Khalifa University Outreach Programs Supporting Community Entrepreneurship and SDG 1

For: Sustainability Taskforce – THE Impact Rankings 2025 Baseline

Introduction

Khalifa University runs several strategic outreach programs that support the local community through mentorship, training workshops, and innovation challenges. These initiatives aim to equip students and youth with the skills and tools to contribute to financially and socially sustainable ventures. This document highlights three such programs; YFEL, Estedad National Program, and the Smart Mobile Application Contest (SMAC); which align with SDG 1: No Poverty by empowering the next generation through education, entrepreneurship, and community engagement.

A. Young Future Energy Leaders (YFEL)

YFEL is a year-long program that empowers undergraduate and graduate students with leadership and technical training in sustainability and clean energy. It includes mentorship from global experts, participation in international events, and project based learning. YFEL fosters innovation and encourages participants to develop real world sustainability solutions; many of which have the potential to evolve into social enterprises addressing community challenges.

Students gain access to KU's research environment, mentorship, and exposure to industry leaders. This contributes to SDG 1 by building capacity among youth to drive innovation led job creation and social impact within the community.

B. National Ambassadors Program "Estedad"

In partnership with the Ministry of Education, KU delivers intensive enrichment tracks under the Estedad program. These include Innovation & Entrepreneurship and Scientific Research modules designed for high school students. Students are mentored by KU faculty and gain access to university facilities, encouraging early exposure to research and entrepreneurial thinking.

The program promotes inclusive education and equips students with practical skills that enhance future employability. By building confidence and innovation capacity among youth, Estedad supports poverty improvement through education.

C. Smart Mobile Application Contest (SMAC)

SMAC is a KU led annual competition where students design mobile applications around real-world themes like AI for sustainability. The program includes structured coaching sessions, mentorship, and a final pitch competition. Participants learn to design, develop, and present app based solutions that address societal and environmental challenges.

This initiative supports digital entrepreneurship, especially among high school and university students. SMAC builds marketable skills, encourages innovation for social good, and supports potential start-ups rooted in community impact.

Alignment with SDG 1

Between 2021 and 2024, Khalifa University's Outreach Office has delivered high-impact programs that equip youth with the knowledge, tools, and platforms to thrive in an innovation-driven economy. Together, YFEL, Estedad, and SMAC contribute to SDG 1 by creating pathways for youth to develop sustainable business ideas, access mentorship, and benefit from KU's research and innovation ecosystem. These programs empower individuals to become change agents and contribute to poverty reduction through innovation, education, and inclusive opportunity.

Key Program Metrics

Program	Total Participants (2021–2024)	Avg. Annual Engagement	Segment	Focus Area
YFEL	197	~50 students/year	Undergraduate & Post Graduate	Clean Energy & Sustainability Leadership
Estedad	372	~100 students/year	High School (Grades 10–12)	STEM, Research & Entrepreneurship
SMAC	163	~40 students/year	High School (Grades 10–12) & Undergraduate	Mobile App Develop & AI for Social Impact

Educational Outcomes

Program	Learning Format	Outcomes
YFEL	Yearlong hybrid program with research & global exposure.	6–8 themed sustainability projects/year; many aligned with UAE Net Zero goals.
Estedad	2-week academic bootcamp with faculty-led tracks.	6–8 capstone groups/track; focused on applied innovation & research.
SMAC	Competition-based learning with mentorship.	15–20 mobile app pitches/year; themes include education, AI, and Coding.