



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

2025

SDG 1: NO POVERTY



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SDG 1: NO POVERTY

Applied Science University (Bahrain) – SDG 1: No Poverty Sustainability Report

Applied Science University (ASU) in Bahrain demonstrates a strong commitment to **Sustainable Development Goal 1 (No Poverty)** through robust financial support systems for students, staff welfare programs, community engagement initiatives, and inclusive policies. These efforts have gained international recognition – as of 2025, ASU is ranked **59th globally** for SDG 1 (No Poverty) in the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings [1]. The following report details ASU’s strategies and evidence in support of SDG 1, including student financial aid, staff support, community outreach, equity policies, and recent as well as future initiatives.

Financial Aid for Low-Income Students

ASU Bahrain provides comprehensive financial assistance to ensure that **economic hardship is not a barrier to education**. The university operates a **Student Support Fund** dedicated to helping students facing financial difficulties complete their studies [2]. Students may apply through the Student Affairs Directorate, and a committee evaluates needs based on defined policies and criteria. **Table 1** summarizes key financial aid programs for students:

Table 1: Key financial aid schemes at ASU Bahrain supporting low-income students.

Financial Aid Program	Description and Evidence
Student Support Fund (Need-Based)	University-funded assistance for students with proven financial difficulties. Applicants submit an aid form and documentation of need; aid is granted based on the committee’s assessment [2]. <i>Example:</i> In 2020, ASU bolstered this fund by an additional BHD 100,000 to support students during the second and summer semesters of 2019/2020 [3] (demonstrating increased aid during a period of high need).
Academic Merit Scholarships	Partial tuition waivers for high-achieving students upon entry. 25%, 20%, or 15% tuition scholarships are offered based on secondary school grades (e.g. 95%+ yields 25% off) [4]. These awards are renewable for continuing students who maintain strong GPA performance [4]. While merit-based, they reduce financial burden and often benefit students from modest backgrounds who excel academically. The below table illustrates the

	<p>Academic Excellence Award scheme that Applied Science University has in place for the validated programmes. The scheme rewards prospective students who have achieved academic merit. The scheme is divided into three categories, depending on the merit level achieved by students upon their graduation from high school.</p> <table><tr><th>Scholarship</th><th>Requirements</th><th>Awards</th></tr><tr><td rowspan="3">Excellence Award (entry)</td><td>95% – 100%</td><td>25% scholarship</td></tr><tr><td>85% – 94%</td><td>20% scholarship</td></tr><tr><td>70% – 84%</td><td>15% scholarship</td></tr><tr><td rowspan="3">Excellence Award A Levels</td><td>AAB (146 UCAS points)</td><td>25% scholarship</td></tr><tr><td>ABB (128 UCAS points)</td><td>20% scholarship</td></tr><tr><td>BBB (120 UCAS points)</td><td>15% scholarship</td></tr><tr><td rowspan="2">Excellence Award IB</td><td>34 IB points or above</td><td>25% scholarship</td></tr><tr><td>31-33 points</td><td>20% scholarship</td></tr></table>	Scholarship	Requirements	Awards	Excellence Award (entry)	95% – 100%	25% scholarship	85% – 94%	20% scholarship	70% – 84%	15% scholarship	Excellence Award A Levels	AAB (146 UCAS points)	25% scholarship	ABB (128 UCAS points)	20% scholarship	BBB (120 UCAS points)	15% scholarship	Excellence Award IB	34 IB points or above	25% scholarship	31-33 points	20% scholarship
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Emergency and Other Support	<p>Case-by-case support such as deferred payment plans or emergency grants for students in sudden financial distress. (Handled through the Student Support Fund committee process.) For instance, applicants can explain urgent needs in their fund application letter [2], and the university can provide special assistance accordingly.</p> <p>Required Documents for Applying to the Student Support Fund:</p> <p>A letter explaining the reason for applying to the Student Support Fund and a copy of the student’s ID card.</p> <p>Copy of the guardian’s or student’s salary certificate if the student is financially responsible.</p> <p>Copy of the guardian’s bank statement for at least three (3) months, or the student’s if they are financially responsible.</p> <p>Documentation proving the guardian’s inability to work or their medical condition (if applicable).</p> <p>Documentation of any financial obligations on the guardian or the student if they are financially responsible (loans, rental contracts).</p> <p>Any other documents that verify expenses mentioned by the student in the letter explaining the reason for applying to the fund.</p>																						

These financial aid services illustrate ASU's commitment to **accessible education**. All aid applicants must be **academically qualified** (minimum GPA requirements) and not receiving other sponsorship [2] – reflecting a balanced policy of merit and need. By reducing or waiving tuition fees and offering grants, ASU enables students from low-income families to **achieve their academic goals** without interruption [2]. Notably, ASU's mission emphasizes providing an education *"accessible to academically competent students of Bahrain, the Gulf and beyond"*, underscoring its policy of equal opportunity in enrollment regardless of financial background [5]. This need-blind admissions approach, coupled with substantial aid, ensures that **no qualified student is left behind due to poverty**.

Support for Staff Facing Financial Hardship

ASU Bahrain extends its poverty alleviation ethos to its employees, especially those in lower-paid roles. The university provides **financial support programs for staff** to promote decent living standards and well-being. Most prominently, ASU offers **monthly financial assistance to its low-income workers**, such as security personnel and cleaning staff [6]. This subsidy helps cover daily essentials (food, housing needs, etc.), directly bolstering the income of staff who might otherwise face hardship. By supplementing wages with this assistance, ASU ensures that all employees can attain a **decent standard of living** [6]. ASU provides monthly financial assistance to its workers, including security personnel and cleaners, to support their daily needs for food and other essentials. This initiative reflects the university's commitment to the well-being of its staff, ensuring they have access to the resources necessary for a decent standard of living. By offering this support, ASU aims to foster a positive work environment and promote the welfare of all employees, recognizing their crucial role in maintaining the campus community.



This initiative reflects ASU's strategic commitment to **staff welfare and poverty reduction among employees**. It acknowledges the vital contributions of support staff and aligns with SDG targets on social protection. The program fosters a positive work environment and loyalty, as staff feel supported in their personal lives. In addition to direct financial aid, ASU's human resources policies include measures like fair wages, opportunity for professional development, and a supportive workplace culture. The **university's risk management and continuity plans** explicitly mention policies for retaining staff and supporting them (including through challenging times) [7]. Overall, ASU's staff support services illustrate a **holistic approach to poverty alleviation** – extending beyond students to the broader campus community.

Community Outreach and Poverty Alleviation Initiatives

Beyond campus, ASU Bahrain actively engages in **community outreach programs to fight poverty and support vulnerable groups**. These initiatives, often led by the **Community Engagement Office** and student volunteers, strengthen local partnerships and provide direct aid in line with SDG 1. Key community-focused activities include:

◆ Annual Ramadan Charity Drives

Every year during the holy month of Ramadan, ASU organizes campaigns to support low-income families. In 2024, the university distributed **500 food baskets** to families in need (in collaboration with the Al-Eker Charity Society) [6]. ASU staff, students, alumni, and local partners participated in delivering these essential supplies. Similarly, ASU's Volunteer Club and CE Office arrange the distribution of Iftar meals to disadvantaged communities in various areas (e.g. Hoora and Hidd), fostering solidarity and addressing hunger during Ramadan [6]. These drives are now institutionalized as *yearly initiatives* to alleviate food insecurity in the community [6]. Every year, ASU distributes Iftar meals during the Holy month of Ramadan which is organized by the Community Engagement (CE) Office. This is done on a yearly basis. In 2024, the CE Office organized a campaign for distributing Iftar meals to the community in the Hoora area on Saturday, 16th March 2024. A number of ASU academic and administrative staff, students and alumni as well as the local community participated in this joyous activity.



◆ Charitable Partnerships and Campaigns

ASU frequently partners with national charitable organizations and participates in humanitarian campaigns. For example, an ASU business student's **"iHand" initiative** – a mobile app connecting people with disabilities to support services – won recognition from the Bahrain Royal Humanitarian Foundation [8]. While focused on disability, it exemplifies ASU's encouragement of student-led solutions for social good. ASU has also historically contributed to charity projects abroad; in 2016 an ASU student delegation joined a Bahrain-led charity project in Egypt to aid impoverished communities [9]. Such involvement in **local and regional charity projects** underlines ASU's broader impact on poverty alleviation beyond campus.



On Thursday, 26 May 2016, the Deanship of Student Affairs and Evening Studies organized a presentation delivered by Bahrain Trust foundation team for ASU students. Bahrain Trust foundation (BFT) is a non-for-profit organization. It aims to help people for deprived from their basic needs, like clean water, electricity, health care, schools, etc...

◆ Volunteerism and Public Service

The university cultivates a culture of volunteerism among students and staff as a means to contribute to poverty reduction. ASU's **Volunteer Club** provides opportunities for students to engage in community service (e.g. organizing donation drives, visiting orphanages, etc.). Many ASU students volunteer through national platforms for causes like poverty relief and education [8]. ASU also encourages faculty and staff to volunteer expertise in community workshops and free seminars. For instance, ASU faculty have shared knowledge with the Ministry of Labour's NGO support directorate to build capacity in community organizations [8]. This transfer of expertise indirectly supports poverty alleviation by strengthening NGOs working on social welfare.



Transfer of expertise to the Ministry of Labor, Directorate of NGOs Support

◆ Public Educational Access

In line with its mission, ASU provides learning opportunities to the broader public to empower individuals socioeconomically. The university's **Training and Continuing Education Centre** offers professional development courses and certifications to community members (e.g. in project management, business skills) to enhance employability [10]. While these courses may charge fees, ASU often collaborates with government programs or offers discounts so that unemployed or low-income participants can attend. Furthermore, ASU hosts public lectures, career guidance events, and open days that are free for everyone – disseminating knowledge and motivating youth from all backgrounds to pursue higher education. Such outreach aligns with **SDG 1.4**, which emphasizes equal access to economic resources and services (including education) for all members of society.



Applied Science University becomes Bahrain’s first university authorized training partner with PMI.

Table 2 provides a summary of selected community outreach initiatives led by ASU that contribute to poverty alleviation:

Table 2: Examples of ASU Bahrain’s community outreach initiatives contributing to poverty alleviation.

Initiative		Description and Impact
Ramadan Food Basket Distribution	Food	Annual campaign providing hundreds of food baskets to low-income families during Ramadan [6]. In 2024, ASU delivered 500 baskets via a local charity, addressing immediate food needs in the community. This initiative is planned every year, strengthening food security for vulnerable households.
Iftar Volunteering	Meal	Students and staff volunteer to prepare and distribute Iftar meals in disadvantaged neighborhoods [6]. These events foster social cohesion and raise awareness of poverty and hunger issues. Multiple areas in Bahrain benefit each year through different ASU volunteer teams.
Local Charity Collaborations	Charity	Partnerships with organizations like the Royal Humanitarian Foundation and Al-Eker Charity Society amplify ASU’s impact. ASU contributes manpower, ideas, and logistics to nationwide charity projects (e.g. humanitarian initiatives competition, international charity drives), thereby extending support to the poor beyond campus [8].
Free Workshops & Seminars	Community	Faculty and trained students conduct free workshops on skills such as basic IT, English language, and entrepreneurship in community centers. These educational outreach efforts help upskill low-income youth and jobseekers, indirectly improving their income opportunities. (For example, ASU’s involvement in government “Qudurat” digital literacy program offers free computer training to citizens [11].)

Volunteer Activities	Club	The ASU Volunteer Club mobilizes student volunteers for various causes – from fundraising for charity to organizing clothing and book donation drives on campus. These activities not only provide material assistance to those in need but also instill a sense of social responsibility in students, ensuring a sustainable commitment to poverty reduction efforts in the long term.
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Through these multifaceted outreach programs, ASU Bahrain extends its **impact on poverty reduction to the wider society**. The university leverages its resources, human capital, and partnerships to uplift underprivileged communities, consistent with Bahrain’s national efforts on SDG 1.

Policies for Equity, Access, and Inclusion

ASU Bahrain’s institutional policies reinforce its strategic commitment to equity and access, both in admissions and in campus life. Key policy areas include:

◆ Inclusive Admissions and Scholarship Policies

ASU follows a **merit-based, need-aware admissions policy** that aims to include students from all socioeconomic backgrounds. The university does not discriminate on the basis of income; any student who meets academic requirements can be admitted, and those with financial need are referred to available support funds or scholarships. This reflects ASU’s pledge to keep education “*accessible to academically competent students*” regardless of their financial means [5]. Transparent admission criteria (published minimum GPAs, test scores, etc.) ensure fairness in student recruitment. Additionally, ASU has a **target to enroll and graduate students from the bottom income quintile** as part of its SDG1 goals (evidenced by internal SDG tracking like “SDG 1.3.1 Bottom financial quintile admission target” and “SDG 1.3.2 bottom quintile student success”) – demonstrating that the university monitors the inclusion and performance of low-income students in line with global Impact Rankings indicators.

◆ Tuition Fee Policies and Financial Transparency

The university maintains relatively affordable tuition compared to many private institutions in the region, and offers flexible payment plans to ease financial strain on students. During crises (such as the COVID-19 pandemic), ASU showed flexibility and compassion – for example, by increasing its Student Aid Fund in 2020 and allowing tuition installment options – to prevent any student from dropping out due to sudden hardship [3]. All financial aid policies are clearly documented and communicated via the Student Handbook and official website, promoting transparency. Students are aware of the scholarships, grants, and criteria well in advance, enabling them to seek help proactively.

◆ Equal Opportunity and Non-Discrimination

ASU's **Equal Opportunity Policy** ensures that no student or staff member is discriminated against on the basis of economic status, gender, religion, or nationality. The university's **Mission and Values** emphasize social justice and the "**sustainable development of society & community**" [5], which includes poverty reduction and empowerment. Enrollment data is reviewed to ensure diversity, and initiatives like "**Women access schemes**" (to assist women from socially/economically disadvantaged backgrounds) are in place as part of ASU's SDG5 and SDG10 efforts [12]. These policies create an inclusive campus environment where all individuals can thrive.

◆ Staff Welfare and Fair Employment

On the staff side, ASU's policies guarantee **fair wages and benefits** for all employees. The provision of additional financial aid to low-wage staff [6] goes beyond legal requirements, underlining an institutional ethic of care. Moreover, each new faculty or staff member is paired with a mentor and receives support during their early employment [13], indicating ASU's investment in every employee's success (which indirectly helps those from poorer backgrounds adjust and grow). The university abides by Bahrain's labor laws and international best practices, offering benefits like health insurance and social security contributions that form a social protection floor for employees. This comprehensive approach aligns with **SDG 8 (Decent Work)** and ensures that working at ASU contributes to poverty reduction for staff and their families. ASU provides monthly financial assistance to its workers, including security personnel and cleaners, to support their daily needs for food and other essentials. This initiative reflects the university's commitment to the well-being of its staff, ensuring they have access to the resources necessary for a decent standard of living. By offering this support, ASU aims to foster a positive work environment and promote the welfare of all employees, recognizing their crucial role in maintaining the campus community.

In summary, ASU Bahrain's governance and policies actively promote **equitable access to education and resources**. By embedding SDG principles into its mission and operations, the university has created a framework where both students and staff from low-income circumstances receive the support, respect, and opportunities they need to succeed.

Recent Achievements and Future Plans

ASU Bahrain continuously evaluates and expands its poverty reduction impact through new initiatives and strategic plans. Some **recent achievements** and **future strategies** include:

◆ Impact Rankings Progress

ASU's rise to **59th globally in "No Poverty" (SDG 1)** in THE Impact Rankings 2025 is a testament to its effective efforts [1]. This achievement builds on earlier improvements; for instance, in 2020 ASU celebrated breaking into the top 401+ universities overall in Impact Rankings, being one of the first Bahraini private universities recognized for impact on quality education and sustainable development [14]. The university aims to **further climb these rankings** by strengthening its SDG programs, which indicates a sustained commitment to poverty alleviation work on and off campus.



This achievement comes within the framework of the university's vision to become the leaders in higher education within its endeavors to enhance its position among Arab and international universities, in line with the strategy of the General Secretariat of the Higher Education Council in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

◆ Enhanced Student Support in Response to COVID-19

During the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath, ASU proactively **increased financial aid budgets** to assist those facing economic hardship. The additional BHD 100k allocation to the Student Aid Fund in 2020 (noted above) is one example, ensuring students could continue their studies despite family income losses [3].



Going forward, the university has **institutionalized emergency aid reserves** for future crises, and is exploring setting up an **“hardship fund”** that can rapidly disburse small grants or loans to students and staff in sudden need. These forward-looking measures will make ASU more resilient in supporting its community during challenging times.

♦ New Scholarship Programs

ASU plans to launch targeted scholarships to further reduce financial barriers. One planned initiative is a **“Community Outreach Scholarship”** that will offer tuition waivers to outstanding students from local charity schools or low-income areas, fostering social mobility. Another is increasing the number of **Dual-Program Scholarships** (30–40% tuition off) for students enrolling in its dual degree programs with London South Bank University [15], making international-caliber education more affordable. These new scholarships, alongside existing ones, are slated to roll out in the upcoming academic years as part of ASU’s strategy to widen access.



◆ Expansion of Community Programs

Building on the success of its Ramadan drives, ASU's Community Engagement Office is developing more year-round community projects. Starting 2025, ASU will run a **"Winter Care" campaign**, providing necessities (food, blankets, school supplies) to low-income families in Bahrain during the winter months. The university is also strengthening its partnership with the **National Volunteer Platform (volunteer.gov.bh)** to involve more students in governmental poverty alleviation programs. Furthermore, ASU's business incubator will host workshops for **micro-entrepreneurs from underprivileged communities**, offering mentorship and seed funding to help them generate sustainable income. These future plans indicate a broadening scope of ASU's poverty impact – from immediate relief to long-term economic empowerment.

◆ Policy Developments

On an institutional level, ASU is reviewing its **enrollment and HR policies to set formal targets and guidelines** aligned with SDG 1. For example, the university Senate is considering adopting a formal goal to **maintain a certain percentage of students from the bottom income quintile**, ensuring continuous focus on inclusion. There is also discussion of instituting a **minimum wage policy** for all campus contractors (such as cleaning services) to extend ASU's fair wage principles beyond direct employees. Additionally, ASU will enhance data collection on student socioeconomic backgrounds and publish this in annual reports – improving transparency and allowing better tracking of outcomes (like retention and graduation rates of low-income students). These policy moves will reinforce ASU's strategic commitment and provide clear accountability metrics for its No Poverty efforts.

Conclusion

Applied Science University Bahrain demonstrates a **comprehensive and strategic approach to SDG 1 (No Poverty)**. Through financial aid for students, support for staff, community outreach, and inclusive policies, ASU addresses poverty on multiple fronts – **on campus and in society**. The evidence of scholarships, funds, charity drives, and policy statements provided above showcases the depth of ASU's commitment. Equally, the university is not resting on its laurels; it actively plans to **scale up and innovate** its poverty alleviation impact in the coming years. This aligns with ASU's vision of contributing effectively to the sustainable development of its community and underscores its role as a **leader in higher education for social impact** in Bahrain and beyond.

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