

GROWING GREENER

AUBSU

A review of AUBSU's sustainability work, mapped by the UN's Sustainability Goals

April 2021

Introduction:

We believe that, as an organisation, we have a responsibility to ensure that we are acting in an environmentally friendly way and to encourage all our members to join us in our quest to grow greener.

Working in conjunction with AUB and SOS-UK, we have taken part in green initiatives, developed environmental procedures, and ensured that sustainability is taken into consideration in all things AUBSU.

We're currently mapping our efforts to the [UN's Sustainable Development Goals](#).

If you have any suggestions on how we can take this further, please contact us:
studentunion@aub.ac.uk

Goal 1: No Poverty & Goal 2: Zero Hunger

What we've been doing:

- We've been developing and supporting our RAG (Raising and Giving) Officer and Team to fundraise for and encourage donations to some amazing causes. Over the past few years, they have supported charities including Street Child, Hope for Children and Hope for Food. Find out more about [RAG](#).
- We currently hold a 3 Star Award for our Fairtrade and ethical purchasing commitments (that's the highest award!). Though our commitment to Fairtrade and considerations for where we're putting our money, we are fighting poverty through fair pay and by supporting organisations that support their workers.

Aims for 2021-2022:

We will continue to offer the role of RAG Officer as an Executive position and support the RAG Team in their fundraising by seeking new opportunities and partnerships. We will aim to maintain our 3 Star Fairtrade Award through regular audits from SOS-UK. We also have a 5-year Fairtrade SMART Plan.

Goal 3: Good Health and Wellbeing

What we've been doing:

- We've been running our 'The Small Things Matter' wellbeing campaign since 2018, which is all about providing students with advice and tools to look after their mental health. As part of The Small Things Matter, we run regular events and workshops. In 2020/21, we have expanded this programme to include externally hosted workshops specifically for AUB's students of colour and our Positive Post project to help students feel less isolated during lockdown.

To practise what we preach, AUBSU staff are supported with extra wellbeing time and opportunities for participation in wellbeing-focused activities and campaigns.

- We also support our students' physical health by working with NHS Dorset Sexual Health to provide regular, free screenings for students. In September 2020, we launched our consent campaign and collaborated with STARS Dorset on our Green Flags campaign. We also successfully applied for funding from Sport England to run an accessible, affordable, and welcoming sports programme 'Give it a Go'. This programme, along with our student-led sports clubs, offers a range of activities to improve and support students' physical health.

- Plus, a shout out to our RAG Team, who are fundraising for Marie Curie through their Morocco Trek this year, and who also raised funds for STARS Dorset.

Aims for 2021-2022:

We want to develop more intersectional wellbeing resources to ensure all students are supported at AUB and feel included in our wellbeing campaigns.

We want to continue to work with AUB to ensure that students are supported through Covid-19 and their physical health remains a priority.

We want to embed our Give it a Go programme in AUBSU without the need for external funding.

Goal 4: Quality Education

What we've been doing:

- We have presented a sustainable curriculum proposal to the AUB Environmental Committee and worked with AUB to make significant actions in embedding sustainability in the curriculum. We are now working with them on Curriculum 21.
- We held a 2-day conference called 'Ethos for Change' with talks from artists, students and industry professionals on sustainability, diversity and equality in the Arts and HE sectors. We also held green creative events including 'Fairtrade flower pressing' and 'natural dyeing and bundle' workshops. These events all developed students' skills and knowledge beyond compulsory course-content. We also provide training and development opportunities to our students, such as the opportunity to audit AUB on its Fairtrade work.
- We produced Edition 3 of the [Green Zine](#), with contributions from 17 students, it covers content and visuals for each UN sustainable development goal.
- We worked to ensure that all students are receiving a quality education by representing the student voice to the university on academic matters, as well as running our course-rep scheme to ensure an effective feedback loop is maintained between students and their course tutors.

Aims for 2021-2022:

To work closely with the implementation and continued evaluation of Curriculum 21 to ensure that sustainability and global issues are included in all courses.

To continue producing an annual zine that helps inform and raise awareness of relevant green issues.

To hold regular events and interventions that build upon course-content and provide students with additional learning opportunities.

Goal 5: Gender Equality, Goal 10: Reducing Inequality and Goal 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions

What we've been doing:

- AUBSU has committed to ongoing anti-racism work and is having regular meetings to check our progress. We also have [resources](#) for students to help engage with anti-racism and improve their knowledge of race issues. We also produced an [Anti-Racism Report](#), after research into student experiences and racism within HE institutions. We are currently lobbying the university to commit to anti-racism actions in response to this report and have proposed next steps.
- We have part-time officer positions for roles including LGBT+, Race Equalities, Students with Disabilities, International and Gender Equalities. Our officers and our SU Team work on liberations campaigns throughout the year to support intersectional groups and engage all students with issues of equality. This year we had campaigns for Black History Month, Disabilities Celebration Month, LGBT+ History Month and Women's History Month, as well as activities throughout the year run by our officers, such as the Taking Up Space Zine.
- Our Give it a Go programme is funded to be inclusive and accessible with targets to engage people of colour, people with disabilities and females, non-binary and transgender students in physical activities.
- We represent all student voices on AUB boards including the Equalities Committee, where we are encouraging AUB to include pronoun use in email signatures and ensuring that students with disabilities are continually considered in Covid measures.
- We will be distributing sustainable menstrual products to all AUB students, including menstrual cups and reusable sanitary pads, ensuring that no student has to suffer from period poverty.
- AUBSU is an equal opportunity employer, and all staff are encouraged to consider equality and diversity in all aspects of their work, undergoing additional training to ensure they have a good knowledge base for their work.

Aims for 2021-2022:

To continue working on actions to ensure that AUBSU is an anti-racist organisation and lobby the university to commit to being a diverse, accessible and equality-championing university.

We want to develop our data tracking and ensure that all our opportunities are diverse and accessible.

Goal 6: Clean Water and Sanitation, Goal 7: Affordable and Clean Energy and Goal 13: Climate Action

What we've been doing:

- We have engaged students with activities and tips on their carbon-footprint energy-saving, especially regarding working from home. We are also running green campaigns like Tech For Trees and Go Green Week to provide opportunities for climate action.
- We supported AUB in attaining the Platinum Eco-Campus Award, which means that buildings like the SU office are energy-efficient, we manage waste responsibly and use 100% renewable energy. We have also made changes to our office behaviours, such as going paper-less for meetings, switching to A6 double-sided flyers where possible and keeping our online drive organised to reduce our online footprint.
- We have a range of [policies and commitments](#), including opting for vegan refreshments at meetings and events, avoiding Amazon purchases and sustainability makes up one fifth of our [Strategic Plan](#).
- We hold beach cleans to help prevent plastic-pollution and raise awareness of water-pollution by tips and advice, like our recipes for chemical-free cleaners.

Aims for 2021-2022:

We have identified that the SU does not do much action on Goal 6 and we will be planning to work on this goal through a new initiative or campaign next year.

We want to engage more with global climate action campaigns and will be looking for opportunities to get students engaged with climate action on a bigger scale.

Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth, Goal 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure and Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities

What we've been doing:

- We provide creative development opportunities, including promoting external opportunities, hosting regular Market Days for students to sell their creations, offering voluntary leadership roles within the SU, and facilitating BUMF, our student-led publication and gallery.
- We support small, local, sustainable businesses as set out in our Ethical Purchasing and Consumption Plan, including opting for gift-cards from local shops or ethical businesses and avoiding Amazon purchases.
- We sit on AUB's Environmental Committee and help influence campus development towards sustainable choices in regard to new builds and investments.
- We organise the Pack For Good campaign in collaboration with BCP council, SUBU and the British Heart foundation, as a community project to reduce waste and support a charitable cause. We support community organisations and charities within our volunteering opportunities, RAG Team, and fairs/market days.

Aims for 2021-2022:

We want to develop our creative opportunities further, expanding on our Creatives for Good project and creating a hub for students who want to get involved with their local community.

Goal 12: Responsible Consumption and Production

What we've been doing:

- In 2020, we were awarded 3 Stars for our Fairtrade work (that's the highest award!). We have a University-wide 5-year Fairtrade SMART plan, policies on avoiding Amazon and single-use plastics, and opting for sustainable food choices at meetings/events.
- We worked with AUB to provide sustainable steel water bottles at half price for students to make going plastic-free easy and affordable.
- We have a regular swap shop at Market Days, where students can donate unwanted clothes and take home second-hand clothes in a move away from fast-fashion. We also host vintage clothes fairs and campaign for slow-fashion with the Green Team. We hold regular campaigns and activities to encourage students to be more conscious with their purchases, including supporting Fairtrade Fortnight.
- AUBSU has an Ethical Purchasing Plan, merch is Fairtrade or FairWear (including the hoodies and t-shirt we get for our staff and volunteers), and we encourage clubs and socs to buy ethically in their purchases/merch too.

Aims for 2021-2022:

We want to maintain our 3 Star Award by keeping up good work! That means we will budget for more ethical and sustainable purchases, keep coming up with engaging initiatives to engage our community with Fairtrade and work to create better partnerships to support us in this.

We have a separate Fairtrade Plan which outlines our aims for this goal that can be viewed [here](#).

Goal 14: Life Below Water and Goal 15: Life On Land

What we've been doing:

- We hold regular Beach Cleans to fight plastic-pollution on our coasts.
- We have a meat-free policy for our meetings and opt for vegan refreshments at our events. Our Green Team have been running regular vegan and flexitarian engagements, with a regular feature on @aubsu_green
- Since 2014, we've planted 1000 trees annually for the local community. During lockdown, we created the campaign Tech For Trees so we could keep planting! We aim to plant around 4500 trees this year with the help of AUB's match-funding.
- We have significantly reduced our paper use over the past 5 years, printing less and opting for A6 double sided flyers where possible.
- Our 3 Peaks RAG Team are fundraising for Born-Free this year, a wildlife conservation and welfare charity.

Aims for 2021-2022:

We want to get back out to planting trees in the local community and will arrange this (Covid-restrictions permitting), along with more beach cleans.

Goal 17: Partnerships for the Goals

We know that we couldn't achieve all this without support from other amazing organisations. We'd like to say a huge thank you to: SOS-UK, Surfers Against Sewage, Upton Country Park, Choose a Challenge, the Woodland Trust, the Fairtrade Foundation, and all the charities who have worked with our RAG Team.

Aims for 2021-2022:

We will keep forming partnerships and working with other organisations in our efforts to grow greener!