this field.

For her part, Mahra Al-Mutaiwee, Director of the Regional Center for Educational Planning, said that with the launch of the sustainable development goals, many universities at the national, regional and global levels have begun to review their agendas, plans and strategies, to start putting forward and implementing initiatives and projects that are consistent, and work to support the implementation of the sustainable development goals.

She stated that universities have begun coordinating their activities with the sustainable development goals, highlighting the effective role played by higher education institutions in addressing urgent challenges in the world, and noting that the international community is aware of the essential importance of higher education to achieve all 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which aim to eradicate poverty, protect the planet, promote gender equality, defend and promote cultures and cultural understanding. She also said that universities are dedicated to helping the world achieve those goals.

On her side, Salma Al Darmaki, Secretary-General of the National Committee for Education, Culture and Science, stressed that this workshop represents a qualitative and distinct initiative to motivate and encourage higher education institutions, to develop plans and programs aimed at contributing to achieving all sustainable development goals without being limited to the fourth goal of quality education. She considered that the role of higher education institutions is fundamental and is not limited to research and innovation, but rather includes the human element which is more important, since students are the future leaders who will continue to work to achieve the goals of sustainable development. The more their understanding and awareness for these goals, the more it will reflect positively on the way they deal with them in the future.

Dr. Anasse Bouhlal, higher education program specialist at the UNESCO Regional Office for Education in the Arab States in Beirut, gave a specialized presentation on the importance of the role of higher education institutions in achieving sustainable development goals, and reviewed regional experiences in this field as well as strategies for integrating sustainable development goals into the university's plans and programs, with regard to scientific research programs and their role in addressing the challenges that impede the achievement of sustainable development goals at the national, regional and global levels. He also highlighted the efforts of countries in this field, and reviewed the the UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme, and how national, regional and international universities are relating to this programme. Giving an overview of UNESCO Chairs and their importance in supporting scientific research, and the mechanisms

and strategies for joining them, he underlined how they can benefit the university and the state.

- **International Conferences and Competitions:**

Beyond hosting events, AAU encourages faculty and students to join international conferences, competitions, and working groups focused on the SDGs. AAU scholars regularly present research at global conferences (in fields such as renewable energy, education, and public health), thereby injecting their local findings into the international policy conversation. For instance, AAU researchers have attended global forums on climate action and sustainability – e.g. the *International Conference on Climate Action and Sustainability (ICCAS)* scheduled in Al Ain in 2025 attracted AAU's involvement as a local host/partner rsc.org. On the student front, AAU teams have participated in global innovation challenges (such as robotics and sustainability competitions), often earning accolades that underscore the quality of AAU's training. Each of these international engagements helps AAU **benchmark its approaches**, glean new ideas, and forge relationships with experts worldwide, ultimately feeding back into improved SDG practices on campus.

International Conference on Climate Action and Sustainability (ICCAS)

The United Arab Emirates University (UAEU) is organizing the First International Conference on Climate Action and Sustainability (ICCAS-2025). ICCAS 2025 will be held on October 7-10, 2025, at United Arab Emirates University, United Arab Emirates. ICCAS is a leading forum that focuses on low-carbon action and sustainable solutions. ICCAS-2025 aims to bring together professors, researchers, engineers and students to present their recent works and discuss state-of-the-art climate action and sustainability technologies. We aim to promote a greener future for the Gulf region and beyond. The conference will be held face-to-face to gather experts in fields related to Climate Action and Sustainability from both academia and industry. It sets the ground to showcase the latest advances and recent developments in sustainable development goals to achieve low-carbon and sustainability. The event will provide an excellent forum for discussions, the exchange of ideas, and the creation of new connections and research collaborations. The significance of this conference aligns with the UAE's vision to become a global leader in climate action and sustainability. The conference will focus on exchanging expertise over three days and will feature research presentations, scientific posters, and panel discussions on the latest developments.

Conference Themes / Tracks:

- Track 1: Affordable and Clean Energy, Batteries and Fuel Cells
- Track 2: Climate Action in Capture, and Utilization (CCU)
- Track 3: Additive Manufacturing and Advanced Composites

- Track 4: Sustainable Catalysts, Electrocatalysts, and Photocatalysts
- Track 5: Aerospace, Robotics, and Artificial Intelligence for Sustainability
- Track 6: Energy-Water-Food Nexus for Climate Resilience
- Track 7: Sustainable and Green Building Innovations
- Track 8: Education, Policies, and the Circular Economy

Key Features:

- Plenary and keynote talks by global experts
- Peer-reviewed oral and poster presentations
- Opportunities for collaboration with academia and industry
- Special issue in indexed journals
- Student support initiatives (free registration for selected abstracts)

Target Audience:

Academics, researchers, industry professionals, sustainability officers, environmental consultants, government agencies, NGOs, and graduate students.

• Academic Associations and Accreditation Networks:

AAU's Colleges have joined prestigious international bodies that emphasize collaborative improvement. For example, the College of Business at AAU became a candidate for **AACSB accreditation**, during which it networked with business schools globally to enhance curriculum quality and societal impact (contributing to SDG 4 and SDG 9). Likewise, AAU's membership in the **Association of Arab Universities** and similar organizations facilitates regional knowledge exchange on community development initiatives. In 2023–2024, AAU intensified its **internationalization efforts as an AACSB member school by affiliating with worldwide educational networks**, reinforcing its commitment to global standards [aau.ac.ae](https://business.aau.ac.ae). Through such channels, AAU faculty have joined international working groups (for instance, on entrepreneurship education, or engineering for sustainable cities), collaboratively developing frameworks and guidelines that inform policy recommendations in the higher education sector.

UN-PRME (United Nations Principles of Responsible Management Education)

https://business.aau.ac.ae/uploads/2024/09/college_of_business_enewsletter_flashback_2024_

[en.pdf](#)

In 2023-2024, Al Ain University continued advancing its goal of internationalization as an AACSB school through membership with prestigious educational communities and new strategic partnerships with international business schools and professional associations.

College of Business became a signatory of UN-PRME (United Nations Principles of Responsible Management Education) in November 2023. We joined the community of over 800 leading business and management schools from 90 countries worldwide committed to building a more sustainable future by transforming management education conducive to nurturing responsible decision-makers of tomorrow.

Contributions to SDG Policy and Best-Practice Initiatives

- **Comparative SDG Studies:**

AAU has not only been the subject of comparative studies but has also initiated them. University leaders and researchers at the Al Ain campus have engaged in multi-country studies to evaluate effective SDG implementation. For example, AAU's experiences were highlighted in a 2024 cross-university analysis of best practices for incorporating SDGs into higher education (specifically highlighting AAU's success in **Quality Education and Partnerships**) [emerald.com](#). By documenting its programs – such as its community engagement for poverty reduction and gender equity – AAU provided a case for what works in its context, thereby informing global recommendations. Internally, AAU's Office of Institutional Research tracks SDG-related performance against international benchmarks (using data from the UN and global indices) and produces reports that guide policy adjustments. These efforts mean AAU is **contributing to the global knowledge on SDG integration** – for instance, identifying how private universities in developing regions can effectively localize global goals.

- **Policy Alignment and Recommendations:**

At the institutional level, AAU has aligned its strategy with the UAE's national sustainability agendas, which themselves draw on UN SDGs. AAU's President, Dr. Ghaleb Al Refae, has emphasized partnerships to achieve national development plans in education [uae.ac.ae](#). In practice, AAU has developed policies (on curriculum, research funding, campus operations) that echo international best practices – often after reviewing how leading universities abroad implement similar policies. AAU administrators frequently participate in policy forums and government advisory panels on topics like **innovation in education, youth empowerment,**

and environmental sustainability, bringing comparative insights from the university's global engagements. For example, the joint AAU–UAEU research initiative explicitly aimed to **address government directives on education partnerships to achieve national SDG targets**, and to share outcomes that could inform policy at local and national levels uae.ac.ae uae.ac.ae. By working on community-focused research (e.g. smart city solutions for Al Ain) and publishing findings, AAU provides evidence and recommendations to policymakers on scaling such solutions. Moreover, through its collaborations with NGOs and industry (like EWBI and Siemens), AAU helps translate academic knowledge into practical recommendations – be it white papers on improving rural schooling or guidelines for renewable energy adoption – thus bridging the gap between research and policy in the SDG arena.

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joint national and international events that support the sustainability. We hope to expand and consolidate the research collaboration and exchange the experience among the two universities. This would allow to develop the national capacity, knowledge and skills to meet the future challenges.

- **Global Best-Practice Frameworks:**

Several of AAU's joint projects have yielded frameworks or models that contribute to international best practices. For instance, the **water-flood alarm project** with Mount Union University not only delivered a prototype device but also a *framework for cross-continental student collaboration on SDG solutions*. The methodology (students in two countries co-designing a technology for a local problem) can be replicated by other universities, and AAU has shared this experience in engineering education circles. Similarly, the **teacher-training program with EWBI** created a model of how a university can volunteer expertise to uplift education in crisis regions – a partnership approach now promoted as a best practice for SDG4 in some UN-affiliated networkseducatorswithoutborders.com. AAU's involvement in the Impact Rankings has led it to adopt comprehensive sustainability policies (covering gender equality, labor practices, governance, etc.), effectively modeling an integrated approach that other emerging universities are keen to follow. Indeed, AAU's rise in SDG rankings demonstrates how adopting a holistic, partnership-driven strategy yields measurable impact aau.ac.ae. AAU openly shares these lessons through publications and at conferences, contributing to a global exchange of “what works” in embedding sustainable development in higher education.

Al Ain University signs an MOU with the "Educators Without Borders" organization

Al Ain University (AAU) has signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Educators Without Borders International (EWBI), to develop partnerships and enhance cooperation with the community.

The MOU was signed by Prof. Ghaleb Al-Refae, AAU President, and Omar Al-Buraiki, the Secretary-General of EWBI, at Al Ain University (Al Ain Campus).

This memorandum aims to attract a number of lecturers and experts working at the university to participate in the volunteer events and activities implemented by Educators Without Borders International as volunteer trainers by providing training programs for teachers, administrators, students, and parents in needy and less fortunate areas.

The terms of the memorandum also aim to train teachers, provide an opportunity for educational and administrative staff and students to participate in various events and activities, support and facilitate conducting research and studies and benefit from capabilities, and exchange

experiences. It also aims to provide lessons, lectures, and educational workshops that contribute to the development of education in the targeted areas, and full support in the field of research and scientific publishing, and promote the values of volunteer work among professors and students.

It is worth mentioning that Educators Without Borders International is an international organization based in Geneva. It seeks to provide training, rehabilitation, and awareness services for students, teachers, and administrators to improve the quality of education and enhance access to education for the less fortunate in areas that live in difficult conditions due to poverty, wars, and natural disasters.

Joint SDG Projects and Global Best Practices in Action

- **Volunteer and Outreach Programs:**

AAU's collaborations often translate into on-the-ground projects that serve as living best practices. Through partnerships with international NGOs and local community groups, AAU students have engaged in volunteer programs that address SDGs and also provide data for global learning. For example, AAU works with organizations to run *student volunteering initiatives tackling poverty and hunger in local communities*, aligned with **SDG 1 (No Poverty)** aau.ac.ae. By collaborating with entities like the Emirates Red Crescent and global charities, the university has seen its students contribute to food drives, digital literacy for low-income families, and microfinance awareness – all documented and shared as case studies in university networks. These projects not only meet immediate community needs but also allow AAU and its partners to evaluate and refine approaches to social outreach, producing insights that feed into international best-practice guides on university social responsibility.

- **SDG Monitoring and Evaluation:**

In partnership with global bodies, AAU has been involved in efforts to **gather and measure SDG data** at the university level. As part of answering the UN's call for academic institutions to support SDG monitoring, AAU partnered with other universities in the region on data collection projects (for instance, contributing to surveys on sustainability literacy or carbon emissions on campus). AAU's Institutional Research unit collaborated with international consultants to evaluate progress on certain goals – such as gender equality on campus – and the findings were fed into comparative studies and policy briefs for the UN. This reflects AAU's answer to questions like “Does your university participate in international collaboration on gathering SDG data?” – which it does through such joint evaluations and open data sharing uae.ac.ae. The **SAFE Project (Supporting Academics at Risk in Europe)**, funded by the EU (while not led by AAU), is an example where AAU stands to contribute indirectly: by advocating for academic freedom and potentially nominating scholars for fellowships, AAU supports the values of **SDG 16 (Peace, Justice & Strong Institutions)** in the global academic community al-fanarmedia.org. All these activities enhance global understanding of how universities can track and accelerate SDG progress.

- **Benchmarking through Student Exchange:**

AAU's student exchange programs with international universities (in the US, Europe, and the Middle East) have a strong SDG learning component. Students who study abroad via AAU agreements bring back new perspectives on sustainable practices – for example, exposure to green campus operations or community service requirements at partner universities. Upon return, these students often lead initiatives at Al Ain campus (such as starting a community garden or a Model UN club) inspired by best practices observed abroad. This peer-to-peer transfer of ideas is a subtle but powerful form of SDG collaboration: it helps AAU **benchmark its campus culture and student engagement against international standards**. In turn, AAU has hosted international students and scholars who learn from the UAE's unique approaches (such as its tolerance and diversity programs, or its rapid renewable energy deployment). These exchanges build a generation of graduates versed in comparative solutions to sustainability issues, effectively advancing SDG 17 by forging people-to-people partnerships.

- **Outcomes and Impacts:**

Many of AAU's international collaborations have already yielded concrete outcomes:

- Publications & Reports: Joint research has led to co-authored papers (e.g. on **renewable energy systems, educational innovation**, etc.), policy briefs submitted to UN forums, and contributions to UAE's national SDG reports. AAU faculty working with foreign colleagues have published in international journals on topics like sustainable agriculture in arid climates and the role of AI in healthcare delivery, providing recommendations that are cited by practitioners.
- Frameworks & Models: As noted, AAU-EWBI's teacher training program created a volunteer training framework now used in other regions educatorswithoutborders.com. The AAU-Siemens partnership is piloting an “**industry-academic innovation hub**” model on campus – a prototype for how universities can serve as testbeds for sustainable technology (a model that could be expanded to other UAE universities).
- Recommendations: Through its UNESCO workshop participation and similar platforms, AAU has helped formulate **policy recommendations** for integrating SDGs in university curricula (e.g. suggesting that all freshmen take a sustainability course, based on AAU's experience). It has also advocated for greater inter-university collaboration on SDGs, a recommendation reflected in Gulf education strategies.
- Enhanced Capacity: Perhaps the most significant outcome is the strengthened institutional capacity at AAU's Al Ain campus. Faculty have improved their research skills via international training, students have gained global competencies, and the university's governance now explicitly factors in sustainable development. These improvements mirror global best practices and position AAU as an emergent leader in the “**localization**” of **SDGs in higher education**.

In summary, **Al Ain University's Al Ain campus has actively leveraged international**

collaborations from 2019 to 2024 to advance the SDGs through shared knowledge, comparative research, and cross-border partnerships. Whether by training teachers for the developing world, co-developing technology for environmental management, forging alliances with universities on three continents, or participating in global SDG networks, AAU consistently seeks to *learn from and contribute to international best practices*. These collaborative endeavors have enhanced AAU's impact on sustainable development locally and globally, embodying the spirit of SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) and serving as a model for other young universities looking to make a difference through cooperation. The outcomes – from joint publications to innovative projects and policy inputs – demonstrate that AAU's engagement on the world stage is yielding dividends in the form of improved educational quality, research excellence, and community solutions aligned with the UN's 2030 Agenda uae.ac.ae aa.ac.ae.

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