

SDG 1 - The Thomasian Commitment to Poverty Alleviation

Founded in 1611, the University of Santo Tomas (UST) is deeply rooted in the teachings of St. Thomas Aquinas and the Dominican Order, both of which emphasize a profound commitment to serving the poor and vulnerable. This historical commitment to service manifests in the University's Thomasian Graduate Attributes (ThoGAs) that serves as a key guiding principle woven into the learning outcomes of every course and program.

The university's vibrant and holistic approach to education ensures that graduates are not only equipped to succeed in their chosen fields but are also prepared to be agents of positive change - championing the rights and dignity of the marginalized, upholding social justice, and contributing to the common good. The demonstration of such skills manifest to UST's initiative that are designed not only to raise the quality of life of the underserved but to promote social transformation. Enumerated below are the projects, programs and activities aimed at addressing SDG 1 (No Poverty) for the academic year.

1. Scholarship Programs: Alleviating Financial Barriers to Education

University of Santo Tomas demonstrates a strong commitment to eradicating poverty through its robust scholarship and financial assistance programs. Through its strategic use of both university-funded and external scholarships, UST has helped students break free from the constraints of poverty, equipping them with the knowledge and skills necessary to thrive in society and contribute to national development. These scholarships not only make education more accessible for students from low-income families but also empower them to pursue academic success and break the cycle of poverty.

- 1.1. <https://www.ust.edu.ph/administrative-offices/office-for-student-affairs/>
- 1.2. <https://manila.ust.edu.ph/osawebapp/osainfo-scholarshipoffered>
- 1.3. <https://www.ust.edu.ph/ust-sgvf-ink-scholarship-moa-to-commemorate-velayos-100-birth-year/>
- 1.4. <https://www.ust.edu.ph/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/UST-Student-Handbook-2018-final-copy.pdf>
- 1.5. <https://www.ust.edu.ph/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Scholarship-Program-Manual-as-of-AY-2020-2021.pdf>

2. Community Engagement and Outreach

UST has a history of engaging with local communities through outreach programs that focus on providing educational resources and support to impoverished areas. These programs often include workshops, seminars, and direct assistance aimed at improving the socio-economic conditions of participants.

2.1. Tulong Tomasino Relief Operations

- 2.1.1. Typhoon Kristine Response - SIMBAHAYAN mobilized relief efforts for over 300 families across Laguna, Manila, and Batangas, distributing food

and hygiene essentials to those affected by Typhoon Kristine. Student organizations and alumni joined forces, showing a united front in supporting disaster-hit communities.

- 2.1.2. Typhoon Enteng Relief - In September 2024, the third wave of SIMBAHAYAN's relief operation partnered with Colegio de San Juan de Letran. They distributed food, clothing, and hygiene kits to over 175 families in Antipolo, fostering solidarity and addressing immediate needs during the recovery period.

2.2. [Indigenous Peoples Cultural Exchange: "Sang Puso para sa mga Katutubo"](#)

Held on December 13, 2023, in partnership with the Episcopal Commission on Indigenous Peoples - CBCP, the event welcomed Indigenous Aeta, Mangyan, Dumagat, and Kalanguya groups to UST. The Office of the Vice Rector for Religious Affairs and SIMBAHAYAN facilitated this cultural exchange, allowing Indigenous groups to share their knowledge, beliefs, and practices.

2.3. Noche Buena Package Distribution: Ningning 2023

- 2.3.1. Ministry of Urban Poor Support: Partnering with the Diocese of Caloocan, UST distributed 54 Noche Buena packages to families impacted by extra-judicial killings. During the annual Agape event, UST's administrative offices and student organizations contributed to support vulnerable families within this community.
- 2.3.2. Santísimo Rosario Parish Initiative: In collaboration with various UST units, SIMBAHAYAN extended holiday aid to 300 families identified by the UST Santísimo Rosario Parish. As part of the Ningning 2023 program, this activity spread holiday cheer and supported basic needs within the Thomasian community.

3. Sustainable Livelihood Projects

- 3.1. [The Dimsum Project](#) - The Society of Thomasian Entrepreneurs designed this project to instill an entrepreneurial mindset and promote income generation within a partnered community. Community members learned to make and sell dim sum, increasing their financial independence and fostering resilience through skills development.
- 3.2. [PROJECT 3Ps: Pamayanan, Pag-asa, Pag-unlad](#) - This initiative trained community members in making DIY home products such as dishwashing liquid and fabric conditioner. Through increased community ownership and participation, the project supports economic stability and empowerment within the local economy.
- 3.3. [Liwanag at Butil ng Pag-kabAsa: Candle Making Workshop](#) - This workshop for the Ministry of the Urban Poor provided both economic opportunities and mental health benefits. By teaching candle-making skills, UST assists community members in developing a livelihood while also offering therapeutic benefits. This

initiative aligns with SDG 1, SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth).

- 3.4. [Akay sa Pag-unlad](#) - Through fundraising and pop-up stores, this initiative provides starting capital for partner communities to launch micro-businesses, supporting financial independence and economic growth.

4. Partnerships for Development

UST collaborates with various organizations and government agencies to enhance its outreach efforts and maximize the impact of its poverty alleviation initiatives. These partnerships are crucial in mobilizing resources and expertise necessary for effective program implementation.

4.1. [Pistang Tomas: Promoting Partner Community Enterprises](#)

- 4.1.1. Partner communities participated in Pistang Tomas, showcasing their products to the UST community. This event not only increased sales for community businesses but also facilitated knowledge-sharing around entrepreneurship, empowering students and community members with hands-on learning in business development.

4.2. [Innovation for Sustainable Development Through Hack-a-Thom](#)

In an effort to harness technology and innovation to address real-world issues, including those related to poverty, UST's TOMASInno Center organized its first university-wide hackathon, "Hack-a-Thom," on November 24, 2023. The hackathon encouraged students to collaborate on projects aimed at achieving Sustainable Development Goals, focusing on solutions that support health, environmental sustainability, and educational access. With the participation of 14 teams and over 80 students, the event emphasized cross-disciplinary teamwork and innovation.

- 4.2.1. Team T6's "KKB" (Kumain Ka Na Ba?): This app addresses nutritional deficiencies among college students by helping users locate food shops based on their preferences. It also features AI-driven nutrient tracking and promotes a community focused on healthy eating habits¹.
- 4.2.2. Team Incinque's "ABARKADA": This interactive learning platform aims to provide inclusive education for children with hearing impairments, thus contributing to educational equity and opportunities for underprivileged youth.

4.3. [The Guiuan Seastainability Program \(GSP\)](#)

a collaboration between the UST Graduate School CCCPET and the Local Government of Guiuan, Eastern Samar empowers coastal communities to improve their livelihoods through sustainable fisheries and tourism. Through the Dumyang Mapping Project, 75 local mappers, including fish catch enumerators and community stakeholders, are trained to conserve and utilize coastal resources

effectively, fostering income diversification and resilience against economic vulnerabilities. By documenting coastal traditions, resources, and technologies, the initiative equips communities with tools to enhance productivity while preserving marine ecosystems, ensuring long-term economic opportunities that break the cycle of poverty.

5. Research Initiatives

The university conducts research that directly addresses poverty-related issues. This includes studies on social protection systems, economic empowerment programs, and policies aimed at reducing poverty among vulnerable populations.

5.1. [Sustainable Tourism and Strategic Development](#)

UST's Research Center for Social Sciences and Education (RCSSEd) and Sentro Turismo, the College of Tourism and Hospitality Management (CTHM), have collaborated with the local government of Echague, Isabela, to craft a 10-year Sustainable Tourism and Strategic Development Plan for Barangay San Miguel. The project, officially turned over to the Echague Local Government on August 19, 2024, was initiated by the office of Hon. Faustino "Inno" A. Dy V and supported by the Department of Science and Technology (DOST). The plan focuses on enhancing community-based tourism in Barangay San Miguel, assessing tourism development potential to create employment opportunities and income-generating activities within the community.

6. Educational Programs

UST integrates discussions about poverty alleviation into its curriculum across various disciplines. By educating students about the complexities of poverty and encouraging them to develop solutions, the university aims to foster a new generation of socially responsible leaders.