



## Azerbaijan State University of Culture and Arts

### SDG17: Partnerships for the Goals

*Report of ASUCA for Sustainable Development Goal 17 (2023-2024)*

Sustainable Development Goal 17, Partnerships for the Goals, aims to implement and strengthen global partnerships to support sustainable development. This objective emphasizes collaboration across national governments, international organizations, civil society, the private sector, local communities, and other key stakeholders to enhance sustainable development outcomes.

As an institution of higher education, Azerbaijan State University of Culture and Arts (ASUCA) plays an essential role in advancing SDG 17 through fostering partnerships, encouraging knowledge exchange, facilitating research collaborations, and building capacity in support of the broader Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Recognizing this responsibility, ASUCA has prioritized the SDGs as integral to its institutional mission and has embedded them into its Development Strategy for 2021-2025. In this regard, ASUCA has prioritized the SDGs and included in its Development Strategy for 2021-2025 (<https://admiu.edu.az/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/hs-10.pdf>).

By prioritizing partnerships and sustainable initiatives, ASUCA is actively contributing to the achievement of SDG 17 and supporting the advancement of sustainable development locally and globally. These efforts underscore ASUCA's commitment to fostering an inclusive, globally connected educational environment that aligns with the principles of sustainable development.

#### *E-university*

Azerbaijan State University of Culture and Arts (ASUCA) is moving forward with initiatives to create an E-University, aiming to digitally transform its educational framework, streamline administrative processes, and enhance the learning experience through technology. This transformation aligns with global trends in higher education and seeks to equip students with digital literacy skills essential for a modern workforce.

#### *Social services*

The Student Scientific-Creative Society, Student Youth Organization, Student Trade Union Committee, and other student organizations operating at ASUCA (Azerbaijan State University of Culture and Arts) carry out various social projects each year. The university's Department of Social and Cultural Activities regularly organizes national and international events and projects aimed at the integration of persons with disabilities and students into society, providing them with equal educational opportunities. It also supports the activities of the "ESA" Inclusive Theater, which brings together people in inclusive theater initiatives. ASUCA holds awareness-raising events in collaboration with NGOs to address various social issues.

Sustainable Development Events at Azerbaijan State University of Culture and Arts (ASUCA) ASUCA has actively engaged in sustainable development activities, focusing on awareness-raising, inclusive education, and community involvement to foster a healthier, more informed student body and campus environment. Below is an overview of recent events and initiatives aligned with the university's commitment to sustainable development and social responsibility.

#### *Anti-Drug Awareness Initiatives*

October 8, 2024: Organized by the Student Scientific-Creative Society, ASUCA held an anti-drug awareness session for students from the Faculty of Fine Arts. This event emphasized the dangers

of drug use and the importance of prevention, aiming to educate young artists on the impacts of substance abuse on individuals and society.

October 4, 2024: Another awareness event titled "No to Drugs" was held by the Department of Social-Cultural Activities at the Faculty of Culturology. This program, also organized by the Student Scientific-Creative Society, was designed to reinforce the university's preventive approach to drug-related issues and foster a supportive environment for students.

### ***Training on Substance Dependency: Social Work's Role and Functions***

ASUCA's Department of Social-Cultural Activities, in coordination with the Faculty of Culturology, hosted a training session on the role and functions of social workers in addressing substance dependency. The training, tailored for students specializing in social work, highlighted practical approaches and interventions, focusing on social work's contributions to community health and well-being.

### ***Support for Autism Awareness and Training***

In collaboration with the "Birgə və Sağlam" Public Union, ASUCA organized a training session for first- and second-year students of the Faculties of Culturology and Music. This event took place as part of Autism Awareness Month in April, emphasizing the importance of inclusive support and understanding for individuals with autism. Led by Ayten Eynalova, the session encouraged students to become advocates for inclusive practices within the arts and culture sectors.

### ***Inclusive Education Project in Art-Based Learning Methods***

ASUCA has initiated the "Art-Based Teaching Methods in Inclusive Education" project, which seeks to create innovative, inclusive teaching methods tailored to the needs of students with disabilities. This project marks a significant step toward accessible, inclusive education by integrating creative approaches that accommodate diverse learning needs, a priority for ASUCA's strategic goals. The project aligns with ASUCA's aim to enhance inclusivity, as indicated in its 2021-2025 Development Strategy.

### ***Guest Lecture on Inclusive Teaching by COP29 Manager***

As part of its commitment to inclusive education, ASUCA hosted Elman Suleymanov, an Assistant Researcher at the University of Washington and Inclusivity Manager for COP29, as a guest lecturer. Mr. Suleymanov delivered a lecture on "Diverse Approaches and Learning Styles" within the framework of art-oriented inclusive education, contributing global perspectives on inclusive pedagogy to ASUCA's curriculum.

ASUCA's recent initiatives reflect its dedication to sustainable development and social awareness, supporting a student-centered and inclusive educational environment. Through anti-drug campaigns, training on social work in substance dependency, autism support, and inclusive art-based education, ASUCA is advancing its commitment to fostering an inclusive and healthy campus community. These activities are aligned with global and national priorities, including the UN Sustainable Development Goals and Azerbaijan's "Azerbaijan 2030" socio-economic development strategy. The Innovation and Entrepreneurship Center at Azerbaijan State University of Culture and Arts (ASUCA) plays a key role in fostering entrepreneurial skills, creativity, and innovative thinking among students. Established to support the university's strategic objectives, the center aims to prepare students for the demands of modern markets and encourage them to engage in entrepreneurial activities that contribute to sustainable development.

Azerbaijan State University of Culture and Arts (ASUCA) students successfully participated in the preliminary stage of the international startup competition titled "Finding Innovative and Creative Solutions" held at Azerbaijan Technical University (AzTU). The project aims to help individuals

involved in the arts sector bring their work into the digital economy. The project will be further developed within ASUCA's Innovation and Entrepreneurship Center. The competition, jointly organized by AzTU and Pakistan's National University of Science and Technology, provided an excellent platform for ASUCA students to showcase their innovative ideas in bridging arts with digital market opportunities. The project, titled "Digital Arts Economy," aims to support artists in integrating their work into the digital economy. By leveraging innovative solutions, this project will create opportunities for artists to reach broader audiences and monetize their talents through digital platforms.

For example, a delegation from the Azerbaijan State University of Culture and Arts (ASUCA), led by the Vice-Rector for Science and Creative Affairs, participated in the Global Sustainable Development Congress held in Bangkok, Thailand.

Azerbaijan State University of Culture and Arts (ASUCA) is a partner in two Erasmus+ projects: "Establishment of Rectors' Conference in Azerbaijan" (ECAR) and "Strengthening Sustainable Entrepreneurial Ecosystem in Higher Education Institutions of Azerbaijan" (ENGAGE). These projects are funded under the European Commission's Erasmus+ Capacity Building in Higher Education Program. Under the ECAR project, ASUCA's rector and vice-rectors visited universities in France, Belgium, Sweden, Lithuania, and Spain to gain insights into the operations of European rectors' conferences. This initiative aims to establish a Rectors' Conference in Azerbaijan, drawing on best practices in university governance and collaboration from leading European institutions.

The ENGAGE project focuses on fostering a sustainable entrepreneurial ecosystem within Azerbaijani higher education institutions. ASUCA staff visited prestigious universities in Estonia, Sweden, Portugal, Poland, and Spain to strengthen their expertise in entrepreneurship management and integrate entrepreneurial skills into the curriculum. Through these visits, ASUCA is enhancing its capabilities in innovation management, developing entrepreneurial activities, and embedding entrepreneurship within its academic framework.

These Erasmus+ projects provide ASUCA with valuable international experience, support institutional development, and contribute to fostering a collaborative academic environment in Azerbaijan. ASUCA is also engaged in international programs and projects. In 2023, it submitted a project titled "Exploring the Intersection of Art and Politics in the European Union" under the Erasmus+ Jean Monnet Module, which was funded by the European Commission. This module refers to the complex and multifaceted relationship shaped by historical, cultural, and social contexts between art and politics.

### **International Cooperation and Memberships of Azerbaijan State University of Culture and Arts (ASUCA)**

In 2022, the Azerbaijan State University of Culture and Arts (ASUCA) became a member of the Cumulus International Association, a global network of higher education institutions in art, design, and media, comprising 350 members from 60 countries. Since 2022, ASUCA has been a member of the Black Sea Universities Network (BSUN), which aims to establish scientific cooperation among universities in the Black Sea region, comprising over 120 universities from 12 countries. ASUCA actively participates in collaborative projects within this network. Additionally, starting in 2023, ASUCA joined the Union of Art Universities of the Turkic World, organized by TÜRKSOY.

### **Academic activities on SDGs and partnerships with NGOs**

ASUCA provides education programs and courses related to the various aspects of SDG goals. Bachelor's and master's programs in Museum Studies, Archival Science, and Heritage Conservation significantly contribute to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by fostering cultural preservation, promoting sustainable tourism, and encouraging inclusive community engagement. These programs

focus on preserving cultural artifacts, historical documents, and heritage sites, which are essential for maintaining cultural identity and heritage. By training professionals in the protection and management of cultural resources, these fields ensure that communities have sustainable, resilient cultural assets that support local identity and pride, aligning with SDG 11's focus on safeguarding cultural and natural heritage. Graduates in these fields contribute to sustainable tourism by developing strategies to manage and protect cultural sites responsibly, minimizing environmental impact. Through sustainable tourism practices, they support local economies, create jobs, and offer meaningful experiences that encourage respect for cultural and natural heritage, directly supporting SDG 8. Museum Studies and Archival Science programs often include training in digital archiving, allowing for the preservation of materials without the extensive physical resources required for traditional storage. Digital conservation efforts ensure historical records remain accessible and resilient to physical degradation, supporting SDG 9's emphasis on innovation and resilient infrastructure. These programs foster community participation and educational outreach, promoting awareness of cultural heritage's value. Graduates are trained to develop programs and partnerships that involve local communities, enhancing public knowledge and creating educational opportunities that inspire preservation efforts. This aligns with SDG 4 by contributing to inclusive and equitable quality education through lifelong learning opportunities.

Also, the curriculum of most arts, culture and social science programs includes several courses that cover topics of SDGs. At ASUCA, the curriculum for arts, culture, and social science programs integrates courses that address key SDG topics, such as sustainable cultural management, community engagement, digital preservation, and environmental responsibility. These courses prepare students to apply sustainability principles in real-world contexts, fostering a deeper understanding of how cultural and social practices intersect with sustainable development goals. Through hands-on projects, partnerships, and research initiatives, ASUCA actively promotes sustainability across its academic activities. Topics such as gender studies, inclusive education, environmental protection, climate change, social challenges, and issues of radicalism and extremism equip students with the knowledge and skills to address pressing global concerns, fostering a commitment to social responsibility and sustainable development.

Azerbaijan State University of Culture and Arts (ASUCA) has recently introduced and is working on improving two important academic courses: "Introduction to Music Therapy" and "Restoration of Artwork", focusing on diverse artistic and cultural fields. These courses aim to enhance students' professional skills and contribute to their emotional intelligence, creativity, and understanding of interdisciplinary approaches in both theory and practice. Below is a brief overview of each course's objectives, target audience, and the expected outcomes for students.

### 1. Introduction to Music Therapy

The course "Introduction to Music Therapy" has been included in the curriculum to offer students essential knowledge and skills necessary for understanding and applying music therapy in various contexts. The course is designed to explore music therapy as an emerging and promising field. It provides students with an understanding of how music can be used therapeutically to improve mental health and emotional well-being. The program aims to help students develop emotional intelligence, creativity, and the ability to integrate knowledge across different fields.

**Target Audience:** This course is aimed at second- and third-year undergraduate students from the Faculty of Music Art, enrolled in the following programs:

Musicology

Music Teaching

Instrumental Performance



## Folk Instrumental Performance

### Course Objectives:

To provide a theoretical understanding of music therapy practices.

To develop practical skills for applying music therapy techniques.

To encourage interdisciplinary learning, combining knowledge from music, psychology, and therapy.

To enhance students' emotional and social intelligence through experiential learning.

**Expected Outcomes:** By the end of the course, students will be able to understand the role of music therapy in various therapeutic settings, from working with individuals with emotional disorders to facilitating wellness in diverse groups. This will also prepare them for possible future roles in educational institutions, healthcare centers, and therapeutic environments.

## 2. Inclusive Art Education Methods in Art Teaching

This course, "Inclusive Art Education Methods," explores how visual arts education can impact mental development and health, with a focus on the benefits of inclusive educational environments. The course looks at methods and practices in inclusive education, encouraging creativity among all students, regardless of their abilities or backgrounds. It aims to enhance the knowledge and skills of future teachers who will work in diverse and inclusive classrooms, fostering an environment where creativity and artistic expression can flourish across different student groups.

**Target Audience:** This course is specifically designed for students in the Faculty of Fine Arts, particularly those enrolled in the Art Education program.

### Course Objectives:

To study the impact of art education on mental health and personal development.

To explore inclusive teaching methodologies in art and visual education.

To promote creativity in students with diverse abilities and experiences.

To enhance the capacity of future teachers to create inclusive and supportive classroom environments.

**Expected Outcomes:** Students will gain the knowledge to implement inclusive teaching methods in art classes, recognizing the diverse needs and abilities of students. By the end of the course, students will be equipped to create inclusive learning environments that promote creativity and personal growth, benefiting students from all walks of life.

**Collaboration with Organizations:** The course will also involve collaboration with several key organizations to offer practical learning experiences and internships for students. The participating organizations include:

Dost Inclusive Development and Creativity Center

"Together and Healthy" Public Union

Autism Early Intervention Center

These partnerships will help students gain hands-on experience in working with various groups, learning to apply their skills in real-world settings, and ensuring the inclusive nature of their teaching.

## 3. Improvement and Expansion of the Restoration Course Curriculum

The course on the Restoration of Artwork, particularly focused on the conservation of carpets, is another area of development at ASUCA. The curriculum for this specialized program is being refined and expanded to enhance the skills of students pursuing a career in artwork restoration and conservation. This includes not only theoretical aspects of restoration but also a deep dive into practical techniques, especially in the conservation of traditional Azerbaijani carpets, which hold immense cultural value.

**Target Audience:** This program is intended for students in the Restoration and Expertise of Artwork program, with a particular focus on the conservation of carpets, a traditional and intricate craft in Azerbaijani heritage.

**Course Objectives:**

To provide advanced knowledge on the principles and techniques of artwork restoration, with a focus on carpets.

To introduce students to modern restoration tools and materials.

To preserve and conserve cultural heritage in line with international standards.

To foster appreciation and understanding of traditional Azerbaijani art, especially carpet-making techniques.

**Expected Outcomes:** Students will graduate with the expertise required to restore and conserve carpets and other artworks, preserving their integrity while ensuring they remain accessible for future generations. Graduates will be prepared to work in museums, galleries, cultural institutions, and private restoration practices, contributing to the preservation of national heritage.

ASUCA has also developed a strong reputation for organizing social events, educational trainings, webinars, and seminars in collaboration with various NGOs. In recent years, the university has significantly enhanced these efforts, reflecting its commitment to addressing societal issues. Student organizations play a pivotal role in these initiatives, ensuring that they are both engaging and impactful. ASUCA maintains a close relationship with national student organizations, providing active support to their branches within the university.

