



الجامعة العربية الأمريكية  
ARAB AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

Palestine



# SUSTAINABILITY REPORT

2024



# Welcoming Message

With great excitement, I share with you the 2024 Sustainability Report, a celebration of our university's ongoing journey toward a more sustainable and equitable future. This year's report not only captures the breadth of our efforts but also redefines how we view sustainability—as a dynamic and evolving responsibility that touches every corner of our community.



**Dr. Bara Asfour**  
**University President**

The challenges facing our planet today demand more than just awareness; they require bold action, innovative thinking, and an unwavering commitment to transformation. At Arab American University, sustainability is woven into the very fabric of who we are. It guides our research, shapes our teaching, and informs our daily operations. More importantly, it inspires us to be a catalyst for meaningful change, preparing the next generation of leaders to address the most pressing global challenges.

Over the past year, we have deepened our engagement with sustainability, embedding it into our academic frameworks, driving forward groundbreaking research, and implementing solutions that reduce our environmental footprint. From pioneering energy efficiency projects to fostering a campus culture that values sustainability, we are working to ensure that our university not only teaches sustainability but lives it every day.

None of this would be possible without the people who bring our vision to life. To our faculty, staff, and students—your ingenuity and drive are the lifeblood of our efforts. To our partners, alumni, and stakeholders—your trust and collaboration empower us to reach beyond the campus and into the wider world. Together, we are building a legacy of stewardship that transcends generations.

This report serves as both a record of progress and a call to action. It reflects the collective achievements of our community and highlights opportunities for growth and innovation in the years ahead. As you explore its pages, I encourage you to see not just what we have accomplished but what we aspire to become—a university that leads by example and inspires others to do the same.

The road ahead will not always be easy, but with shared vision and determination, I am confident that we can navigate the complexities of our time and leave an indelible mark on the future. Thank you for your support, your passion, and your belief in our mission.

Let us continue to dream boldly, act decisively, and champion sustainability in all that we do.



# Arab American University, Palestine

Arab American University (AAUP) is the first private Palestinian university, founded in the year 2000, in collaboration with California State University (CSU) in Stanislaus and Utah State University (USU) in Logan. The University started in one campus located in Jenin City in the northern area of the West Bank. In 2020, the university established a new campus in Ramallah City.

AAUP serves the educational needs of over 13,500 students, 65% of whom are from Palestine, 30% from the Palestinian homeland, and 5% from other nationalities. The university provides a dynamic learning atmosphere that inspires innovation and focuses primarily on every student's success.

AAUP is committed to providing high-quality education to both local and international students, with a vision to become a leader in higher education in Palestine. The university has made impressive progress in developing state-of-the-art educational facilities and laboratories, creating a dynamic learning environment. AAUP offers a unique and diverse education system with a wide range of academic programs that are in high demand.

The necessity-motivated programs aim to equip graduates with the skills, qualifications, and

knowledge required to develop independent thinking and entrepreneurship capabilities, contributing to sustainable national development. To achieve this, AAUP attracts outstanding professionals, scholars, and researchers from both Palestine and abroad, which enriches and diversifies the sources of education and facilitates the transfer of the latest scientific and technological achievements.

AAUP takes pride in being a leading academic institution that actively participates in local, regional, and international academic forums. Additionally, the university holds memberships in prestigious organizations such as the Association of Arab Universities, the Federation of Islamic Universities, and the Association of Private Universities. The university is an active member of the UNIMED, the Mediterranean Universities Union.

Furthermore, the University aims to provide a satisfying learning experience, complemented by extracurricular activities. AAUP accepts challenges and seizes opportunities to equip students with the skills and knowledge needed to excel in the national, regional, and global economies of the twenty-first century.



## Vision

The Arab American University aspires to be known for graduating students who far exceed expectations locally and globally, adhere to the highest ethical standards, and have a real impact on society through research and innovation.

## Mission

- **Deliver Globally Recognized Academic Programs:** Provide internationally acclaimed academic programs and attract esteemed faculty dedicated to teaching and research excellence.
- **Foster Collaborative Innovation:** Cultivate a vibrant environment fostering creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurship, encouraging free exchange of ideas and nurturing groundbreaking research.
- **Forge Global Academic Alliances:** Establish robust partnerships with top-tier international universities, facilitating cross-cultural learning and enriching academic diversity.
- **Promote Ethical Values:** Imbue students with a strong ethical foundation, guiding their behavior and decision-making, fostering integrity and responsibility.
- **Champion Community Service:** Inspire faculty, staff, and students to actively engage in community service, promoting social responsibility and creating a positive impact beyond the university walls.

# What's New



## **Campus Area and Facilities:**

- The number of academic and administrative staff increased from 694 in 2023 to 815 in 2024.

## **Sustainability Budget:**

The budget for sustainability increased slightly from \$1,082,770.94 in 2023 to \$1,096,028.78 in 2024, reflecting a slight increase in sustainability efforts.

## **Energy and Climate Change:**

**Renewable energy:** Solar energy production has seen an increase in 2024 with 1,392,000 kWh produced, compared to 951,000 kWh in 2023. This is a significant increase, which shows the university's progress towards a more sustainable energy model.

The carbon footprint decreased slightly, from 5,649.02 metric tons in 2023 to 4,947.55 metric tons in 2024, reflecting successful efforts in reducing emissions.

The university increased its green building implementation to >50% of total campus buildings in 2024, compared to >25% in 2023.

## **Waste Management:**

The waste management programs show progress with an increase in recycling and waste separation. In 2024, 3R (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle)

program implementation is more advanced, and medical waste management shows improved disposal practices.

The volume of toxic waste treated has increased to 2.25 tons, reflecting the university's commitment to minimizing harmful environmental impacts.

## **Water Management:**

The water conservation programs and water recycling efforts have improved in 2024, with more advanced systems for managing and recycling water. The university's use of rainwater harvesting is more widespread, and the percentage of treated water consumed has increased significantly.

## **Transportation:**

The university has introduced more zero-emission vehicles (ZEV) on campus. The average number of ZEVs on campus has increased to 20 per day in 2024, up from 15 in 2023.

Additionally, the university continues to implement shuttle services and pedestrian paths to reduce its carbon footprint and promote sustainable campus mobility.

# 1 NO POVERTY



## SDG1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere

### Supporting Vulnerable Communities

AAUP recognizes the vital role higher education plays in combatting poverty. As part of its community engagement initiatives, the university nurtures a culture of voluntary work among its students. AAUP organizes multiple activities aimed at helping marginalized groups, including students participating in charitable initiatives and community service projects. Students are required to complete 100 hours of community service as part of their graduation criteria, with over 282,000 hours of service recorded in 2023.



**\$1,370,401**

Total Scholarships

### Scholarships for Disadvantaged Students

AAUP fights poverty through its scholarship programs, particularly for students from low-income backgrounds. In the academic year 2022/2023, AAUP awarded \$1,370,401 in scholarships to 1,782 students, ensuring that financial barriers do not prevent talented individuals from accessing higher education. This initiative empowers students and provides them with opportunities for career advancement.



**1782**

Beneficiary Students



**282,000**

Community Service Hours in 2023



## 2 ZERO HUNGER



# SDG2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture

### Promoting Sustainable Agriculture and Nutrition

AAUP incorporates sustainability in its approach to food security through programs and projects focused on improving the lives of local farmers and students. The university actively engages with local agricultural centers to preserve and enhance ecosystems and agricultural practices. AAUP's greenhouse and plant reproduction farm not only support campus beautification but also serve as educational tools for students in agriculture and environmental sciences.

### Student Engagement and Awareness

The university promotes nutrition and food security through community outreach programs. These programs focus on educating local communities and raising awareness about sustainable farming and food production practices, including the efficient use of resources and the reduction of waste.



# 3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



## SDG3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

### Health and Wellness Services on Campus

AAUP provides a wide range of health services to ensure the well-being of its students, staff, and faculty. The medical clinic on campus is equipped with modern medical facilities and staffed by qualified personnel to offer free healthcare services. In addition to the clinic, AAUP operates specialized centers, including a Dental Center, Occupational Therapy Center, and a Physical Therapy Center, providing vital services to both the campus community and local residents.



### Academic Programs in Healthcare

AAUP has several academic programs aimed at enhancing the healthcare workforce. Through its Nursing Technology Simulation Center and Medical Laboratories, the university trains the next generation of healthcare professionals. The Occupational Therapy and Speech, Language, and Hearing Disorders programs ensure that AAUP contributes to improving the quality of life for individuals with various health challenges.





# 4 QUALITY EDUCATION



## SDG4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

### Commitment to Quality Education

AAUP has consistently focused on providing high-quality education that prepares students for leadership roles in their respective fields. The university adheres to international accreditation standards such as ABET for Computer Engineering, ADEE for Dentistry, and NLN CNEA for Nursing. In 2023–2024, AAUP ensured continuous improvement by updating curricula, refining teaching methods, and enhancing student assessment systems.



### International Standards and Quality Management

AAUP upholds rigorous academic and administrative standards, guided by the ISO 9001:2015 certification. By ensuring excellence in teaching, research, and community service, the university cultivates an environment that fosters innovation, creativity, and global competitiveness. Furthermore, over 20% of courses at AAUP are aligned with the UN SDGs, preparing students to tackle global challenges.



### Equitable Access for All

The university is committed to gender equality and inclusion, with 60% of enrolled students being women, reflecting AAUP’s policies of non-discrimination in admissions and employment. The university also ensures accessibility for people with disabilities, providing facilities such as ramps, elevators, and designated parking spots across its campuses.



20%

of courses contribute to UN SDGs



# 5 GENDER EQUALITY



## SDG5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

### Promoting Gender Equality

AAUP is dedicated to eliminating gender-based barriers in education and employment. The university's gender equality initiatives include equal opportunities for both male and female students and staff. Women comprise 39% of the university's employees and hold leadership positions in academic and administrative roles. Female faculty members contribute significantly to the university's decision-making processes, with several women serving on prestigious boards like the Board of Trustees and University Council.



60% of enrolled students are females

### Encouraging Women's Leadership

AAUP actively supports women's leadership through programs that encourage female students to pursue careers in traditionally male-dominated fields. This empowerment is supported through mentorship programs, leadership workshops, and the visibility of female faculty members as role models.



39% of employees are females



## 6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION



### SDG6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

#### Water Conservation and Management

AAUP continues to enhance its efforts in water conservation, particularly through the implementation of smart irrigation systems on campus. The university collects rainwater from its roofs, utilizing it for irrigation and sanitation. In 2024, treated water consumption increased as part of the university's commitment to sustainable water use.

#### Sustainable Water Use Practices

With the installation of underground rainwater tanks across both campuses, AAUP effectively captures and stores water to reduce reliance on external water sources. The Jenin campus boasts a 2,000 m<sup>3</sup> rainwater tank, and in Ramallah, a system pumps collected rainwater into elevated tanks for distribution across the campus, ensuring efficient water management and conservation.



# 7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY



## SDG7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all



70%

of the university buildings are smart



75%

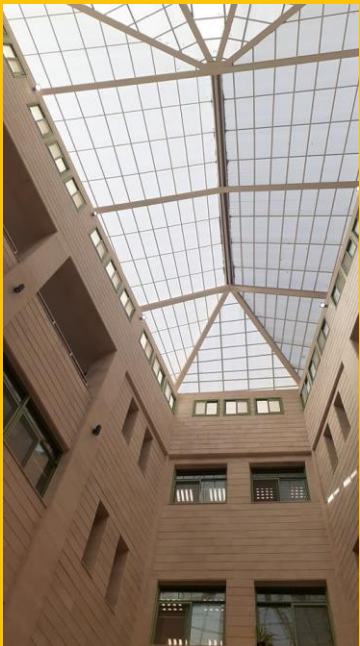
of the devices used in the university are energy-efficient

### Renewable Energy Integration

AAUP continues to expand its solar energy capacity, generating 1,392,000 kWh in 2024 from solar power stations located across the campuses. These efforts are part of the university's goal to reach 18% solar-powered electricity by 2024. The university also integrates energy-efficient building designs, including natural ventilation and daylight illumination to reduce its overall energy consumption.

### Green Building Standards

All new buildings on campus are designed with green building elements. This includes the use of energy-efficient materials, sustainable construction techniques, and renewable energy systems that promote long-term environmental sustainability.



## 8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



# SDG8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

### Encouraging Innovation and Entrepreneurship

AAUP fosters an environment that supports creativity, innovation, and leadership. Through initiatives like the Hassib Sabbagh Information Technology Center, the university prepares students for the workforce by bridging the gap between education and industry needs. This center focuses on technology adoption and prepares students to excel in high-demand fields, encouraging them to participate in global competitions such as the HULT PRIZE.



### Economic Growth and Job Opportunities

AAUP's rural campus expansions contribute to local economic development by creating new job opportunities. The university's partnerships with local industries provide students with valuable internships and employment prospects, supporting sustainable regional development.



# SDG9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation

## Infrastructure and Innovation

Through its Nursing Technology Simulation Center, AAUP empowers students with practical, hands-on learning experiences. This innovative facility is a key example of how the university combines advanced infrastructure with cutting-edge technology to improve education outcomes in healthcare. The center also conducts research to improve patient care and train the next generation of medical professionals.



## Technology and Research

The Hassib Sabbagh Information Technology Center plays a vital role in advancing technology adoption in local communities. It also promotes innovation in various sectors, including agriculture, healthcare, and education, through specialized training and collaboration with industry leaders.



# 10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES



## SDG10: Reduce inequality within and among countries

### Inclusivity in Education and Employment

AAUP's commitment to inclusive education ensures equal access to high-quality programs for all students, regardless of their background. Scholarships and financial aid support students from underprivileged communities, particularly those in Palestinian territories and the 1948 occupied areas, ensuring they can access the same educational opportunities as other students.

### International Collaboration

The university's involvement in international partnerships and Erasmus Plus projects enhances academic exchange and research opportunities for Palestinian students and faculty, fostering global solidarity and providing valuable networking opportunities.





## **SDG11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable**



### **Campus Design and Sustainable Living**

AAUP is committed to designing campuses that are environmentally friendly and accessible. Both the Jenin and Ramallah campuses are equipped with green spaces, where walking paths connect buildings and encourage walking as a primary mode of transport. The farthest distance between buildings is no more than a 10-minute walk, minimizing the need for motorized travel and fostering a connection with nature.



### **Public Transportation and Accessibility**

AAUP has partnered with a contractor to provide public transportation services, using large buses to shuttle students between Jenin and the campus. These initiatives reduce the environmental impact of individual car usage while making the campus more accessible to the local community.



### **Wastewater Treatment for Sustainable Urbanization**

The university has implemented a wastewater treatment station, benefitting individuals in the surrounding community. This facility addresses environmental and health challenges caused by untreated wastewater, promoting sustainable agricultural practices and improving the quality of life for nearby residents.





# 12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION



## SDG12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

### Comprehensive Waste Management Policies

AAUP prioritizes responsible waste management through initiatives such as:

- Separation of waste into organic and inorganic categories, including specialized containers for medical waste generated by labs and the College of Dentistry.
- Recycling practices, such as paper shredding facilities, reduce the university's dependency on raw materials.
- Burial of waste ensures safe disposal for non-recyclable items.

### Sustainability Education

The university offers a BSc program in Environmental Management, equipping students with the skills to address waste-related issues and implement sustainable practices in managerial and technical roles. Students in this program contribute to local and national efforts to improve waste management systems.

### Reduction of Paper Usage

AAUP has implemented digital solutions to reduce paper consumption, including online documentation and reporting systems. These efforts minimize environmental impact while promoting efficiency and sustainability in administrative tasks.



# 13 CLIMATE ACTION



18%

of the university electricity is solar in 2024



## 4 Programs

In the fields of renewable energy and environmental sciences



## SDG13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

### Environmental Sustainability Policy

AAUP integrates climate action into its operational and academic frameworks. By minimizing its carbon footprint and promoting renewable energy, the university actively contributes to global efforts to combat climate change.

### The Center of Excellence in Climate Change and Environmental Technology (CECCET)

The CECCET was established to address the challenges of climate change in Palestine. This center provides:

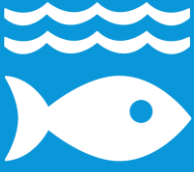
- Research and data analysis on the impact of climate change in local contexts.
- Strategic consultations for policymakers to address climate issues effectively.
- Opportunities for partnerships with global environmental organizations.

### Renewable Energy Goals

In 2022, 5% of the university's electricity came from solar energy, and AAUP is on track to reach 18% by 2024. The installation of solar panels across campuses reflects AAUP's commitment to energy transformation and climate change mitigation.

### Student and Community Involvement

Educational programs in renewable energy and environmental sciences empower students to become leaders in combating climate change. Through seminars and workshops, the university raises awareness about environmental challenges and solutions among students and the broader community.



# SDG14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

AAUP's location in Palestine limits its direct interaction with marine ecosystems, but the university still contributes to global efforts by promoting the sustainable use of natural resources. Environmental management programs educate students on reducing pollution and supporting policies for marine and freshwater conservation.

## Educational Impact

Students in environmental management and renewable energy programs learn about the global importance of oceans and seas, particularly in regulating the climate and supporting biodiversity.





# SDG15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, and halt biodiversity loss

## Biodiversity Conservation

AAUP actively contributes to protecting terrestrial ecosystems by maintaining a greenhouse and plant reproduction farm on campus. These facilities supply the campus with indoor and outdoor plants, contributing to the ecological balance of the area.



## Collaborations with Agricultural Centers

The university collaborates with local agricultural centers to support biodiversity and sustainable farming practices. These partnerships enable the exchange of knowledge and resources, enhancing the preservation of local ecosystems.



## Educational Outreach

AAUP integrates biodiversity conservation into its academic curriculum, inspiring students to take action against deforestation, desertification, and biodiversity loss. Through research and fieldwork, students contribute to local and regional conservation efforts.



# 16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS



## SDG16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

### Inclusive Dialogue and Democratic Values

AAUP fosters a culture of inclusivity and open dialogue through its Policy on Inclusive Dialogue and Promotion of Democratic Values. This policy emphasizes:

- Freedom of speech and critical thinking.
- The acceptance of diverse perspectives within the university community.
- A safe and supportive environment for meaningful discussions.

### Conflict Studies Research Center (CSRC)

The CSRC is the first center in the region dedicated to research in policy and conflict resolution. It:

- Provides policy advice to Palestinian decision-makers.
- Produces policy papers and academic research on conflict resolution strategies.
- Offers Master's and Ph.D. programs in Conflict Resolution, equipping graduates with practical skills to address global and regional conflicts.

### Educational Contributions

Courses in transitional justice, post-colonial peace models, and human rights equip students to become agents of peace and reconciliation. These programs also focus on identity studies, memory studies, and reconciliation processes, promoting understanding and collaboration among diverse groups.



## 17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS



# SDG17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

### Building Partnerships for Global Impact

AAUP has established partnerships with over 100 local and international institutions, including Erasmus Plus and Horizon EU projects. These collaborations:

- Support academic exchange for students and faculty.
- Facilitate research projects addressing global sustainability challenges.
- Enhance AAUP's ability to transfer academic knowledge to real-world applications.

### Community Service and Volunteerism

AAUP promotes volunteerism as a key element of its community engagement strategy. Students are encouraged to participate in projects that address local challenges in areas such as healthcare, environmental conservation, and legal support.

### Technology and Innovation for Development

The university leverages technology to support sustainable development through practical applications in education, agriculture, and healthcare. By staying at the forefront of technological advancements, AAUP ensures that its students are prepared to contribute meaningfully to global sustainability efforts.



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