



2021 Sustainability Report SDG8

8 DECENT WORK AND
ECONOMIC GROWTH



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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH





SDG8 aims to promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all. The global economy has been growing at a slower rate than in previous years notwithstanding improvements in labour productivity and unemployment. The unprecedented shock to the world's labour markets is expected to result in a decrease of around 10.5% in aggregate working hours in the second quarter of 2020, equivalent to 305 million full-time workers. Small and medium enterprises, workers in informal employment, the self-employed, daily wage earners and workers in sectors at the highest risk of disruption have been hit the hardest.



¹ <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2022/img/info/Goal-8.pdf>

Before the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the average growth of the global economy had already slowed. The pandemic has caused the worst global economic recession since the Great Depression and has had a massive impact on working times and incomes. In 2020, 8.8% of global working hours were lost compared to the figure for the fourth quarter of 2019, which is equivalent to 255 million full-time jobs and approximately four times greater than the hours lost during the global financial crisis in 2009. Young people and women in the workforce were hit particularly hard by the crisis in the labour market. The global economy is slowly recovering, although activity may remain below pre-pandemic levels for a prolonged period.

Following average growth of about 2% from 2014 to 2018, global real GDP per capita increased by only 1.3% in 2019 and is estimated to have declined by 5.3% in 2020 owing to the pandemic. Global real GDP per capita is projected to increase again by 3.6% in 2021 and 2.6% in 2022. The real GDP of the least developed countries increased by 4.8% in 2019 and is estimated to have fallen by 1.3% in 2020 because of the disruption caused by the pandemic.

Before the onset of the pandemic, informal employment accounted for 60.2% of global employment, equivalent to 2 billion people with informal jobs characterized by a lack of basic protection, including social protection coverage. More than three quarters, 1.6 billion informal workers, were significantly affected by the pandemic-related lockdown measures or were working in the sectors hardest hit.

The median gender pay gap in countries and territories with data from around 2017 is close to 12%, indicating that women's hourly earnings are an average of 12% lower than those of men in half of all countries and territories with data. However, this gender pay gap is an approximate calculation based on average hourly earnings without controlling for sector, occupation, educational level or work experience. In a global study, the International Labour Organization identified a factor-weighted gender pay gap of 19%. In 87% of countries and territories with recent data, professionals earn more than double that of workers in elementary occupations per hour on average.

Global unemployment increased by 33 million in 2020, with the unemployment rate increasing by 1.1% points to 6.5%. However, unemployment figures reflect only a small proportion of the jobs lost as a result of the pandemic. A further 81 million people were not actively seeking employment or were simply unable to find employment owing to the COVID-19-related restrictions. Young people and women were particularly hard hit by the crisis, with employment losses in 2020 of 8.7 and 5%, respectively, compared to 3.7% for all adults and 3.9% for men.

In 2019, more than one in five of the world's young people were not in employment, education or training, a proportion almost unchanged since 2005. Quarterly figures indicate that the rate increased from the fourth quarter of 2019 to the second quarter of 2020 in 42 out of 49 countries and territories with data. As young women were already twice as likely as young men not to be in employment, education or training, and as women have been forced into inactivity disproportionately during the pandemic, the COVID-19 crisis is likely to worsen the gender gap among young people not in employment, education or training².

² <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/files/report/2022/secretary-general-sdg-report-2022--EN.pdf>

AGU'S POLICIES AND PRACTICES

Decent work in safe and stable conditions is a crucial component of helping people out of poverty, with the related aspects of reducing hunger and increasing health. The rise of precarious employment, modern slavery, and uneven growth have created threats to a sustainable future. Therefore, it is highly important to take precautions regarding working conditions in order to ensure economic growth. AGU aims to guarantee equivalent rights of employees and implements the State's and its own policies on labour and wage.

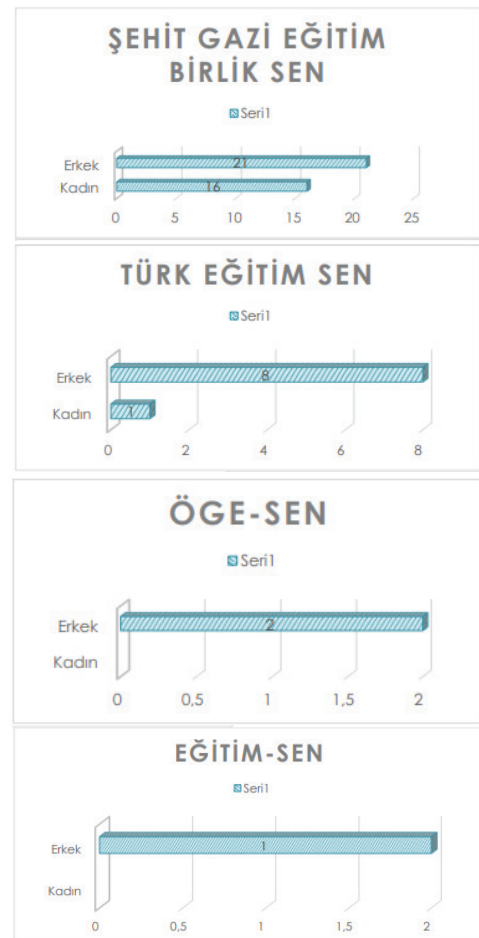
AGU's Policies on Equality and Freedom, Article 1, prohibits any discrimination on the basis of race, colour, creed, religion, gender, national origin, citizenship, ethnicity, marital status, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, refugee status, and expression.

AGU complies with Article 10 of the Turkish Constitution states that all Turkish laws and regulations need to be applied equally without discrimination. Everyone is equal before the law without distinction as to language, race, colour, sex, political opinion, philosophical belief, religion and sect, or any such grounds. AGU's Policies on Equality and Freedom, Article 6, is focused on Forced Labour, Crime, Corruption and Bribery and strictly condemns and prohibits engaging in forced labour, modern slavery, and human trafficking activities. All employees working at AGU are subject to Civil Servants Law No. 657. The employees' petition rights are made in accordance with Law No. 3017 on the Right to Petition. AGU also complies with the Turkish Regulation on Child Labour, Article 71 – No Child Labour.

Article 5 is focused on the Policy on Employment and Pay Scale Equity and guarantees equivalent rights of workers when outsourcing activities to third parties. Moreover, as a state university, AGU applies policies guaranteeing equivalent rights of workers, as per regulations applied to public institutions by the Turkish Higher Education Council / Ministry of Higher Education / Ministry of Labour and Social Security. Article 5 states that AGU complies with Article 5 of Turkish Labour Law No. 4857: "Differential remuneration for similar jobs or for work of equal value is not permissible."

Since "Salary Transactions" are carried out by each expenditure unit for its own personnel and there is no central "Salary/Accruals" unit, "Salary Appeal" transactions and applications related to this issue are evaluated by the responsible salary trustee.

AGU has been committed to an effort to maintain a healthy working environment and ensure job satisfaction among employees.



Number of Union Members

AGU attaches importance to unionization for the rights of its staff. AGU allows its employees to be a member of labour unions. AGU's Human Resources organizes meetings with unions every year. The employees apply to this department for the membership process.

Open to All for Societal Impact

AGU, as a higher education institution aiming at excelling in education, research, and producing societal impact, designs and implements activities and programs that are accessible to all, regardless of ethnicity, religion, disability, or gender.

All AGU staff members are free to book and use all institutional educational, health, sports, recreational, etc., facilities; and are invited to join all open activities and events.

Flexible Working Conditions

AGU allows all its academics and administrative staff in need to have flexible working hours in order to optimize their professional performance and personal time. Additionally, all administrative and academic departments plan office presence rotation systems and telecommute with appropriate scheduling and equipment in order for office members to be able to work remotely and complete their tasks from home.

Transportation Services

All AGU office employees are entitled to a free shuttle service every morning and evening, driving them to and from home.

Our personnel bus service ensures that the most suitable routes are determined, thus making public transportation instead of personal vehicles, making transportation more economical and reducing the traffic density as the number of vehicles decreases. Therefore, the damage to the environment is also reduced, and the service becomes sustainable. In this way, a total of 166 personnel are able to benefit from this service.



Top Quality Equipment and Comfortable Setting

All offices are equipped with high-quality desks, chairs, etc., and employees are given use of high-quality desk- or laptop computers. The AGU campus offers a pleasant work environment with large windows, greenery, and multiple lounge areas. Employees also have access to kitchens to prepare beverages and snacks for their coffee/tea breaks.

Multiple Restaurant Options

The University offers employees two government-subsidized canteens for lunch meals. Private food companies have also established on-campus restaurants. Vending machines are available all over campus, and the University is ideally placed for students and staff to benefit from multiple food-delivery opportunities.

Partnerships with Off-Campus Organizations

The University also continues to sign partnership agreements to allow its employees to benefit from additional services at discounted prices (kindergartens, sports centres, hospitals, etc.). Finally, as part of its societal impact approach, employees are also offered multiple opportunities to volunteer and partake in charity work in the community. AGU employees are encouraged to get involved in charitable and community activity and can do so via the different AGU partnerships with (inter)national NGOs.



AGU aims to become a high-quality university and has been promoting its vision globally. At the same time, the University has been making a strong impact on social life. In order to ensure equality, the AGU Diversity and Equality Committee has been established. Priorities of the committee are educating AGU students to be world citizens and transforming societies for the better. The committee organizes training sessions and seminars for the students in order to raise their awareness about gender mainstreaming. The committee also aims to reach to and work with a wider audience based in Kayseri.

AGU'S PROGRESS

AGU tracks publications, projects, courses, theses, dissertations, and congress and symposium participation for all SDGs through AVESIS (Academic Data Management System).

Employee Statistics

Number of employees: 522
Number of employees on contracts of over 24 months: 11

Student Statistics

Number of students: 2944
Number of students with work placements for more than a month: 361



RESEARCH AND PROJECTS

AGU aims to ensure decent work and economic growth by supporting research and projects and carries out various projects, one of which is A New Approach for Sustainable Water Management: Integrating a Circular Economy Approach into the Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystem Linkage Framework. AGU also has the AGU Foundation (AGUF), which supports the University's research activities and projects. Additionally, AGU has joined the University-Industry Research Cooperation Foundation (USAIV), and some of its faculty members serve on the advisory boards of research support programs.

AGUF

As AGU aspires to be a research and teaching university of international standards, an organization playing a key role in its development is the AGUF. Founded in 2011, the work of AGUF is dedicated to the overall goal of supporting the University with the following three specific aims: To provide financial incentives to

successful students, students with financial needs, and alums looking for further study and career opportunities; To provide economic, cultural, and social support to the University's employees; to fund developments in the University's physical and technical-technological facilities and underwrite improvement efforts in education and research and opportunities for their application. AGUF's main areas of support are awarding and supporting successful students, providing all kinds of support to meet the economic, social and cultural needs of the academic and administrative staff, and supporting the development of education, research, projects, and application opportunities with its physical and technological infrastructure.

USAIV

USAIV is a foundation established in cooperation of AGU, Erciyes University, Kayseri University, and the Chamber of Industry in Kayseri. The objectives of USAIV are as follows:

- To ensure university-industry cooperation in order to conduct research for industry in accordance with today's technology.
- To support research activities carried out in universities according to the latest technology for the industry. In this context, to establish laboratories and workshops, to provide tools and equipment, and to inform industrialists about the latest developments.
- To provide successful disadvantaged students with the opportunity to do internships, specialize, or pursue a doctorate at home and abroad,
- To open and operate student dormitories, libraries, canteens, and workplaces at locations deemed appropriate by the Board of Directors of the Foundation,
- To provide opportunities to train personnel and scientists in technical fields related to today's technology. In this direction, to organize seminars, conferences, and symposiums in order to ensure that university students and industrialists benefit from international developments in science branches.
- To establish companies, to become partners in existing enterprises, and to operate them.
- To promote teaching, training, and research; to publish all kinds of publications such as magazines, bulletins, newspapers, and books related to the technological developments of the day; to organize competitions; to give awards.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AND COURSE

AGU offers many educational programmes and courses. In 2021, 72 courses related to the SDG 8 were taught. In addition to these courses, AGU has educational programmes such as the AGU Global Challenge Curriculum (GLB) and units such as AGU Technology Transfer Office, the AGU Academy and AGU Career and Professional Development Office.

AGU also hosts multiple educational programs and courses open to the general public, such as executive education programs and/or vocational training courses.

AGU Global Challenge Curriculum (GLB)

AGU – as a research university seeking solutions to global challenges and aiming at developing citizens who can contribute to societies and shape the future (AGU's Mission Statement) – developed

an innovative GLB program composed of one mandatory course and several elective courses taught throughout the four undergraduate academic years. These courses focus on global topics such as the ones tackled by the United Nations (UN) SDGs.

AGU Global Courses Objectives: To help students comprehend and seek solutions to current and future world challenges in an innovative and stimulating class environment; to help students develop and improve soft and hard skills that are relevant to today's job market; to establish a culture of dialogue, debate, "Learning by Doing," teamwork, empathy, and participatory learning; to enable progress through the blending of all three contemporary university missions: education, research, and societal impact. Please see [see](#) for more information about AGU's Higher Education Curriculum for the SDGs.

GLB 102: Innovation and Entrepreneurship

The main aim of the Innovation and Entrepreneurship course is to provide students with the entrepreneurial orientation and mindset. Some of the elements that are key for a successful start-up and are covered in this course are the ability to seek and explore opportunities, value proposition, understanding customers, having a solid marketing plan, working with a good team, understanding the technology, and financing and managing the cash flows. Creating new businesses also requires a good understanding of innovation. Discoveries, new technologies, competition, and globalization compel both entrepreneurs and existing firms to foster innovation. This course also examines the theory and practice of promoting and managing innovation in start-ups and existing firms.

AGU Technology Transfer Office

AGU Technology Transfer Office was established to encourage young entrepreneurs' creative and innovative thinking, in which the participants can get free training sessions and workshops. In this regard, AGU has launched a Social Entrepreneurship Network in Türkiye, which includes programs supporting and guiding active citizens and social entrepreneurs by giving them access to training. Please see AGU Technology Transfer Office's SDG Awareness Training Series within the scope of social contribution.

AGU Academy

An AGU Centre called "AGU Academy" is dedicated to designing and providing upskilling, continuing education, and capacity-building programs, such as Project Management, Language courses, Information Technology and In-Service training, etc., to the general public. In 2021, the AGU Academy organized corporate training sessions for several companies operating in the industry. All participants received an online participation certificate at the end of the training programs. Some of the topics of these programs were climate change, conflict resolution, and economics.

AGU Career and Professional Development Office

All events of the AGU Career and Professional Development Office are open to the public. The Office organizes educational events, conferences, and seminars and publishes its calls on social media for easy access by the public. The webpage of the Office also includes open data about platforms to find internships, scholarships, and jobs both domestically and internationally:

- [Opportunities in Türkiye](#)
- [International Opportunities](#)
- [Graduate Programs](#)

COOPERATION AND EVENTS

AGU emphasizes the significance of the cooperation and events conducted in relation to the SDG 8. Some of the University's relevant cooperation and events are as follows.

Cooperation

1- Global Solutions Initiative (GSI)

AGU signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the GSI.

The GSI is a globally collaborative enterprise to propose policy responses to major global problems, addressed by the G20, the G7 and other global governance fora. The policy recommendations and strategic visions are generated through a disciplined research program by leading research organizations, elaborated in policy dialogues between researchers, policymakers, business leaders and civil society representatives.

AGU and the GSI partnered formally in the following fields: AGU faculty members' participation in the GSI group research, discussions, networks, workshops, research and exchange programs; AGU members' active participation in the GSI Annual Summit; AGU students' involvement in the Young Global Changers program; AGU members' involvement in the co-creation of training courses or camps for participants in the Young Global Changers program; joint commitment and efforts towards aligning the business sector with societal needs to enable a symbiotic economic and social progress, recoupling economic and social prosperity.

The agreement also leaves the door open for further potential collaboration projects both AGU and GSI would like to pursue.

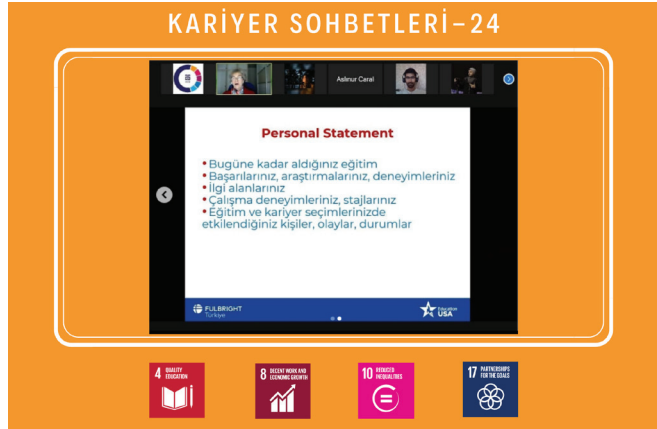


The Global Solutions Initiative Summit – The World Policy Forum

Events

1- 24th Career Talks Related to the SDG 4, 8, 10, and 17

The AGU Career Office organized the 24th Career Talks, as an open event to the public, in connection with the SDG 4, 8, 10, and 17. An information seminar was organized by the Fulbright Commission on the scholarships provided by them for Turkish citizens who wish to pursue master's and doctoral studies in the USA.



24th Career Talks related to SDG 4, 8, 10 and 17

2- 25th Career Talks Related to the SDG 4, 8, and 17

At the 25th Career Talks, Hakan Topuzoğlu, an e-commerce expert, gave public training on “Digital Entrepreneurship.”



25th Career Talks related to SDG 4, 8 and 17

3- 26th Career Talks Related to the SDG 4, 8, and 17

At the 26th Career Talks, Buğra Kılıçarslan, the founder of MBK Digital Consultancy, shared his transition from corporate life as a manager to a freelance career, the tricks of his sector, and consultancy as a profession.



Career Talks related to SDG 4, 8 and 17

4- 27th Career Talks Related to the SDG 4, 5, 8, and 17

The AGU Career Office held a productive meeting with “We Code” Company.



27th Career Talks related to SDG 4, 5, 8 and 17

5- Feminist Foreign Policy and Women Leaders Seminar

The online seminar titled “Feminist Foreign Policy and Women Leaders” was organized by the Department of Political Science and International Relations, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. The seminar was given by faculty member Assoc. Prof. Dr. C. Akça ATAÇ.

