Progress Report: SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) – Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University (COOU)

2024/2025 Session

Executive Overview

Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University (COOU) contributes to **Sustainable Development Goal 11 (SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities)** by fostering resilient urban planning, promoting sustainable waste management, safeguarding cultural heritage, and enhancing campus safety across its campuses in Igbariam, Uli, and Awka. Anchored on the university's **"3Vs Agenda" (Values, Viability, Visibility)** under the leadership of Vice-Chancellor Prof. Kate Azuka Omenugha, COOU leverages academic research, community partnerships, and green campus operations to support sustainable urban and rural development in Anambra State.

Key Areas of Progress & Implementation

1. Urban Planning, Architecture, and Environmental Education

COOU serves as a key regional center for capacity building in sustainable human settlement planning:

- **Faculty of Environmental Sciences:** Located at the Uli campus, the faculty trains professionals through dedicated departments in *Urban & Regional Planning, Architecture, Environmental Management,* and *Estate Management*.

- **Sustainable Spatial Development:** Academic curricula emphasize climate-resilient architecture, sustainable land-use planning, disaster risk reduction, and urban sprawl mitigation within rapidly urbanizing Nigerian cities.

- **Surveying & Geospatial Partnerships:** The university collaborates with professional bodies such as the Nigerian Institution of Surveyors (NIS) to advance spatial mapping, land administration, and GIS application capacities across Anambra State.

2. Municipal Waste Management & Circular Economy Innovations

To reduce the environmental impact of urban solid waste (Target 11.6):

- **Smart Waste Innovation Projects:** COOU researchers won British Council research grants to develop smart waste management frameworks, including the Collaborative Recycling Digital Infrastructure (COREDI) project. This project incorporates digital tracking and reverse logistics to reduce plastic accumulation in urban waterways and host communities.

- **Campus Greening & Sanitation Initiatives:** Student units—including the Students' Accident, Emergency, and Safety Unit and Students' Safety Marshals—regularly lead environmental sanitation drives. University departments active under the 3Vs Agenda contribute physical tools and greening support to maintain clean and sustainable campus spaces.

3. Cultural & Natural Heritage Preservation

COOU actively safeguards local cultural identity and traditional heritage (Target 11.4):

- **Centre for Igbo Language and Culture:** The university operates a dedicated centre to preserve, research, and promote indigenous language, oral traditions, and cultural practices.
- **Community Heritage Outreach:** COOU leadership and scholars engage with local host communities in cultural preservation, such as participating in historic cultural observances like the World Eri Festival in the Iduu Eri Kingdom.
- **Vernacular Architecture & Cultural Conservation Research:** Academic research within the Faculty of Environmental Sciences documents traditional Igbo architecture, indigenous building materials, and sustainable heritage conservation practices.

4. Campus Safety, Emergency Response, Inclusive Public Spaces, and Physical Facelift

- **Safety Marshals & Emergency Units:** COOU maintains safety frameworks—including the Students' Accident, Emergency, and Safety Unit—that conduct risk assessments, promote road safety near campus gates, and manage emergency responses across all three campuses. COOU Management, under the leadership of Vice Chancellor Prof. Kate Azuka Omenugha, initiated a strategic partnership with the Anambra State Fire Service to establish a student-led safety framework. The Anambra State Fire Service officially confirmed a comprehensive safety training program for Student Fire Marshals at the Igbariam Campus.
- **Green and Accessible Public Spaces:** Campus master planning prioritizes pedestrian walkways, green open lawns, and outdoor study spaces to foster safe, inclusive community interaction.
- **Structural and Physical Facelift:** The Vice Chancellor is currently giving the University a big facelift. She is currently restarting all abandoned projects and giving the University a tremendous facelift. All abandoned buildings are currently being rebuilt, and most of the abandoned building have been completed. All the access roads at Uli Campus have been tarred and is currently ready for commissioning.

Performance Summary against SDG 11 Targets

SDG 11 Target Area	COOU Operational & Academic Contribution	Impact Level
11.3 Inclusive & Sustainable Urbanization	Degree programs in Urban & Regional Planning and Architecture, alongside geospatial partnerships with NIS.	**High** (Regional Urban Planning)
11.4 Protect Cultural & Natural Heritage	Centre for Igbo Language and Culture, traditional architecture studies, and community heritage participation.	**High** (Cultural Preservation)
11.6 Reduce Urban Per Capita Environmental Impact	British Council-funded smart waste recycling research (COREDI) and campus greening programs.	**High** (Circular Economy)
11.7 Safe, Inclusive & Accessible Green Public Spaces	Safety Marshals, emergency management units, and campus landscaping under the 3Vs Agenda. Development of physical infratructure.	**Moderate to High** (Campus Infrastructure)

Strategic Recommendations for Acceleration

1. **Formulate a Comprehensive University Green Campus Master Plan:** Publish a formal, publicly accessible master plan establishing zero-waste targets, carbon footprint reduction milestones, and renewable energy integration across the Awka, Igbariam, and Uli campuses.
2. **Establish a Town-and-Gown Urban Observatory:** Partner with the Anambra State Ministry of Urban Development and Physical Planning to create a joint urban data lab that provides real-time GIS mapping, flood risk modeling, and traffic flow analysis for regional cities.
3. **Scale Community Recycling Hubs:** Expand smart waste collection points beyond university grounds into surrounding urban centers (such as Awka and Onitsha) to turn academic circular economy research into municipal waste reduction solutions.

Signature:  Date: 24/09/2026

Prof. Kate Azuka Omenugha, Fnipr

Vice Chancellor