

# MINGACHEVIR STATE UNIVERSITY

## Report

**8** DECENT WORK AND  
ECONOMIC GROWTH



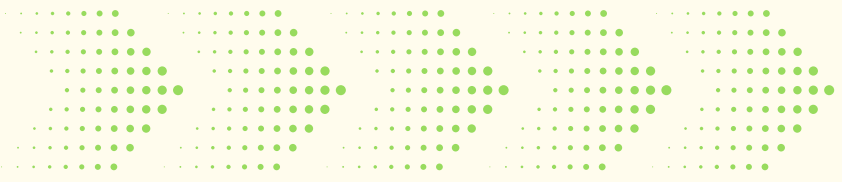
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# GENERAL INFORMATION ON THE SDG

## 8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



Sustainable Development Goal 8 is recognized as one of the central pillars of the global sustainable development agenda, aiming to promote sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, alongside full and productive employment and the provision of decent work for all segments of society. Within the broader framework of the United

Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, SDG 8 reflects a paradigm shift from purely growth-oriented economic models toward more inclusive, equitable, and sustainability-driven development pathways.

At its core, SDG 8 seeks to ensure that economic expansion is not only quantitatively measurable through indicators such as gross domestic product (GDP) growth but also qualitatively transformative. This includes the generation of high-quality employment opportunities, improvements in labor productivity, and the establishment of equitable income distribution mechanisms.



The goal emphasizes that economic growth must be accompanied by structural transformation, whereby economies transition toward higher value-added sectors, enhanced technological capabilities, and more efficient resource utilization. In this context, productivity growth is closely linked to innovation, human capital development, and institutional effectiveness.

A critical dimension of SDG 8 is its strong focus on labor market conditions and the promotion of decent work. This encompasses not only access to employment but also the quality and security of jobs. The concept of “decent work” integrates multiple components, including fair wages, safe and healthy working conditions, social protection systems, job stability, and respect for fundamental labor rights. Particular emphasis is placed on the elimination of exploitative practices such as forced labor, modern slavery, and child labor, which remain persistent challenges in many parts of the global economy. Additionally, SDG 8 advocates for inclusive labor market participation, ensuring equal access to employment opportunities regardless of gender, age, or socio-economic background.



From a macroeconomic and policy-oriented perspective, SDG 8 promotes the implementation of sound economic policies that support sustainable growth trajectories. This includes the design of effective fiscal and monetary policies, the promotion of entrepreneurship and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and the encouragement of innovation-driven economic activities.

Importantly, SDG 8 is inherently interconnected with other Sustainable Development Goals, reflecting the integrated nature of the 2030 Agenda. Its linkage with Sustainable Development Goal 1 highlights the role of employment and income generation in poverty reduction. By creating productive job opportunities and enhancing earning potential, SDG 8 directly contributes to lifting individuals and communities out of poverty. Similarly, its relationship with Sustainable Development Goal 10 underscores the importance of reducing income and opportunity disparities through inclusive labor market policies and equitable economic growth.



Furthermore, the environmental dimension of SDG 8 aligns closely with Sustainable Development Goal 13, as sustainable economic growth must be decoupled from environmental degradation. This implies the adoption of low-carbon production processes, increased energy efficiency, and the transition toward green and circular economic models. In this regard, the concept of “green jobs” becomes increasingly relevant, linking employment generation with environmental sustainability.

The integration with Sustainable Development Goal 9 further emphasizes the role of industrial development, technological innovation, and resilient infrastructure in driving productivity gains and long-term economic growth. Investments in infrastructure, research and development (R&D), and digital transformation are critical for enhancing competitiveness and creating new employment opportunities in emerging sectors.





From an institutional perspective, Mingachevir State University approaches SDG 8 as a shared responsibility that requires coordinated and sustained cooperation between higher education institutions, public bodies, private sector actors, and broader society. The University promotes this approach through stakeholder engagement, university–industry collaboration, applied training initiatives, and research activities that contribute to sustainable economic development and decent work. At the same time, the importance of effective planning, institutional coordination, and evidence-based evaluation is clearly recognized in the University’s efforts to ensure the relevance, quality, and long-term impact of its SDG 8-related initiatives.



In conclusion, the implementation of SDG 8 at Mingachevir State University reflects a multidimensional and integrated institutional approach that links education, employability, entrepreneurship, innovation, and social inclusion within a coherent development framework. By emphasizing quality, inclusiveness, adaptability, and sustainability, the University contributes not only to the professional development of students and graduates but also to broader regional and national socio-economic progress. In this regard, Mingachevir State University strengthens its role as an active contributor to sustainable development and as an institution committed to preparing a competitive, responsible, and future-ready workforce.

# POLICY AND STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

Mingachevir State University's activities under SDG 8 reflect a strategically aligned institutional commitment to promoting sustainable economic growth, decent work, labor market development, and entrepreneurship. These priorities are implemented through an integrated framework that connects teaching, research, practical training, industry cooperation, and innovation-oriented engagement.

The university's strategic approach emphasizes strengthening employability, improving the relevance of education to labor market needs, supporting entrepreneurship and startup culture, expanding digital and future-oriented skills, and fostering closer collaboration with industry stakeholders. This approach demonstrates that SDG 8 is embedded not only in academic content but also in broader institutional development priorities related to human capital formation, economic resilience, and inclusive growth.

This strategic orientation is supported by a set of key institutional policy documents. The **Teaching and Learning Policy** (<https://sustainable.mdu.edu.az/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Teaching-And-Learning-Policy.pdf>) ensures that academic programs are aligned with labor market requirements and support the development of relevant professional competencies.



## The Collaboration Policy

(<https://sustainable.mdu.edu.az/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Collaboration-Policy.pdf>) facilitates strong university–industry linkages, promoting practical training opportunities, internships, and knowledge exchange, which directly contribute to improving graduate employability.

The University’s commitment to inclusive and equitable employment is reinforced through the **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy** (<https://sustainable.mdu.edu.az/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Equality-Diversity-and-Inclusion-Policy.pdf>) and the **Anti-Discrimination Policy** (<https://sustainable.mdu.edu.az/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Anti-Discrimination-Policy.pdf>), which promote equal access to education and future labor market opportunities. In addition, the **Policy on Disability** (<https://sustainable.mdu.edu.az/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Policy-On-Disability.pdf>) supports accessibility and inclusive participation, ensuring that all individuals can benefit from education and employment pathways.





From the perspective of decent work and labor standards, the **Policy Against Human Trafficking and Child Labor Exploitation** (<https://sustainable.mdu.edu.az/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Policy-Against-Human-Trafficking-and-Child-Labor-Exploitation.pdf>) plays a crucial role in promoting ethical labor practices and aligning institutional values with international standards of fair and responsible employment.



Furthermore, the **Student Innovation and Leadership Circle Policy** (<https://sustainable.mdu.edu.az/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Student-Innovation-And-Leadership-Circle-Policy.pdf>) contributes to the development of entrepreneurial thinking, innovation capacity, and leadership skills among students, supporting the creation of sustainable business initiatives and future employment opportunities.

Overall, the integration of these selected policy documents into the University's strategic framework demonstrates a coherent and focused approach to implementing SDG 8. By linking institutional policies with teaching, employability, inclusion, and innovation, Mingachevir State University ensures a sustainable contribution to economic growth and decent work.



# IMPLEMENTATION AND MAIN ACTIVITIES

## 3.1 TEACHING AND LEARNING

Within the framework of SDG 8, Mingachevir State University implemented a broad and systematically structured range of teaching and learning activities designed to strengthen participants' understanding of sustainable economic growth, macroeconomic policy, labor market dynamics, decent work principles, future professions, digital competencies, entrepreneurship, and career development.

These educational initiatives were developed in line with modern pedagogical approaches and combined theoretical knowledge with applied learning methods. Through interactive lectures, case-based learning, simulations, and problem-solving exercises, participants were able to bridge the gap between academic concepts and real-world economic and labor market challenges. This approach enabled learners to develop both discipline-specific knowledge and practical competencies required in rapidly evolving economic environments.



The learning process addressed a wide spectrum of thematic areas, including financial and monetary policy frameworks, labor relations and institutional structures, employability and career planning, digital transformation, small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) development, and sustainable and inclusive business models. Special attention was given to understanding structural changes in labor markets driven by globalization, technological innovation, and digitalization, allowing participants to better interpret current trends and anticipate future developments. In addition, the teaching framework emphasized the development of transferable and future-oriented skills. These included critical thinking, analytical reasoning, problem-solving, communication, teamwork, and adaptability—competencies that are increasingly essential in modern labor markets. The integration of digital tools and technology-based learning environments further enhanced participants' digital literacy and their ability to operate effectively within the digital economy.





Moreover, the University promoted a culture of lifelong learning by encouraging continuous skills development and self-improvement. Participants were guided to assess their own competencies, identify gaps, and actively engage in learning processes that support long-term career development and professional resilience.

Overall, the teaching and learning approach adopted by Mingachevir State University contributed to the development of a highly skilled, adaptable, and labor market-oriented student body. By aligning academic content with real-world economic demands and SDG 8 objectives, the University plays a key role in preparing graduates who are capable of contributing to sustainable economic growth, innovation, and inclusive labor market development.

### 3.2 RESEARCH

Mingachevir State University has actively contributed to research supporting Sustainable Development Goal 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth through a series of Scopus-indexed publications, reflecting both theoretical and applied studies that address economic development, industrial safety, and regional growth.

The article “Assessing the Relationship Between R&D Expenditures and Economic Growth in South Caucasus Countries: An Econometric Analysis” examined the role of Research and Development (R&D) investments in shaping economic performance. The study found that higher R&D expenditures are strongly associated with increased GDP growth, enhanced export capacity, and lower unemployment rates. These findings emphasize the importance of fostering innovation-driven policies, facilitating technological advancement, and promoting regional cooperation as key mechanisms for sustainable economic development in emerging economies.

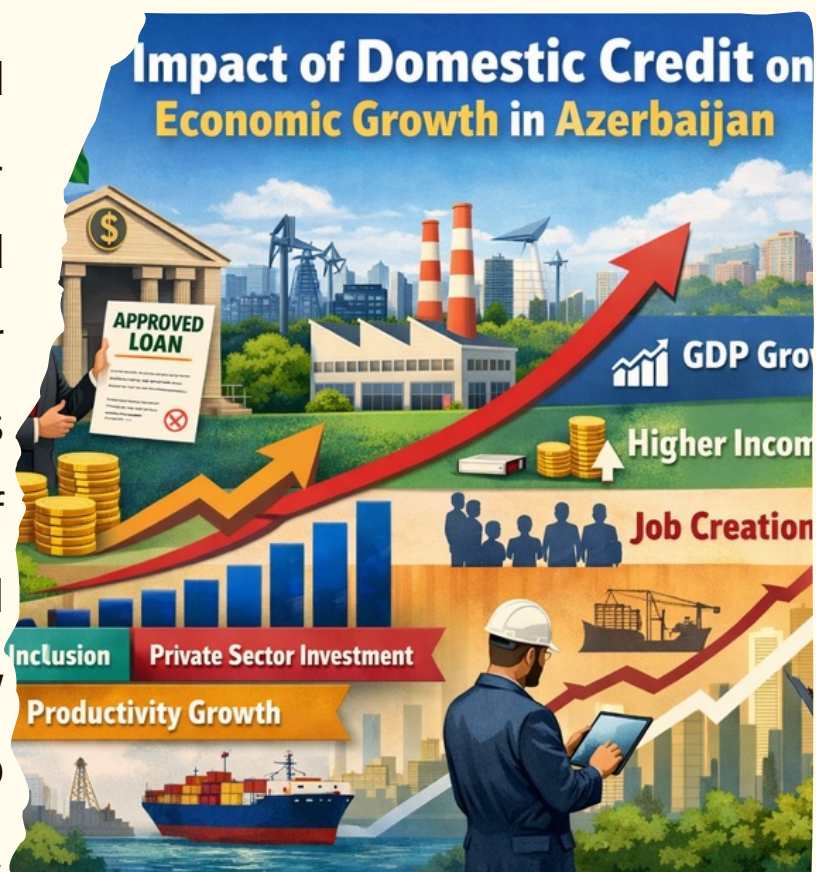


In the industrial sector, research has addressed workplace safety in the primary aluminium industry, which is a critical area for ensuring both worker welfare and operational efficiency. The article "Accident Rates in Primary Aluminium Production: Trends, Determinants, and Safety Measures" provided an in-depth analysis of accident trends relative to production volumes. Despite growth in production, accident rates decreased due to improvements in safety protocols, automation, and workforce training. The study identified key determinants of workplace accidents, including human error, equipment maintenance practices, and energy intensity, and offered concrete recommendations for strengthening occupational health and safety measures. Similarly, the study "Analysis of Aluminium Production and Accident Rates: Safety and Operational Efficiency" reinforced these findings, demonstrating that technological upgrades and rigorous safety management can simultaneously enhance production efficiency and reduce workplace risks.



Financial sector development has also been a focus of research, particularly its link to economic growth. The studies “Domestic Credit to Private Sector and Its Impact on Economic Growth in Azerbaijan” and “Domestic Credit, Investment, and Economic Growth in Azerbaijan: An ARDL Approach” explored how access to credit influences private sector investment, GDP growth, and per capita income.

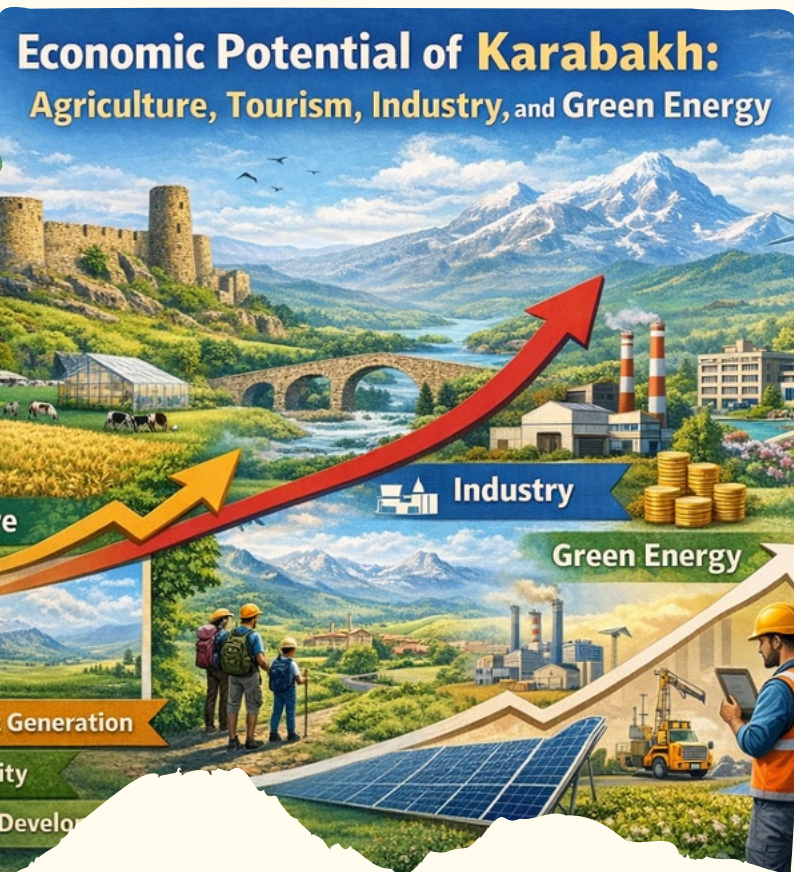
The analyses consistently showed that improved credit accessibility enables businesses to expand operations, invest in productivity-enhancing technologies, and ultimately contribute to higher economic output. The results underscore the importance of efficient credit allocation, financial inclusion, and supportive regulatory policies as vital instruments to stimulate private sector-led growth, which is directly aligned with SDG 8 objectives.



Furthermore, research on regional development has highlighted the economic potential of post-conflict areas. The article “Analyzing the Economic Potential of Karabakh: Agriculture, Tourism, Industry, and Green Energy” evaluated sectors such as agriculture, tourism, industry, and renewable energy to identify opportunities for sustainable development. The findings suggest that strategic investments in green energy infrastructure and tourism can generate employment, promote social stability, and facilitate long-term economic growth.

The study stressed the need for integrated policies encompassing infrastructure development, resource management, and innovation-driven strategies to fully harness regional economic potential.

Collectively, these publications demonstrate a strong institutional commitment to advancing SDG 8 by linking research with economic growth, industrial safety, financial development, and regional revitalization.



### 3.3 SOCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL ENGAGEMENT

The engagement dimension of SDG 8 implementation at Mingachevir State University has been reflected in a comprehensive and multifaceted set of initiatives, including university–industry cooperation, practical employment models, entrepreneurship support, startup development, and innovation-oriented collaborative activities.

Through strategic partnerships with industry stakeholders, public institutions, and private sector actors, the University has created a dynamic platform for knowledge exchange, practical exposure, and real-world problem-solving. These collaborations have enabled students to gain hands-on experience through internships, joint projects, and applied learning environments, thereby strengthening the link between academic education and labor market requirements. At the same time, these initiatives have facilitated the transfer of knowledge and innovation between academia and industry, contributing to the development of more responsive and demand-driven educational programs.



A key component of this engagement approach has been the promotion of entrepreneurship and innovation ecosystems within the University. Through startup initiatives, hackathons, competitions, and mentorship programs, students and young professionals are encouraged to develop creative ideas, design sustainable business models, and transform innovative concepts into practical solutions. These activities foster an entrepreneurial mindset, enhance problem-solving capabilities, and support the development of leadership and teamwork skills.

Furthermore, engagement activities have contributed to strengthening institutional responsiveness to evolving labor market dynamics. Continuous interaction with industry stakeholders allows the University to better understand employer expectations, emerging skill demands, and sectoral trends. This, in turn, supports the continuous improvement of academic curricula and training programs, ensuring their relevance and effectiveness in preparing graduates for modern employment environments.



## 3.4 CASE STUDIES: SDG 8 IN PRACTICE

## CASE STUDY 1

## CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT SERVICES

The university has established comprehensive career support services to help students prepare for the labor market. These services include career counseling, CV writing training, interview preparation, and employment support.

During the 2024–2025 academic year:

-  15+ career development trainings were conducted
-  More than 800 students participated
-  The Internship and Career Development Center was established

## KEY IMPACT



Increase in students' readiness for the labor market



Improvement in employment outcomes



Facilitation of the transition from education to the labor market



Mingachevir State University has established comprehensive career support services to prepare students for the labor market. These services include career counseling, CV writing training, interview preparation, and job placement support. Between 2024 and 2025, more than 15 career development training sessions were conducted with the participation of over 800 students, and the Internship and Career Development Center was established.



3.4 CASE STUDIES: SDG 8 IN PRACTICE

CASE STUDY 2

# ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND INNOVATION SUPPORT

The university promotes an entrepreneurial ecosystem by supporting student initiatives, startup development, and innovation activities.

During the 2024–2025 academic year:



9 entrepreneurship training programs were conducted



13 startup ideas were supported



Innovation competitions and hackathons were organized



KEY IMPACT



Formation of an entrepreneurial mindset among students



Development of innovative business ideas



Contribution to local economic development



IDEAS • INNOVATION • IMPACT

Mingachevir State University promotes an entrepreneurial ecosystem by supporting student initiatives, startup development, and innovation activities. Between 2024 and 2025, 9 entrepreneurship training programs were conducted, 13 startup ideas were supported, and innovation competitions and hackathons were organized. These initiatives have contributed to the development of an entrepreneurial mindset among students, fostered innovative business ideas, and supported local economic development.



3.4 CASE STUDIES: SDG 8 IN PRACTICE

CASE STUDY 3

# STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND DECENT WORK ENVIRONMENT

Mingachevir State University ensures a supportive and fair working environment for its staff by promoting professional development, equal opportunities, and workplace well-being.

BETWEEN 2024 AND 2025:



**30+**  
professional development trainings conducted



**Implementation of**  
fair employment policies



**Introduction of**  
staff well-being initiatives



A supportive workplace builds a strong university

KEY IMPACT:



**Improved**  
staff satisfaction and productivity



**Strengthened**  
institutional capacity



**Promotion of**  
decent work principles within the University

Mingachevir State University ensures a supportive and fair working environment for its staff by promoting professional development, equal opportunities, and workplace well-being.

Between 2024 and 2025, more than 30 professional development training sessions were conducted, fair employment policies were implemented, and staff well-being initiatives were introduced.



# EVIDENCE

The implementation of activities within the framework of Sustainable Development Goal 8 (SDG 8) at Mingachevir State University is supported by a comprehensive, multi-layered system of qualitative and quantitative evidence demonstrating both the effectiveness and sustainability of institutional initiatives. This evidence base reflects a structured approach to planning, implementation, monitoring, and impact assessment.

A key component of this evidence is the organization of a wide range of targeted training programs and educational activities designed to strengthen knowledge, skills, and employability in alignment with SDG 8.

The training on financial policy and economic awareness provided participants with a comprehensive understanding of financial systems, macroeconomic stability, and the role of financial mechanisms in economic development. By strengthening financial literacy and analytical thinking, this initiative contributed to enhancing participants' capacity to understand economic processes and make informed decisions in professional contexts.


[https://mdu.edu.az/finance\\_30-09-25/](https://mdu.edu.az/finance_30-09-25/)



The training on “Decent Work Principles and Modern Labor Relations” served as a comprehensive platform for promoting labor rights, ethical employment practices, and social protection mechanisms in alignment with the core objectives of SDG 8. The program provided participants with an in-depth understanding of international labor standards, workplace equality, fair wages, and the legal frameworks regulating modern labor relations. Through interactive discussions and case-based learning, participants explored key challenges such as informal employment, workplace discrimination, and labor rights protection, while also developing the ability to apply theoretical knowledge to real-world labor market contexts. This activity significantly contributed to strengthening legal awareness, ethical responsibility, and participants’ capacity to support inclusive and sustainable labor market systems. [https://mdu.edu.az/practice\\_27-11-25/](https://mdu.edu.az/practice_27-11-25/)



# EVIDENCE

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## 04

SDG 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth



The seminar on labor market and socio-economic trends enhanced participants' understanding of evolving employment structures, economic transformation processes, and their broader policy implications. The seminar provided a comprehensive overview of key labor market indicators, including employment and unemployment trends, labor force participation, and sectoral shifts, while also addressing the impact of globalization, digitalization, and technological innovation on labor demand and supply. Through analytical discussions and data-driven approaches, participants developed the ability to interpret economic trends, evaluate labor market dynamics, and understand the relationship between economic policy and employment outcomes. This activity strengthened analytical thinking, research skills, and policy awareness, directly contributing to the development of competencies aligned with sustainable and inclusive economic growth under SDG 8. [https://mdu.edu.az/water\\_27-09-25/](https://mdu.edu.az/water_27-09-25/)





The economic analysis training further strengthened participants' competencies in interpreting complex economic data, analyzing labor market indicators, and applying evidence-based approaches to decision-making. The program emphasized the use of analytical tools and data-driven methodologies to evaluate economic trends, assess policy impacts, and understand the dynamics of employment and productivity.

Through practical exercises and applied analysis, participants enhanced their research capacity, critical thinking, and ability to make informed economic assessments, thereby contributing to the development of advanced analytical and professional competencies aligned with SDG 8.

<https://mdu.edu.az/analysis> 24-09-

25/





Another training session on economic development and employment strategies focused on improving participants' practical knowledge and applied skills related to labor market participation, career readiness, and economic planning. The training explored key topics such as employment strategies, workforce development, and the role of economic policy in job creation and sustainable growth.



Participants were engaged in interactive learning processes that enhanced their understanding of career pathways, labor market requirements, and strategic planning for professional development. This initiative contributed to strengthening employability, adaptability, and readiness for integration into dynamic and competitive labor market environments.

[https://mdu.edu.az/water\\_03-11-25/](https://mdu.edu.az/water_03-11-25/).



The training on “Future Professions and Sustainable Skills Development” addressed the ongoing transformation of labor markets driven by digitalization, technological innovation, and structural economic change. The program introduced participants to emerging professions in fields such as digital technologies, data analysis, and innovation-driven industries, while emphasizing the importance of anticipating future skill demands. Through interactive discussions and practical exercises, participants developed forward-looking competencies, including digital literacy, adaptability, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills.

This training significantly contributed to enhancing long-term employability and preparing participants to successfully navigate dynamic and evolving labor market environments in alignment with SDG 8.

<https://mdu.edu.az/future-professions-and-sustainable-skills-10-10-25/>



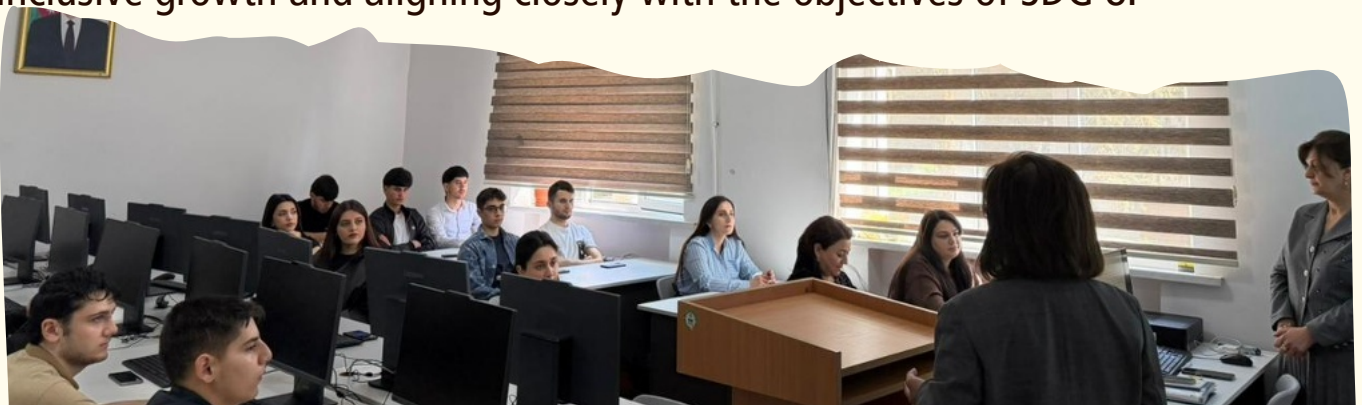
# EVIDENCE

The entrepreneurship development training focused on strengthening entrepreneurial thinking, innovation capacity, and business planning skills among participants. The program provided a comprehensive understanding of the foundations of entrepreneurship, including opportunity identification, market analysis, financial planning, and risk management (see: <https://mdu.edu.az/enterprenerurship-17-10-25/>). Participants were actively engaged in developing startup ideas and exploring sustainable business models that integrate economic viability with long-term growth potential. This initiative fostered creativity, strategic thinking, and practical problem-solving skills, while also encouraging participants to contribute to economic development through the creation of new business ventures, in line with the objectives of SDG 8.





The training on social entrepreneurship and sustainable business models emphasized the integration of social impact with economic sustainability, highlighting the importance of addressing societal challenges through innovative and responsible business practices (see: <https://mdu.edu.az/training-on-social-entrepreneurship-and-sustainable-business-models-held-at-mingachevir-state-university/>). Participants explored various models of social enterprises, focusing on value creation, stakeholder engagement, and long-term sustainability. The training fostered a deeper understanding of how business initiatives can contribute to social development while maintaining financial viability, thereby supporting inclusive growth and aligning closely with the objectives of SDG 8.



In addition to training activities, evidence is also reflected in the implementation of modern teaching and learning approaches, which play a crucial role in enhancing practical competencies and aligning education with labor market requirements (see: [https://mdu.edu.az/tlm\\_03-10-25/](https://mdu.edu.az/tlm_03-10-25/)). These approaches are based on student-centered and competency-based learning models that integrate theoretical knowledge with applied practice through interactive lectures, case studies, simulations, and project-based assignments. By incorporating real-world scenarios into the learning process, students are encouraged to develop critical thinking, analytical reasoning, and problem-solving skills. Furthermore, the use of digital tools and innovative teaching methodologies strengthens students' digital literacy and adaptability, enabling them to respond effectively to the demands of modern and rapidly evolving labor markets. As a result, the University ensures that graduates are not only academically prepared but also equipped with the practical skills and professional mindset required for sustainable employment and career development.



A critical dimension of evidence is the strengthening of university–industry cooperation, as demonstrated by strategic partnerships such as the collaboration with Azeraluminium (see: [https://mdu.edu.az/mdu\\_azeralmunium\\_emekdashliq\\_08-07-25/](https://mdu.edu.az/mdu_azeralmunium_emekdashliq_08-07-25/)). These initiatives play a key role in bridging the gap between academic education and real-sector requirements by providing students with practical training opportunities, internships, and direct exposure to industrial environments. Through such collaborations, students gain hands-on experience, develop technical and professional competencies, and better understand workplace expectations. At the same time, these partnerships facilitate knowledge exchange between academia and industry, contributing to curriculum development, applied research, and innovation. As a result, the University enhances graduate employability and ensures that its educational outputs remain relevant to labor market demands.



Similarly, sectoral cooperation agreements, including partnerships in the tourism sector, contribute significantly to applied learning, skills development, and the alignment of academic programs with industry needs (see:

<https://mdu.edu.az/n%99z%99riyy%99d%99n->

[t%99crub%99y%99-ming%99cevir-dovl%99t-](https://mdu.edu.az/n%99z%99riyy%99d%99n-t%99crub%99y%99-ming%99cevir-dovl%99t-)

[universitetind%99n-turizmd%99-yeni-memorandum/](https://mdu.edu.az/n%99z%99riyy%99d%99n-t%99crub%99y%99-ming%99cevir-dovl%99t-universitetind%99n-turizmd%99-yeni-memorandum/)). These collaborations create opportunities for students to engage in real-world projects, sector-specific training, and experiential learning activities. By integrating industry input into academic processes, the University ensures that students acquire relevant, up-to-date skills required in specific economic sectors. Furthermore, such partnerships support regional economic development by strengthening human capital, fostering innovation, and promoting sustainable employment opportunities in key industries.



# EVIDENCE

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## 04

SDG 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth

The University has also expanded its collaboration network through multiple institutional memorandums, strengthening research, innovation, and employment-oriented partnerships (see: [https://mdu.edu.az/mmrndm\\_24-10-25/](https://mdu.edu.az/mmrndm_24-10-25/); [https://mdu.edu.az/naftalan memorandum 20-11-25/](https://mdu.edu.az/naftalan_memorandum_20-11-25/)). These agreements facilitate closer cooperation with regional stakeholders, public institutions, and industry actors, creating opportunities for joint projects, knowledge exchange, and practical training. Such partnerships contribute to aligning academic activities with real economic needs, enhancing students' practical experience, and supporting the development of a more responsive and demand-driven education system. In addition, these collaborations play a significant role in promoting regional development, fostering innovation, and creating sustainable employment opportunities.



The establishment of an economic observatory serves as an important analytical platform for monitoring economic and labor market trends, supporting evidence-based policy-making and research activities (see: <https://mdu.edu.az/observatoriya/>). This initiative enables the systematic collection and analysis of data related to employment, productivity, and sectoral development, providing valuable insights into economic dynamics at both regional and national levels. By strengthening analytical capacity and supporting data-driven decision-making, the observatory contributes to the development of informed strategies aimed at improving labor market outcomes, enhancing economic resilience, and supporting sustainable growth in alignment with SDG 8 objectives.





Entrepreneurship and innovation are further supported through the Young Entrepreneurs and Startup Initiatives, which include mentorship programs, business plan competitions, and investor engagement activities (see: <https://mdu.edu.az/young-entrepreneurs-and-startup-initiatives-business-plan-competitions-investor-meetings-and-mentorship-programs/>). These initiatives provide a comprehensive support system for students and young professionals to develop entrepreneurial skills, refine business ideas, and gain practical experience in startup development. By connecting participants with mentors, industry experts, and potential investors, the program facilitates knowledge exchange, networking, and access to financial resources. As a result, students are empowered to transform innovative concepts into viable and sustainable business ventures, contributing to job creation, innovation, and economic development in line with SDG 8 objectives.



The Digital Skills Hackathon provided a dynamic and collaborative platform for developing technological solutions and enhancing participants' digital competencies (see: <https://mdu.edu.az/digital-skills-hackathon-11-12-25/>). Through intensive, team-based activities, participants engaged in problem-solving, innovation, and product development processes, addressing real-world challenges using digital tools and creative approaches. .

The hackathon fostered critical thinking, teamwork, and adaptability, while also strengthening practical skills in areas such as coding, data analysis, and digital design. This initiative significantly contributed to preparing participants for the digital economy and enhancing their readiness for technology-driven labor market environments in alignment with SDG 8



# EVIDENCE

A social innovation event encouraged participants to address socio-economic challenges through creative, collaborative, and sustainable solutions (see: <https://mdu.edu.az/social-30-09-25/>). The event provided a platform for generating innovative ideas aimed at tackling issues such as unemployment, inequality, and community development. Participants worked in teams to design solution-oriented projects that combine social impact with practical feasibility, thereby strengthening their entrepreneurial mindset and social responsibility. This initiative reinforced the importance of innovation in promoting inclusive economic growth and demonstrated how creative approaches can contribute to sustainable development outcomes under SDG 8.





Startup-oriented activities, including startup competitions, played a significant role in promoting entrepreneurial thinking and supporting the development of innovative and sustainable business ideas aligned with economic growth objectives (see: <https://mdu.edu.az/starup-08-12-25/>). These initiatives provided participants with opportunities to design and present business concepts, receive feedback from experts, and refine their ideas through competitive and collaborative processes. By engaging in these activities, students developed practical skills in business planning, innovation management, and strategic decision-making, while also strengthening their confidence and ability to operate in entrepreneurial environments. This contributed to fostering a culture of innovation and supporting the creation of future job opportunities in line with SDG 8.

# EVIDENCE



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## 04

SDG 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth

Finally, the training on enhancing employability skills focused on developing key competencies such as communication, teamwork, leadership, and problem-solving, which are essential for successful labor market integration (see: <https://mdu.edu.az/enhancing-employability-skills-13-11-25/>). The program emphasized the importance of soft skills alongside technical knowledge, providing participants with practical tools to improve their professional performance and adaptability. Through interactive exercises and real-life scenarios, participants strengthened their ability to collaborate effectively, manage challenges, and present themselves confidently in professional settings. This initiative significantly contributed to increasing employability, supporting career readiness, and preparing participants for competitive and dynamic employment environments in alignment with SDG 8 objectives.





# IMPACT

The implementation of SDG 8-oriented initiatives at Mingachevir State University has generated a profound and multidimensional impact, extending across human capital development, labor market integration, institutional transformation, and regional economic advancement. The cumulative effect of these initiatives reflects a strategically coordinated and systematically implemented approach to fostering sustainable economic growth, productive employment, and decent work.

At the individual level, the initiatives have significantly enhanced students' academic knowledge and professional competencies. Through a combination of theoretical instruction, applied learning methodologies, and interactive engagement, participants have developed a comprehensive understanding of key economic domains, including labor market analysis, financial policy design, entrepreneurship ecosystems, and digital transformation. This has strengthened their analytical capacity, enabling them to critically evaluate economic trends, policy interventions, and structural challenges within both national and global contexts.



In terms of employability, the activities have contributed to a more effective alignment between educational outcomes and labor market requirements. The integration of practical components—such as internships, case-based learning, simulations, and project-oriented assignments—has facilitated the acquisition of job-relevant skills. As a result, participants demonstrate higher levels of adaptability, problem-solving ability, and readiness to operate in complex and dynamic employment environments. This alignment reduces structural unemployment and skill mismatches, thereby contributing to more efficient labor market functioning.



Another significant dimension of impact is the promotion of entrepreneurship and innovation. The organization of startup competitions, hackathons, and entrepreneurship-focused trainings has cultivated an innovation-oriented mindset among participants. Students are increasingly encouraged to identify market opportunities, develop creative solutions, and transform ideas into sustainable business ventures. This not only enhances individual career prospects but also contributes to the broader development of an innovation-driven and diversified economy.



Institutionally, the strengthening of university–industry collaboration has played a pivotal role in amplifying the overall impact. Strategic partnerships with industry stakeholders have facilitated knowledge exchange, curriculum modernization, and the provision of practical training opportunities.

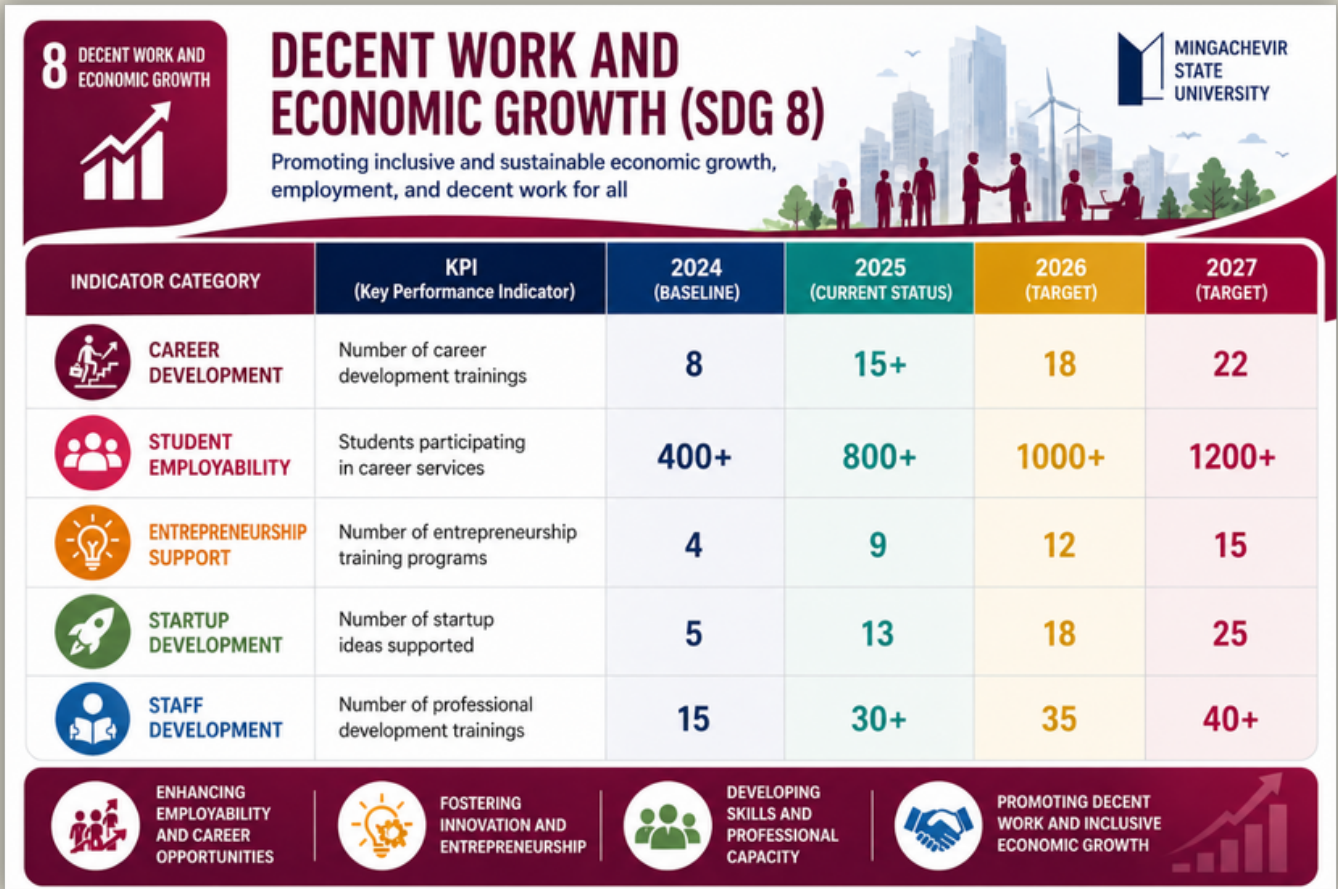




From a social perspective, the initiatives have contributed to promoting inclusive and sustainable economic growth. By emphasizing principles such as equal opportunity, non-discrimination, fair labor practices, and social protection, the activities support the development of a more equitable labor market environment. The focus on social entrepreneurship and inclusive participation further reinforces the role of education in addressing societal challenges and reducing inequalities.

Additionally, the integration of digitalization and technological innovation into training programs has prepared participants for the demands of the digital economy. The development of competencies in areas such as digital communication, data analysis, and technological problem-solving ensures that students are equipped to navigate and contribute to rapidly transforming labor markets shaped by automation and innovation.





This figure presents Mingachevir State University’s SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) performance through a visually enhanced and structured indicator table. It highlights baseline data for 2024, current progress in 2025, and realistic targets for 2026–2027 across key areas such as career development, student employability, entrepreneurship support, startup development, and staff development.

The data demonstrates a steady increase in career training opportunities, growing student participation in employability services, and a significant expansion of entrepreneurship and startup support initiatives. In parallel, continuous investment in staff development contributes to improved institutional capacity and workplace quality.





# CHALLENGES AND AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



## ADVANCING SDG 8 – DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

01



### LIMITED SCALE OF STUDENT EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The number of available work-study positions remains insufficient, especially for students from low-income backgrounds.

Despite the progress achieved in advancing SDG 8, Mingachevir State University continues to face several structural and operational challenges that limit the effectiveness, inclusiveness, and long-term sustainability of its employment and economic development initiatives.

One of the primary challenges is the limited scale of student employment opportunities. Although work-study programs have been introduced, the number of available positions remains insufficient relative to the demand among students, particularly those from low-income backgrounds.

Another key issue relates to the alignment between academic programs and labor market requirements. While efforts have been made to modernize curricula, gaps still exist in ensuring that graduates possess the practical skills and competencies required by employers in a rapidly evolving economic environment.



The availability and accessibility of internship opportunities also remain uneven across disciplines. Some fields benefit from strong industry connections, while others have limited access to structured internship programs, which affects students' practical experience and employability.

In addition, the development of entrepreneurship and innovation ecosystems within the University is still at an early stage. While initial initiatives have been implemented, further institutional support, funding mechanisms, and mentorship structures are needed to fully foster entrepreneurial activity among students.

Another important limitation is the lack of a comprehensive and data-driven monitoring system for graduate employment outcomes. Current tracking mechanisms are limited, making it difficult to assess employment rates, career progression, and long-term impact of educational programs.

Staff development and workplace conditions also require continuous improvement. Although professional development programs are conducted, participation is not always systematic, and additional efforts are needed to enhance job satisfaction, productivity, and retention.



Addressing these challenges is essential to enhance employability, promote inclusive economic growth, and strengthen MSU's contribution to sustainable development through **SDG 8**.





# CORRECTIVE ACTIONS & RESPONSE STRATEGY



Stronger Actions Today, Stronger Future Tomorrow

In response to the challenges identified in the previous section, Mingachevir State University has developed a comprehensive and forward-looking strategy aimed at strengthening employability, expanding economic opportunities, and ensuring the sustainability of its SDG 8 initiatives.



In response to the challenges identified in the previous section, Mingachevir State University has developed a comprehensive and forward-looking strategy aimed at strengthening employability, expanding economic opportunities, and ensuring the sustainability of its SDG 8 initiatives.

To address the limited scale of student employment opportunities, the University will expand its work-study programs by increasing the number of available positions across campus departments and establishing partnerships with external organizations to create additional part-time job opportunities for students.

In order to improve alignment with labor market demands, the University will institutionalize a dynamic curriculum review mechanism involving employers, industry experts, and alumni. Competency-based education models will be further strengthened to ensure that graduates possess relevant and practical skills.



To enhance internship opportunities, the University will develop structured internship frameworks across all academic disciplines. This will include formal agreements with industry partners, standardized internship guidelines, and monitoring systems to ensure quality and relevance of practical training.

To foster entrepreneurship and innovation, the University will establish dedicated support structures such as incubation centers, seed funding mechanisms, and mentorship networks. Student start-ups and innovation projects will be actively supported through training, competitions, and collaboration with industry stakeholders.

To overcome limitations in data monitoring, the University will introduce a graduate tracking system that systematically collects data on employment outcomes, career progression, and skill relevance. This system will support evidence-based planning and continuous improvement.

In terms of staff development and decent work conditions, the University will implement a structured human resource development strategy. This will include continuous professional development programs, performance-based incentives, and initiatives aimed at improving workplace well-being and job satisfaction.

Commitment

- INNOVATE** Embrace new technologies
- ENGAGE** Collaborate with industry, alumni and community
- INCLUDE** Ensure equal opportunities for all
- IMPROVE** Use evidence to drive better outcomes
- EMPOWER** Prepare learners for a dynamic global future



# CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT AND FUTURE PLANS

Future initiatives within the framework of SDG 8 at Mingachevir State University will adopt a more strategic, scalable, and impact-oriented approach, building upon existing achievements while introducing innovative mechanisms to address emerging economic and labor market challenges. The long-term vision is to institutionalize SDG 8 principles across all academic, research, and engagement activities, thereby ensuring sustained contribution to inclusive economic growth and decent work.





A primary strategic priority will be the expansion and deepening of university–industry collaboration. This will involve the establishment of long-term partnerships with key sectors of the economy, the development of joint research and innovation projects, and the creation of sector-specific competence and training centers. These centers will focus on addressing skill gaps in priority industries, such as manufacturing, digital technologies, and green energy, thereby enhancing the relevance and applicability of academic programs. In parallel, the university will significantly invest in the development of advanced digital and future-oriented skills. New educational programs and training modules will be introduced in areas such as artificial intelligence, machine learning, big data analytics, digital finance, and sustainable technologies.





Entrepreneurship development will remain a central pillar of future strategy. Plans include the establishment of business incubators, startup accelerators, and innovation hubs within the university ecosystem. These platforms will provide comprehensive support, including mentorship, technical assistance, networking opportunities, and access to financial resources. Collaboration with investors, venture capital firms, and financial institutions will further enhance the sustainability and scalability of entrepreneurial initiatives.

Moreover, the integration of sustainability principles into all academic and training activities will be strengthened. Environmental, social, and governance (ESG) considerations will be embedded into curricula, research agendas, and institutional policies.





Finally, inclusive development will remain a cross-cutting priority. Targeted programs will be designed to support vulnerable and underrepresented groups, promote gender equality in employment, and ensure equitable access to education and training opportunities. Social inclusion will be integrated into all aspects of program design and implementation.

In conclusion, the future strategy reflects a comprehensive and forward-looking vision that emphasizes innovation, collaboration, inclusivity, and sustainability. Through these initiatives, Mingachevir State University aims to further strengthen its role as a catalyst for economic development and a leading contributor to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 8.





# CONCLUSION

The activities implemented at Mingachevir State University reflect a systematic, strategic, and multidimensional approach to advancing Sustainable Development Goal 8 (SDG 8). The University adopts an integrated institutional model that combines teaching, practical application, and stakeholder engagement to promote sustainable economic growth, decent work, and the development of a labor market-oriented workforce. Through this approach, students acquire both theoretical knowledge and practical competencies, enabling them to become more competitive and adaptable in modern labor market conditions.

A wide range of trainings, seminars, startup initiatives, and university–industry collaborations have significantly enhanced participants’ analytical thinking, problem-solving, decision-making, and digital skills. At the same time, entrepreneurship and innovation-oriented activities have fostered an entrepreneurial mindset among students, encouraging them to generate new business ideas and contribute to economic development. As a result, graduates demonstrate improved employability and greater readiness to integrate into dynamic and evolving labor markets.



# CONCLUSION



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SDG 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth

A key strength of the University's approach lies in its strong collaboration with industry and external stakeholders. These partnerships facilitate knowledge exchange, provide access to real-world work environments, and ensure that academic programs remain aligned with labor market needs. Consequently, the gap between education and employment is reduced, supporting a more effective transition from education to the workforce.

Overall, Mingachevir State University's SDG 8-related activities contribute not only to individual skill development but also to institutional capacity building and regional socio-economic development. Looking ahead, the University aims to further expand its efforts in areas such as digital skills development, entrepreneurship ecosystems, and international cooperation, thereby continuing to support sustainable economic growth and decent work.





# THANK *You*

We sincerely thank all partners, academic and administrative staff, students, and participants for their support in implementing these initiatives. The achieved results contribute to the MSU's progress in sustainable development.

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