

2 ZERO HUNGER



Hunger and food insecurity affect millions worldwide, with direct consequences for health and social stability. Özyeğin University addresses this challenge through sustainable campus food practices, gastronomy-led educational programs, and research on innovative food solutions, while also engaging students and local communities in initiatives that reduce waste and promote food security.

9

Scholarly Publications
(2020-2024)

1.14

Citation Impact
(FWCI)

1

Funded
Projects

4

Student-Led
Activities

Mobilizing Campus Action Against Food Waste

The SEC 180 course, "Sustainable Campus Practices," was launched in 2023 to mobilize university members in the fight against climate change and encourage sustainable actions on campus. As part of this initiative, Research Action Teams were created, comprising students, faculty, staff members, and suppliers who collaboratively work on specific sustainability challenges identified within the University. Each team participates in a series of workshops where they examine their chosen topic, develop actionable strategies, and promote them to engage the entire university community in this transformative process.

In the 2023-24 academic year, the student group focused on reducing food waste designed an awareness program and installed designated food waste bins in various campus locations to encourage proper disposal and recycling of food waste. Informational flyers were placed strategically around campus to educate students about these new recycling stations and the significant impact using them can have on reducing landfill waste. Their efforts proved effective, with active participation rising from

20% to 55%. By embedding these initiatives into daily campus life, Özyeğin University fosters a culture of sustainability, empowering students and staff to contribute directly to the University's environmental goals.

Responsible Food Management and Waste Reduction

Özyeğin University promotes responsible food management and sustainable nutrition practices throughout its campus operations. Meals for students, faculty, and staff are prepared and served by an external catering partner that is a member of Türkiye's Responsible Restaurant Movement, underscoring a shared commitment to responsible food production and consumption. Together, they plan daily menus and portion sizes based on consumption data to reduce overproduction and food waste while maintaining balanced, nutritious meal options.

The catering partner continuously reviews kitchen and service processes to prevent waste at its source. When food waste cannot be avoided, it is collected and managed under ÖzÜ's Health, Safety, and Environment (HSE) framework and repurposed for sustainable uses such as animal feed or compost. Through these integrated efforts, Özyeğin University demonstrates its dedication to minimizing food waste, encouraging responsible consumption, and contributing to a more sustainable campus food system.

Addressing Homelessness and Food Insecurity Through Community Action

In March 2024, Toplumsal Çatı, a student community at Özyeğin University, collaborated with the charity organization Çorbada Tuzun Olsun to organize a social responsibility event near Taksim Square, Istanbul. During the event, volunteers distributed hot meals to individuals experiencing homelessness.

The initiative aimed to raise awareness about social inequality and the daily challenges faced by people living without shelter, while also promoting a culture of empathy and collective responsibility among university students. Through direct engagement, participants provided tangible support to disadvantaged groups and strengthened the spirit of social solidarity within the Özyeğin University community. This event, which has been repeated periodically throughout 2024, continues to foster long-term student involvement in social aid activities.



PACHA: Science-Based Healthy Food Innovation

Founded by Özyeğin University Faculty Member Dr. Aslı Zuluğ Guru, Healthy Food Company produces nutritious food products and received an investment with a valuation of 2.5 million dollars in its first investment round. The company produces Türkiye's first natural collagen and protein chips under the brand PACHA. With the vision of "science for healthy food," Healthy Food Company is establishing a bridge between past and future, local and global, through its products. The initiative is also supported by TÜBİTAK and the Royal Academy.

In July 2024, PACHA rebranded its product line under the name "PACHA Natural Collagen." The change reflects its expanded lineup: as of then, the company offers 8 varieties of chips, 5 types of crackers, 2 granolas, and one children's snack, all of which contain naturally sourced collagen and are free of additives or preservatives. PACHA also emphasizes clean label and "traditionally obtained" natural collagen, positioning the brand both domestically and for exports to Germany, Netherlands, and the USA, while increasing its product family in response to consumer demand.

Strengthening Food Security in Disaster Response

The project "Food Security in Times of Disasters" led by Prof. Dr. Burcu Balcik addresses the growing challenge of food insecurity caused by natural disasters and climate change. It involves collaboration with internationally recognized research institutions and organizations focused on global food security. The aim is to develop effective strategies and innovative solutions to help humanitarian organizations use their resources more efficiently in response to events like earthquakes, floods, heatwaves, and droughts. By utilizing technological advancements and data analytics, the project focuses on planning sustainable needs assessment operations, designing aid programs, and managing resources efficiently.

Two major case studies were completed within the project: the first analyzed the impact of the February 2023 earthquakes in 11 Turkish provinces on food security, while the second examined a region vulnerable to climate-related risks in Asia, Africa, Latin America, or the Caribbean to generate comparative insights.