

# Third Mission Impact Report

**WU**  
WIRTSCHAFTS  
UNIVERSITÄT  
WIEN VIENNA  
UNIVERSITY OF  
ECONOMICS  
AND BUSINESS



Third mission  
impact

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# Table of Contents

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<b>FOREWORD</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>THIRD MISSION – THE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY OF UNIVERSITIES</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>THE THIRD MISSION AT WU</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>THIRD MISSION AND IMPACT</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>ABOUT THIS REPORT</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>WU THIRD MISSION ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>12</b>



# Foreword

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Dear reader,

It is becoming increasingly important for universities to reflect on their own impact on the economy and society and also to trace this impact.

With the Research “Impact Map Research”, published in 2020, WU has taken a first step towards sharing this reflection with the general public. In the fall of 2021, we have followed up with the “Teaching and Learning Impact Map.” And the report you are holding in your hand – or probably have downloaded to your computer, tablet, or smartphone – is the third in this series of impact reports: This is our Third Mission Impact Report 2022.

There are many different activities that are associated with the concept of third mission: knowledge transfer, stakeholder relations, interaction with society, community engagement, involvement in national and international networks and alliances, good governance, sustainable operations, to name just a few.

In this report, WU has collected a variety of different third mission activities carried out over the last couple of years, that have had an impact on our students, faculty and staff, stakeholders and partners, the general public and of course most directly, all the people involved in the individual projects.

And I hope that in sharing our projects and third mission activities with you, the reader, our examples will inspire you to get involved as well.

**Edeltraud Hanappi-Egger**

Rector

# Third Mission – The Social Responsibility of Universities

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The grand challenges of the Anthropocene and the current shift towards a “knowledge society” have given rise to a long-lasting and ongoing debate about the social responsibility of universities. Through this debate, the third mission (TM) of higher education institutions (HEIs) is increasing in importance. However, it is not that easy to find a common definition of the third mission. There are already various synonyms and related concepts such as community engagement, social responsibility, or technology transfer which are all linked to the very same concept.

In a narrow sense, TM is sometimes understood as activities connected to teaching and research in interaction with society. From this perspective, the focus rests mainly on the universities’ impact on regional economic development. Over the years, with the increasing needs for universities to engage in socio-ecological transformations, this narrow interpretation has changed. The new understanding of TM – an understanding that is shared in this report – refers to an additional function of universities. This new function emphasizes that the social responsibility of universities doesn’t stop at educating or qualifying students (first mission) or producing new knowledge and technologies (second mission). Rather, it is a fundamental task of HEIs to engage with societal needs as partners in non-academic networks, as co-producers of context-related solutions, or as a players in community engagement. In other words, the TM is a multidisciplinary, complex, and evolving phenomenon linked to the social responsibility of universities. This new focus on TM activities represents also a radical shift from the traditional “ivory tower” stance of universities, where teaching and research were always seen as ends in themselves.

Although TM is gaining increasing importance among universities as well as policy makers, it has only been translated into concrete activities since the end of the

1980s, triggering considerable debate. Even today, TM often comes into conflict with traditional academic ideas, values, and cultures, and has sometimes even led to individual “identity crises” among some academics. However, this situation is changing, and the significance of TM has become increasingly visible. This new dynamic or mainstreaming of TM has two main reasons: The first reason is connected with a new self-conception and understanding of science that is strongly influenced by terms such as “post normal science,” “open university,” or “citizen science.” All these different approaches to readjusting the relationship between science and society have one fundamental thing in common: They encourage interaction on equal footing between the scientist and the layperson or, if necessary, the opening up of transdisciplinary learning and innovation spaces for answering socially relevant questions together. In this context, cooperation with external, non-university stakeholders is increasingly seen as mutually beneficial for all partners involved and also enhances the quality of teaching and applied research.

The second reason relates to the grand challenges of the Anthropocene mentioned at the beginning of this chapter and the resulting significance of sustainability research and sustainability-oriented teaching. Especially during the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005–2014), the leading role of universities with regard to sustainable societal transformations was highlighted in various policy documents and scientific publications. In this process, the following additional core goals of a university were mentioned many times, thus creating a conceptual as well as strategic bridge to TM: a) being a socially responsible organization, b) acting as beacons for innovation in society, c) supporting “lifelong” and “lifewide” learning, d) engaging with the public and local communities, and e) responding to social needs and global issues.

# The Third Mission at WU

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WU understands TM as a very comprehensive role in the social environment. It is a declared goal of WU to be a role model as a Responsible University in the field of TM, not only nationally but also internationally. As Austria's only business and economics university, we have a special role to play in this context. On the one hand, WU graduates hold key positions in business and society and can thus help shape the future in a responsible manner. For this reason, special attention is paid to maintaining alumni contacts. On the other hand, WU makes diverse contributions to the public discourse on economics – especially through social engagement, knowledge exchange, and practical cooperation.

The comprehensive understanding of TM, however, goes far beyond a purely economic focus and reflects a wide range of diverse activities, all of which aim to have a positive impact on our society in addition to teaching and research. The areas of this social commitment are manifold. For example, WU is a partner in numerous innovation networks. This cooperation with partners from business, society and politics enables the transfer of knowledge in both directions: Not only does business knowledge generated at WU flow into the design of social systems, but WU also receives important feedback on the practical relevance of its research and teaching topics. Its researchers are also represented in various institutions and committees, where they contribute scientifically sound economic knowledge.

Furthermore, as a co-producer of context-related solutions, WU plays an active role in location development. Cooperation, for example within the framework of the RCE Vienna, the WU Entrepreneurship Center, or the various smart city projects, leads to regionally important innovations and thus strengthens the location. However, answering socially relevant questions goes beyond the

region and the location. In doing so, WU increasingly relies on an intensive exchange with non-academic organizations, in the private and public sectors, in the for-profit and non-profit sectors.

As an active participant in community services, WU also has an important role model function: programs such as "Volunteering@WU," in which students mentor children from socially disadvantaged families, or school cooperations to better address talented students are just as important contributions as, for example, WU's commitment to supporting refugees. With the new comprehensive educational program "WU4Juniors," WU supports young people aged 16 to 19 with videos and online modules to help them better understand economic contexts, strengthen their economic skills, and awaken their interest in economic studies.

Furthermore, our open campus is a place of encounter and tries to build a bridge between science and society through the open access to our library or through public events such as the "WU matters. WU talks." series of discussions and lectures. In addition, our campus gives visible impulses to address current social challenges. Barrier-free accessibility, beehives on the roofs, the transparent and publicly accessible WU Energy Screen, or the biodiversity-promoting greening concept are all activities aimed to increase social mainstreaming through our commitment.

The TM activities documented in this brochure are concrete examples of our commitment in all the areas listed above. Their diversity reflects, on the one hand, the inherent complexity of TM itself and, on the other hand, WU's comprehensive approach to its own social responsibility.

# Third Mission and Impact

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CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are on the rise, the IPCC is delivering its sharpest warning of anthropogenic climate change to date, and various conflicts all around the world are causing far-reaching migratory flows. 2021 has been an eventful year demonstrating the complexity and interconnectedness of the social, ecological, and economic challenges that humanity is facing. Solving them requires all actors within academia and beyond to accept their social responsibility and act urgently and with purpose.

Higher education institutions (HEIs) shape the mindsets and values of future decision makers and play an important role in contributing to concrete solutions to humanity's grand challenges. They have a unique social responsibility, which is reflected in the concept of TM. With the increasing importance of this concept, the demand for defining the actual and verifiable impact of individual TM activities is growing. It is precisely the currently existing range of definitions and the complexity of the different TM dimensions that can reduce these concepts to mere lip service or a new kind of social "greenwashing," as is too often seen in the economy at large. Within this context, it is obvious that the desired mainstreaming of TM is only possible if it goes hand in hand with its operationalization in terms of measurable impact. But what does this commonly used term – "impact" – mean anyway?

First of all, many different definitions of impact exist. Nevertheless, regarding the impact of organizations or institutions, some common ground can be found. First, it is usually understood as a neutral concept concerned with both positive and negative effects. It describes effects that are directly or indirectly caused by the activity of any entity and that affect its surrounding environment (environment in its wider meaning, including social and

economic dimensions). Activities can be interventions such as policies, projects, products, services, or applied technologies. Another important common characteristic is that the effect must occur outside the organization and affect its social-ecological environment to count as "impact." Moreover, the concept is not only concerned with intended effects but, more importantly, also with those that are unintended. Usually there is also a time dimension involved, where impact is understood as an effect that is an outcome of the direct output of an organization. Today, impact is most-commonly assessed with regards to sustainability considerations and issues related to socio-ecological transformations. In the context of this report, we understand the impact of TM activities as our university's "positive contributions" to society, which go beyond pure teaching or pure research. Subsequently, adequate TM impact assessment procedures still need to be designed in a way that captures the contributions that HEIs generate to support multifaceted structural changes. Additionally, they must also reflect the complexity of the wide array of TM dimensions and challenges.

Measuring societal impact is a relatively new endeavor that is currently gaining in importance, especially among companies. This new significance of impact and its assessment in business goes hand in hand with an increasing awareness of corporate social responsibility, which has gained additional momentum through the development of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations. To measure, compare, and communicate the impact of business on socio-ecological systems, various corporate impact assessment tools have been developed.



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HEIs, on the other hand, have so far hardly engaged in measuring the impacts of their TM performance. Although many researchers and departments have begun to understand and accept the importance of TM, they fail to pursue and assess the impact in a comprehensive and systematic manner. However, in order for the mainstreaming process of TM to be successful, there is an urgent need for approaches and methods with which the impact of TM can be evaluated in a transparent and comprehensible way.

A few HEIs or HEI networks have already addressed this need and have developed assessment tools. Some examples are the Business School Impact System (BSIS), the Model for Integrative Development (GMID) of the University of Graz, or the Auditing Instrument for Sustainability in Higher Education (AISHE). Many of these existing instruments and approaches, however, have been criticized for putting too much emphasis on the output dimension of campus operations and not on their wider and longer-lasting influence on society. Even if, apart from a few exceptions, integrative and structured measurement of TM's impact is still in its

infancy, its necessity is beyond question. Looking into the future, a one-size-fits-all approach to the evaluation of TM performance and its impact for all universities does not seem realistic. Indeed, the wide range of TM activities should be assessed according to the characteristics and the context of each university and to the particular socio-economic environment in which the HEI operates. Nevertheless, a common framework or heuristic that generates indicator-based, meaningful assessment approaches should be developed. This approach will depend on the application of mixed methods combining the advantages of both quantitative and qualitative methods.

Moreover, it should be noted that the quality of TM impact assessment can be improved significantly by including the insights of all stakeholders through participatory mechanisms. Understanding TM impact assessment as a common research project instead of an administrative task is an important step towards meaningful impact assessment. Cooperatively developing effective assessment instruments and sharing the knowledge constitutes a TM activity in its own right.

# About this Report

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We see our Third Mission Impact Report as a first step towards a stronger, structured anchoring of the TM at WU – and at the same time as an open institutional learning process. To date, the concept of TM has not been sufficiently defined in science and politics, nor have the few university pioneers who have committed themselves to implementing TM entirely managed to operationalize this new mission well enough and integrate it seamlessly into everyday university life. If we go one step further and look at the actual measurement of the impact of TM, we enter almost completely new scientific and institutional territory. The aim of our report is therefore twofold: On the one hand, we want to turn the spotlight on a variety of selected pioneering TM activities and thus not only highlight their relevance for WU but also offer opportunities for networking and “imitation.” And secondly, we want to give a brief first outlook on possible measurement criteria for assessing the impact of our third mission and thus also support a stronger focus on measurable and verifiable impact of our TM activities in the future.

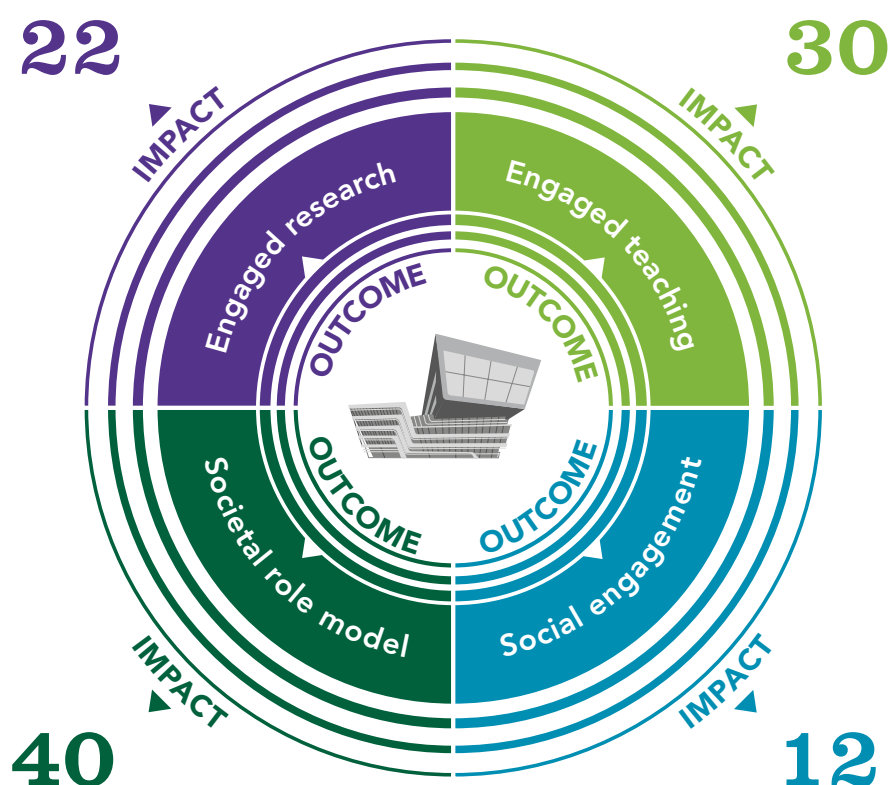
This report features a selection of 19 examples of WU’s TM activities. The diversity of our documented activities not only reflects the multidisciplinary, complexity, and novelty of this additional university function. At the same time, it also illustrates the broad spectrum of positive impacts that our activities have on society, far beyond pure teaching and research. The examples given in the

report in no way claim to be a complete and exhaustive list of all TM activities at WU. Rather, they are intended as a first sample and are initial points of orientation in the current process of WU’s increased commitment to social responsibility and the mainstreaming of TM.

We structured the variety of our selected pioneering TM activities along the distinct but intertwined dimensions “Social Engagement,” “Engaged Teaching,” “Engaged Research,” and “Eco-Social Role Model.” To clarify the impact of the individual activities, we have also differentiated between output, outcome, and intended impact. Taken together, output, outcome, and impact describe the impact pathways of the individual activities. In order to provide an additional outlook on possible starting points for assessing the impact of the individual activities, the category “potential impact assessment” was integrated in each impact pathway. The individual reference values mentioned in the impact pathways are to be understood as examples and not as a complete list.

The Third Mission Impact Report was prepared by James Gunn, Ulrich Weber, Anna Krulis, Victoria Yavorskaya, and Christian Rammel from the Regional Center of Expertise on Education for Sustainable Development Vienna (RCE Vienna). RCE Vienna is part of the Competence Center for Sustainability Transformation and Responsibility (STaR).

# WU Third Mission Activities



## SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT

Volunteering@WU	12
WU4You	14
MORE Program and German classes for refugees	16
SDG Day	18
WU matters. WU talks.	20

## ENGAGED RESEARCH

Alliance of Sustainable Universities in Austria	22
COPERNICUS Alliance	24
Scholars at Risk	26
Scientists4Future	28

## ENGAGED TEACHING

WU4Juniors	30
Social Impact Award	32
Sustainability Challenge	34
Transfer Hubs	36
Changemaker	38

## SOCIETAL ROLE MODEL

Ecological Urban Campus	40
WU Commemorative Project	42
Urban Mobility	44
BeAble Program, Student Counselling and the Barrier-Free Campus	46
WU Public Events Program	48

# Volunteering@WU

“This program serves as a bridge between two social strata of society – students from middle- or upper-class families and less fortunate children from working class families. The paths of these two groups most probably would have never crossed if Volunteering@WU hadn’t brought them together.”

*Paul Rameder, Senior Researcher*

“Our meetings are not restricted to just learning, we have now become real friends, who also have a lot to talk about.”

*Arianna, Learning Buddy*

## KEY FACTS

- › Each term approx. **130 students** volunteer as **study, music or sport buddies** and offer support to about 260 children and teens.
- › Since 2010 **more than 1,300 students** have participated in the program and carried out **130,000 hours of voluntary work**.
- › Volunteering@WU received the Innovative Teaching Award by WU (2011) and the “Wirtschaft hilft” award presented by the Fundraising Verband Austria (2019).
- › Volunteering@WU was one of the finalists for the Erste Foundation Award for Social Integration (2013) and has been nominated twice for the Ars Docendi awards (2015 and 2020).
- › The Learning Buddy program was also adopted by the University of Education in Lower Austria (PH NÖ) in 2013 and to the International Research Center for Social and Ethical Issues (ifz) at the University of Salzburg in 2014. Following the example of WU, students in other Austrian provinces now also volunteer as buddies for socially disadvantaged young people.

## BACKGROUND

Socioeconomic status plays a major role in determining people’s access to education and learning opportunities. Growing up in poverty greatly reduces young people’s chances of attaining higher education later in life. Countering this heritability of education will have far-reaching impacts beyond simply decreasing income inequality. Therefore, it lies within universities’ third mission to reconsider their stakeholders and equally provide high-quality education to people across all social strata.

WU Vienna has understood and accepted its social responsibility by establishing the Volunteering@WU program to support socially disadvantaged young people on their educational path and, at the same time, promote commitment and social responsibility among students. The central objective of the program is to provide support to and promote the social participation of socially disadvantaged young people, while training self-determined and reflective students who are ready to take on social responsibility.

## DESCRIPTION

Within the framework of Volunteering@WU, the service learning initiative “Lernen macht Schule” was established in 2010 in cooperation with Caritas Vienna, REWE International AG, and BILLA AG. In this program, WU students are encouraged to volunteer as learning buddies, music buddies, or sport buddies to support kids from centers run by various nonprofit institutions while earning course credits and gaining a variety of valuable soft skills. By interacting with WU students, the participating children receive support and learn from positive role models in order to develop their individual interests and goals. In this way, the project increases the

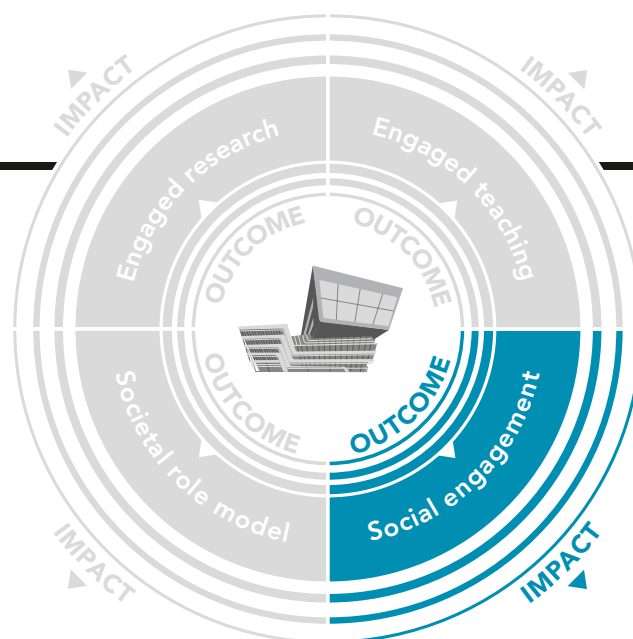




children's self-confidence as well as their pleasure in learning and strengthens various skills such as prosocial behavior, language skills and creativity. At the same time, WU students broaden their horizons by getting to know people from different cultures and social backgrounds and are challenged to contribute and develop their own skills and competences.

### Learning Buddies

As learning buddies, WU students support children and teenagers ranging from 6 to 18 years of age from various social facilities run by Caritas Vienna and the Austrian Red Cross (Lernhaus). For a period of one semester, and often even longer, the students meet with the children for around two to three hours a week. In addition to these weekly visits, learning buddies also have the opportunity to participate in field trips, tours, or workshops together with the kids. These activities are aimed at strengthening the relationships between the tandems and promoting the development of skills on both sides. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the program was adapted and extended into the digital space in 2020 in cooperation with the Austria-wide initiative #weiterlernen.



### Music Buddies

As music buddies, the students participate in a choir with children aged between 7 and 12 under the artistic direction of the Caritas cultural initiative "Brunnenpassage" and rehearse for several performances each semester. As part of the team, they take responsibility for the group and thus become important contact persons for the children. The main focus here lies on the personal and educational development of the children, which is encouraged by engaging in music and singing in an entertaining and playful way. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the rehearsals are now being continued online.

### Sport Buddies

Every summer, students can volunteer as sport buddies at a holiday camp for children, which takes place in the Austrian mountains. During this camp, students plan and offer various social and physical activities, like swimming, ball games, dancing, or hiking. Students act as supervisors and role models for a healthy lifestyle and are responsible for the children at all times. Both sides gain intensive learning experiences throughout this one-week adventure.

## IMPACT PATHWAY

### OUTPUT

- › WU students participating in volunteering activities

### OUTCOME

- › WU students increase their interpersonal and social skills

### IMPACT

- › Raising the level of education in low-income groups

### POTENTIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- › Long-run assessment of educational attainment and income inequality across the whole population

# WU4You

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**“Promoting equal educational opportunities to support economically underprivileged students benefits the entire society in the long term. The WU4YOU scholarship program supports high-potential students during their bachelor’s studies by providing a monthly scholarship as well as by fostering their academic and social network through mentoring and coaching programs to support their successful studies at WU.”**

*Verena Kozmann, WU4YOU program coordinator*

## KEY FACTS

- › Since the program’s launch in 2016, 80 scholarships have been awarded to high-potential students from all over Austria.
- › Currently WU4YOU is working with 52 partner schools throughout Austria to identify high-potential applicants.
- › In 2021, WU4YOU received 32 applications and awarded 15 scholarships.
- › Active scholarship holders receive €500 per month. A max. of €21,000 is awarded for a maximum duration of 7 semesters.
- › In 2021, 32 high-school students applied for the program and 15 scholarships were awarded.
- › So far, 11 scholarship recipients have completed their bachelor’s degree.

## BACKGROUND

Social inequality is a considerable barrier to ensuring a cohesive, diverse, vibrant, and prosperous society. Sustainability is not just about environmental concerns – social dimensions such as poverty are too often ignored and left unaddressed. The socio-ecological transformation required for the future health of our society and planet must prioritize the needs of the most vulnerable populations in our communities.

Access to a quality education can be instrumental in providing individuals with the opportunity to achieve lifelong success and gain social mobility. Unfortunately, the lack of financial resources too often plays a major role as a factor that determines an individual’s educational career, which can severely limit their future potential and overall well-being. When you add together tuition fees, housing and living expenses, plus expenses for learning materials, studying at a university such as WU can be quite expensive for low-income groups.

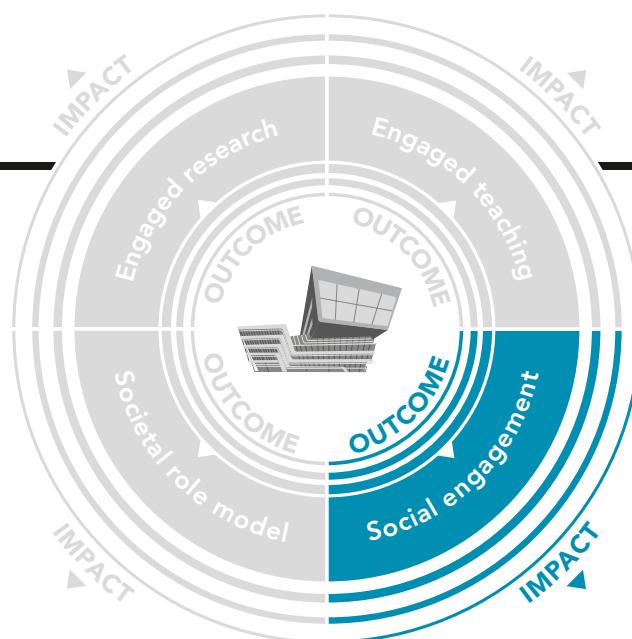
Recognizing this problem, WU has been supporting social mobility through the WU4YOU scholarship program since 2016. The program supports talented young students from low-income families and enables them to further advance in education and their life after university. The scholarship supports students for the entire duration of their bachelor’s degree program with a monthly grant and other helpful support services.

The WU4YOU scholarship program is made possible by AK Wien, Österreichische Nationalbank, Österreichische Post Aktiengesellschaft, Henkel CEE GmbH and Mayr Melnhof Karton AG.

## DESCRIPTION

WU4YOU is designed and intended to promote talented individuals and enable them to advance their educational





pursuits, despite financial burdens. WU4You is a scholarship program for low-income, high-potential bachelor's students who have already been admitted to WU. WU4You aims to contribute to a fair, just, and equal society for all. As a higher education institution, WU seeks to ensure that financial barriers do not hinder individuals' access to the knowledge that can lead them to a bright future. In short, a lack of resources should never be a barrier to those seeking knowledge.

Recipients receive € 500 per month for the duration of their bachelor's program, get support from other, more advanced students as part of a mentoring program, and individual coaching by a university faculty member.

The scholarship is expressly targeted at students from partner schools who can demonstrate that they meet the following criteria:

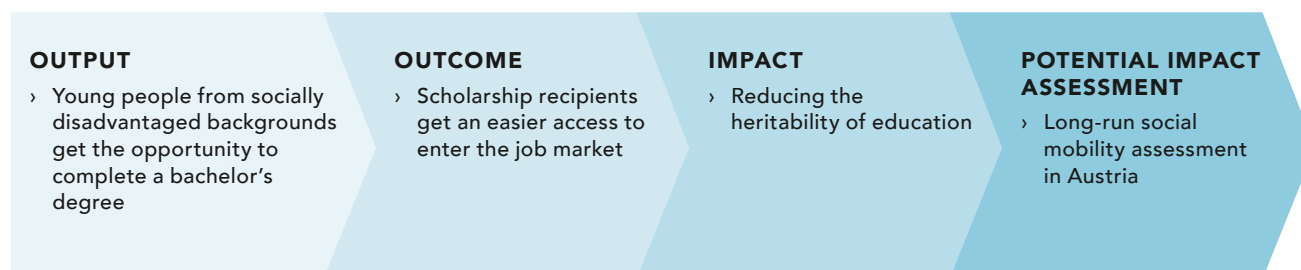
- › They show commitment and high performance potential but cannot afford to study at WU without a scholarship.
- › They are prepared to strive for continuously high levels of academic performance.

The monthly scholarship enables and encourages students to pursue full-time studies even though their

financial situation would normally make it necessary for them to seek part-time employment, which can make all the difference. This motivates the scholarship recipients to study diligently and complete their degree program quickly. Additionally, the vital financial support they receive gives them the opportunity to consider Erasmus exchange semesters in different countries. This can prove to be instrumental in broadening their horizons, expanding their worldviews, and generating innovative mindsets.

Through the WU4You scholarship, students are automatically enrolled and encouraged to participate in the WU4You mentoring program. This allows them to get to know other students outside of their degree program and helps provide them with positive role models who can support them throughout their educational journey. Individual coaching sessions by university faculty allow the students to gain invaluable 'face time' with experienced academic professionals who are familiar with and aware of the challenges that students encounter in their studies. Taken together, the mentoring program and the coaching sessions are specifically intended to help ensure that students build the skills and receive the support they need to succeed in their studies at WU and beyond.

## IMPACT PATHWAY



# MORE Program and German courses for refugees

“It was – and remains – very important to me to support people who come to Austria, looking for a new life, and are trying to learn the language and start studying. The course instructors are extremely professional and dedicated, the participants are correspondingly committed and interested. I really enjoy taking part in the course. The topics are exciting and the conversations are a real exchange – I always learn something myself.”

Miya-Komori Glatz, Senior Lecturer

“The most important thing about the online course is that it gives us the opportunity to get training during the pandemic.”

“In the last course, I liked its continuity without stopping, which meant that the language was not forgotten and the practice increased.”

Arianna, Learning Buddy

## KEY FACTS

- › Since the beginning of the program, 267 students have been admitted to the MORE program. 240 of them attended a “Lernen macht Schule” German course.
- › A total of 2,538 hours of German courses were made possible within the framework of 27 courses.
- › Five different language levels have been offered since 2015. From A1 to C1, the levels have been adjusted to the demand.
- › In 6 years, a total of 27 German courses were offered at WU.
- › The participants came from 15 different countries. Syria, Afghanistan, Iran, and Iraq were represented most frequently.

## BACKGROUND

For many refugees, access to education is not only a basic prerequisite for leading a self-determined life in their new country, it is also a decisive factor for integration. However, gaining this access is difficult, and especially the start of a university degree is often unattainable. The MORE program was launched in 2015 by the Universities Austria (uniko) group at 21 universities in Austria – including WU. This program has given refugees the opportunity to register as non-degree-program students at one of the participating universities, to attend courses, and to receive support for starting a regular degree program. The aim of the MORE program as well as of the “Lernen macht Schule” initiative is to support

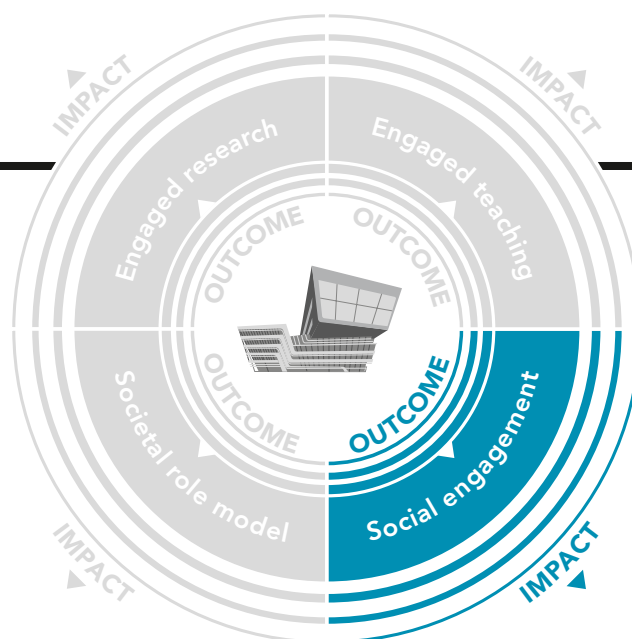
refugees on their educational path and in their integration in Austria.

## DESCRIPTION

Since 2015, WU has been organizing German lessons for refugees interested in studying as part of “Lernen macht Schule,” a joint initiative with Caritas Vienna and REWE International AG. These lessons were linked to the MORE program, which led to a close collaboration. The levels of the German courses have been constantly adapted since 2015. In 2015, at the beginning of the so-called “refugee wave,” it was important to teach the refugees basic language skills in A1 and A2 courses so that they were able to find their way around life in Austria as quickly as possible.

Over time, the demand for more advanced courses has increased, as most of the participants had already been living in Austria for a number of years and fewer people have been coming to the country every year. From 2017, only B1 and B2 courses were offered, and these courses were very well attended. After that, however, the demand for C1 courses also increased, as this level was made a prerequisite for studying at an Austrian university in 2018 and is a great asset for integration into the job market. For this reason, courses at levels B2 and C1 have also been offered at WU since the 2019/20 winter semester. The COVID-19 pandemic was a major challenge for the participants of the “Lernen macht Schule” German courses. After a very short break in March 2020, the courses were continued via digital channels. This was not only very important for the participants because it allowed them to continue their language acquisition but also supported them by providing an anchor point during





a very challenging time. During most of the 2020/21 winter semester and 2021 summer semester, the courses were taught online. In addition to the German classes, the MORE program also offers the following ways to support the participants' educational development and cultural integration:

#### **Student counseling**

The MORE program supports the participants with comprehensive and individual advisory services to help them plan their entry into a regular WU degree.

#### **Campus tour**

The MORE program also included a campus tour at the beginning of the semester, which is especially important for the new participants. Together with the coordinator of the program, the participants have the opportunity to explore WU and find out more about how to use WU services such as borrowing books, internet access, and language learning opportunities.

#### **Attending WU courses**

As non-degree-program students, the MORE participants also had the opportunity to attend courses at WU and

take the associated exams. The credit earned for these exams could then be transferred towards their regular studies at WU.

#### **MORE Café**

From 2019 onwards, several MORE Café sessions took place during the semester. In these sessions, the MORE students received information on topics such as "studying at WU" or "studying or teaching" and had the opportunity to find out more about external organizations that presented their offers on site.

#### **Field trips**

In addition to a first orientation at WU, there were regular field trips that were organized either by the coordinators themselves or in cooperation with WU partners.

- › Theater visit: "The Power of Things. Scenes about migration"
- › Brunnenpassage winter festival
- › Online lecture "Higher Powers" by the Kunsthistorisches Museum in the 2021 summer semester
- › Workshop "Do you speak art? Do you hear art?" by the Kunstforum Wien

### **IMPACT PATHWAY**

#### **OUTPUT**

- › Refugees get the opportunity of attaining B2-level German skills

#### **OUTCOME**

- › Refugees improve their set of skills relevant for the enrollment in a WU degree program

#### **IMPACT**

- › Improved integration of refugees in Austria

#### **POTENTIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- › Long-run assessment of attitudes towards immigration in Austria

# SDG Day

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“Target 4.7 of the SDGs is for each and every learner to achieve sustainability (in a very holistic sense). This target has to permeate deeply into all fields of study and inquiry, not only making them part of our way of thinking, but more importantly, part of being a sustainable and responsible human.“

*SDG Day participant*

## KEY FACTS

- › In 2019, the WU Vienna Sustainable Transformation Day (SDG Day) was held for the 6<sup>th</sup> time.
- › The event attracted more than 1000 visitors for the 6<sup>th</sup> consecutive year.
- › Several student organizations organized 6 SDG-related workshops, which were open to the general public.
- › More than 150 people, mostly students, participated in the workshops.

## BACKGROUND

As one of Europe’s largest universities of business and economics, WU Vienna is aware of its key role in shaping the mindsets and values of current and future decision-makers. In view of the Grand Challenges, it is important for WU students to concern themselves with the SDGs on the one hand, and to actively participate in their implementation on the other. In order to increase awareness for SDG-related issues, and to provide an inclusive networking platform for all of WU’s stakeholders, the university hosts the Sustainable Transformation Day as an annual event open for the general public.

## DESCRIPTION

The event was first held by the Competence Center for Sustainability in 2014 under the title “WU Nachhaltigkeitstag.” Since then, it has been organized on an

“The SDGs and education necessarily belong together. Just like knowledge and action.”

*Student and SDG Day co-organizer*

annual basis with changing topics related to the broad concept of sustainable development. The organization of the event has always been a bottom-up approach with the active involvement of various student organizations and external partners. In 2019, the event was renamed to SDG Day and hosted by the new Competence Center for Sustainability Transformation and Responsibility (STaR). It was a collaborative initiative, organized by STaR, the WU Environmental Management office, and representatives of several student organizations: ÖH WU, oikos Vienna, össfo, and forum n. Together they organized specialized workshops, open discussion areas, key notes, and a panel discussion in the evening. The whole program was focused on the 4<sup>th</sup> goal of United Nation’s 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: Quality Education. Together, the organization team hosted the following 6 specialized workshops throughout the whole day in German and English:

### Workshop 1:

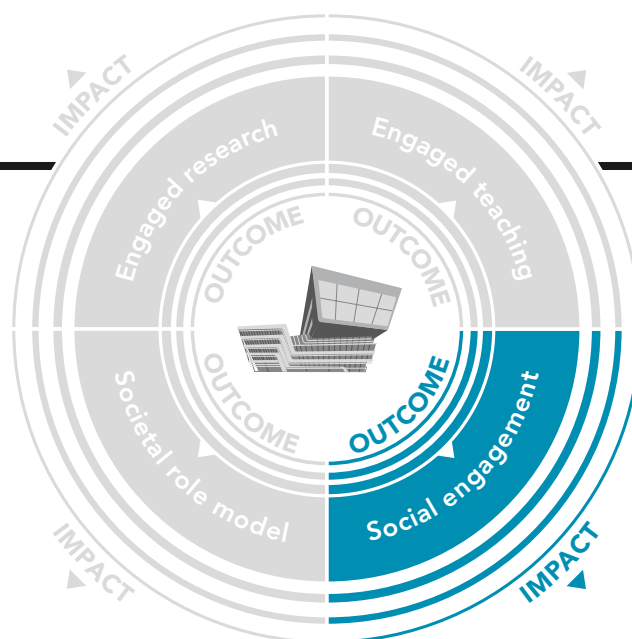
#### **Rethink Economic Thinking.**

In this workshop, participants took part in a simulation where they discussed major flaws of the current economic system but also learned about possible solutions and alternatives.

### Workshop 2:

#### **Sustainable Career**

The second workshop was focused on jobs and employment options concerned with sustainability. Participants, who were mainly students, learned more about what a sustainable career could look like, where



they could find adequate job offers, how they should best apply for them, and what else they should consider.

### **Workshop 3: Green Buddies & Green Campus Management**

The Green Buddies are WU students and employees who are interested in and committed to environmental and sustainability issues on campus. In the workshop, the participants had the chance to learn more about the various activities of the Green Buddies and about Green Campus Management.

### **Workshop 4: Learning Across Borders – Universities, Fit for Future?**

In this workshop, participants had the chance to talk with experts and great minds from the field of education about what it takes to think globally, act responsibly, and how to convey this knowledge to educate future global citizens.

### **Workshop 5: Study Sustainably with Learning Ergonomics**

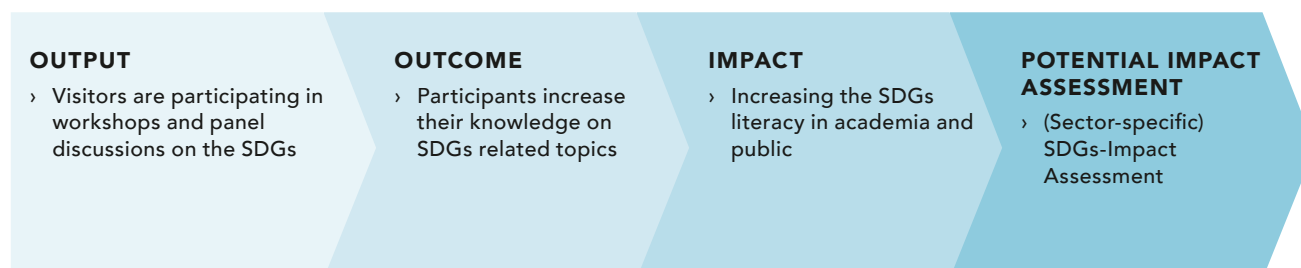
In this interactive workshop, participants had the chance to explore these and other questions around sustainable learning. The workshop introduced WU's Learning Ergonomics initiative and explained the underlying scientific framework the program is based on.

### **Workshop 6: Consumption to Active Citizenship – a Challenge for Individuals and Society.**

In this workshop, participants had the chance to reflect on their daily consumer choices as individuals and, more importantly, on ways of transforming consumption into active citizenship. Using the RCE Vienna guiding concept of Transformative Learning, the workshop participants discussed the actual impact of consumer choices, covering topics like sustainable start-ups, labels, and greenwashing.

Due to Covid 19, subsequent SDG Days after the 2019 event have had to be cancelled.

## **IMPACT PATHWAY**



# WU matters. WU talks.

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**“With the ‘WU matters. WU talks.’ series, WU encourages public discourse by highlighting key topics of our time that are particularly relevant from an academic perspective.”**

*Edeltraud Hanappi-Egger, Rector*

## KEY FACTS

- › Close to 100 “WU matters. WU talks.” events have been held and uploaded to the WU Vienna YouTube channel since 2016.
- › Since June 2020, all the events have been streamed live on YouTube. Some of them are held in English.
- › Overall, over 20,000 people have participated in the events.
- › About 400 experts have been invited to contribute to the project.

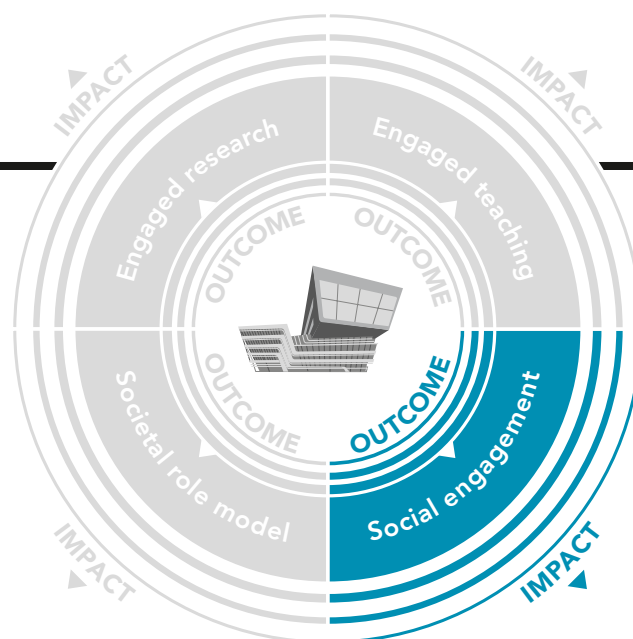
## BACKGROUND

Knowledge and access to it are primary human rights and it is paramount to ensure that no one is restricted access to knowledge. Its creation and application have always been critical to the development of societies and the economic welfare of people. When it comes to any social issue that humanity faces nowadays, knowledge and education are always among the key elements to their solutions, and information is vastly seen as another form of currency. Therefore, it is highly important for universities, as primary sources of scientific knowledge and up-to-date information, to build a bridge to the general public and share knowledge with it. Committed to addressing today’s crucial economic and social issues, WU initiated “WU matters. WU talks.”, turning its campus into an open space for encounter and exchange.

## DESCRIPTION

With this series of events, WU has created a new platform for exchange and discourse between researchers and the interested public. As part of its third mission activities, WU contributes to solving today’s and tomorrow’s economic, social, legal, and ecological challenges using future-oriented expertise. The project aims at facilitating sustainable thinking and responsibility in the business community. In this series of public lectures, panel discussions, and talks, socially and economically relevant topics are discussed and brought to the public’s attention. Researchers and experts present their findings and share their experiences. Additionally, practical insights from business and institutional practice as well as current issues are discussed with the audience. Since the launch of the series in 2016, 98 events with more than 20,000 visitors have been held.





All “WU matters. WU talks.” events are announced in a program schedule, and some of them are held in English. Everyone interested can easily register for any event on the project website. The semester program can also be found online. For example 10 discussions and lectures on various relevant topics have been scheduled for the 2021 winter semester.

The first talk was dedicated to Austria’s Federal Constitution, and attendees learned more about which parts of the constitution are “outdated” and which are still relevant after 100 years. The controversy around insolvency law in the COVID-19 pandemic, its limits and perspectives were explored during another public lecture. The next talk, organized in cooperation with the newspaper “Die Presse,” addressed the issue of what “we” means in politics and political rhetoric. The main question discussed at the following event was the energy systems of the future and ways of achieving decarbonization. At another talk, participants had a chance to listen to experts and have fruitful discussions about geopolitics, the zero-sum logic, and its con-

sequences for trade. The last talk of the semester will focus on leadership in communication.

The program for the winter semester 2021 also included two events held in English: a lecture that gave an overview of blockchain technology, its requirements and constraints, as well as perspectives for future research, and a panel discussion aimed at answering the question of how to inspire entrepreneurs.

Another special format of “WU matters. WU talks.” are award ceremonies, some of which include talks on topical issues.: As part of the WU Manager of the Year 2021 award ceremony, award winner Silvia Angelo, WU alumna and member of the management board of ÖBB Infrastruktur AG, talked about public infrastructure and its importance for the mobility transition in the fight against climate change. She also discussed the concept of the “entrepreneurial state” and Europe’s role in cross-border investments. The WU Awards and Best Paper Awards 2021 ceremony was another event organized as part of the “WU matters. WU talks.” series.

## IMPACT PATHWAY

### OUTPUT

- › Socially and economically relevant topics are brought to the public’s attention

### OUTCOME

- › The participants’ level of information on socially relevant topics increases

### IMPACT

- › Increased public awareness of current economic and social issues

### POTENTIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- › Social responsibility reporting by the business community and beyond

# Alliance of Sustainable Universities in Austria

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**“The Alliance of Sustainable Universities in Austria sees itself as an informal, open network aimed at giving sustainability-related topics a more prominent place at universities. In this way, it aims to contribute to a sustainable and future-proof society.”**

*Memorandum of Understanding on the Cooperation of the Alliance of Sustainable Universities in Austria*

## KEY FACTS

- › To date, WU has contributed to more than 30 expert meetings.
- › 19 Austrian universities are members of the Alliance as of November 2021.
- › The last on-site meeting before the COVID-19 pandemic was hosted by WU.
- › WU is an active participant of the “Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) Working Group”, initiated in 2015 as a platform for exchanging best teaching practices in ESD and increasing the visibility of ESD at the universities of the Alliance.
- › A Sustainable Procurement Guide for member institutions (Leitfaden für eine Nachhaltige Beschaffung) was jointly developed and published in October 2021 by the Sustainable Procurement Working Group, and WU was one of the eight contributing universities.
- › WU chaired the Sustainable Entrepreneurship Working Group for three years up until 2018, when it was discontinued.

## BACKGROUND

In view of the urgency of the sustainability challenges and the implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), universities must actively pursue a pioneering role of driving sustainable change. To fulfill this role and to be transformative, our universities must transform themselves. This applies to teaching, research, and university management just as much as it does to knowledge transfer and outreach.

As member of the Alliance of Sustainable Universities, WU shares its best practices and knowledge related to sustainability in education and research with the network and, overall, contributes to the strategic promotion of sustainable development at and through universities.

## DESCRIPTION

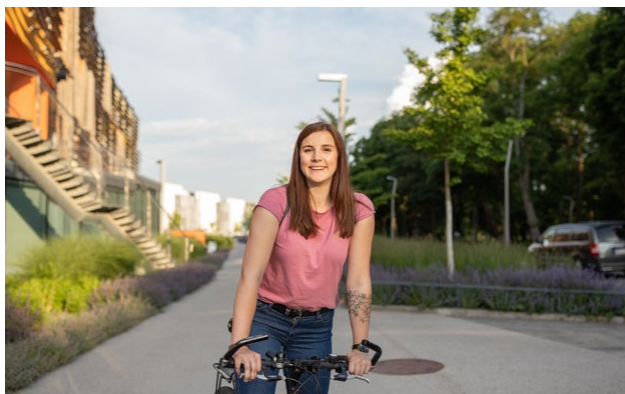
The Alliance of Sustainable Universities in Austria was initiated in 2012 by BOKU Vienna and the University of Graz. Several other Austrian higher education institutions have joined the Alliance since then, including WU Vienna. Currently it comprises 19 higher education institutions based in Austria. The primary goal of the Alliance is to provide a platform for exchanging experiences and enhancing synergies between universities in the five thematic areas of teaching, research, university management, knowledge exchange, and sustainability strategy.

## Teaching

Education is an indispensable prerequisite for promoting sustainable development and enhancing human capacity to address environmental and development issues. The central goal of educational institutions committed to sustainable development should be to create awareness of sustainable development issues among students – to an extent that enables them to participate in practice in the development of ecologically sound, economically efficient, and socially equitable solutions.

## Research

Research can contribute to a sustainability transition by developing and using new knowledge, methods, and tools, linking theory and practice, promoting participatory approaches, and contributing to institutional innovation



and “societal learning.” Research for sustainable development generates knowledge that supports society in decision-making, adaptation and learning processes.

#### University management

Issues such as ecological and social responsibility, environmental management, procurement, investments, working conditions, and how people treat each other are as important for universities as for any other organization. This thematic area centers around the question of HOW work is done at universities.

#### Knowledge exchange

Universities operate in a closely interconnected network that brings together civil society, business, and the public sector, interacting with each other in different ways and on various topics. This work goes beyond public relations and knowledge transfer: An equal exchange of information among all stakeholders is also of high importance. Therefore, the Alliance universities exchange ideas on the best ways of communicating the message of sustainability to the wider public.

### IMPACT PATHWAY

#### OUTPUT

- › Increased interactions and communication with other pioneering of “sustainable universities” in Austria

#### OUTCOME

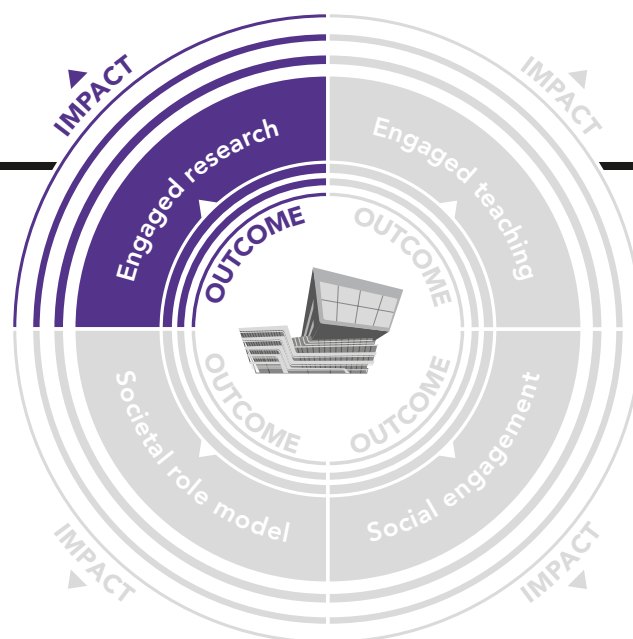
- › Increased research collaborations with other pioneering of “sustainable universities” in Austria

#### IMPACT

- › Enhancements in socially relevant and collaborative third mission activities among Austrian universities

#### POTENTIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- › Third mission impact assessment of Austrian HEIs



#### Sustainability strategy

The universities in the Alliance of Sustainable Universities in Austria have committed themselves in their Performance Agreements and in the Alliance’s Memorandum of Understanding to developing sustainability concepts.

#### Working groups

In order to carry out the joint activities of the Alliance universities more effectively and to strengthen the exchange of information between the members, six working groups are currently active, namely: CO<sub>2</sub> Neutral Universities, Sustainable Mobility Initiatives, Sustainable Procurement, Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), Sustainable Buildings and Sustainability Strategies. Each working group is devoted to collecting and sharing experience and knowledge on dedicated topics among member institutions as well as to developing practical guidelines, methodologies, and standards. Through its active participation in the working groups “Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)” and “Sustainable Procurement,” WU Vienna ensures its contribution to the sustainable development of universities in Austria and the overall positive impact on the sustainable future of society.

# COPERNICUS Alliance

**“In order to be transformative, universities must transform themselves!”**

*Clemens Mader, former president of the COPERNICUS Alliance*

## KEY FACTS

- › In total, the COPERNICUS Alliance (CA) has 25 members.
- › WU joined the COPERNICUS Alliance in 2010, as one of its founding members.
- › WU has attended every annual conference of COPERNICUS Alliance over years.
- › WU has participated in three COPERNICUS Alliance sponsored/related research projects/programs.
- › An MDPI Sustainability special issue – “The Future of Education for Sustainable Development – Between the Power of Technology and the Need for Responsible Citizenship” – was published by WU in cooperation with the CA in 2019.

## BACKGROUND

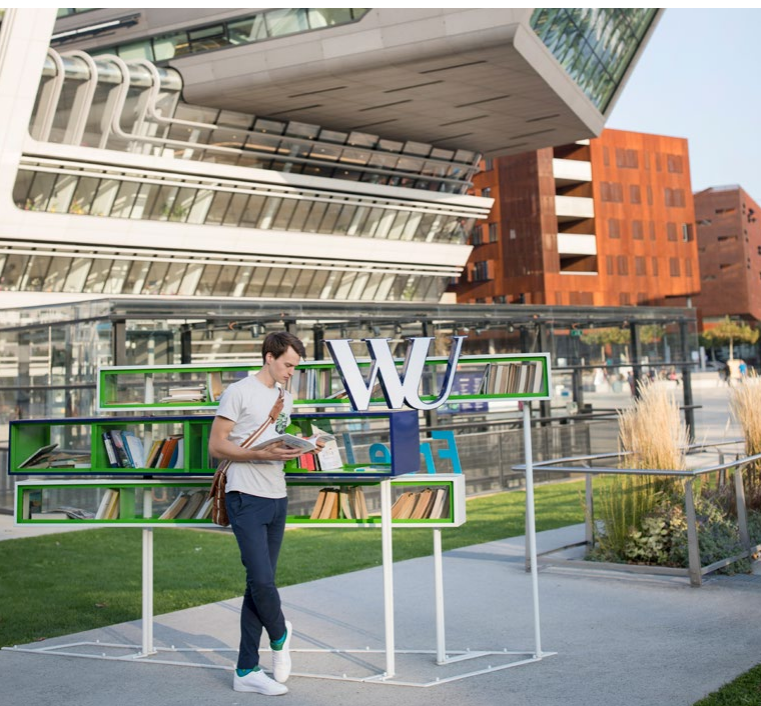
Today’s grand challenges demand collaborative solutions, jointly built knowledge and competencies, and the active engagement of higher education institutions (HEI), policy-makers, and community stakeholders – which has been acknowledged and accepted as a vision of the CA, a European network of higher education institutions whose roots date back to 1993, when COPERNICUS CAMPUS and the CRE COPERNICUS Charta were founded in Geneva.

The Charta outlines ten “change pathways” – including sustainable development values, ethics, education for university employees and students, and institutional strategic frameworks – and has been endorsed by 326 European universities. The Charta falls under the purview of the CA, a result of the relaunch and rebranding of COPERNICUS CAMPUS. As one of its founding members, WU was among the nine universities that established the CA, underlining its commitment to being a responsible and impact-orientated university.

## DESCRIPTION

The central aim of the CA is enabling European higher education institutions and their partners to jointly identify challenges in higher education (HE) for sustainable development and facilitate the development of solutions to address these challenges from an institutional perspective. To enhance resource exchange and co-development of education for sustainability (ESD) initiatives, the CA serves as a networking platform and organizes events for its member institutions. Additionally, members’ networking projects are supported by the CA Micro Funds as well as through advice and alliances.

As a signatory of the COPERNICUS Charta, WU is committed to the principles of sustainability and is





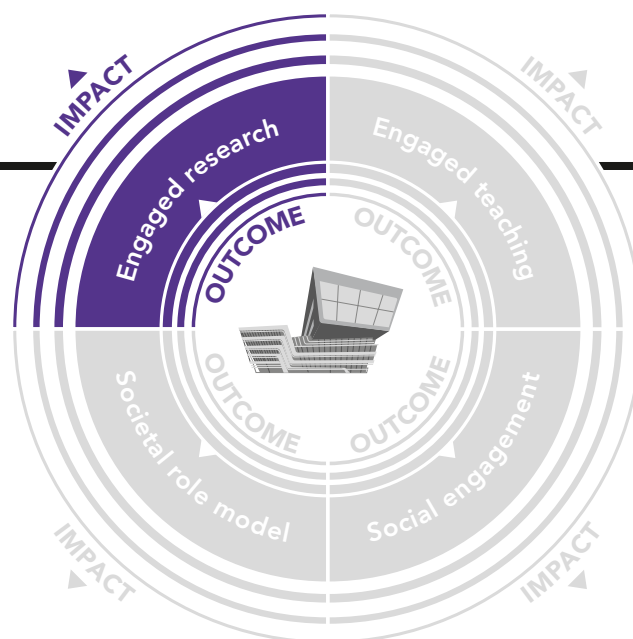
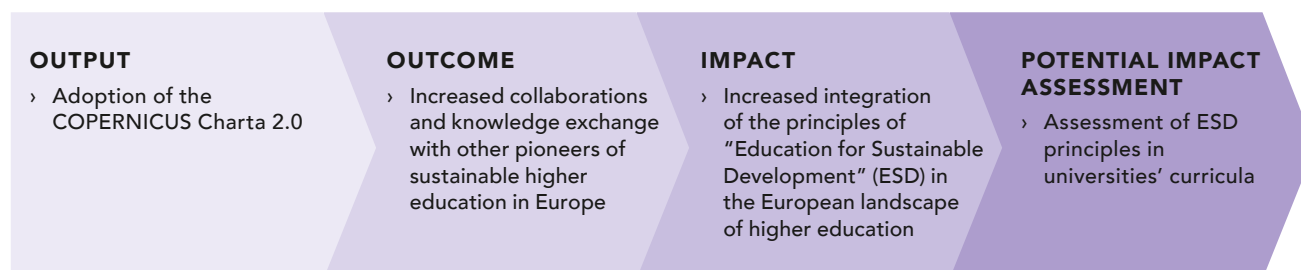


determined to bring them to life. The internal discussion of and reflection on the individual points of the COPERNICUS Charter supports WU's potential to achieve a positive social impact. Even though the focus of WU's activities within the framework of its membership in the COPERNICUS Alliance is clearly on knowledge exchange and its own institutional learning process, there have also been some joint projects with COPERNICUS in the past.

#### CASE Project

The CA Micro Funds provided support to WU Vienna to host the final event of the Competencies for a Sustainable Socio-Economic Development (CASE) project in Vienna, which took place in November 2017. CASE was funded by the ERASMUS+ Program of the European Union. The overarching goal of the project was innovative teaching for sustainable entrepreneurship and enhancing collaboration between universities and companies. At the final event, participants had an opportunity to explore innovative approaches for entrepreneurial education, experience innovative learning and teaching methods, and explore a new master's curriculum for sustainability-driven entrepreneurship. The event was held in cooperation with BOKU, another CA member.

#### IMPACT PATHWAY



#### SDGs Labs

In 2019, WU invited the CA to become a network partner of the SDGs Labs, an EU Erasmus+ project, jointly coordinated by eight partner universities from four countries. The main objective of this project was the translation of the abstract SDGs into concrete business solutions for actors all along the supply chain in the agribusiness and food production sector. The SDGs Labs project also aims to facilitate collaboration and knowledge exchange between higher education and agribusiness and food production businesses, while also highlighting the significance the SDGs could have for start-ups.

#### MDPI Sustainability special issue

Clemens Mader, extended board advisor and former president of the CA, and Christian Rammel, head of the RCE Vienna at WU Vienna, served as editors of the MDPI Sustainability special issue "The Future of Education for Sustainable Development – Between the Power of Technology and the Need for Responsible Citizenship," published in 2021. The special issue aimed to discuss digitalization and education from the transdisciplinary perspective of responsible citizenship and engagement.

# Scholars at Risk

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“For WU, it is a matter of course not to look away when fellow researchers in other countries and systems are being persecuted and oppressed. We plan to play an active role in the important work of Scholars at Risk, welcoming visiting researchers to WU and helping to raise awareness of the importance of free research and teaching.”

*Edeltraud Hanappi-Egger, Rector*

## KEY FACTS

- › **Over 500 universities**, colleges and associations in 40 countries are part of the network Scholars at Risk network.
- › WU joined the international network on January 1, 2019, and offers threatened or persecuted researchers the opportunity to come to WU as guest researchers.
- › SAR has received **over 5000 requests** for assistance from **more than 120 countries** during the past 20 years.
- › In total, SAR has provided direct assistance to over 1,600 scholars through temporary research and teaching visits.
- › The largest percentages of scholars requesting assistance at present come from the **Middle East, North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, and South Asia.**
- › Scholars at Risk received the Scientific Freedom and Responsibility Award, in recognition of its “outstanding contribution to defending and promoting the free and responsible practice of science,” presented by the International Science Council (ISC).

## BACKGROUND

Universities generate fact-based knowledge and thereby play an important role in and for societies based on democratic values. This means that institutions of higher education are seen as enemies by repressive regimes if they present inconvenient facts or support critical reflection, which can result in academics being threatened, imprisoned, or forced into exile. Therefore, efforts to defend academic freedom are highly important and are supported within the network of Scholars at Risk. WU joined this international network on January 1, 2019, and offers threatened or persecuted researchers the opportunity to work at WU as guest researchers while also raising societal awareness of the importance of independent research and teaching.

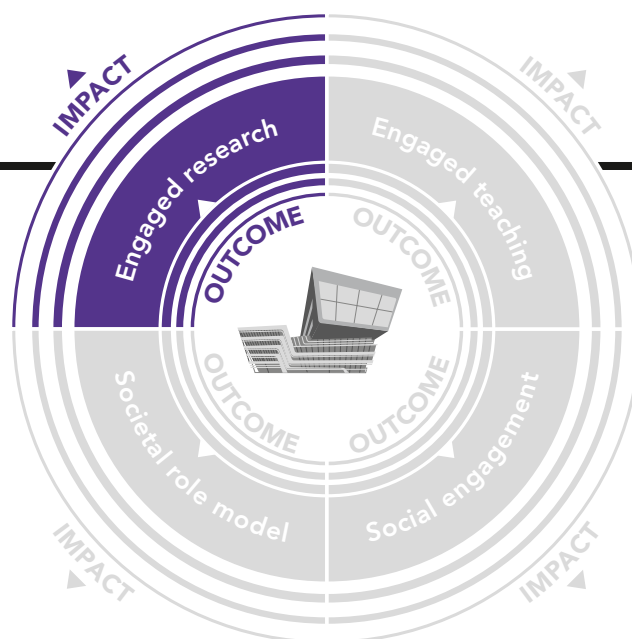
## DESCRIPTION

Scholars at Risk, founded at the University of Chicago in 1999, is an international network of over 500 institutions of higher education in 40 countries whose members work to protect threatened scholars and promote academic freedom around the world. The network’s partners want to give researchers and teachers persecuted by repressive regimes the opportunity to work in freedom as guest lecturers and researchers at one of the network’s member institutions. Members also strive to raise awareness of the importance of academic freedom as a basis for democratic societies. According to the principles of protection, advocacy, and learning, SAR hosts a variety of programs, conferences, and activities.

## Protection

Populist and authoritarian regimes that are restricting academic freedom, ongoing refugee crises, armed conflicts, and climate disasters have led to an increase in





the numbers of scholars seeking assistance. SAR provides direct assistance to scholars who are threatened and suffer restrictions or attacks because of their work defending free inquiry, free expression, human rights, and democratic values. SAR assists scholars by providing services like advice, legal referrals, career advice, and other services, and arranges research and teaching positions at member institutions. In the last 20 years, SAR has reached over 1600 scholars with placements, training opportunities, and other services like emergency assistance grants.

### Advocacy

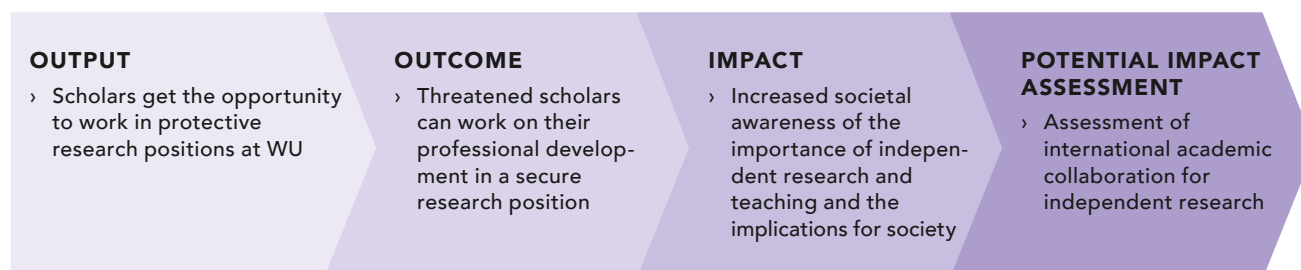
Speaking out and investigating attacks to increase protection for vulnerable individuals are core to SAR's advocacy efforts. These activities serve to identify, document, and take action on threats posed to scholars, students, and higher education communities. The Academic Freedom Monitoring Project annually publishes the Free to Think report, which documents attacks on university communities. SAR Legal Clinics help to prepare reports for submission to national and international human rights bodies. The Student Advocacy

Seminars present an opportunity for students to develop human rights research and advocacy skills. On behalf of scholars and students who are wrongfully imprisoned the Scholars in Prison Project conducts advocacy by raising awareness of these cases and encouraging people to get involved.

### Learning

Research on academic freedom and higher education values across states and communities helps to deepen the understanding of the issue and increase security for scholars. SAR initiates different opportunities that bring together students and other members of the higher education community to discuss global and regional academic freedom climates and to develop solutions that strengthen the university space. The Scholar Speaker Series invites scholars who have escaped attacks to share their stories across the network. Member institutions are also involved in conferences, working groups, and collaborative research, e.g. in March 2021 WU invited Majid Mgami, associate professor of English literature and criticism and member of Scholars at Risk, to join the "WU matters. WU talks." series discussion on internationality and academic freedom.

## IMPACT PATHWAY



# Scientists4Future

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**“In 2018, compelled to do something against the climate crisis and biodiversity loss, I spent my sabbatical on a bike, visiting colleagues and conferences. A year later, inspired by Scientists4Future, I founded OS4Future (Organizational and Management Scientists for Future) with other six international colleagues, convinced that business schools scholars must also have the courage to tell the truth on the impending catastrophes and offer their knowledge to prevent them.”**

*Giuseppe Delmestri, Head of the Institute for Change Management and Management Development*

## KEY FACTS

- › In March 2019, more than 26,800 scientists from German-speaking countries joined forces to form Scientists for Future (S4F).
- › Scientists for Future’s interdisciplinary lecture series Lectures for Future (L4F) offers current insights into scientific work on the climate crisis, the environment, and society.
- › L4F@WU started in the winter of 2019 and has already reached 1,900 participants. In 2021, L4F focused on climate justice, civil disobedience, and protest.
- › Organizational and Management Scientists for Future (OS4Future), an offspring of the Scientists4Future movement, was established by and for management and organization scholars.

## BACKGROUND

The historically unprecedented climate, biodiversity, and sustainability crisis, which concerns all of our well-being and poses global challenges to humanity, requires immediate attention. Irreversible changes to our climate and ecosystems are caused by human activities. To start an effective process of change, action must be taken on all levels: political, economic, technical, social and cultural, scientific and private. This requires factual, evidence-based political discussions.

Responding to these challenges, scientists have started the initiative Scientists for Future (S4F), which sees itself as the voice of science and proactively speaks out in public. Scientists from all disciplines bring together skills, knowledge, and experience to facilitate change and provide facts and materials based on reliable and accepted scientific data. WU researchers are part of S4F, started organizing L4F@WU in winter 2019, and co-founded the offspring movement OS4Future.

## DESCRIPTION

### Scientists for Future (S4F)

Scientists for Future (S4F) was founded in March 2019 by scholars from across the German-speaking countries and is organized in regional and local chapters in Austria, Germany, and Switzerland. In cross-disciplinary and international collaboration, S4F spreads awareness on the scientific consensus on climate change, CO<sub>2</sub> and other greenhouse emissions, the environment, and implications for society. As a reaction to the concerns of the protesting students organized as Fridays for Future, scientists from various universities, including WU, joined together to confirm that the claims were justified and supported by

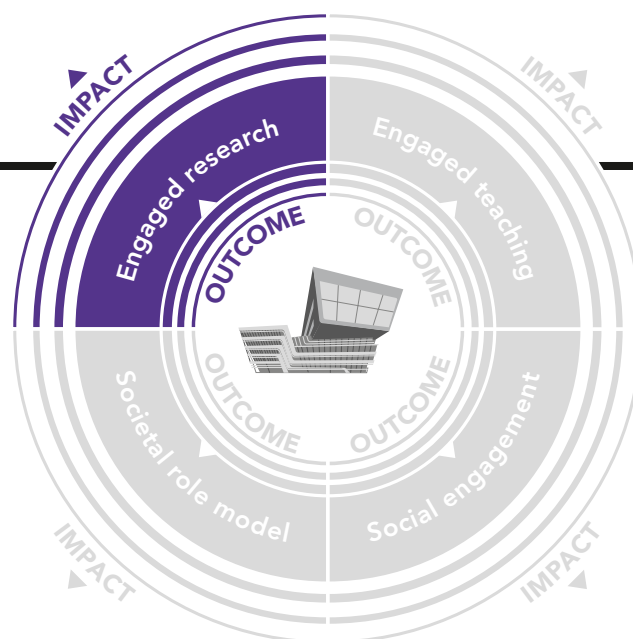




scientific data., They then went on to advise the Fridays for Future movement as well as other initiatives for a sustainable future. S4F provides resources for learning and teaching, introduces environmental concerns into higher education curricula, and fosters dialog with policy makers and the general public. Scientists acknowledge their responsibility and engage in proactive science communication, whether through events at schools, universities, companies, in public discourse, media activities, or participation in discussions.

#### Lectures for Future (L4F)

The interdisciplinary lecture series Lectures for Future (L4F), organized by S4F researchers, offers current insights into scientific work to a wide public audience. Twelve universities in Austria are involved in the L4F and invite scholars, students, and the public to come hear about evidence-based insights into topics related to the climate crisis, our environment, and society. Scientists contribute their knowledge and time to inform others and start a dialog with the public. L4F@WU was first organized in the 2019 winter semester and has 1,900 participants so far. Each semester's lectures focus on



different aspects, for example on climate justice, civil disobedience, and protest in the 2021 summer semester.

#### Organizational and Management Scientists for Future (OS4Future)

Co-founded by WU Professor Giuseppe Delmestri at the Institute for Change Management and Management Development and international colleagues, the Organizational and Management Scientists for Future initiative takes action on climate crisis and wants to inspire other scholars. As an offspring of the S4F movement, OS4Future is organized by and for management and organization scholars. The initiative focuses on four dimensions for a better future: research, teaching, practice, and leading by example. OS4Future enables change by providing knowledge of organizational and institutional dynamics and also by the symbolic power of behavioral changes prefiguring a zero-carbon world. EGOS by Train, for example, organizes a joint journey by train from various hubs in Europe, giving participants the opportunity to meet new friends and like-minded people while enjoying a relaxed and low-carbon ride to take part in the EGOS conference.

#### IMPACT PATHWAY

##### OUTPUT

- › Establishing an inter-university and collaborative teaching format on sustainability issues

##### OUTCOME

- › Increased inter- and transdisciplinary collaborations across Scientists4Future researchers and teachers

##### IMPACT

- › Increasing scientific collaboration on sustainability across all disciplines

##### POTENTIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- › Prevalence of topics such as Climate Change in universities' curricula and research agenda

# WU4Juniors

“We are all part of the economy, and economic issues accompany us throughout our lives. In our learning modules, we take up the most important questions and explain to students what they need to know and understand in order to find good answers. Not only individuals benefit from this, but also the entire economy and society of a country. I wish you a lot of fun and many eye-opening moments while learning about the economy!”

Bettina Fuhrmann,  
Head of the Institute for Business Education

“The WU4Juniors Summer School is a unique experience in which a great deal of knowledge is transferred. Business interests are promoted, and student life is brought closer to the participants. I can highly recommend applying for the Summer School. Not only to learn more about economics, but also to get to know WU better and to exchange ideas and make contacts with other young people interested in economics. The week was great from start to finish, and I am very grateful to have been a part of it!”

Summer School participant

## KEY FACTS

- › 56 learning modules summarized in 15 topics are offered by WU4Juniors on the platform LearnPublic.
- › A total of 77 young people attended the Summer School.
- › To date, over 20,000 users are registered.
- › 32,000 modules were completed.
- › Together, all users have earned around 6,000 badges.

## BACKGROUND

In a globalized economy that is becoming increasingly complex, financial, economic and legal literacy are highly important skills – especially for school-aged people, who are the citizens and consumers of tomorrow. These skills give young people the tools for understanding their economic world and how to interpret events that will either directly or indirectly affect them.

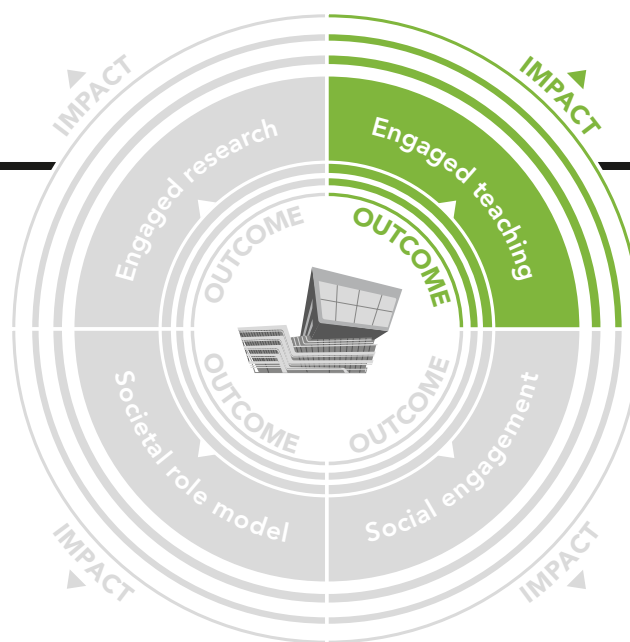
Through the WU4Juniors program, young people are encouraged to expand their financial, economic and legal knowledge. Subsequently, society benefits from programs like WU4Juniors because they improve the public’s ability to better understand and critically evaluate financial and economic issues in their own individual lives. The partner of the WU4Juniors programme is the Berndorf Privatstiftung.

## DESCRIPTION

At the beginning of 2019, WU4Juniors launched a comprehensive business education program for young people. With WU4Juniors, young people can begin their education in the areas of finance, economics, and business law. They benefit by gaining business knowledge (WU4Juniors topics) and proof of success for their professional career (online badges), and also by preparing for future studies at WU (WU4Juniors Summer School).

The earned badges can be used to apply for the WU4Juniors Summer School, which takes place in summer on Campus WU. It offers a week-long varied program for young people between the ages of 16 to 19. In summary, 77 participants took part in the Summer Schools of 2020 and 2021.





WU4Juniors offers two ways for students to discover the world of business:

1. Interactive online modules from WU4Juniors and,
2. Summer School on the WU campus.

The **LearnPublic Online modules** allow the students to learn about a variety of business and economic related topics such as:

The economic cycle and its actors, Stocks & Shares; Poverty, Entrepreneurship, Money and Monetary Policy, Lending rates, Sustainable development, Perspectives on the economy, Debt, Social partnership, Taxes, Contracts, World trade, or Risk and Insurance.

**WU4Juniors Summer School**

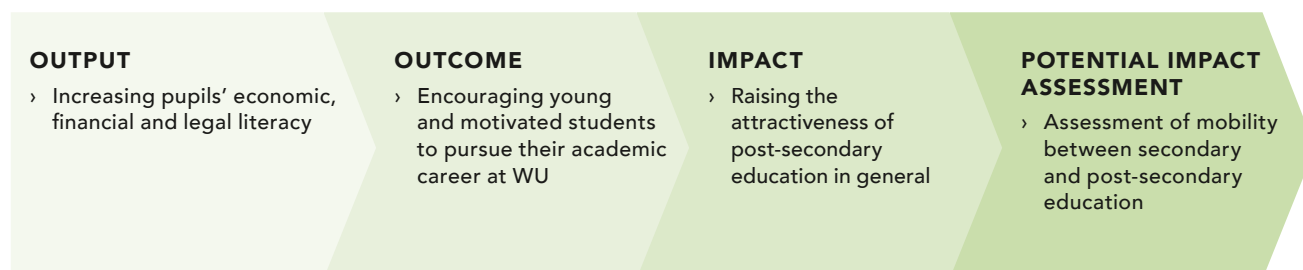
WU opens its doors for one week in summer and offers committed 16 to 19-year-olds the unique opportunity to immerse themselves in the diverse world of business and gain their first university experience. Participation in the Summer School can also be credited towards future studies at WU.

The second WU4Juniors Summer School offered 41 committed young people a varied program from July 12 to 16. At the beginning, the participants had the oppor-

tunity to get to know the campus and their fellow students and to start working on the project together. In the following three days, WU professors presented their expertise on the key topics of companies, money, and sustainability in the input sessions and highlighted different perspectives of the economy. There was more about current research topics at WU and the everyday life of researchers in Research Insights. Selected representatives provided exclusive insights into company practice in the company insider session. In the business game session, the participants were able to observe and analyze the consequences of entrepreneurial activity themselves. They also got to know the Austrian National Bank in an interactive workshop. The concluding information sessions gave an overview of the degree programs and opportunities at WU.

During the course of the week, the participants worked in small groups focusing on an economic question as part of the project work and jointly created explanatory videos. The groups were supported by the WU4Juniors team, a workshop on working in groups, and individual project coaching. In the closing event, the groups presented the results of their project work and received their certificate of participation.

**IMPACT PATHWAY**



# Social Impact Award

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**“For us, the Social Impact Award was the real start. What I liked best is how SIA helped us set the right priorities and provided guidance to focus on the most important next step.”**

*Dita Formánková, Founder of Czechitas, an SIA alumni*

**“There are a number of programs, incubators, and initiatives worldwide, but what is special and unique about the Social Impact Award is the dedication of the team, the thought and track record behind it, and a very robust and exciting curriculum.”**

*Katherine Milligan, Former Head of the Schwab Foundation and Member of SIA’s Global Advisory Board*

## KEY FACTS

- › The Social Impact Award (SIA) is Europe’s largest community for early-stage social entrepreneurs under 30.
- › SIA collaborates with 1,000+ organizations worldwide from all corners of the social innovation sector and beyond.
- › Since its foundation in 2009, SIA has trained 40,000+ young people in 26 countries.
- › Incubated over 800 promising impact ventures.
- › And provided 350+ teams with awards and pre-seed funding.
- › 75% of these ventures are still creating systemic impact.
- › In 2019, SIA was the winner of the TRIGOS Award in the category International Engagement.
- › In 2020, SIA was active in 14 countries of Europe, Central Asia, and Africa.
- › In the same year, SIA was ranked as the most relevant Austrian civil society organization in the field of social innovations by the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber (WKÖ).

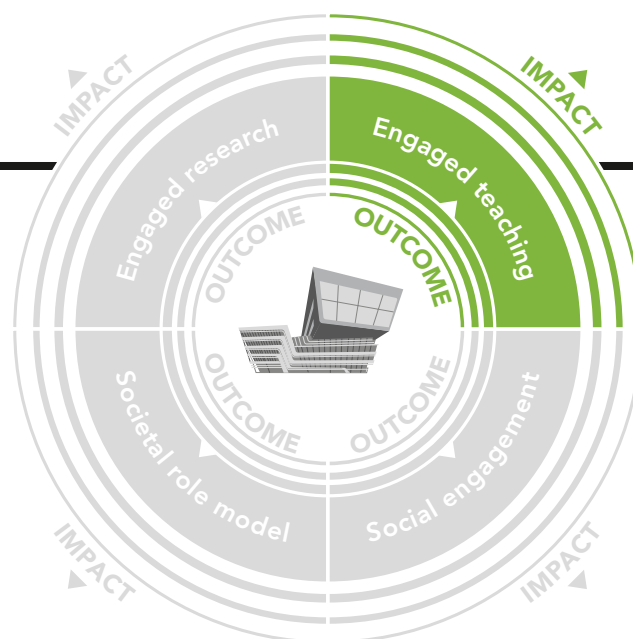
## BACKGROUND

When the public sector and market are unable to provide an effective solution, it is time for social entrepreneurs to shine and bring about positive societal change. Rather than focusing exclusively on successful economic performance, social entrepreneurship is primarily geared towards achieving a positive “return on investment for society.” Social entrepreneurs try to tackle crucial social, environmental, or cultural challenges and understand them also as business opportunities. As more and more students are getting interested in social entrepreneurship, adequate support is required for them to establish new impact-focused projects and ventures aimed at solving social problems in an entrepreneurial and creative way. Back in 2009, the social entrepreneurship field was still underdeveloped at WU and in Austria as a whole until a rather unorthodox course of events lead to the foundation of the Social Impact Award (SIA) by WU’s Institute for Entrepreneurship & Innovation (E&I). Foundation of the SIA, an important milestone in the development of social entrepreneurship in Austria, is one of WU’s most impactful projects and contributes directly to its social responsibility commitments.

## DESCRIPTION

In 2008, Joachim Hunold, long-time CEO of Air Berlin, had just won the prestigious Schumpeter Prize. At the award ceremony, he spontaneously decided to donate the award money to Professor Nikolaus Franke, a founder of the E&I Institute. Within the E&I Institute, PhD student Peter Vandor had the idea of using the € 14,000 for the field of social entrepreneurship. The Institute thus became the founder and first recipient of the Social Impact Award, the award money from the Schumpeter





Prize became the start-up capital, and Peter Vandro became its driving entrepreneur. The newly created course “E&I Social Entrepreneurship” at WU was one of the first application-oriented courses in the German-speaking world and already in the first year there were 58 submissions for the Social Impact Award. The following years convincingly refuted the stereotype that Austrian students are apolitical and uninterested in social issues, as hundreds of enthusiastic students developed concepts for social enterprises and submitted their ideas to the SIA.

In 2013, Impact Hub Vienna, led by Cezar Neaga, took over the organization of the Social Impact Award and further developed the project. Since then, SIA has been run in partnership with the Social Entrepreneurship Center at WU and a growing number of international partners who brought SIA to their respective countries. The WU Social Entrepreneurship Center supports SIA in several ways: workshops, events for participants, yearly project evaluations, conceptualization and implemen-

tation of the screening for SIA Austria, as well as finalizing a shortlist of finalists together with the screening team. Importantly, instead of awarding projects that have already been implemented, SIA chooses to work with young future social entrepreneurs and support them on their first steps in developing and implementing innovative business solutions to solve sustainability-related issues of our times. To do so, SIA’s work focuses on four impact fields: raising awareness about social entrepreneurship as an alternative career path among students; educating young people, sharing valuable knowledge and helping students to develop the skills and competencies required for the future success of their ventures; supporting students with individual mentorship and impact/ business model validation in the incubation phase as well as promoting the best teams through the Social Impact Award; and finally, serving as a network hub for young social innovators, entrepreneurs, and experts by building a peer community of young leaders.

## IMPACT PATHWAY

### OUTPUT

- › Hosting events and organizing workshops to raise awareness for social entrepreneurship

### OUTCOME

- › Connecting agents of change internationally by building a peer community

### IMPACT

- › Mobilizing a global community of social entrepreneurs inspiring young people to take action

### POTENTIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- › Co-creative and strategic impact assessment in the areas support, community, education, and awareness

# Sustainability Challenge

“Sustainability, innovation and interdisciplinary approaches are becoming increasingly important for the future of students. The Sustainability Challenge offers the opportunity to implement creative and economic ideas together in a network of teachers and students from a wide range of disciplines.”

*Christian Rammel, Head of the RCE Vienna*

“The only thing that helps against the climate crisis is action. The Sustainability Challenge brings together diverse thinking in different groups, where sustainable perspectives are not only developed in theory, but implemented in hands-on projects. Together with the students, we take a further step towards a climate-friendly future.”

*Student enrolled in the Sustainability Challenge*

## KEY FACTS

- › 90 students of all fields of study implement specific sustainability projects in interdisciplinary teams
- › 15 projects on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are currently being implemented with practice partners / service learning partners or as start-ups
- › 6 universities provide theoretical input and supervise the project teams: WU Vienna, BOKU, TU Vienna, University of Vienna, University of Graz, and the University of Applied Arts Vienna
- › 12th year of running
- › 153 projects
- › 92 non-academic partners
- › 917 participants
- › 6 universities involved in designing the program

## BACKGROUND

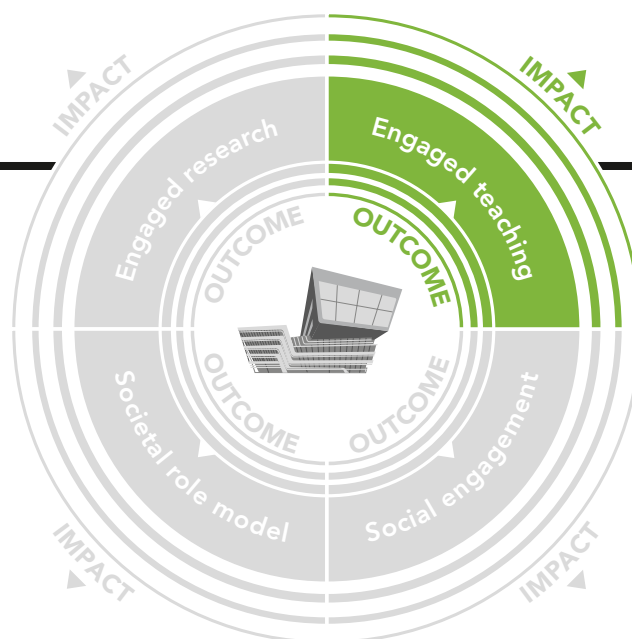
A new generation of decision-makers is needed to successfully master the great challenges faced by our times. For higher education, this requires the development of new teaching and learning formats. The complexity and multidimensionality of problems such as climate change or migration call for interdisciplinary cooperation as well as for joint learning and action between science and society. However, both of these are currently still more the exception than the rule in higher education.

The Sustainability Challenge is answering this call by allowing students, teachers, and external partners to team up in an effort to find innovative solutions to concrete challenges of the SDGs in the region. Transdisciplinary learning environments outside the lecture halls and mutual learning processes between students and practice partners on an equal footing characterize the innovative and impact-oriented nature of this inter-university project.

## DESCRIPTION

The Sustainability Challenge is a two-semester inter-university course involving students from a variety of disciplines. Each year, 70 – 90 master, PhD and advanced bachelor students from all fields are selected through a detailed application process. By providing transdisciplinary learning environments, the Sustainability Challenge supports students in developing various key skills needed to act as change agents. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) accompany the learners as an overarching theme throughout the course. Working in interdisciplinary teams is the core element of the course. It requires a high degree of independence and promotes both organizational and communication skills.





Teachers from six different universities and various theoretical backgrounds discuss sustainability concepts from multiple perspectives (economics, sociology, urban planning, architecture, arts, system sciences, climate science). Combined with the practical projects, students have the opportunity to experience different learning environments and sustainability-related issues in various contexts. This empowers learners to critically question existing structures and realities. Due to the close connection to social reality, the theoretically acquired knowledge can be applied in practice and participants' own points of view can be developed. Problem solving and design skills are specifically promoted and enable students to develop the key skills needed to face complex challenges of the future. Students participate in one of two tracks:

### Service Learning Track

Students participating in the Service Learning Track form interdisciplinary working groups with so-called "service learning partners." These groups work on a specific SDG problem of the partner. The working groups are supervised and supported by a teacher from one of the

participating universities. "Service learning partners" can be companies, NGOs, or public institutions. Students are introduced to the service learning method, which is learning by giving service to the community. They receive tools and knowledge that help them to understand the scope of service learning and to collaborate with their external partners. Service learning fosters collaborative learning and learning from experience, allowing students, teachers, and practice partners to learn with and from each other.

### Start-Up Track

The Start-Up Track allows students to find their own entrepreneurial answers to global challenges. University start-up coaches from the WU Entrepreneurship Center and BOKU:BASE accompany the development of business ideas, assist in formulating a business plan, and individually coach the student teams. In start-up workshops and start-up camps, the main focus is on developing a solid bridge between the vision of bringing the SDGs to life and creating an effective and successful business model.

## IMPACT PATHWAY

### OUTPUT

- › Helping students apply their theoretical knowledge about the SDGs and gain practical experience

### OUTCOME

- › Improving the interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary collaboration skills of attending students

### IMPACT

- › Contributing to a new generation of responsible and sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs and intrapreneurs

### POTENTIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- › Assessment of start-ups founded by students each year with explicit reference to SDGs

# Transfer Hubs

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**“With Challenge Impact, we do not only promote the development of social entrepreneurship in Austria, but also the cross-disciplinary transfer of innovation, creativity, and knowledge – by putting together and working with cross-university teams.”**

*Dr. Rudolf Dömötör, Director of the WU Entrepreneurship Center*

## KEY FACTS

- › 1 accelerated training program each year
- › 2 programs since launch (2020 & 2021)
- › 6 modules over 2–3 months
- › 27 experts and mentors to support the participants in the training program
- › 16 teams selected via an application and selection process

## BACKGROUND

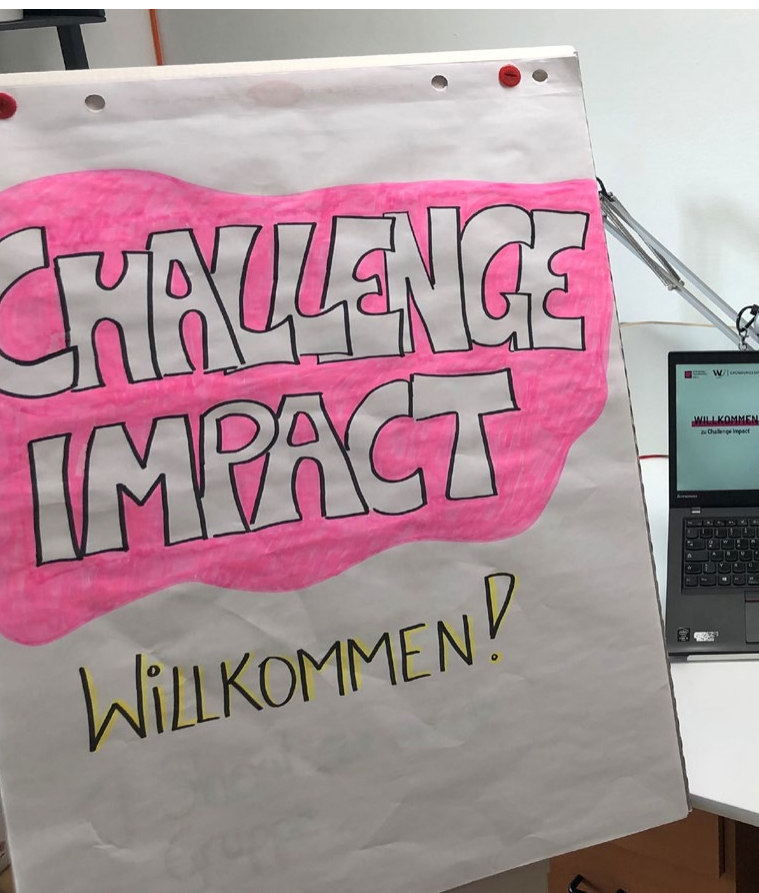
The challenges facing our global society in the 21st century demand new mindsets and partnerships to develop innovative and unique solutions that can be adopted and implemented with haste. Private enterprise has the ability to rapidly address the urgent needs that cannot be ignored any longer as the emerging socio-ecological crisis deepens. Social entrepreneurship offers our society a new vision for business, one that promotes mission driven enterprises that value people, profit, and the planet equally. However, these grand challenges also require innovation and knowledge sharing that can only be accomplished through robust and novel cross-disciplinary partnerships.

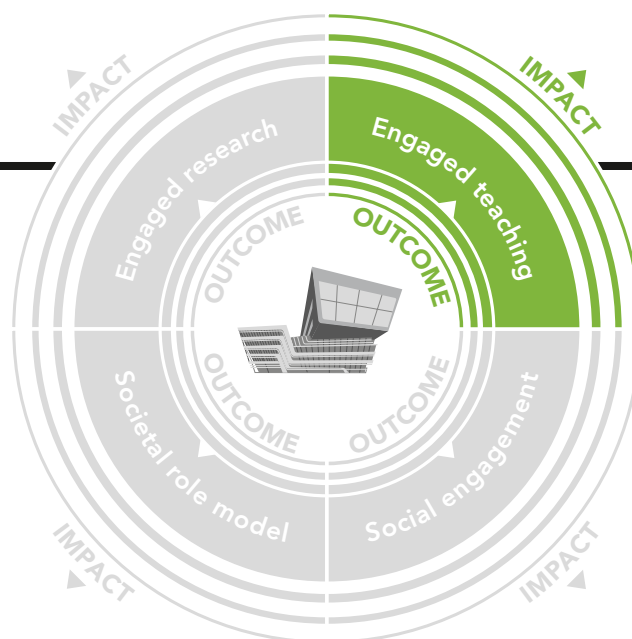
Aiming at such novel cross-disciplinary partnerships, the WU Entrepreneurship Center, together with Wissens-transferzentrum Ost (WTZ Ost), initiated the Transfer Hub Program in 2020. This program connects people from different disciplines and universities so they can join forces to solve current and emerging social challenges and work towards the implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

## DESCRIPTION

Transfer HUBs is a cross-university program that is open to people from all Austrian universities. It is intended that the combination of interdisciplinary knowledge exchange and social entrepreneurship will inspire and encourage new collaborations that will be well-positioned to solve the complex socio-ecological problems our society is facing. Transfer HUBs invites the students, alumni and staff of all Austrian universities to put their theoretical knowledge to practical use to create a sustainable shared future for us all.

Currently, the program’s partners include: the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, the University of Veterinary Medicine





Vienna, the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna, the FH Campus Vienna, St. Pölten University of Applied Sciences, and the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna.

Transfer HUBs organizes events, workshops and training programs to support entrepreneurial students and alumni in implementing their own ideas and projects in interdisciplinary teams. They also include annual networking formats such as the "Impact Academy" or the "Transfer Summit". As part of these activities, transferable skills on alternative funding sources such as crowdfunding, impact investment, and entrepreneurship are offered. The program's content focuses on contemporary social challenges and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

One highlight of the various activities is the training program "Challenge Impact." It is an interdisciplinary training program for students, alumni, and researchers with ideas for projects, initiatives, and start-ups that contribute to the achievement of the SDGs. The program is organized by the WU Entrepreneurship Center in the context of an inter-university cooperation on knowledge transfer. The aim is to introduce the participants to the

concepts of social entrepreneurship and promote interdisciplinary knowledge exchange. At the same time, the teams are offered the necessary knowledge and support to turn an innovative business concept into reality. This all happens within an accelerated timeline of a few months.

The program is divided into 6 modules, offering the teams a step-by-step process to successfully bring a mission-driven business concept to life:

1. Entrepreneurship Basics and Business Model Canvas
2. Social Effect and Your Effect Model
3. Becoming Visible and Finding Supporters
4. Business Model Deep Dive
5. Pitch Training I: Intro and Peer-Review
6. Final Pitch Training II: Personalized Pitch Coaching and Expert Feedback

These six training modules are followed by a final 'Jury Pitch' closing event; where the teams show what they have learned, pitch the projects they have created, and convince the jury of the merit and value of their projects, initiatives, or start-ups.

## IMPACT PATHWAY

### OUTPUT

- › Workshops, events, and training programs for entrepreneurial students and alumni for tackling social challenges and the SDGs

### OUTCOME

- › Students, alumni, and researchers were empowered to bring their SDG-related projects and start-ups to life

### IMPACT

- › Raising awareness of the importance of sustainability in entrepreneurial activities

### POTENTIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- › Corporate social responsibility assessment of start-ups

# Changemaker

**“Kids can be entrepreneurs! The Changemaker Program enables elementary school children to experience entrepreneurial thinking and acting in a playful way. In this way, with the help of our students, they are motivated to become designers of the future.”**

*Nikolaus Franke, Head of the Institute for Entrepreneurship & Innovation*

## KEY FACTS

- › Since 2017, more than 1,000 children have already taken part in the Changemaker Program.
- › 47 different classes & 27 schools/camps have hosted the Changemaker Program.
- › 124 WU students have worked with the Changemaker Program.



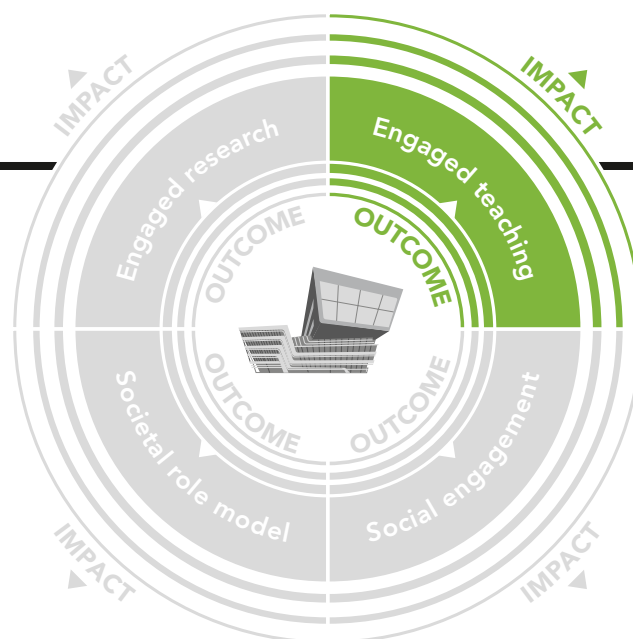
## BACKGROUND

Sustainable socio-ecological transformations will require new mindsets and innovative solutions to address the climate crisis and solve the problems facing our global society. New problems require new ideas, but ideas must take shape to have an impact. Entrepreneurship is the ability to turn ideas into action. It requires creativity, innovation and risk-taking, as well as the ability to plan and execute projects to achieve specific goals. Entrepreneurship also helps everyone in their daily lives, at home as well as in society, and enables people to recognize opportunities.

However, entrepreneurial mindsets don't just emerge in professional life, but start to develop in childhood: Tomorrow's employees and entrepreneurs are in school today. However, entrepreneurship education is not explicitly included in the curriculum of primary schools and depends heavily on individual teachers' interests and experience. It is precisely this problem that the project addresses. The impact of Changemaker is therefore to ensure that future entrepreneurs can have a positive impact on our society.

## DESCRIPTION

The Changemaker Program intends to bring entrepreneurship education to primary schools throughout Austria with collaborative partnerships. The WU Entrepreneurship Center & the Entrepreneurship Center Network illustrate how entrepreneurship can be an attractive career path & life perspective through inspiration, information, networking, and support. The Initiative for Teaching Entrepreneurship wants to change children & young people into shapers of the future through entrepreneurship education, while the program partners Kirchliche Pädagogische Hochschule Wien/



Krems and the Zentrum für Entrepreneurship Education und wertebasierte Wirtschaftsdidaktik aim to empower teachers through continuing education and the development of innovative teaching and learning materials on entrepreneurship education.

This unique partnership creates a triple-win outcome for children, WU students, and teachers by generating genuine, age-appropriate learning situations with WU students as role models. WU students learn to train their own mindset and gain insight into the topic of entrepreneurship. The WU students also support primary school children in the impact project "Markttag," from idea generation to the implementation of the market stands and the sale of the self-made products.

The Changemaker Program connects teachers, WU students, and primary school children with the key concepts and skills need to build a stronger entrepreneurial society. The programs gathers WU students into teams and provides them with leadership and entrepreneurship training. They conduct 2 workshops with the children to support them with information on generating ideas, prototyping, sales pitches, marketing, market stands,

prices, sales, and profit. The program also works with the teachers on creating the products and integrating the topic of entrepreneurship into regular lessons. When "Markttag" finally comes, the children and WU students gain operational insight into the sale of self-made products. They also learn the value of celebrating their successes.

After nearly 5 years of success, the Changemaker program will be expanding throughout Austria with the forthcoming launch of the regional Changemaker Program – thanks to TOP 8 funding from the "MEGA Bildungsstiftung." Its primary focus is to bring together partner networks from university entrepreneurship centers, educational partners, and primary schools. The team is also busy adapting and digitizing the existing program contents while also overseeing the creation of a franchise system to provide "Train-the-trainer workshops" and ongoing support for regional program leaders. The Changemaker program will be promoted throughout Austria with comprehensive program support from WU in Vienna.

## IMPACT PATHWAY

### OUTPUT

- › Elementary school children were given the opportunity to experience entrepreneurial thinking

### OUTCOME

- › Encouraging and supporting entrepreneurial skills in school children

### IMPACT

- › Contributing to a new generation of transformative entrepreneurs

### POTENTIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- › Assessment of entrepreneurial literacy across all levels of education

# Ecological Urban Campus

**“Environmental responsibility is a key requirement for all university activities, and the principle of sustainability was already a major premise in the planning, construction, and operation of the WU campus. Raising awareness for sustainability among 20,000 students, 2,500 employees, and other big stakeholder groups is a unique chance for a university and a personal issue of the WU Environmental Team. WU’s green Campus and our activities should encourage all stake-holders of WU to promote sustainable thinking.”**

*WU Environmental Management*

## KEY FACTS

- › More than 60% of surface area is open, publicly-accessible space.
- › Around 250 trees and approximately 10,000 m<sup>2</sup> shrubs
- › Approximately 100,000 ornamental grasses and 188,000 perennials on campus
- › 128 different flowering plant species can be found on campus.
- › 5 beehives on the roof of the D3 building, 200,000 bees, Between 120 and 200 kg honey produced every year
- › 25 urban garden plots (10% students, 30% faculty, 60% staff)
- › 40% water use reduction, 20% electricity and heating energy reduction since 2014
- › Approximately 60% of the required heating energy is obtained using geothermal energy from ground water.
- › More than 110 tons of waste separated in 2020 (90 t used paper, 9 t plastics, 7 t glass, 2,5 t metal, 2 t used electronic appliances, 3 t used air filters, 80 kg batteries, 300 kg computer monitors)
- › WU’s regular operations (electricity, heating, fuel for operations) have been 100% climate neutral since 2019.

## BACKGROUND

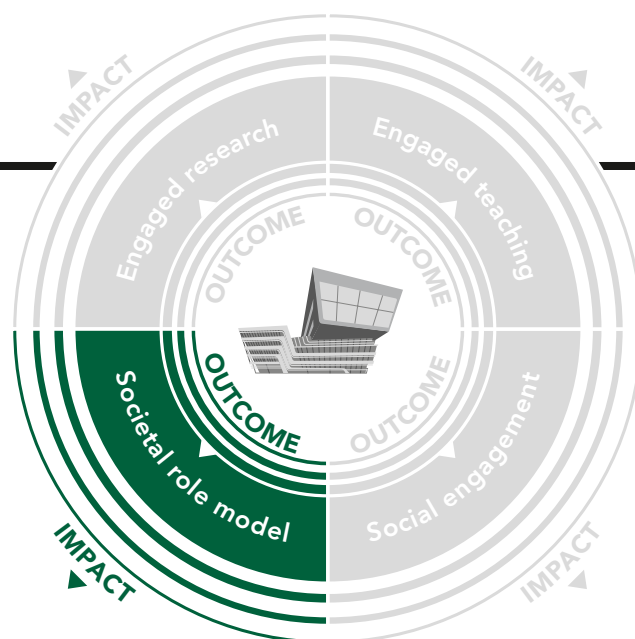
The cityscape and the built environment where we live, work, and play have an immeasurable influence on our society and our relationship with our natural surroundings. Too often ecological concerns are largely ignored in urban areas and the psychological/social impact of institutional settings is rarely considered. Campus WU attempts to break this tradition through an innovative and inviting built environment that merges the urban and ecological spheres of Vienna to build stronger ties with the surrounding community and the general public.

## DESCRIPTION

As a pioneering educational institution, Campus WU was carefully planned based on a theme of ‘Ecological Urbanism’, in order to provide a more socially inclusive and ecologically sustainable educational environment for all. Centrally located within one of Vienna’s key development target areas, the WU campus was planned as an anchor for new urban redevelopment/ revitalization in the surrounding district.

The campus is situated at a critical juncture where the inner core of the city meets the Danube river, located between Vienna’s historic city center, the new Donaucity district (UNO), and the Danube Island. This unique location between city and nature inspired the designers to envision the WU campus as straddling a critical border territory where the natural world and the human environment interact. To further elaborate on this theme, the campus was envisioned as “pavilions in a garden,” synthesizing urban density with an intense landscape strategy. In recognition of the natural world around us, wind and water flows were simulated and modeled to





mitigate negative impacts and incorporate innovative design solutions.

Campus WU is located between the Prater park, the Messe Wien exhibition center, and the existing Stuwerviertel neighborhood, embedded in a city structure with sufficient open space to develop an eco-urban campus concept. The entire campus is bordered by trees and shrubs which create a natural green boundary that is a filter to the city, to Prater, and to immediate vehicular traffic. This lush landscape creates a habitat for pollinators amongst the variety of herbs and grasses that were planted on campus. In fact, on the roof of the D3 building there are beehives that are maintained by a Vienna-based, organic, private beekeeping company. The campus is designed as a “walk along the park,” and in different seasons it leads to sequences of plazas along paths between green spaces, leading to specific areas. The sequences are designed so that each path also becomes an existential journey. Fundamental to the quality of the site is the permanent visual relationship with Prater Park, ever green in its presence.

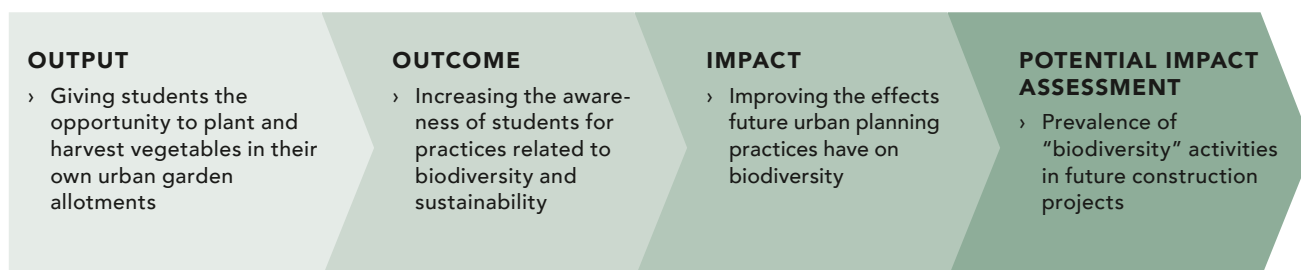
One of the spatial principles that shapes the whole campus is the fluidity of its outdoor public spaces. The

campus is a sequence of interlinked spaces. Six contiguous plazas are linked together by the main circulation spine. These critical components of the campus allow for a multitude of uses, both intended and spontaneous. Interior and exterior spaces are interwoven, giving life to the environment. The open space generates spatial continuity to form a harmonious whole while also creating opportunities for active social interchange and places for learning and research. This invites people to linger after class or research conferences, creating organic spaces for collaboration.

In addition to the social functions of the university, the campus also addresses community activities in urban life, with a direct positive impact on the immediate area. This is achieved through ample recreational opportunities like table tennis and fitness areas, cafes, etc.

Finally, the WU Energy Screen is a unique method to make our campus’ electricity and water consumption more transparent and visible to all. The screen displays the exact numbers for daily energy, electricity, and water consumption in the different buildings on campus, as well as the annual averages.

## IMPACT PATHWAY



# WU Commemorative Project

**“The Vienna University of Economics and Business deeply regrets the active and passive participation of the Hochschule für Welthandel in the expulsion and displacement of numerous persons who had until the Anschluss been loyal students and faculty members. The University accepts responsibility for this, and recognizes that coming to terms with this history is a moral obligation towards those affected as well as their descendants.”**

*The Memorial Book for Victims of National Socialism at the Hochschule für Welthandel 1938–1945*

## KEY FACTS

- › On 8 May 2014, the Memorial with the names of those students unable to continue their studies in the then University of World Trade was inaugurated on the university campus.
- › The biographies of the university members concerned and their relatives have been collected in a virtual memorial book.
- › In November 2018, WU symbolically restored the degree of Diplomkaufmann (graduate in commercial sciences) to a descendant, which the University of World Trade had withdrawn from its former Jewish graduate Leopold Weiß due to his expatriation from the German Reich in 1940.

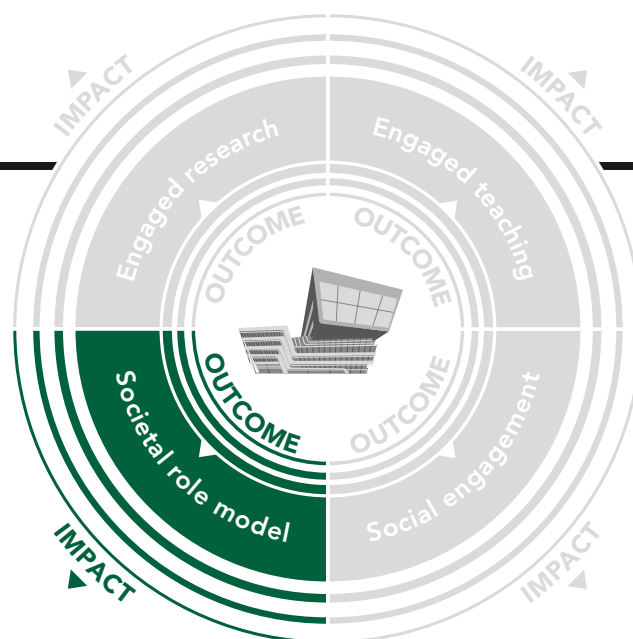
## BACKGROUND

“Denied. Jews cannot be admitted to a doctoral defense.” With these words, a Jewish student who had submitted his thesis to the University of World Trade in Vienna just a few weeks before the Anschluss was denied the right to complete his doctoral degree. Austria’s incorporation into Nazi Germany in 1938 had fatal consequences for the University of World Trade (Hochschule für Welthandel), the institution that would later become today’s WU. WU belongs to those Austrian universities that have been self-critically examining various aspects of its history during the Nazi era from the perspective of a democratic and pluralistic society for many years. A number of projects are based on scientific research and aim to communicate the “dark sides” of the university’s history to its own faculty and staff as well as to its students and the non-university public. Among these initiatives is the Commemorative Project, devoted to rigorous research and documentation intended to unveil the injustices that happened at the University of World Trade during the time of the Nazi regime in 1938-1945.

## DESCRIPTION

In 2012, the WU Rector’s Council launched the Commemorative Project, intending to research the fate of those students of the then University of World Trade who were expelled or otherwise persecuted based on political or “racial” motives after Austria had been “annexed” to the Third Reich in March 1938. A visible expression of the project is the Memorial designed by the young Viennese artist Alexander Felch. It was inaugurated in the middle of the university campus on May 8, 2014, in a ceremony attended by former expelled students. The sculpture, a steel sphere made up of the names of the victims, is now an integral part of





the campus. The sphere was deliberately left incomplete to allow for further names to be added as they are discovered. The biographies of the university members concerned and their relatives are accessible via the Memorial Book. In addition, the scholarly collective volume "Säuberungen" an österreichischen Hochschulen 1934–1945' (Purges at Austrian universities, Böhlau Verlag, 2017) presents key results of WU's Commemorative Project. Its contributions enable comparisons with the history of other Austrian universities in the 1930s and 1940s. As a further result of the project, in November 2018, the degree of Diplomkaufmann (graduate in commercial sciences) was symbolically restored to the former graduate Leopold Weiß (born in 1893), stripped of his academic title by the University of World Trade in the wake of racist persecution in 1940.

Thanks to ongoing archival research and contact with relatives, the knowledge about university members who were persecuted in one way or other by the Nazi regime continues to grow. According to the current state of research, 138 students, alumni, or staff members of the University of World Trade were persecuted on different

grounds and in different forms. Among them were ten employees of the academic and administrative staff. Most of the victims of National Socialist persecution were students. Well over ten percent of the total student population were expelled for being of Jewish descent. The exact number of Christian students or students without a religious denomination with Jewish ancestors is impossible to determine. However, this group of students needed explicit permission from the appropriate Reich Ministry or the Rector's Council to be able to study, take exams, or graduate. Apart from Leopold Weiß, three other graduates were stripped of their academic degrees by the Nazi regime for political or racial reasons. Finally, five members of the university community were killed in the context of the Shoah. Moreover, WU is examining the extent to which holders of its academic honors served the Nazi regime and is reviewing their lectures and publications for anti-Semitic ideas. In order to not only investigate the past, but above all to learn from it, the WU initiative "Antisemitism at Work" is making an attempt to analyze the workplace as a place of active and passive antisemitism.

## IMPACT PATHWAY

### OUTPUT

- › Unveiling injustices and anti-Semitism that happened at the former University of Trade during the Nazi regime

### OUTCOME

- › Symbolically restoring the academic titles that have been revoked in the wake of 1940s racist persecutions

### IMPACT

- › Increased social sensitization to anti-Semitism

### POTENTIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- › Anti-Semitism study among students and WU staff

# Urban Mobility

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**“WU is proud of having a city campus that can be reached in a variety of different ways, including mixtures of different modes of public transport but also short- to mid-range battery- or muscle driven appliances, from e-bikes to skateboards.”**

*Tina Wakolbinger, Deputy Head of the Institute for Transport and Logistics Management*

## KEY FACTS

- › 67% of WU students used the subway as one transport mode in their commute.
- › 89% of WU students have a season ticket for public transport.
- › 82% of the WU students who commuted to WU come from within Vienna.
- › 29% of WU employees use a scooter or a bike as one transport mode in their commute.
- › 10% of WU employees have a car-sharing membership.
- › 28% of WU employees who commute to WU come from outside of Vienna.
- › More than 50% of staff who commute use public transport.
- › 16% of staff commute by bicycle.
- › Approximately 20% of staff walk to work.
- › 1,000+ bike stands on campus, approximately 250 of these parking spaces are located in roofed bicycle garages.
- › 700+ meters of bicycle path directly on campus WU
- › 3 electric chargers (2 for cars, 1 for e-bikes)
- › Minutes to city center/Stephansplatz: subway (7 mins), bicycle (13 mins), by foot (30 mins)

## BACKGROUND

A regular commute to school or work is an unavoidable part of most people's life. However, the mode of transport used can have a wide variety of consequences on the overall quality of someone's life. Driving a car in congested traffic each day is much different than riding a bicycle or taking the subway. A stressful morning and evening commute can be transformed into restful time to read or get some exercise.

In recent decades, the negative socio-ecological impacts of our fossil fuel-based urban transportation network have been thoroughly investigated and well documented. Factors like sprawling land-use patterns, increased greenhouse gas emissions, poor air/water quality, and reduced physical/mental health have all been linked to the high prevalence of single occupancy vehicle commuting. Reversing these patterns, while retrofitting our urban environments to become less carbon intensive, is a major component of the 21st century socio-ecological transformation necessary to ensure a sustainable future on our planet.

The City of Vienna has recognized this, and subsequently has made mobility and transport an integral aspect of the Smart City Framework Strategy 2019 – 2050, with ambitious goals and objectives laid out to reduce transport-related CO emissions by 50% by 2030, and by 100% by 2050. WU is proud to be a pioneer in this effort and continuously strives to be a societal role model for green mobility.

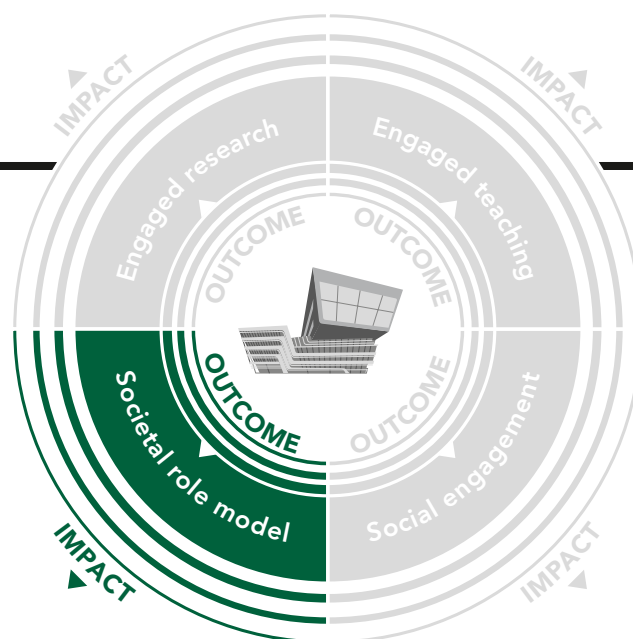
## DESCRIPTION

WU recognizes its responsibility toward promoting more sustainable modes of transport and is committed to encouraging students, faculty, staff, and visitors to



consider less carbon-intensive ways to travel to and from Campus WU.

A vast majority of visitors to Campus WU don't have to commute via private automobile, a fact which has a multitude of positive impacts on social and ecological sustainability. Giving people the ability to commute via alternative modes of transport offers them the opportunity to lead healthier and more socially connected lives. The campus is easily accessible from two subway stations (U2 Messe-Prater and Krieau), streetcar line #1 (Prater Hauptallee), bus routes, and the Praterstern train station. The campus is designed to be a pedestrian area, vehicular traffic is relegated to the periphery of the campus with parking in the garage below the campus. Through six access points and five paths, it is possible to enter, traverse, and leave the campus 24 hours a day. The proximity to Prater Park offers individuals a welcome venue for contemplative sojourns, providing open space for free thinking and innovation. Neighboring shops, restaurants, and attractions within a short walking distance promote a vibrant socio-economic landscape for students, faculty, staff, and visitors.



Given the increasing importance of cycling in recent years, the campus was designed to meet the needs of cyclists. The flow of cyclists is directed around the outside of the campus, in a circuit directly linked to Vienna's urban bike-path network, and integrated into the campus with bicycle parking areas, located close to the various buildings. Additionally, the campus is immediately adjacent to three different CityBike stations.

In 2021, WU master's student Bozana Tomic conducted a WU-wide mobility survey under the guidance of faculty members Tina Wakolbinger and Stefanie Peer. With more than 600 participants from WU's faculty and staff, the data collected enables WU to get a clear picture of its employees' daily commute from and to WU. The results of this survey are currently being evaluated and will become an important cornerstone in WU's effort to become a climate neutral university. The data collected will be important not only when it comes to calculating WU's carbon footprint, but also to gain an understanding of what WU can do in order to minimize emissions and promote sustainable ways of transport for all students, faculty, and staff.

## IMPACT PATHWAY

### OUTPUT

- › Increasing the attractiveness of public modes of transport for traveling to campus

### OUTCOME

- › More university staff and students come to WU by public transport or by bike

### IMPACT

- › Raising the importance of mobility consideration for large-scale construction projects

### POTENTIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- › Long-term modal split assessment in Austria

# BeAble Program, Student Counselling and the Barrier-Free Campus

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**“I finally enrolled in BeAble when I realized that I had major problems and needed help. The first two years of study were an adjustment phase for me in which I felt lost. In the beginning I was embarrassed to ask someone for help. I was always afraid of looking stupid and showing that I couldn’t do something.”**

*Student enrolled in the BeAble Program*

## KEY FACTS

- › Currently, more than 120 students are supported by the BeAble Program.
- › 1.5 kilometers of tactile paving on Campus WU
- › 90 audio induction loop systems on Campus WU
- › 109 accessible restrooms and showers on Campus WU
- › 43 elevators with voice announcements on Campus WU
- › 650 automatic doors on Campus WU
- › 13 accessible first-aid rooms on Campus WU

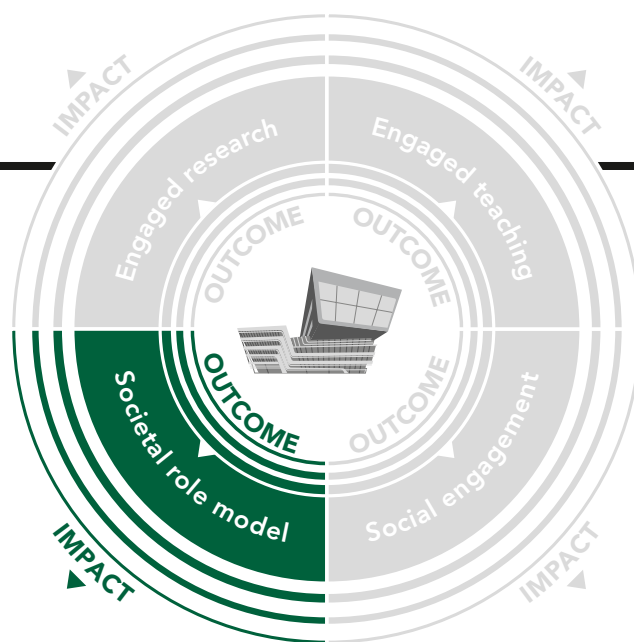
## BACKGROUND

Our society still has great leaps to make to ensure the full inclusion of all members of our community. Disabilities, visible and invisible, are omnipresent throughout our diverse society. For too long, these individuals have been marginalized and shut-out from avenues of higher learning and the socio-economic benefits that result from a university education.

Including the unique and varied perspectives of neuro-diverse individuals can bring untold value to our society as we urgently attempt to seek out and develop innovative solutions to our shared global socio-ecological problems. In order to promote a fair society with equal opportunities for all, WU is committed to implementing new methods of inclusion to give every student the opportunity to succeed.

WU is designed to be a living, working, and learning space for all individuals. WU follows the social model of disability, which focuses on the interrelationship between physical or mental health conditions and infrastructural barriers. According to the social model, disabilities are created in the interaction between impaired individuals and society. The BeAble support program is aimed at WU students with disabilities and/or chronic illnesses. The Student Counselling program provides WU students with a variety of mental health support services, recognizing that studying is stressful and that an individual’s mental health should not be sacrificed in the pursuit of knowledge. Finally, the campus has been expressly designed to provide barrier-free access to ensure all members of society are welcome at WU.





**DESCRIPTION**

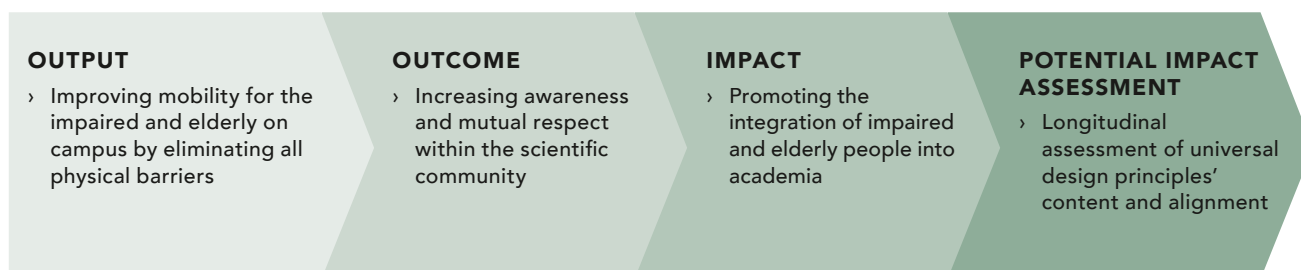
Right from the start, barrier-free accessibility was one of main design goals when planning and building Campus WU. WU’s interactive campus map includes information about barrier-free restrooms, ramps, evacuation chairs, and quiet rooms. There are wheelchair spaces in all auditoriums, audio induction loop systems for people with hearing aids, and orientation and guidance systems for persons with vision impairments, to name just a few of the many barrier-free accessibility features on campus. As of October 2019, gender-neutral toilets are provided in each building on Campus WU.

The BeAble support program is aimed at WU students with physical or psychological impairments, chronic illnesses, or reading or writing difficulties. The BeAble team helps these students to study without obstacles. Impairments are often not visible – in addition to mental health issues, there are numerous physical disabilities and chronic illnesses that, while not immediately apparent, can also make students’ life a great deal more difficult. Additionally, the BeAble team organizes social events for the supported students and gives advice to

faculty and staff on how to improve barrier-free teaching. The BeAble team issues recommendations to all participants in the BeAble program. These recommendations may include, for example, a different examination method. They are selected based on any medical specialists’ or psychologists’ reports that have been submitted to us, and are intended to compensate for the disadvantages resulting from the underlying disability. It is not a question of creating any kind of advantage, but rather of providing support and compensating for disadvantages, with no changes in content or requirements.

The Student Counselling Program is there to help students strengthen the skills they need to successfully complete their degree programs and learn to deal with stress factors and other challenges presented by student life. The Student Counselling team can provide students with support in a variety of situations, such as: psycho-social problems affecting students’ quality of life and performance potential; study-related problems; difficult social situations; as well as insecurity and anxiety.

**IMPACT PATHWAY**



# WU Public Events Program

**“One of WU’s central concerns is staying in touch with the general public and sharing the findings and results generated by its research as well as the comprehensive knowledge of its experts. For this reason, WU regularly invites the public to panel discussions, debates, and lectures, which are very popular and reach thousands of people every month.”**

*Michael Lang, Vice-Rector for Research and Human Resources*

## KEY FACTS

- › Over 1000 events were held as part of the WU Public Events Program since 2018.
- › The scale of public events ranges between 50 and 8,000 participants.
- › Overall, the Program’s events were attended by more than 160,000 people over the last four years.
- › Public events were organized by different WU stakeholders varying from university departments to external agents.
- › Events organized and/or supported by WU cover various target audiences, from university staff and students to representatives of other organizations and the general public.
- › The Public Events Program ensures a diversity of formats (from public talks to workshops to alumni meetups) and topics (from broader issues such as diversity to more specific ones such as ergonomics).

## BACKGROUND

A university is not just a group of buildings located around the libraries, nor it is a place for the storage of wisdom with restricted access. A modern university is an open and accessible source of valuable knowledge and expertise, a booster of scientific research, an accelerator of societal development, an inclusive networking platform, and a meeting spot for various stakeholders from the academic, social, economic, and public sectors. A responsible university recognizes these roles and keeps its doors open for the general public, thereby doing its share to help tackle today’s economic, social, and environmental problems.

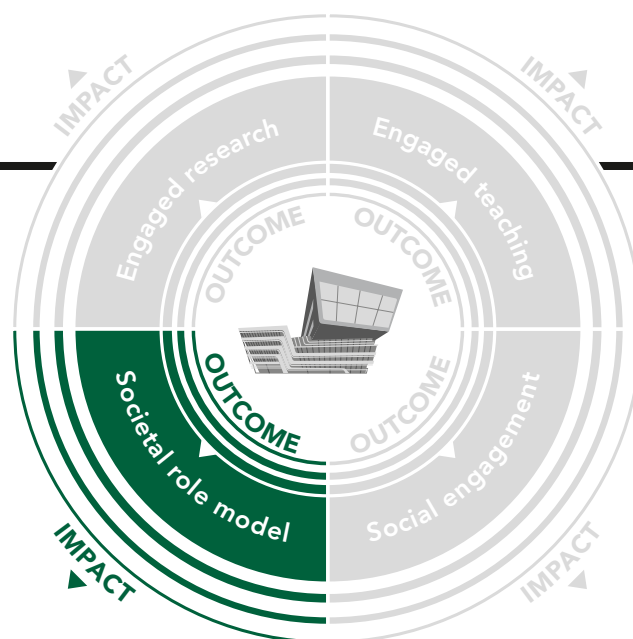
WU is committed to being a responsible university and making a positive impact on sustainable social transformations. By contributing as an open university to the discussion on socially relevant topics at the interface between science and society, WU helps to facilitate the implementation of the sustainable triple bottom line – economy, society, and the environment.

## DESCRIPTION

One of WU’s central concerns is staying in touch with the general public and sharing the findings and results generated by its research as well as the comprehensive knowledge of its experts. A responsible university creates its social impact not only through outstanding scientific achievements and their publication in specialist journals, – it is above all also about the broad communication and easily understandable translation of the results into the public discourse. For this reason, WU regularly invites the public to panel discussions, debates, and lectures, which are very popular and reach thousands of people every month. Only in October 2021, more than 3,500 people participated in events organized by WU.







Discussions and lectures are among the most popular event formats. Some of the latest public events in these formats included “The “We” in Politics,” focusing on non-/inclusivity in political rhetoric, and “The Energy System of the Future,” a discussion on renewable energy and how to decarbonize economies without sacrificing economic prosperity. Both of the events were organized by the WU Marketing & Communications office as part of the “WU matters. WU talks.” series.

There were also various workshops, another format well-loved by the audience, held with the support of WU. For example, Sarah Spiekermann was invited as a keynote speaker for the workshop on Value-Based Engineering/ IEEE 7000 at the Global Design Thinking Conference. During this workshop, Sarah Spiekermann shed light on the motivation, process flow, and philosophy behind the aforementioned concepts.

Furthermore, WU opens its doors to various associations and organizations, providing them with modern and

comfortable premises for their events and meetings. For example, in October 2021, WU hosted the General Assembly of European Law Students’ Association (ELSA) Alumni and the networking lunch, attended by almost 200 participants. This event was held as part of the ELSA Vienna Summit and celebrated the 40th anniversary of the alumni’s association. Another event supported by WU was the Visionary Program Kick-off of “Ashoka,” an NGO aimed at assisting change-makers in the social entrepreneurship sector.

WU is also committed providing its employees with the healthy and comfortable environment necessary for productive work, effective collaboration, and overall well-being. Some of the events held by WU are directly targeted at this audience to make them feel welcome, supported, and valued. Whether it is an introductory event for newly employed staff or a farewell retirement celebration of an honorary professor, WU contributes equal effort to each of them.

## IMPACT PATHWAY

### OUTPUT

- › Information events on scientific findings with social relevance

### OUTCOME

- › Improving the understanding of participants of WU public events in the scientific analysis of societal problems

### IMPACT

- › Enhancing critical and well informed citizenship

### POTENTIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- › Frequency of participation and satisfaction/ knowledge gain of participants of WU event

# Third Mission Impact Report

**WU**  
WIRTSCHAFTS  
UNIVERSITÄT  
WIEN VIENNA  
UNIVERSITY OF  
ECONOMICS  
AND BUSINESS



**If you also have suitable activities for our next Third Mission Impact Report, please send a short description of the activity to:**

**[rce-vienna@wu.ac.at](mailto:rce-vienna@wu.ac.at)**





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Subway: U2 stations "Messe-Prater" or "Krieau"  
Bus: 82A, "Südportalstraße" stop