

The contribution of Hellenic Open University to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

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Introduction

Open universities actively support the implementation of the 17 sustainable development goals of the agenda 2030 [1,2]. Applying the innovative method of distance teaching, they ensure the right of access to knowledge for everyone, regardless of gender [3], age and place of residence, while through new technologies they provide lifelong learning and training, covering the weaknesses and limitations of conventional universities [4,5]. In Greece, the first university to introduce open and distance education is the Hellenic Open University (HOU), which through a series of actions, promotes the preservation of environmental and social balance [6].



HOU's projects to achieve SDGs

HOU's operational framework includes actions with a sustainable orientation:

1) Implementation of postgraduate study programs related to the objectives of sustainable development such as: Environmental Design, Protection of cultural heritage and monuments of nature from the effects of climate change, etc [7]

2) Organization of education and Lifelong learning programs with thematic areas referring to the sustainable development goals such as:

Coastal erosion: causes and sustainability in the context of climate change, etc. [8]

3) Establishment of an Environment Unit

4) Bioclimatic design and construction of HOU's buildings with innovative building materials [6]

5) Installation of central air conditioning and lighting control systems [6]

6) Classification of HOU's buildings in energy categories B and A [6]

7) Establishment of a gender equality committee[9]

8) Financial exemption from the costs of the studies of all HOU's students over 70 years of age [9]

9) Offer scholarships to vulnerable social groups (homeless, prisoners, etc.) [9]

Conclusions

Achieving the sustainable development goals is important to form the basis of a long-term strategy for HOU. A key role in drawing up this strategy will be played by the Environment Unit, which will define the institution's environmental policy and formulate proposals for the accomplishment of the SDGs.

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