

SUSTAINABILITY REPORT 2024



UMEÅ UNIVERSITY

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Sustainability report for Umeå University 2024

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E-mail: hallbarhetsfunktionen-umu@umu.se

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Foreword

As a higher education institution, Umeå University is required to contribute to Sweden's climate neutrality, and to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. We do this through Education, Research and Collaboration about and for sustainable development, and by transitioning our own activities to promote sustainability in a broad sense.

In 2024, we have made progress in our work for sustainable development, and this is also visible in the sustainability rankings in which we participate, and in our work for *A healthy campus*. We recognise that sustainability is not something that can be achieved in a short time, but is an ongoing journey, where every step is an important contribution to a larger change.

This report is Umeå University's third Sustainability Report. In it, we present a selection of the initiatives we have implemented in 2024 to contribute to a more sustainable future. This report is addressed

to anyone who is interested in our work. The report has been compiled by the Property Management Office of Umeå University.

We would like to thank everyone who contributes to our sustainability efforts, and we look forward to continuing our work with you. With the support of staff, students and partners, we believe that our University will be able to continue to play an important role. Together, we can create a sustainable and just future.

We hope you find the reading enjoyable.

Content of the report

This 2024 Sustainability Report is an overview of how Umeå University is contributing to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). By shedding light on the University's Education, Research and Collaboration, as well as Other activities, and with our sights set on improving sustainability, this report provides a picture of how the University is contributing to these efforts, and what challenges there are.

How **Education** at the University is contributing to sustainable development is reported below by means of examples of courses and/or study programmes that impart knowledge and skills that can contribute to a sustainable transition. For some SDGs, quantitative measures of the number of graduates at undergraduate and postgraduate levels are also presented.

Research relevant to SDG1 to SDG16 is presented by means of the research areas defined in SciVal, a bibliometric analysis tool based on the Scopus database. The search was limited to publications between 2019 and 2024, and was carried out on 5 January 2025. The results are compared with previous searches results conducted for the periods 2017–2022 and 2018–2023, respectively. The number of publications and the Field-Weighted Citation Impact (FWCI), which reports citations received compared to the average or expected number of citations received by other similar publications from the same research field, are the quantitative measures used to show how the University's research is contributing to achieving each of the SDGs. Key phrases in SciVal have been used for the content analysis of the research for each SDG. The analysis in SciVal does not always identify research from humanities disci-

plines, but this standardised approach does make it possible to follow sustainability research at the University over time. The report therefore also presents examples of research environments and other work carried out during 2024 that are relevant to the particular SDG.

Collaboration that has a bearing on the SDGs is exemplified on the basis of its impact on the University's activities and collaboration projects – from local to global activities. For SDG 17, for which implementation and global partnership are fundamental, descriptions of initiatives, partnerships and drivers are provided.

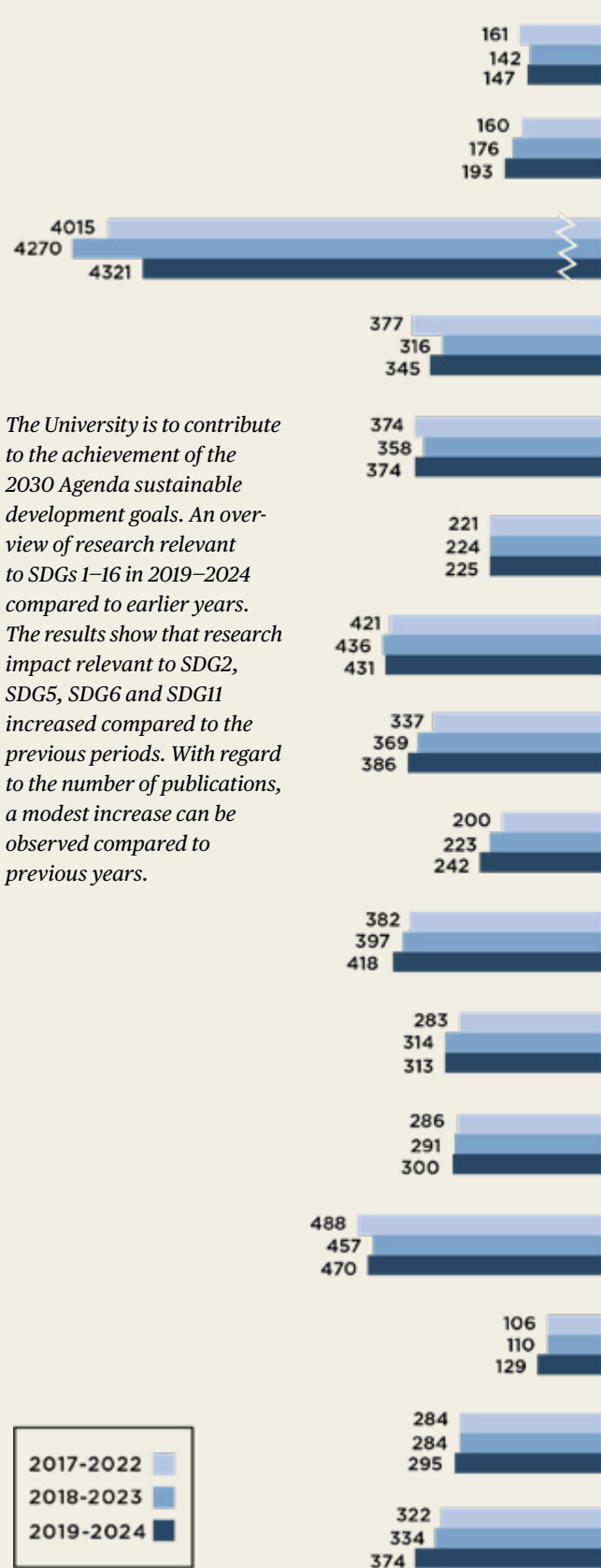
How the University is working to improve sustainability through its **Other activities** is also described under each of the SDGs. This category concerns governance as well as direct and indirect efforts related to sustainability, and the extent to which the University is living up to its own sustainability goals.

There are many ways to evaluate sustainability efforts. This report includes a **reflection** on the University's work towards, and contributions to achieving, each of the SDGs from a sustainability perspective.

The University and the SDGs in brief

NUMBER OF PUBLICATIONS

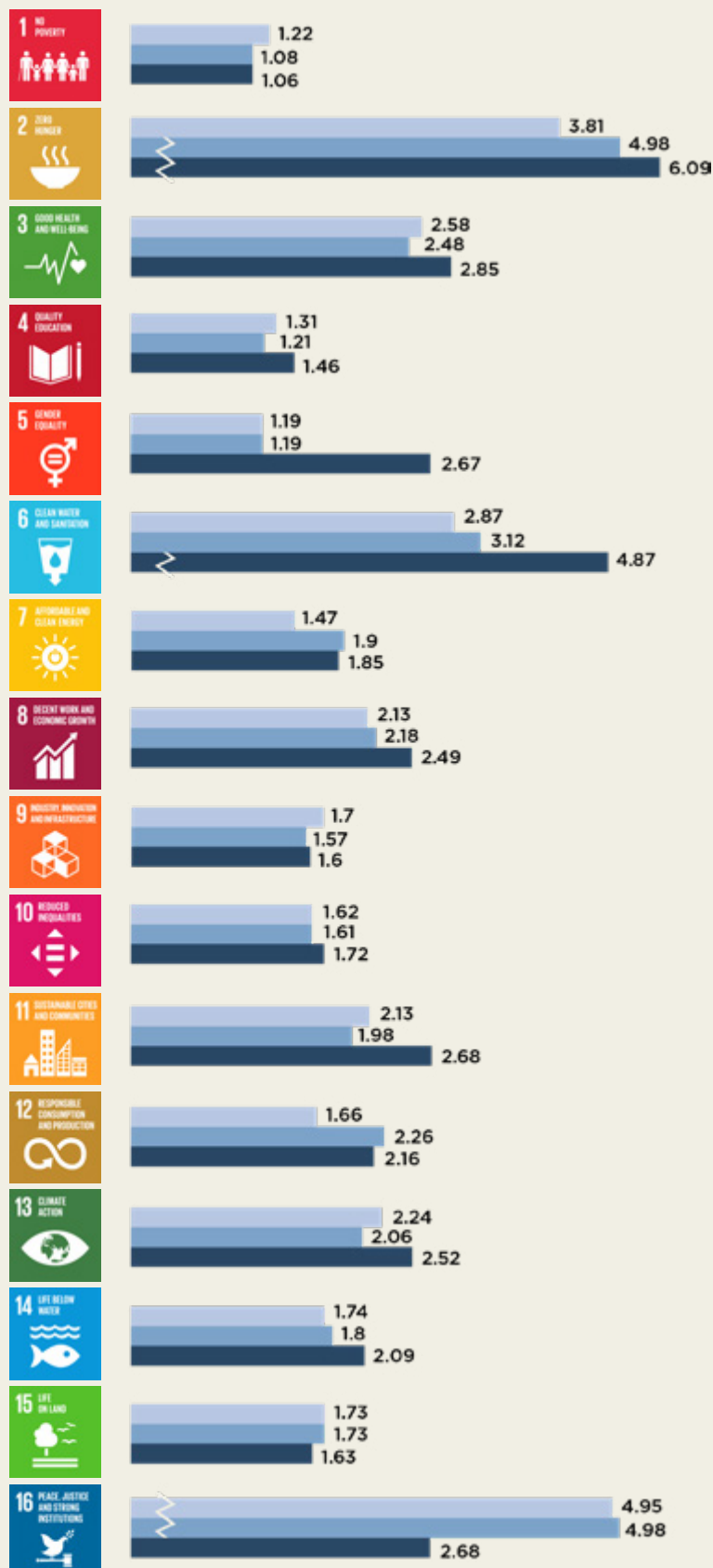
Number of publications in SciVal relevant to each SDG in 2019–2024 compared to 2018–2023 and 2017–2022.



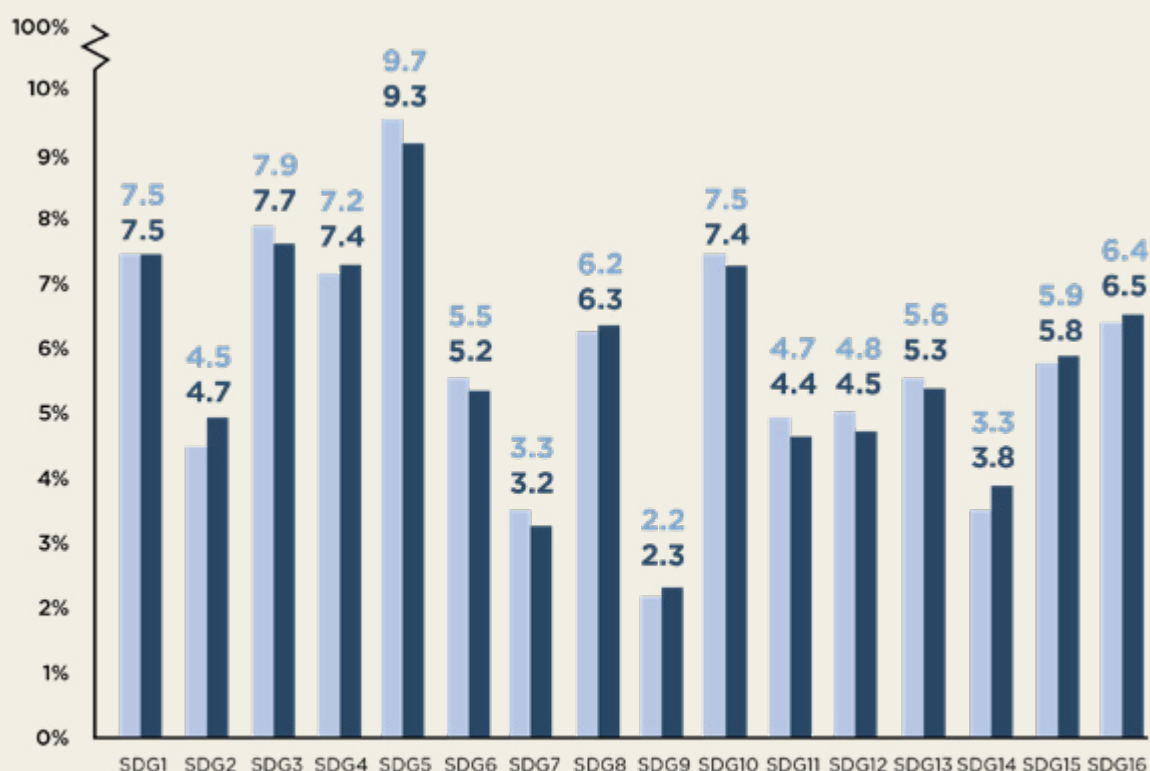
The University is to contribute to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda sustainable development goals. An overview of research relevant to SDGs 1–16 in 2019–2024 compared to earlier years. The results show that research impact relevant to SDG2, SDG5, SDG6 and SDG11 increased compared to the previous periods. With regard to the number of publications, a modest increase can be observed compared to previous years.

FIELD-WEIGHTED CITATION IMPACT, FWCI

The Field Weighted Citation Impact in SciVal in 2019–2024 compared to 2018–2023 and 2017–2022.



Umeå University's share of the research produced in Sweden



Vertical bar graph showing Umeå University's share of the research produced in Sweden, SDG1–SDG16, in 2018–2023 and 2019–2024.

2018-2023
2019-2024

AGENDA 2030 AND THE GLOBAL GOALS





SDG 1 No Poverty

All people have the same right to a dignified and secure life with freedom, influence, health, physical safety and access to education. For Umeå University, this SDG means that all students, regardless of background, should be given the same opportunities to study here.

EDUCATION

Education relevant to this SDG concerns the acquisition of knowledge and skills related to various aspects of social vulnerability, about the interaction between people and the wider community, and about peace and conflict. Students enrolled in the Study Programme for Social Work learn about and practise being able to understand and explain people's living conditions and their actions, and to analyse social processes and problems at individual and group levels in order to assist people who find themselves in various kinds of problematic life situations. In 2024, approximately 270 students graduated with a Degree of Bachelor of Science in Social Work, or in Sociology and Social Work.

RESEARCH

Research linked to this SDG includes studies of inequalities, primarily from a medical or social science perspective. For example, it concerns gender inequalities, between urban and rural settings, in townscapes or in health, and between different socio-economic groups. These studies primarily deal with global conditions, but there is also a focus on Sweden and the northern periphery specifically. In one project, natural science researchers are collaborating with researchers in Vietnam to investigate the possibility of developing a policy roadmap for blue carbon (carbon in coastal ecosystems) in less developed countries in South-east Asia. The objective is to create a foundation for sustainable development in these countries.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Everyone in the community could participate in the University's public activities. The University Library and *Bildmuseet* (Museum of contemporary art and visual culture) are completely free of charge and Curiosum, the University's science centre, offers free visits for children and young people. The University's outdoor areas with outdoor gym, disc golf baskets, and the running track at the Umeå campus can be used by anyone, summer or winter, with groomed ski trails on the campus fields and an ice skating is possible on the Campus Pond.

REFLECTION

Education relevant to this SDG is limited. The number of publications is relatively small and the research has a relatively low impact. This is comparable to the previous year. Work in Other activities is also very limited. There are some activities that are offered free of charge. There is no internal governance linked to this SDG.

PUBLICATIONS

147

FWCI

1.06



Building Back Better

Students from the Umeå School of Architecture participated in a collaboration – *Building Back Better* – on strategies for the sustainable reconstruction of Ukraine. Over two intensive weeks, around one hundred students, teaching staff, researchers, representatives from NGOs, professional architects, municipal officials and residents participated in important discussions on strategies and methods for this sustainable reconstruction. Building Back Better has been made possible with support from Greenpeace and Ro3kvit.



SDG 2 Zero hunger

End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition. This can be promoted through sustainable agriculture using modern technologies and fair and equitable distribution systems. At Umeå University, we collaborate readily with a range of actors on the importance of food for health and on sustainable food supply systems.

EDUCATION

Education linked to this SDG includes being able to create sustainable meals, and this is something that students of the *Gastronomy programme* get to practise when they combine the serving of food and drink, and the food and drink themselves, with social and cultural aspects in a meal. In 2024, about 50 students graduated in gastronomy; in food, nutrition and home economics studies; or as a dietician.

RESEARCH

Research relevant to this SDG is conducted from several angles. In the natural sciences, there is a focus on food security and sustainable food systems, and in the social sciences, studies mainly concern the transition to sustainable agriculture and studies of minorities. In medicine, the research focuses on diet in relation to health, malnutrition and climate impact.



Photo: Thomas Adolfsén, Johnér Bildbyrå AB.

“In 2024, about 50 students graduated in gastronomy; in food, nutrition and home economics studies; or as a dietitian.”

COLLABORATION

Examples of collaboration included the Department of Food and Nutrition’s Education Associate membership of the European Federation of the Association of Dietitians (EFAD), a federation of professional associations of dietitians, food economists and nutritionists active in health care, institutional food services, and public health work in Europe, where the Department participates in education contexts.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Examples of Other activities are the free dietary advice offered to students by dietitian students under the guidance of registered dietitians, and the Student Health Service’s online information on how diet affects studies. The University has a targeted goal stating that *The selection of climate-friendly food and meal options offered at the University must increase*, a goal that the University has begun working with.

REFLECTION

Although the University offers courses and study programmes with a focus on nutrition, there is a lack of broader education relevant to this SDG, such as courses in agriculture and food supply. There is more research on malnutrition and in agriculture, and the number of publications and their impact compared to the previous year has increased. Today, research related to this SDG has the greatest impact of all the SDG-related research at the University. Work has begun on *Other activities*, but much remains to be done to increase the range of climate-friendly food and meal options offered to staff and students.



Photo: Anna-Karin Eriksson.

PUBLICATIONS

193

FWCI

6.09



Sustainable dietary changes in the Arctic

The project ***Sustainable dietary changes*** in the Arctic addresses issues of food security, environmental sustainability, and public health in the Arctic. The project aims to find solutions and develop strategies that can be implemented at different levels – from local communities to decision-makers – and that take into account the environment as well as the cultural heritage of indigenous Arctic peoples. For example, the project is studying attitudes and behaviours in Arctic communities related to plant-based and fermented plant-based foods and foods containing algae.



SDG 3 Good health and well-being

Good health is fundamental to people's opportunities to achieve their full potential. Umeå University strives for a sustainable working life for all staff, and student life for all students, and within the framework of the FISU Healthy Campus programme, we are attempting to grapple with issues related to both health and well-being.

EDUCATION

A large proportion of the students who graduate from the University go on to work in medicine and in health promotion occupations, with about 1,500 students graduating with these specialisations in 2024. Teachers who educate to promote sustainable development in general and SDG3 in particular need to have the capacity to position their subject within a wider context. For this reason, the Faculty of Medicine has implemented a broad training initiative in the form of *Learning for sustainable development* and during 2023 and 2024 about 380 of the Faculty's teaching staff have taken this course.

RESEARCH

The research relevant to this SDG is extensive and dominated by studies within the Faculty of Medicine focusing on asthma, COVID-19 and SARS, as well as nutrition and various types of cancer (brain, prostate, colon and rectal, bladder and breast). A number of strategic initiatives such as through the *Uppsala University Comprehensive Cancer Consortium (U-CAN)*, the *Diabetes Strategic Research Program in Diabetes (SRP)* and *StratNeuro* (neuroscience) have also been made.

“Umeå University is the first university in the Nordic region to be certified as A Healthy Campus.”

COLLABORATION

Collaboration linked to this SDG is broad and at the local, regional, national and international levels. For example, *InFuturum 2024*, the annual dialogue meeting between Sweden's regions and universities, was held during the year with the aim of discussing and sharing experiences in research, education, funding and leadership between the regions, and to develop the cooperation between academia and health care. The goal is for Sweden's medicine and health sciences research and education, and health care to attain the highest class in an international comparison.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Umeå University is the first university in the Nordic region to be certified as *A healthy campus (FISU Healthy Campus)*. This certification brings the University's efforts to improve the health and well-being of its staff and students together under one umbrella. The intentions of A healthy campus have been effectively integrated into the University's environmental and sustainability efforts so that the focus is on both health and sustainability, which are aspects that can also increase the University's attractiveness. As part of *A healthy campus*, a seminar on *Physical literacy and inner development for a sustainable society* was held during the year with the *Change the game* organisation. The seminar participants got to try out in practice how physical literacy can generate an increased feeling of connectedness, which in the long run can lead to more conscious and sustainable decisions.



REFLECTION

Education in the area of medicine is extensive at Umeå University and about one third of the University's students graduate with a degree in health sciences and/or medicine. Out of all the SDGs combined, the most publications are generated in relation to this SDG and the volume of research in this area has remained largely unchanged in recent years. In addition, the University has invested extensively in the health of its staff and students through a number of initiatives, including the

University-wide Healthy campus project, the fitness reimbursement, and the fitness hour for all employees. However in this area, both new and known health risks require continued efforts.

PUBLICATIONS	FWCI
4321	2.85



GERDA

As part of the *Gerontological Regional Database (GERDA)* project, an interdisciplinary research collaboration on older people and their living conditions in the Kvarken region and on Åland. The research collaboration has investigated health-related, medical and social aspects of ageing, including older people's plans for the future. The researchers found that native speakers of Swedish more often have plans for the future than native speakers of Finnish, and that there was also a greater difference between Swedish- and Finnish-speaking Finns than between residents of Sweden and Finland. The results also showed that men more often than women had plans for the future, which seems to be linked to factors other than just gender.



SDG 4 Quality education

The education provided by Umeå University is to be inclusive, equitable and of good quality. It should also promote lifelong learning. With regard to sustainable development, the goal is for all students to acquire knowledge and skills that will enable them to contribute actively to the climate-neutral society in their future professional lives and enable the achievement of the SDGs in the 2030 Agenda.

EDUCATION

For education for sustainable development to be effective, sustainability aspects need to be integrated into courses and study programmes so that when they graduate, students take with them knowledge as well as skills - key competences - that are crucial for sustainable development. This also requires that democratic and transformative pedagogical approaches are used in the teaching, in a format

that facilitates student activation. Today, the vast majority of the University's degree programmes have qualitative targets that require such approaches. For teacher education programmes, there are also statutory qualitative targets of this kind, where the Higher Education Ordinance states that to obtain their degree, students in teacher education programmes must be able to demonstrate the capacity to make assessments in educational processes on the



Photo: Simon Jönsson

“By integrating sustainability aspects into education, students practise key competences and skills that are crucial to sustainable development. This also requires that democratic and transformative pedagogical approaches are used in the teaching, in a format that facilitates student activation.”

basis of relevant scientific, social and ethical aspects with particular respect for human rights, especially children's rights according to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and sustainable development. In 2024, approximately 500 students graduated with a Degree of Bachelor/Master of Arts in Primary Education, a Degree of Master of Arts/Science in Secondary/Upper Secondary Education, or a Higher Education Diploma in Vocational Education.

RESEARCH

The University's research linked to this SDG primarily has a social science focus. For example, studies are being conducted on teaching outdoors, and on Learning for sustainable development at different levels, from preschool to higher education. The project *Hållbar utevistelse vid storförskolor* (HUS) (Spending time outdoors sustainably for large preschools) has studied the importance of outdoor environments for the preschool child's health and relationship-building, and nature as part of the child's learning for sustainability. The results clearly show the health-promoting importance of outdoor play, where children who spend more time in nature, with its rich microflora of bacteria, have better immune systems than children who spend time in environments with more hard standings and less nature. Another result is that outdoor play in a natural environment also seems to facilitate social relationships between the children and reduce conflicts.

COLLABORATION

Being able to successfully supply skills to schools, and continuing the development of teacher education and research in educational sciences are essential for a good education. For these reasons, in 2024 a collaboration was formalised between schools in Umeå Municipality and the Umeå School of Education at Umeå University. In this collaboration, a common vision for this strategic cooperation over the next ten years was agreed. The strategy is based on the forms for work-integrated education being based on proven experience and scientific evidence,

where the aim is to increase the attractiveness of the teaching profession and increase the number of qualified teachers in schools.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

In 2024, sustainable development was assessed as being a pervasive perspective within 91% of the University's study programmes. Shorter and longer continuing professional development courses in learning for sustainable development are provided for teaching staff and programme coordinators. Through the HEI climate network's focus group of the same name, experiences are shared between Sweden's higher education institutions on how to actively educate for sustainable development and the key competences required.

REFLECTION

The University is working continuously to integrate sustainability aspects into its courses and study programmes, including in third-cycle programmes. There is a need here to ensure that teachers have sufficient knowledge and capabilities to position their subject within a wider context in order to be able to educate for and about sustainable development. Research concerning this SDG has increased in volume during the period 2019 to 2024 compared with the previous period. Since education and lifelong learning are essential for developing sustainability efforts in various contexts, ongoing and future initiatives are needed to help address global challenges in local contexts. Higher education institutions adopting a common approach when it comes to learning for sustainable development is one way of doing this.

PUBLICATIONS

345

FWCI

1.46



SDG 5 Gender equality

Gender equality is fundamental to sustainable and peaceful development, so that everyone can live a life free from violence and discrimination and have equal access to power and influence. Gender equality is a common thread in all of Umeå University's activities.

EDUCATION

Gender equality is one of the pervasive perspectives that is monitored as part of the University's quality system for education, which covers all courses and study programme. The *Umeå Centre for Gender Studies* brings together courses and study programmes in gender studies. For example, the *Master's Programme in Gender, Justice and Society* has a strong interdisciplinary profile and prepares students for jobs that demand advanced knowledge and critical perspectives in areas such as gender equality, social norms, power and equal treatment.

RESEARCH

The University conducts research relevant to this SDG in medicine. This research focuses on reproductive health and domestic violence, as well as sexual behaviour and how gender affects health. Social science research relevant to this SDG focuses on gender and (in)equalities, while humanities research deals with gender equality in literature, as well as changes from prehistoric/historical times to modern times.

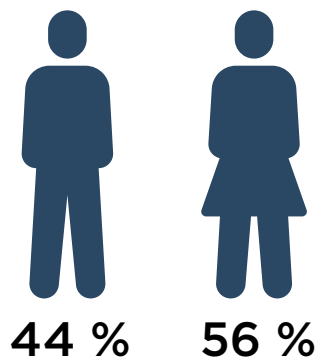
COLLABORATION

Examples of collaboration include the regional strategy for *A gender-equal Västerbotten* which aims to reduce gender inequalities by redistributing power between women and men, changing gender stereotypes and preventing and combating men's and boys' violence against women and girls. Based on this strategy, the University has developed its own key indicators that can be used to identify and highlight shortcomings in gender equality and to monitor gender equality efforts at the University.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

The University is constantly working to improve equality between men and women, despite the fact that gender balance is skewed in many instances in this University. The share of women among employees was more than that of men at 56% and 44%, respectively, in 2024. The biggest differences are seen in administrative staff positions, where the proportion of women is 78%, and men 22%, and in professorial positions, where the share of women is 34% and men 66%. Even among students

"The share of women among employees was 56% and the share of men was 44% in 2024."





there is a gender imbalance, where the share of men continues to decline; in 2024 it was 33% compared with 67% women.

REFLECTION

The University offers courses and study programmes in gender studies at all levels, including third-cycle level. Research in areas relevant to this SDG has increased somewhat in recent years, particularly in terms of its impact. Concerning *Other activities*, while gender equality is an integral part of the University's work, challenges remain in achieving a gender balance, which is why strategic and operational work in these areas needs to continue.

PUBLICATIONS

374

FWCI

2.67



SDG 6 Clean water and sanitation

Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all. Water pollution needs to be reduced and in troubled times, a focus on increasing the security of water treatment works and reservoirs is needed. At Umeå University, we conduct research and provide education that deals with a range of aquatic environments, their status, and changes in them.

EDUCATION

Students in the *Bachelor's Programme in Biology and Earth Sciences* acquire knowledge about the environment and the processes within it. For example, students learn about the water cycle and the study programme includes many field projects and excursions to explore lakes and forests – in the local area as well as other locations such as the Abisko area, and in Greenland and Borneo. In 2024, approximately 60 students graduated at Bachelor's or Master's level with a specialisation in ecology, biology, earth sciences or environmental science.

“The study programme includes many field projects and excursions to explore lakes and forests – in the local area as well as other locations such as the Abisko area, and in Greenland and Borneo.”

RESEARCH

Research related to this SDG is mainly in the natural sciences. For example, studies are investigating environmental toxins and pharmaceuticals in wastewater, and various biological wastewater treatment methods. In the project *Co-Creating Better Blue (C2B2)*, researchers are attempting to develop ecosystem-based management processes where decisions are

based on both sustainability and democracy; while in the project *Halogenated natural products (HNPs) in Nordic marine ecosystems*, researchers are investigating how HNPs are being affected by climate change. In the latter project, the aim is to identify factors influencing the formation of halogenated natural products (HNPs) to be able to predict how their levels and transport pathways might be affected by climate change.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

The University's steering towards this SDG is deficient. The University's *Action plan - climate and sustainability 2024-2026* includes an activity to integrate aquatic aspects into its systematic environmental and sustainability management. In connection with this, a student group has developed a model for how sustainability aspects in laboratories, including water use, can be evaluated.

REFLECTION

Education is limited related to this SDG. Research is relatively limited but has a good impact. The focus on water treatment remains strong. In *Other activities*, actual steering towards this SDG is lacking. Since water is a strategically important community resource and is also crucial for the proper functioning of ecosystems, energy production, green industries as well as industrial enterprises and households, this work should continue so that questions concerning water become a natural and integral part of the University's systematic environmental management and sustainability efforts.

PUBLICATIONS

225

FWCI

4.87





SDG 7 Affordable and clean energy

Access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all is fundamental to being able to meet many of our global challenges. The University conducts research and provides education in renewable energy solutions such as hydrogen gas and energy efficiency in the built environment. We also strive to reduce and optimise our own energy use.

EDUCATION

There are several degree programmes and courses relevant to this SDG, including the engineering programmes in energy technology. In the course *Bioenergy*, students acquire knowledge of different types of bioenergy from the raw material perspective, about energy forestry and energy crops and waste from forestry; about agriculture and wastewater treatment plants; and about by-products from forestry and agriculture. In 2024, around 50

students specialising in energy engineering graduated from the University.

RESEARCH

Research is primarily conducted from natural science perspectives, particularly in relation to sustainable fuels. There is a focus on biofuels but also hydrogen gas and how nanomaterials can be used to produce renewable energy. Research on hydropower and the disposal, reuse and safety of batteries is also being pursued.



Photo: Mattias Pettersson.



“Many of the rooftops in Campus Umeå have solar panels and these produced just over 600 MWh of electricity in 2024.”

COLLABORATION

The University is part of *Bio4Energy*, a strategic project for research where collaboration with researchers from Luleå University of Technology, the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences and the Research Institutes of Sweden (RISE) are working to develop methods and tools for the efficient use of bio-based resources. This research is at the forefront of the research internationally, and covers the entire production chain from tree to finished products in the form of biofuels, bio-based materials and ‘green’ chemicals that can be used for drugs, textiles and packaging, for example. The vision is to create environment-friendly and sustainable technologies that make it possible to replace today’s oil refineries with biorefineries.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

In 2024, 43 GWh of energy was used in the University’s facilities, which corresponds to the energy

consumption of 1,700 detached houses. Many of the rooftops on Campus Umeå have solar panels and these produced just over 600 MWh of electricity in 2024. By optimising facilities utilisation and reducing our facilities’ total footprint, the University’s total energy consumption can be reduced. There is potential here, as offices are used on average only 3 hours on a normal working day. In 2024, the corresponding use of classrooms was approximately 4 hours, and of group rooms 4.5 hours.

REFLECTION

Some courses and study programmes related to this SDG are provided by the University. The volume of research lies at roughly the same level as before. The focus of the research relevant to this SDG is on biofuels and energy efficiency, but studies are also being conducted on saccharification processes and oxygen evolution. Regarding *Other activities*, work continues with building owners to reduce energy consumption and increase energy efficiency.

PUBLICATIONS

431

FWCI

1.85



Intelligent Human-Buildings Interactions Lab

At the University, an *Intelligent Human-Buildings Interaction Lab (IHBI)* has been established to investigate how occupants’ behaviours affect energy consumption in buildings. Through a series of experiments in a virtual-physical environment, the relationship between energy efficiency measures and occupants’ behaviours is being studied. This can include how energy performance is affected by an occupant adjusting a thermostat, opening a window, or raising or lowering Venetian blinds. The goal is to help occupants understand how their behaviours affect energy consumption. By mapping experiences and behavioural patterns for different energy-efficiency scenarios, the researchers aim to create more inclusive solutions that promote a more efficient use of renewable energy in buildings.



SDG 8 Decent work and economic growth

This SDG is about promoting sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all. For Umeå University, this is about continuous collaboration with union organisations to ensure that our working conditions are the best possible and that we provide education and conduct research that promotes sustainable growth.

Photo: Malin Grönborg.



EDUCATION

Knowledge is needed to ensure decent working conditions and ensure sustainable economic growth. At the Faculty of Social Sciences, a new *Master's Programme in Sustainability Reporting and Financial Analysis* was launched during the year, where students learn what is required in sustainability reporting and to work as an expert in areas such as sustainable finance and compliance with the EU's Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD).

RESEARCH

Research relevant to this SDG is from a social science perspective, and includes studies of green industry initiatives in northern Sweden, but also unemployment, well-being and tourism. The results of this research indicate that the green transition, if fully implemented, could lead to a labour shortage in the public sector when competition for staff intensifies, as there is a risk that employees working mainly in the administrative parts of the public sector will move to private employers if the mining and manufacturing industries were to grow by adding a larger number of services. These are primarily employees in occupations with lower levels of formal qualifications, and more administrative occupations that require higher education. In addition, there is a risk that these employees will largely be replaced by less experienced staff, which in the short term may impair the quality of welfare services.



OTHER ACTIVITIES

A sustainable working life entails cooperation between the employer and staff, and the local collective agreement between the University and union organisations sets out the nature of the cooperation between the parties and in which areas this cooperation occurs. In 2024, a new work environment and equal opportunities organisation was implemented at the University. The idea is that this organisation should take a holistic approach to the work environment and equal opportunities, promoting dialogue between management and operations while clarifying the student perspective. During the year, the University has also been successfully assessed for the *Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R)* award with the goal that the University should become a better workplace for researchers and have a good work environment that enables high-quality research.

REFLECTION

Most of the University's social science programmes address issues related to sustainable working conditions and economic growth. The number of publications relevant to this SDG has increased along with their impact compared to the previous measurement period. As questions relating to working conditions and the labour market should be examined from different angles, interdisciplinary approaches are better able to contribute to the knowledge base. Regarding *Other activities*, the University has made efforts to develop and maintain support activities.

PUBLICATIONS

386

FWCI

2.49



Who Wants to be a Working Retiree?

The project *Who Wants to be a Working Retiree?* is investigating the basis and working conditions for people combining work and retirement in the temporary staffing sector. Among other things, the study is looking into the growing labour market of non-standard employment (NSE) tailored for working retirees. Using a life-course perspective, the project is exploring how job-related events and trajectories shape pathways into NSEs, along with experiences of working conditions such as autonomy, income, and the work environment.



SDG 9 Industry, innovation and infrastructure

To meet future challenges, we need innovation, resilient infrastructure and inclusive and sustainable industrialisation. The University contributes to this SDG through its Innovation Office and its holding company through which sustainable innovations can be commercialised. The University also contributes to this SDG by providing society with well-educated and relevant skilled labour who can take on society's challenges.

EDUCATION

In the *Master's Programme in Digital Management and Innovation*, students learn how to use digital technology applications that will enable them to bring about positive change for individuals, organisations and society in their future professional lives. Students from a range of educational backgrounds combine the knowledge they have acquired from their previous education with new insights concerning digitalisation and its impact.

“The University’s Innovation Office supports the University’s researchers, other employees and students in getting their ideas, research findings and innovations turned into products for a market.”

RESEARCH

Research relevant to this area is dominated by studies in natural science. In the *Digital materials* project, researchers are investigating whether and how the carbon footprint of buildings can be reduced by using digital frameworks that integrate geometry, materials, structure and performance. The aim is then to develop these towards the production of performative materials and building systems.

Artificial intelligence and its possibilities should be used responsibly and be beneficial to people and the community. At the *AI Policy Lab*, researchers are investigating how governance and policy structures can manage the human and societal impacts of AI. The Lab focuses on the relationship between AI policies and societal change and strives to ensure that these policies can respond dynamically to changing needs and values.

COLLABORATION

Long-term, concrete collaboration is pursued through the University's strategic partnerships with various actors. In the University's partnerships with the municipalities of Skellefteå and Umeå, *AI and digitalisation* is one of several identified focus areas. The University's partnership with Volvo Trucks focuses on Sustainable production and technology in addition to *Sustainable leadership* and *Sustainable working life and health*.



OTHER ACTIVITIES

The University's Innovation Office supports the University's researchers, other employees and students in getting their ideas, research findings and innovations turned into products for a market. In 2024, the University's Innovation Office and holding company worked to integrate sustainability aspects into its processes for supporting innovation, so that the innovations that are ultimately commercialised take sustainability aspects into account. For example, all new projects need to consider how and which SDGs their projects address. In 2024, 149 idea proposals were submitted to the Innovation Office, 36 of which were selected for verification resulting in 9 limited companies being formed.

The number of publications relevant to this SDG has increased slightly but the impact of the research has not increased. Research involving life cycle analyses is growing and remains significant. In *Other activities*, work with innovations is an important part of the University's activities, including the holding company - to enable employees and students to develop and commercialise their ideas into useful solutions that benefit society.

PUBLICATIONS

242

FWCI

1.6

REFLECTION

In terms of *Education*, the University contributes to building skills that are important to this SDG, including incorporating new technologies and digitalisation into its courses and study programmes.



Systematic digital service innovation in the public sector for sustainable development

Within the Industrial Doctoral School for Research and Innovation, the University collaborates with external parties. One of the projects, ***Systematic digital service innovation in the public sector for sustainable development***, is based on the fact that digital technology has traditionally been used as a tool to support already developed business strategies and structures, but by shifting to digital strategies, the possibilities afforded by digitalisation instead become the starting point for developing these strategies. This change in approach requires new assumptions about digital technology, its flexibility, and the capacity to change. Through this, organisations can create better conditions for strategy development and their long-term digital innovation capacity.



SDG 10 Reduced inequalities

Fundamental to a sustainable society is a fair distribution of resources and economic, social and political influence. Inequalities within and between countries also need to be reduced. At Umeå University, we work to ensure equal opportunities for students and employees, irrespective of gender, transgender identity or expression, ethnicity, religion or other belief, disability, sexual orientation and/or age.

EDUCATION

To reduce inequalities, the University works with widening participation, so that people who might otherwise not have undertaken university studies choose to do so. Distance education is a format that makes it easier for those who are not able to change their place of residence to study, and is offered in all disciplines. The Umeå School of Education offers a wide range of distance education courses and there are multiple pathways to admission which have been adapted to different groups in society. One example is work-integrated learning for older students and students in inland municipalities in the northern parts of Sweden in particular. The Faculty of Medicine also offers decentralised courses and study programmes in several smaller cities in Sweden's north.

RESEARCH

The research relevant to this SDG is broad and is in social science, as well as humanities and medicine. For example, studies are being conducted on inequalities deriving from socio-economic factors, gender, migrants and conflicts within indigenous communities or conflicts between indigenous peoples and industry. The *Co-creating Coexistence (CoCo)* project aims to develop effective solutions for co-creation, biodiversity and sustainable rural development in Europe. Another project is investigating how financial inclusion for both women and men, regardless of social class, can contribute to economic development and prosperity so as to create an equitable society. This research focuses on understanding how access to financial services influences social and economic equality. By analysing different



Photo: Malin Grönberg.

aspects of financial inclusion, such as access to bank accounts, loans and insurance, and how these services are used by different groups in society, the research is contributing to reducing inequalities within and between countries.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

The University works continuously to reduce inequalities and combat discrimination in its work with equal opportunities. Support is therefore available to managers at all organisational levels, who are offered opportunities for learning through courses and sharing experience within the University's equal opportunities network. A number of educational initiatives linked to this SDG have been implemented during the year, included basic training in equal opportunities, and training in how to recruit without discrimination, courses in work to combat racism, in a sustainable start of studies and student reception matters, as well as initiatives to develop measures to prevent sexual harassment. New support material for working with workplace culture along with a 'dilemma book' and a core values game have also been developed.

REFLECTION

The University works with widening participation in its courses and study programmes to reduce inequalities linked to access to education. Of all the SDGs where the University's social science and humanities research is strong, research relevant to the Reduced inequalities SDG is the most extensive. It remains at the same level as before, but with an increased focus on research on migrants and migration and with a certain reduction in the research conducted in northern Sweden. In addition, a large strategic project is under way to reduce inequalities at the University, but continued efforts are needed here to ensure that it has a pervasive effect across the entire University.



Photo: Fredrik Larsson.

PUBLICATIONS

418

FWCI

1.72



LGBTQI CERTIFICATION

So that all students at Umeå University and the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences in Umeå feel included, safe and seen in their contacts with the Student Health Service, its staff have chosen to undergo LGBTQI certification in 2024. The certification means that the staff now have greater competence and awareness concerning norms and living conditions related to, for example, gender, sexuality and LGBTQI issues, and to other minorities. The Student Health Service has also developed an approach to provide a welcoming reception and an open work environment from an LGBTQI perspective. The hope is to be able to lower the threshold for students to approach the Student Health Service with their concerns, and that the students who do approach the Health Service will be met with respect and interest.



SDG 11 Sustainable cities and communities

Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. They also need to be developed in an environmentally, economically and socially sustainable way. Umeå University educates, pursues researches and collaborates with others to promote sustainable cities and neighbourhoods. We also work to ensure that our campuses are sustainable from a climate and resource perspective while promoting a sustainable working life and student life.

EDUCATION

The course *Transition towards a sustainable society*, based on the principles of challenge-based learning, aims to illuminate various aspects of sustainable development from the scientific, social and ethical perspectives. The course collaborates with the University's sustainability function where students undertake various projects that could develop the University's work for *A sustainable campus*.

“The research pursued at the University that is linked to this SDG is wide-ranging.”

RESEARCH

The research pursued at the University that is linked to this SDG is wide-ranging. In medicine, this research deals with air quality, pollution and noise in cities and how these factors affect cancer risk, asthma, cardiovascular diseases and diabetes. In social science, a number of transport projects are being conducted, such as *Norrflyg* and *SAEKERT*. The conditions for introducing a system of regional routes with electric-powered aircraft as part of public transport in the four northern counties is being studied. *SAEKERT*, which is being conducted with Luleå University of Technology and the Swedish National Road and Transport Research Institute, is studying how to create transport systems that are safe, adaptable, economical and climate-neutral,

while at the same time strengthening society's resilience. Research is also conducted in the humanities. This includes the project *HerCul: Prioritisation of climate-threatened cultural heritage - approaches and methods*, where the researchers are studying how and to what extent climate change in the form of flooding, erosion, fires, drought, mould, pests, etc., may damage cultural heritage. Currently, there is no system for prioritising which places should be saved and which we should allow to be lost, but through interviews with and surveys among cultural heritage managers at the county administrative board, municipal and national levels, as well as GIS analyses, the researchers will be able to deepen their knowledge about this and propose solutions. The project *Designing Cycles at 64° - Interior Landscapes and the Water-Energy-Food Nexus* is being conducted in the field of architecture. It is working towards shifting the built environment and its inhabitants in the sub-Arctic climate zone from being consumers to becoming producers. The aim is to transform our ecological footprint from negative into positive.

COLLABORATION

The University collaborates within the Higher education institutions' climate network. In 2024, the University project-managed the work in a focus group that produced national guidelines on *Sustainable buildings and premises* for Sweden's higher education institutions on behalf of the Expert Group on Property and Security within the Association of Swedish Higher Education Institutions (SUHF). The purpose of the guidelines is to assist the HEIs to reduce the climate footprint from their facilities

by demonstrating methods and ways of working as well as proposing targets.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Sustainable travel is also one of the pillars of sustainable cities and communities. To promote sustainable commuting, a bicycle parking garage was constructed at Campus Umeå and the installation of bicycle parking with weather protection is ongoing. A University-owned bicycle pool has also been established. Within the Higher education institutions' climate network, work has also begun to develop a guide for sustainable business travel. The number of business trips undertaken for the University by air increased slightly in 2024 compared with 2023. Since 2019, however, the number of business trips by air has decreased by 40% while the number of employees has increased. Rail journeys in 2024 were fewer than in 2023, although journeys in Europe increased.

REFLECTION

The University contributes broad competence to this SDG. There has been a slight increase in the number of publications but no increase in the impact of the

research. Over time, the research's focus on Nordic perspectives has grown, while studies of environmental exposure have declined in volume. A large share of the University's collaboration is linked to this SDG. Concerning *Other activities*, we work continuously to ensure that our campuses are sustainable while also supporting a sustainable working life and student life. Business travel by air still accounts for a large proportion of the University's climate emissions, making it essential to continue working towards holding a greater number of meetings digitally, and to transition towards more environment-friendly travel, but also to influence the formats for academic conferences and collaboration.

PUBLICATIONS

313

FWCI

2.68





SDG 12 Responsible consumption and production

The transition to sustainable consumption and production patterns for goods is essential to reducing our negative impact on the climate, the environment and human health. Umeå University provides education, conducts research and pursues collaboration in resource management and sustainable consumption patterns. We also work actively by imposing environmental and sustainability requirements in our purchasing and procurement.

EDUCATION

An example of a course linked to this SDG is *Public procurement as an environmental policy instrument*. In this course, students learn about why policy instruments are needed and how environmental considerations or consideration of other aspects of sustainability in public procurement can act as a powerful instrument for a sustainable transition.

RESEARCH

Examples of research related to this SDG deal with forestry and forest management, which is studied from both natural science and social science perspectives. This research also deals with sustainable production and consumption linked to building construction. In order to reduce its carbon footprint and contribute to a sustainable bioplastics industry,



Photo: Per Melander.

“In 2024, 95% of the University’s procurements and call-offs from governmental agreements imposed environmental requirement.”

researchers in the *Waste2Plastic* project are also attempting to produce biodegradable plastic using microalgae. In the project, microalgae are cultured in wastewater. These algae can then convert carbon dioxide from flue gases into biomass, which can then be converted into biodegradable bioplastics with the aid of bacteria. The plastic can then be used for light bulbs and packaging, for example.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

In order to promote sustainable production and consumption, the University imposes environmental and sustainability requirements in its purchasing and procurement. In 2024, 95% of the University’s procurements and call-offs from governmental agreements imposed environmental requirements. This is a huge step forward and a major improvement compared to the year before when environmental requirements were imposed in only 62% of procurements and call-offs. In 2024, work on the introduction of sorting waste at source throughout the University was completed and a digital marketplace for the University’s internal furniture stocks was introduced to promote reuse.

REFLECTION

This SDG requires a wide range of expertise, which the University provides in its study programmes and courses. The number of publications has not increased over time, but the impact of the research related to this SDG has increased. The work done through imposing environmental and sustainability requirements in purchasing and procurement has borne fruit. The improved procedures for recycling and reuse that have been put in place are also positive, but much still remains to be done.



Photo: Mattias Pettersson.

PUBLICATIONS

300

FWCI

2.16



Design and Clothes

In the course *Design and Clothes*, students gain both practical experience and theory in clothing design. The course aims to develop students’ understanding and critical thinking about how textile and clothing manufacturing affects the environment and society. The final project in the course has students creating their own clothing collections, focusing on awareness of the impacts of the clothing industry and the materials used on sustainability and climate. The students’ creations, where garments have been reused from second-hand purchases and old curtains are given new life, are also exhibited.



SDG 13 Climate action

Immediate action needs to be taken to mitigate climate change and its consequences, and at the moment it is unlikely that we will succeed in limiting the global temperature increase to 1.5°C. At the University, Research, Collaboration and Education related to climate change are pursued in all faculties. The University is also working towards becoming climate-neutral in accordance with Sweden's climate goals.

EDUCATION

In the course *Climate changes – causes and effects*, students learn about the impact that humans are having on everything from animal populations to ecosystems. The emphasis is on the relationship between biotic (living) and abiotic (non-living) processes and how these are affected by climate change over time.

“Emissions compared to the base year 2019 have decreased, from almost 25,000 tonnes of CO₂-equivalents in 2019 to just under 21,000 tonnes of CO₂-equivalents in 2024.”

RESEARCH

Research relevant to this SDG is found in all disciplines but mainly in the natural sciences. The project *Greening of the Arctic: gradual or abrupt?* which is being carried out at the *Climate Impacts Research Center (CIRC)* in Abisko, is studying what the new Arctic ecosystem will look like, and how quickly ecosystems can adapt to a changing climate. Today, whether the ecosystem will adapt gradually as the climate gets warmer, or whether it will happen

in the form of sudden changes from one state to another when the climate has exceeded certain thresholds, remains an open question.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

To ensure that the University's climate and sustainability efforts have an impact, a carbon budget has been developed that is followed up with annual climate accounts. The carbon budget shows that the University's emissions should decrease by 19% per year compared to the previous year. Emissions compared to the base year 2019 have decreased, from almost 25,000 tonnes of CO₂-equivalents in 2019 to just under 21,000 tonnes of CO₂-equivalents in 2024. However, the rate of reduction is slow, and the climate budget for all years since the base year has been exceeded.

REFLECTION

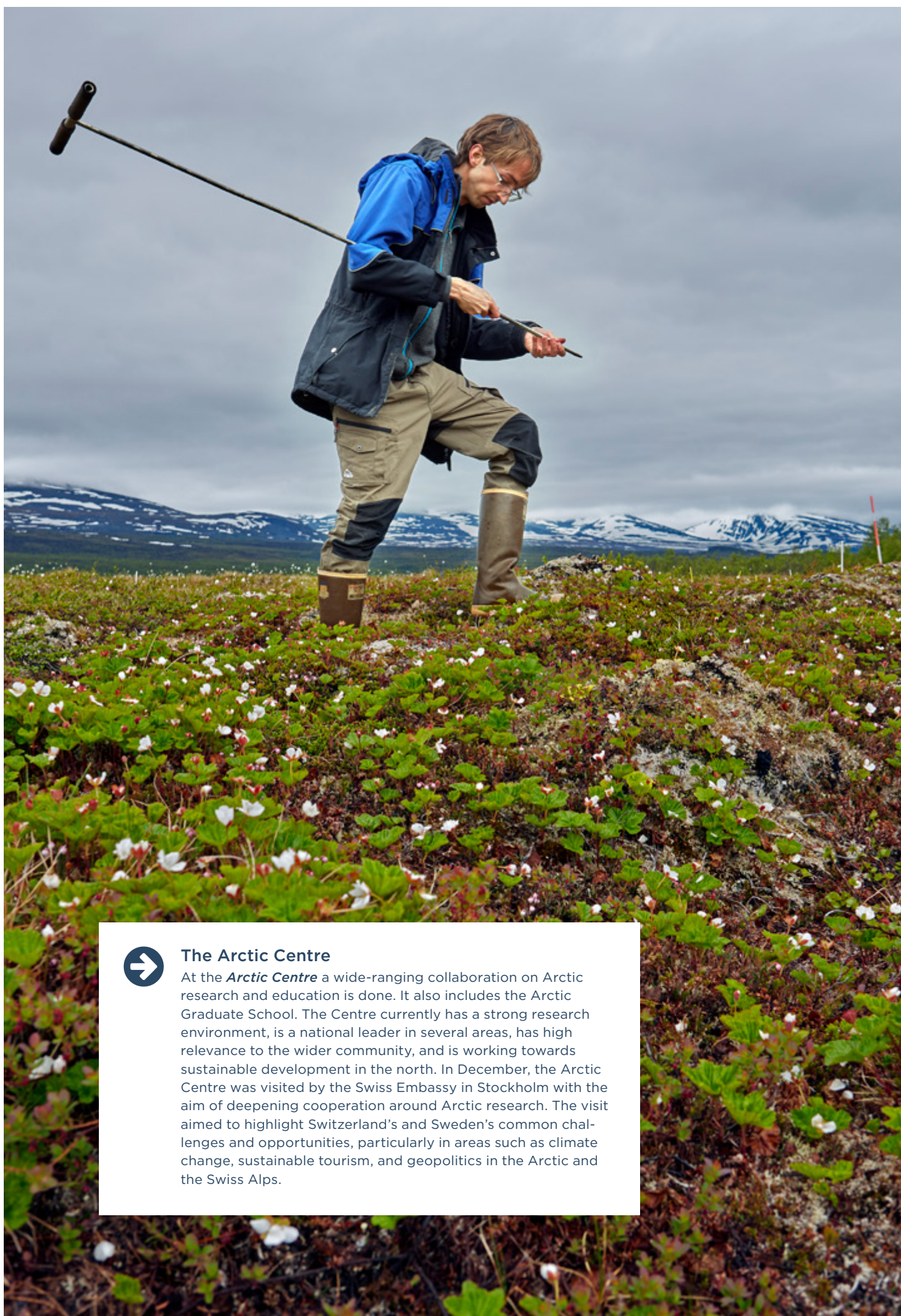
The research is extensive and climate change is being studied in collaborative research across all disciplines, but mainly in the natural sciences. The University is working to reduce its climate footprint in order to achieve the long-term sustainability target of 1 tonne of CO₂ emissions per person per year, and much remains to be done.

PUBLICATIONS

470

FWCI

2.52



The Arctic Centre

At the **Arctic Centre** a wide-ranging collaboration on Arctic research and education is done. It also includes the Arctic Graduate School. The Centre currently has a strong research environment, is a national leader in several areas, has high relevance to the wider community, and is working towards sustainable development in the north. In December, the Arctic Centre was visited by the Swiss Embassy in Stockholm with the aim of deepening cooperation around Arctic research. The visit aimed to highlight Switzerland's and Sweden's common challenges and opportunities, particularly in areas such as climate change, sustainable tourism, and geopolitics in the Arctic and the Swiss Alps.



SDG 14 Life below water

Oceans, seas and marine resources must be conserved and sustainably used for sustainable development. Umeå University contributes to this SDG by disseminating knowledge about the status of the marine environment and about changes that are taking place in it. The University also conducts research and provides education about the water in various ecosystems. For Umeå Campus outdoor environments, work has begun with the property owner and students to improve the status of the area's aquatic systems.

EDUCATION

In the course Aquatic Chemistry, students gain an understanding of how chemical reactions in water function, both in industrial contexts and in natural environments. The course also covers how environmental toxins and other pollutants are transported by, or have an impact on, water systems.

RESEARCH

The research related to this SDG is dominated by the natural sciences. Blue carbon is being studied in several projects, i.e. the ability of marine organisms to store carbon and thereby contribute to reducing the concentration of CO₂ in the atmosphere. Blue carbon can be crucial to maintaining a balanced carbon cycle in the Earth's oceans. One project, *Recosal*, is investigating how diversity can be restored in salmon populations. This is being done by linking different knowledge systems and integrating historical monitoring data with traditional and local knowledge of salmon and rivers. In addition, the project is investigating the community planning in the region in question, where traditional Sami fishing, tourist fishing and other activities may need to be reconsidered.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

The University's steering towards this SDG is deficient. There is information for employees about which residues, chemicals or liquid solutions from laboratory activities may or may not be poured down drains. The basic rule is that all hazardous waste must be disposed of separately.

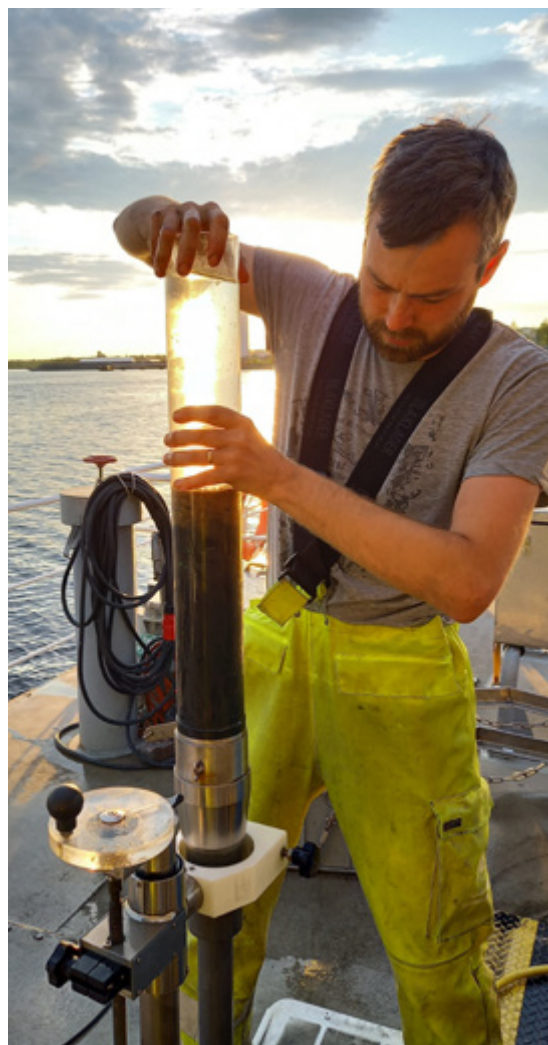


Photo: Åsa Hallberg



REFLECTION

The University has few activities relevant to this SDG. This applies to both *Education* and *Collaboration*. Research in areas related to this SDG are limited and has neither increased nor decreased over time. However, an increase in research on bioaccumulation and organic pollutants is seen, while research on, for example, algal blooms and dissolved organic matter has decreased.

PUBLICATIONS

129

FWCI

2.09



EcoChange

EcoChange is a strategic research area designated by the Swedish Government that focuses on the marine environment and the climate, and aims to increase knowledge about the consequences of climate change in marine systems, and in the long term to motivate government agencies to implement effective measures to respond to the effects of climate change. In **EcoChange**, the collaboration involves multiple higher education institutions, and this provides unique opportunities to make comprehensive syntheses of the effects of climate change in the Baltic Sea. This work is led by a board, a scientific coordinator, and a steering group and is administered through Umeå University.



SDG 15 Life on land

This SDG is about protecting, restoring and promoting the sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably managing forests, w halting desertification, and halting and reversing land degradation and biodiversity loss. In concrete terms, at the University this work is in *Research, Collaboration* and *Education* related to forest ecosystems. The University also works with property owners and students to increase biodiversity and combat invasive species in its outdoor areas.

EDUCATION

Examples of *Education* with relevance to this SDG is the recently established *Bachelor of Science Programme in Environmental Science with sustainability profile*. The programme combines natural science and social science aspects so that students can acquire the kinds of knowledge and skills that can create the conditions for a sustainable society, and to solve national and global environmental, sustainability and health problems. After graduation, students will be able to work in the business sector or the public sector with current environmental and social issues for example, as well as finding solutions and measures for a sustainable living environment for people, animals and plants in the long term. In 2024, around 65 students graduated in the fields of environmental health, biology and ecology.

RESEARCH

Research is conducted in both the natural and social sciences. The natural science research focuses on forestry and forest management, while the social science research deals with the governance and management of primarily forests. An example is the *MARGISTAR* project, which is being implemented to enable innovation through a series of physical and digital meetings to jointly design innovative pathways for transitioning marginalised mountain ranges towards their green, digital and healthy futures. The *FAIRWAY* in Europe platform brings together researchers, policy-makers, actors from mountainous regions, non-profit organisations, SMEs, public bodies and private organisations so that they can engage in dialogue on social science and policy issues, with the wider aim of achieving the EU's sustainability goals.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Together with our property owners, the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, researchers and students, the University is working to promote biodiversity and reduce invasive species on Umeå Campus. A Master's project in ecology has produced results that could lay the foundation for improving the ecological and chemical status of the Campus Pond. Students have set up nesting boxes for birds and bats at a number of sites on Umeå Campus. During the year, many guided excursions on the topic *Nature on campus* have also been conducted with the aim of stimulating interest in the animal and plant life around the University. The concept has proved popular and will continue in 2025.

REFLECTION

Courses and study programmes with a bearing on this SDG are mainly in the natural sciences, although there are also courses with a social science focus. The volume of the research has remained unchanged over time. The challenges associated with this SDG are great and require further efforts to build skills and answer research questions. The broad collaboration that exists concerning the University's outdoor environments is positive and should continue. The aquatic ecosystem in the area should be systematically included.

PUBLICATIONS

295

FWCI

1.63



Mixed forests more likely to resist climate change

Together with the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, studies of mixed forests are being carried out. For example, it has been shown that a mixed forest reduces the risk of forest damage in a warmer climate. Forests with relatively few tree species have a significantly higher risk of forest damage than forests with many tree species and also run a greater risk of damage caused by wind, snow, fungi and deer. Conifers and juvenile stands are particularly vulnerable to this kind of damage. In other words, forests or forestry with a higher proportion of deciduous trees could reduce forest damage and improve their resilience to climate change.



SDG 16 Peace, justice and strong institutions

This SDG is about promoting peaceful and inclusive societies and providing access to justice for all, and building effective and inclusive institutions with accountability at all levels. In order to contribute to this SDG, the University has established that academic freedom, autonomy and student influence are central.

EDUCATION

Education relevant to this SDG includes the *Programme for International Crisis and Conflict Management*, which focuses on different types of crises and conflicts, as well as ways of understanding, analysing, managing and resolving them. This multidisciplinary programme combines practical exercises with theory in order to build skills that are useful both in Sweden and abroad. In 2024, approximately 75 students graduated with degrees in crisis and conflict management or peace and conflict studies at first- or second-cycle level.

“During the year, the University’s core values have been renewed through formulating the importance of the three academic core values: academic freedom, academic collegiality and academic integrity.”

RESEARCH

The research related to this SDG is broad, where social science research focuses on human rights, in particular the rights of minority groups such as indigenous peoples or people with disabilities. Medical research deals with, for example, domestic violence and health systems, while research in the humanities focuses primarily on justice, rights and agency in education but also society at large, and how digitalisation is affecting society. The project *Collaboration for conservation in Sápmi* is investigating the governance and management of nature reserves on the Swedish side of Sápmi, with a focus on organisation and implementation. For example, the project is examining power relationships, the scope for action and the conditions for participation and influence in situations where power and responsibility are shared between central government actors and local Sami resource users. Another project, *Swedigarch – Swedish National Infrastructure for Digital Archaeology*, is carrying out data-driven analyses to take advantage of and make available the knowledge potential that exists in archaeological documentation, scientific analysis results and cultural heritage collections, so that this knowledge can benefit both research and society. The research is being led by Uppsala University, which is also collaborating with the universities in Umeå, Lund, Stockholm, Karlstad and Gothenburg, as well as SciLifeLab, Sweden’s National Historical Museums and the Swedish National Heritage Board.



OTHER ACTIVITIES

Student influence is central to ensuring the inclusion of the student perspective in the development of the University's activities. The student unions wrote in their comments to the 2024 Annual Report that cooperation with the University had worked very well during the year, and the student representatives who have participated in dialogues, on councils, etc., had good opportunities to exercise student influence at the department level as well as at the faculty and University levels. The principle of academic freedom is central to the University's activities, and fundamental to the development of knowledge and scientific dialogue. To highlight and keep the issue alive, a number of panel debates, seminars and theme days on this theme have been conducted. Within the framework of the ongoing University-wide project about core values, three academic core values – academic freedom, academic collegiality and academic integrity – and their importance to Umeå University have been formulated and established.

REFLECTION

Education related to this SDG is provided in various social science study programmes in particular. The *Research* related to this SDG is relatively extensive, but its impact has declined. Although there is still a focus on domestic violence in the research, its importance has decreased somewhat over time, while research on human rights has increased. Concerning *Other activities*, the work to include the student perspective is functioning well. However, challenges in the wider world and the current climate for debate have led to a need to work with issues such as academic freedom and the vulnerability of researchers.

PUBLICATIONS

374

FWCI

2.68



Vulnerable Areas

Every two years, the Swedish Police publish a list of areas deemed vulnerable. A research project at Umeå University is investigating how these areas are affected by being identified as a Vulnerable Area, which is based on health, crime and trust in the area. By analysing both the positive and negative effects of this classification, the research aims to understand how such labels affect local communities and how policies can be improved to promote social justice and inclusion.



SDG 17 Partnerships for the goals

The SDGs can only be achieved through global partnership and cooperation. The SDGs are often implemented locally but require global solidarity, capacity development, and the mobilisation of financial resources to ensure that no country or group is left behind. The University contributes to this SDG through education, research and disseminating knowledge, and through collaboration locally, regionally, nationally and with various actors in other countries.

IMPLEMENTATION

Umeå University is contributing to the achievement of the SDGs in a number of ways, such as by building knowledge and skills and establishing platforms for research and collaboration with the wider community, locally and regionally. The University is far from reaching top rankings in this work but contributes important Nordic perspectives on a number of global challenges in relation to northern habitats and waters, employment in the north, and indigenous peoples. At the University there is something that we call the UMU spirit. It is our set of common core values and culture that permeate Umeå University (UMU). It is about a positive and inclusive atmosphere that encourages openness, collaboration, creativity and diversity. The UMU spirit also emphasises the importance of close cooperation between students, teaching staff and researchers, as well as a willingness to be part of and drive social development, both locally and globally. It also reflects the University's ambition to be a place of inspiration, learning and innovation, where each individual is given the opportunity to grow and develop, and contribute to a better future.

INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACHES

The Umeå Transformation Research Initiative (UTRI) at Umeå University aims to support and promote interdisciplinary approaches being taken to address today's social challenges. In 2024, the UTRI supported and arranged 25 initiatives aimed at promoting an interdisciplinary perspective. This included a particular focus on supporting researchers early in their careers to establish interdisciplinary networks. In November, UTRI arranged a

conference, *Actions for Sustainable Transformations*, where researchers, students and other actors gathered to discuss sustainable transformation and urban transformation. The keynote speaker from Linköping University explained that the term *transformation* is complex and entails many interconnected changes at different levels of society. He stressed the importance of trialling different strategies to implement the transition, where local action and long-term processes are crucial. One of the University's professors from the Umeå School of Architecture stressed that researchers need to engage more in society and discuss their knowledge with actors outside academia. During the day-long conference, a number of parallel sessions were held on sustainable food production, climate adaptation, and the role of communications in the transition.

THINK GLOBALLY, ACT LOCALLY

At the local hub *A Sustainable Tomorrow*, which the University has organised in collaboration with Umeå Municipality and the Västerbotten County Administrative Board, about 60 people met to discuss dissonance - the gap between what we know we need to do for a sustainable transition and what we actually do. The whole idea behind *A Sustainable Tomorrow* is to spark a movement, which is needed for local transformation from a global perspective. The conference at Umeå's hub began with a behavioural researcher at the University reflecting on the concept of dissonance and how conflicting emotions can be transformed into a force for change if managed in the right way. This was followed by a number of lectures from speakers who had changed their lives in various ways, and who emphasised the



importance of collective action and role models for creating sustainable societies. *A Sustainable Tomorrow* is a Nordic event that brings together 30,000 participants at 50 local hubs.

The annual conference Perspectives is held at Umeå University, and provides different perspectives on a chosen theme. The 2024 Perspectives conference was what can be described as a conference and meeting place, a knowledge-rich source, and a discussion forum on the theme of *Natural resources and sustainable development*. The event included four keynote speakers, five panel discussions, six short films and live music. Between sessions, there was time for the participants to mingle and network. They came from the private sector, the public sector and higher education.

PARTNERSHIPS

Internationalisation and global partnerships are essential to achieving the SDGs in the 2030 Agenda. Internationalisation is also a priority area for the University and all faculties and the Umeå School of Education work continuously with it. The University has four prioritised areas for its internationalisation work: international cooperation, internationalisation at home, international experience for students and teaching staff, and hosting that benefits internationalisation.

During the year, the University applied to become part of the *AcrosseEU* alliance within the European University Initiative, but instead began collaboration with European Campus of City-Universities (EC2U), to become a member in 2025.

Together with nine other Swedish higher education institutions, the University received strategic internationalisation funds from the Swedish Foundation

for International Cooperation in Research and Higher Education (STINT) for the *MIRAI 2024–2026* collaboration project and also took over national responsibility for the project. MIRAI is a collaboration between 17 Swedish and Japanese universities. Collaboration has continued in these bilateral projects: *South Africa Sweden University Forum (SASUF)/SASUF 2030*, *Sweden Korea Education, Research and Innovation Collaboration (SKERIC)* and *Swetaly*. At the end of the year, the University joined the *Academic Collaboration Chile Sweden (ACCESS)*. These projects aim to strengthen academic collaborations in education, research and innovation between Swedish and international higher education institutions.

PROGRESS TOWARD THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Overall, the University's sustainability work can be summarised in the international sustainability rankings in which we participate: the Times Higher Education (THE) impact ranking and the QS Sustainability Ranking. In June 2024, the results of the 2023 THE impact rankings were announced where Umeå University was placed in the 201–300 band out of 1,950 higher education institutions, which is an improvement compared to previous years. Within two of the SDGs – SDG11 and SDG12 – we were also ranked in the top 100. We participated for the second time in the QS Sustainability Ranking and here too the University climbed in the rankings – from 481st place in 2023 to 214th out of a total of around 1,750 ranked universities in the world. Progress has also been made in the University's work for A healthy campus which focuses on SDG3. Umeå University is the first university in Sweden and the Nordic region to be certified as a Healthy Campus. The certification, which aims to promote health and well-being among students and staff, is part of the University's broader sustainability efforts.



UMEÅ UNIVERSITY