



## **UPR's Annual Report on SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities**

The University of Poonch Rawalakot (UPR) is one of the leading University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) in Pakistan. UPR is situated in the challenging territory along the border with India and the disputed Kashmir region and is a leading institution in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), Pakistan. At UPR, we are deeply committed to the principles of promoting equality of opportunity, recognizing and valuing diversity, and being inclusive of all sectors of society in all aspects of Institute life. Therefore, UPR is working towards creating the conditions whereby staff and students are selected and trained solely on the basis of their merits, capabilities and potential, regardless of sex, marital status, disability, religion or belief, age, socio- economic background, family circumstances, or any other irrelevant distinction. Further, UPR seeks to eradicate unfair and discriminatory practices whenever they occur and to actively promote a culture of equality and diversity, where all staff and students may contribute as fully as possible.

### **Initiatives to reduce inequalities among students, staff and faculty at UPR**

UPR believes in education being the only tool to bridge not only economic inequalities but also cultural inequalities. For the purpose, UPR Awareness Drives were conducted during 2021-2022 on the concept of "Education for All". During these drives 08 districts, 32 institutes of Azad Jammu and Kashmir and more than 1000 students were outreached. UPR has taken steps to actively seek applications from underrepresented groups, the UPR admission application form has been carefully crafted to ensure easy accessibility. UPR also systematically tracks students' applications of underrepresented groups (including low income students, women, disabled students, newly settled refugee students). In 2022, there were 1632 total number of students and out of which 1272 students were tracked as low-income students, 898 were women students, 11 were newly settled refugees and 12 were disabled students. In the year 2022, UPR disseminated information to all relevant parties regarding the opportunity to assume additional responsibilities or duties in certain administrative

positions. Notably, female employees were actively encouraged to apply for these positions. UPR is committed to extend its support, implement policies and arrange trainings for underrepresented groups. In this regard, University Diversity Officer was appointed in year 2021 to carry on various activities related to diversity, equity and awareness about human rights. Following our gender discrimination and anti-discrimination policies, female students, staff and faculty members are offered extra facilitation and support. About 90 % of the buses are dedicated for women students, high roof van and hiace van service is dedicated for faculty members. A health center is operating on the main campus (Picture 2). The physician is available for students, staff and faculty members on working days, while 24/7 emergency service is also provided. Free ambulance service is also available at campus in case of any serious emergencies. Students receive three meals per day along with the accommodation. The total cost per semester is approximately PKR 42,000, equivalent to USD 150. There are five dedicated houses for faculty members and staff from underrepresented groups which are provided on priority basis. Nominal charges are paid by the residents which cost approximately PKR 15,000, equivalent to USD 52 per month. The institution aims to enhance overall inclusiveness, ensuring that all members of the community, regardless of ability, can actively participate and contribute to the academic and professional landscape. In this regard, an “International Day of People with Disabilities” was celebrated at main campus on December 03, 2022. To support newly settled refugees, UPR has adopted the notification issued by the State of Azad Jammu and Kashmir in which the tuition fee of refugee students at UPR was waived off.

UPR places special emphasis on graduation targets for students from low-income households. In this regard, two scholarships named Ehsas and Need-Based Scholarships are dedicated to financially needy students. By prioritizing accessibility, UPR demonstrates its commitment to promoting equal participation and fostering a supportive atmosphere for all members of the academic community. In this regard, special ramps and parking access aisles have been provided on campus for persons with disabilities. UPR takes pride in its commitment to inclusivity and has established the UPR Forum of Persons with Disabilities. This forum serves as a dedicated platform for individuals with disabilities within the university community to come together, share experiences, and advocate for their needs.



**Figure 1:** (a) UPR celebrating International Day of People with Disabilities at main campus, (b) Special parking access aisles at UPR campus for person with disabilities, (c & d) Glimpses from cultural activities at UPR campus, (e & f) Glimpses of transport services for student, staff and faculty members at UPR.

**Table 1: A summary of UPRs initiatives related to SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities).**

Indicator no.	Indicator Name	Action taken
10.6.1	Non-discriminatory admissions policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non-discriminatory admissions policy adopted at University of Poonch Rawalakot</li> <li>• UPR’s Awareness drives on education for all</li> </ul> <p>Reference link <a href="https://www.upr.edu.pk/non-discriminatory-admissions-policy0">https://www.upr.edu.pk/non-discriminatory-admissions-policy0</a></p>
10.6.2	Access to university track underrepresented groups applications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UPR has taken initiative to acces and track underrepresented groups applications</li> <li>• Tracking system to track applications of underrepresented groups exists</li> </ul> <p>Reference link <a href="https://www.upr.edu.pk/access-to-university-track-underrepresented-groups-applications">https://www.upr.edu.pk/access-to-university-track-underrepresented-groups-applications</a></p>
10.6.3	Access to university underrepresented groups recruit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UPR has taken initiative to recruit people from underrepresented groups</li> </ul> <p>Reference link <a href="https://www.upr.edu.pk/access-to-university-underrepresented-groups-recruit">https://www.upr.edu.pk/access-to-university-underrepresented-groups-recruit</a></p>
10.3.4	Anti-discrimination policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anti-discrimination policy adopted at University of Poonch Rawalakot</li> <li>• Anti-harassment policy adopted at University of Poonch Rawalakot</li> </ul> <p>Reference link <a href="https://www.upr.edu.pk/anti-discrimination-policies">https://www.upr.edu.pk/anti-discrimination-policies</a></p>
10.6.5	University diversity officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UPR appointed University Diversity Officer to implement policies and arrange programmes</li> <li>• To promote cultural diversity, equity and inclusion at UPR, various programmes are arranged.</li> </ul> <p>Reference link <a href="https://www.upr.edu.pk/university-diversity-officer">https://www.upr.edu.pk/university-diversity-officer</a></p>
10.6.6	Support for underrepresented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UPR offers free transportation, free indoor medical services, subsidized food and lodging facilities</li> </ul>



	groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UPR supports refugee students through tuition fee waiver</li> <li>• UPR has dedicated scholarships for low-income students</li> </ul> <p>Reference link <a href="https://www.upr.edu.pk/support-for-underrepresented-groups">https://www.upr.edu.pk/support-for-underrepresented-groups</a></p>
10.6.7	Accessible facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UPR is committed to provide accessible facilities for persons with disabilities</li> <li>• UPR demonstrates its commitment to promoting equal participation and fostering a supportive atmosphere for all members of the academic community</li> </ul> <p>Reference link <a href="https://www.upr.edu.pk/accessible-facilities">https://www.upr.edu.pk/accessible-facilities</a></p>
10.6.8	Disability support services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UPR has created an inclusive and supportive infrastructure on all its campuses which involves incorporating features and services that accommodate individuals with disabilities</li> </ul> <p>Reference link <a href="https://www.upr.edu.pk/disability-support-services">https://www.upr.edu.pk/disability-support-services</a></p>
10.6.9	Disability access scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UPR is deeply committed to provide a range of supportive schemes, including mentoring, counseling, and peer support programs for people with disabilities</li> <li>• UPR has Forum of Persons with Disabilities</li> </ul> <p>Reference link <a href="https://www.upr.edu.pk/disability-access-scheme">https://www.upr.edu.pk/disability-access-scheme</a></p>
10.6.10	Disability accommodation policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UPR follows the Higher Education Commission Policy for Students with Disabilities at Higher Education Institutes in Pakistan</li> </ul> <p>Reference link <a href="https://www.upr.edu.pk/disability-accommodation-policy">https://www.upr.edu.pk/disability-accommodation-policy</a></p>