American International University-Bangladesh

Sustainable Development Goals Report

SDG 17: PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

Contents

AIUB's Initiatives for SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth

American International University–Bangladesh (AIUB) has implemented a range of programs and policies supporting **UN Sustainable Development Goal 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth)**. From 2020 to 2024, AIUB focused on improving student career readiness, fostering entrepreneurship, ensuring fair working conditions for staff, and engaging with industry and the community to promote inclusive economic growth. The following report highlights AIUB's key activities and outcomes under four dimensions:

1. Student Employment and Career Development

Internships and Job Placement: AIUB integrates hands-on work experience into its curricula. All undergraduate students complete a *mandatory 12–14 week internship* before graduation. The university's **Office of Placement & Alumni (OPA)** assists students in securing internships and jobs, providing CV/resume support, interview preparation, and job search strategies. According to AIUB's tracer studies, a strong majority of graduates secure employment or further opportunities shortly after graduation – **59% are employed**, **8% self-employed**, **9% in higher studies**, while the remainder continue seeking jobs. This indicates that about *76% of AIUB alumni are engaged in work or postgraduate education* within six months of graduation, reflecting the effectiveness of AIUB's placement support.

Career Fairs and Recruitment Events: AIUB holds annual **Job Fairs** that connect students and alumni with employers. The **AIUB Job Fair 2023** was a *mega event* with **around 111 companies** participating, setting up stalls, collecting CVs, and conducting on-site interviews. Similarly, the **Job Fair 2022** (held in November 2022) attracted almost **100 leading companies**. These fairs provide invaluable networking opportunities and often lead to immediate job offers for students. AIUB also invites companies for on-campus recruitment "roadshows" to promote management trainee programs, many of which are facilitated by *AIUB alumni* now working in those companies. Notably, *AIUB's alumni network exceeds 32,000 graduates*, many in key positions who "pass the baton" by recruiting fresh AIUB graduates.

Career Workshops and Counseling: Throughout 2020–2024, AIUB organized numerous workshops and seminars to enhance student employability. These include sessions on CV writing, interview skills, and **post-pandemic job market preparedness**. For example, in May 2020 during the COVID-19 lockdown, AIUB hosted a webinar with a telecom HR executive on *"Post-Pandemic Preparedness: Competencies Needed for Tomorrow's Job Market,"* emphasizing critical thinking, digital skills, and adaptability for new graduates. Faculty departments also held career talks such as a 2024 seminar on *"Strategies for Career Advancement in the Era of Business Automation,"* highlighting data-driven skills for the future workplace. The university's Office of Student Affairs and alumni mentors regularly provide one-on-one career counseling, ensuring students navigate career choices and transitions effectively. Through **alumni mentoring programs and networking events**, current students gain industry insights and job referrals, strengthening the community of "AIUBians" helping each other.

2. On-Campus Employment and Entrepreneurship

On-Campus Student Employment: AIUB offers part-time job opportunities on campus so that students can earn income and build skills while studying. Qualified senior students are recruited as **Student Assistants** in various departments (e.g. IT support, library, research labs). In 2023, AIUB advertised paid student assistant positions in its Software Development Department, offering about **20 hours/week with a stipend of BDT 8,000 per month** aiub.edu. Dozens of students serve as teaching assistants, lab instructors, or administrative interns each year, gaining professional experience in a supportive environment. These roles not only provide financial support but also improve students' time management and workplace competencies. AIUB's commitment to **"part-time job opportunities"** for students – especially female students – is one way the university fosters an inclusive campus and prepares students for future workplaces aiub.edu.

Student Entrepreneurship & Incubation: To promote innovation and decent work through new ventures, AIUB established the **Dr. Anwarul Abedin Institute of Innovation (D2A2I)** and its **Business Incubation Center (BIC)**. The BIC is a dedicated incubator that nurtures student and alumni startups by providing workspace, mentorship, and seed funding opportunities aiub.edu aiub.edu. Key objectives include helping teams turn project ideas into prototypes and guiding aspiring entrepreneurs from ideation to successful launch aiub.edu. AIUB's incubator offers **expert mentorship, training workshops, and even initial financing** – for example, the center arranges *"seed funding" and access to grants* for promising entrepreneurs. This support is often realized through competitions: winners of campus innovation contests receive **substantial prize money as startup capital**. In 2024, AIUB hosted a Cisco IoT Hackathon where winning teams earned **BDT 50,000 (1st prize)**, **BDT 30,000 (2nd)**, and **BDT 20,000 (3rd)** as non-dilutive seed funding to develop their projects (such as a Smart Farm Management System) into sustainable businesses. Similarly, *AIUB Architecture Week* design competitions award cash prizes to jump-start student-led creative ventures. These initiatives encourage students to pursue entrepreneurship as a career path, creating jobs rather than just seeking jobs.

Skills Training and Certifications: To enhance student employability in a fast-changing economy, AIUB provides specialized training programs and professional certifications. The **AIUB Institute of Continuing Education (ICE)**, an award-winning center, offers short courses in partnership with industry leaders like Cisco, Microsoft, Amazon, Juniper, SAP, and others. Through these vendor-authorized programs, students (and often external participants) earn internationally recognized certifications in areas such as networking (Cisco CCNA), cybersecurity, cloud computing (AWS), and other in-demand skills. By 2024, AIUB had established academies for **Cisco NetAcad, Microsoft, Fortinet, Red Hat, and more**, enabling hundreds of students to obtain professional credentials before graduation. These courses greatly improve digital skills and job prospects for participants, aligning with the university's strategy of producing *"market-oriented graduates"*. Additionally, AIUB's curriculum itself stays industry-aligned – the Computer Science department updates curricula with input from an Industry Advisory Board and includes practical projects, ensuring graduates have relevant skills. In sum, the university's emphasis on **entrepreneurship training and skill certification** prepares students to thrive in the modern job market or launch their own ventures.

3. Faculty and Staff Working Conditions

Fair Wages and Secure Contracts: AIUB upholds fair employment practices and provides its faculty and staff with secure, well-compensated positions. The university employs nearly **1,000 full-time staff** (academic and administrative), making it a significant employer in the local economy. All permanent employees receive standard benefits including a **Contributory Provident Fund (CPF)** (in place since 2008) and **gratuity** (since 2016) upon retirement. These programs ensure long-term financial security for employees and reflect fair compensation beyond base salaries. AIUB explicitly recognizes the rights of staff to collective bargaining and free association – employees (including women and international staff) are allowed to form or join unions or forums to voice their interests. For instance, the **AIUB Women Forum (AWF)** serves as a platform for women employees (and students) to organize, advocate for rights, and take on leadership roles. Through AWF and other channels, AIUB encourages active staff participation in decision-making and ensures labor rights are respected, in line with SDG 8 principles of decent work.

Professional Development and Wellness: The university invests in the growth and well-being of its employees. **Study Leave** is offered to full-time faculty and staff who wish to pursue higher education (Master's or PhD), allowing them to upgrade qualifications *without resigning from their jobs*. Many AIUB faculty have benefited from this policy to obtain advanced degrees at home or abroad, which in turn enriches the university's academic environment. Internally, the **Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL)** and **IQAC** (Internal Quality Assurance Cell) conduct regular training for faculty on pedagogy, outcome-based education, and research skills, ensuring continuous upskilling of staff (e.g., workshops on new teaching technologies and conferences on academic quality improvement).

AIUB prioritizes employee health and work-life balance through several initiatives. The campus hosts a **Health Center** that provides free basic medical consultations and first aid to all students and staff. In addition, AIUB has partnered with *wEvolve*, a professional mental health service, to offer **confidential counseling** for students **and employees** on-campus. Staff can access individual therapy sessions, mental health workshops (on stress management, work-life balance, etc.), and wellness seminars as needed, reflecting AIUB's commitment to holistic well-being. To support employees with families, AIUB provides a *generous leave policy* and childcare support. **Paid maternity leave** is guaranteed for all full-time female faculty and staff, with the university aiming to retain talented women and ease their return to work after childbirth. Similarly, **paid paternity leave** is offered to male employees so they can support their spouse and newborn, fostering an inclusive workplace for new fathers. For parents of young children, AIUB operates an **on-campus Day Care Center** – a safe facility where staff and students can leave their children during work or class hours. This has been invaluable in helping working parents (especially mothers) balance their careers and family responsibilities, directly contributing to better work-life balance.

Safe and Equitable Work Environment: AIUB maintains strict policies to ensure a safe, discrimination-free campus for both employees and students. The university has a clear **anti-discrimination policy** – no harassment or discrimination is tolerated on the basis of religion, race, gender, age, disability, or other status. A confidential **grievance and appeal process** allows staff or students to report any unfair treatment or misconduct. Complaints (e.g. regarding workplace harassment or pay disparities) can be submitted to the Office of Human Resources through formal channels (including anonymous drop-boxes or email), and a designated committee addresses these issues promptly. In line with national directives, AIUB has a standing **Complaint Committee for Sexual Harassment** to investigate and resolve any such incidents with utmost seriousness. The existence of these mechanisms and the assurance of

confidentiality encourage employees to voice concerns without fear, thereby reinforcing a decent and respectful work environment. Additionally, AIUB provides **group insurance coverage** for all employees – for example, in 2024 the university renewed an agreement with Chartered Life Insurance to provide comprehensive life and health insurance to its staff. This insurance, along with periodic health and safety workshops (such as fire drills, and recently a 2024 workshop on preventing heat illness for outdoor workers), demonstrates AIUB's concern for employee safety and welfare. Overall, through fair labor policies, continuous development opportunities, and strong support systems, AIUB ensures its faculty and staff enjoy dignified working conditions.

4. Economic Impact and Community Engagement

Local Employment and Economic Contribution: As a major private university, AIUB contributes directly to the local economy by creating jobs and fostering human capital. The university itself employs nearly **953 full-time personnel** (as of 2022) – including academics, administrators, and support staff – making it a significant employer in Dhaka. By providing stable employment with fair wages and benefits, AIUB helps many families attain economic security, aligning with the goal of decent work. Moreover, AIUB's **graduates (over 30,000 alumni)** form an important part of Bangladesh's skilled workforce. Every year, around 2,500–3,000 new graduates from AIUB enter the job market in fields ranging from IT and engineering to business, science, and healthcare. The high rate of graduate employment and entrepreneurship reflects AIUB's positive impact on workforce development. According to the Vice-Chancellor, many AIUB alumni now hold leadership roles in industry and "play a vital role in working closely with their alma mater" to hire fresh graduates – creating a virtuous cycle of employment for the community. In addition, AIUB graduates who start their **own companies and startups** contribute to job creation beyond the university. The growing number of student-led startups (supported by AIUB's incubation programs) is expected to generate new jobs in tech and creative sectors, further boosting regional economic growth.

Partnerships with Industry, Government, and NGOs: AIUB actively collaborates with external partners to promote decent work and inclusive growth. The university has signed numerous **Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs)** with companies and industry associations to bridge the gap between academia and the job market. These partnerships facilitate internship placements, curriculum input, and recruitment pipelines for students. For instance, AIUB maintains an **Industry Advisory Board** with professionals from leading firms to ensure its programs align with industry needs and to co-organize initiatives like training sessions and joint research. Regular **guest lectures, tech talks, and networking events** are held in collaboration with business leaders, giving students insight into evolving industries.

At the national level, AIUB works with government agencies to expand employment opportunities. In November 2023, AIUB partnered with the **ICT Division of the Government** to host a *"Divisional Job Fair"* under the Learning & Earning Development Project (LEDP). This day-long fair, held on AIUB's campus, brought together many leading software/IT companies to recruit not only AIUB students but also other youths in the region. It provided a platform for participants to submit CVs and interview for tech jobs or internships, directly supporting workforce participation in the digital sector. By collaborating with the ICT Ministry on such events, AIUB helps implement national strategies for youth employment and digital skill development. Another example is AIUB's seminar with the Ministry of ICT's Innovation Fund (RIC project) in 2024, which informed students about grant funding up to **BDT 60 lakh** available for tech startups and research – effectively connecting young innovators with

substantial government financial support. These partnerships leverage external resources to amplify AIUB's impact on decent work creation.

AIUB also engages with international networks and NGOs to promote inclusive economic growth. In 2024, AIUB became the **first educational institutional partner of WePOWER**, a South Asia-focused network (backed by the World Bank) that advances women's participation in the energy and power sector. Through WePOWER, AIUB has committed to a gender action plan and hosted seminars to encourage female students to pursue STEM careers in the power industry. This illustrates how AIUB's global partnerships are opening new professional fields to underrepresented groups (women in engineering), aligning with the goal of *full and productive employment for all*. Likewise, AIUB's collaboration with **Orange Corners Bangladesh** (a Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs initiative) connects young entrepreneurs to training, mentorship, and *match-funded grants up to €5,000* during incubation, and even larger grants/loans (up to €50,000) post-incubation. In March 2024, AIUB hosted the "Road to Entrepreneurship" seminar with Orange Corners, introducing students and local startup founders to these funding opportunities, particularly encouraging **women entrepreneurs** to take advantage of them. By leveraging such international programs, AIUB helps local youth secure financing and support to launch sustainable businesses – thereby reducing poverty and creating decent jobs (SDG 1 and SDG 8) through global partnerships.

Community Programs for Skills and Inclusion: Beyond its campus, AIUB contributes expertise to community development projects that enhance financial literacy and digital inclusion. Faculty and student clubs frequently organize outreach workshops on topics like personal finance management, ICT skills for rural youth, and entrepreneurship for underserved communities. For example, in August 2023 the university's economics and business faculty arranged a public poster competition on *"Budget 2023–2024: Shaping Tomorrow's Prosperity"* to raise awareness about national budgeting and economic planning. Such events engage students and the public in discussions of fiscal policy, indirectly improving economic literacy among young citizens. AIUB's Computer Science faculty have been involved in government initiatives to train freelancers and IT professionals under the LEDP program, thereby contributing to digital skill-building beyond its student body. The **AIUB Community Service Club** and other student organizations also run programs that teach basic computing or financial skills to marginalized groups (e.g. computer training for local school children, or seminars on small business basics for community members), though these are often voluntary projects.

In terms of research, AIUB encourages projects that address local economic and workforce challenges. Through the **Center for Sustainable Development** and academic departments, the university has conducted studies on graduate unemployment trends, the impact of technology on jobs, and strategies for inclusive growth. By sharing such research with policymakers (e.g., AIUB experts speaking at national conferences on skills gaps and employment), the university influences broader efforts to improve job readiness in Bangladesh. Notably, AIUB hosted the **AWS Community Day Bangladesh 2024**, where over 300 cloud technology professionals and enthusiasts gathered for knowledge exchange on cloud computing and AI, including a career fair segment. Co-hosting this event in Dhaka not only gave AIUB students free access to industry-led workshops and networking, but also supported the country's digital workforce development by spreading best practices in cloud technology. It exemplifies AIUB's role as a hub for community learning and professional networking.

Through these multifaceted engagements – from creating jobs on campus, to partnering with industry and government, to extending education into the community – AIUB demonstrates a

strong commitment to **Decent Work and Economic Growth**. The university's efforts from 2020 to 2024 have yielded tangible outcomes: high graduate employment rates, hundreds of internship and job placements, new startup ventures initiated by students, improved working conditions for staff, and a ripple effect of economic empowerment in the wider community. AIUB's alignment with SDG 8 is evident in its strategic focus on **quality education-to-employment pathways, fair and inclusive workplace policies, and collaborative initiatives** that uplift society through knowledge, innovation, and opportunity.