

2023 REPORT OF SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



IN
HARMONY
with SELF and
OTHERS

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Social Responsibility and Sustainable Development at Vilniaus kolegija / Higher Education Institution

In today's world, sustainable development and social responsibility are very important issues that are being debated not only by international organisations, national governments, public institutions, business organisations, educational institutions, but also by the society at large.

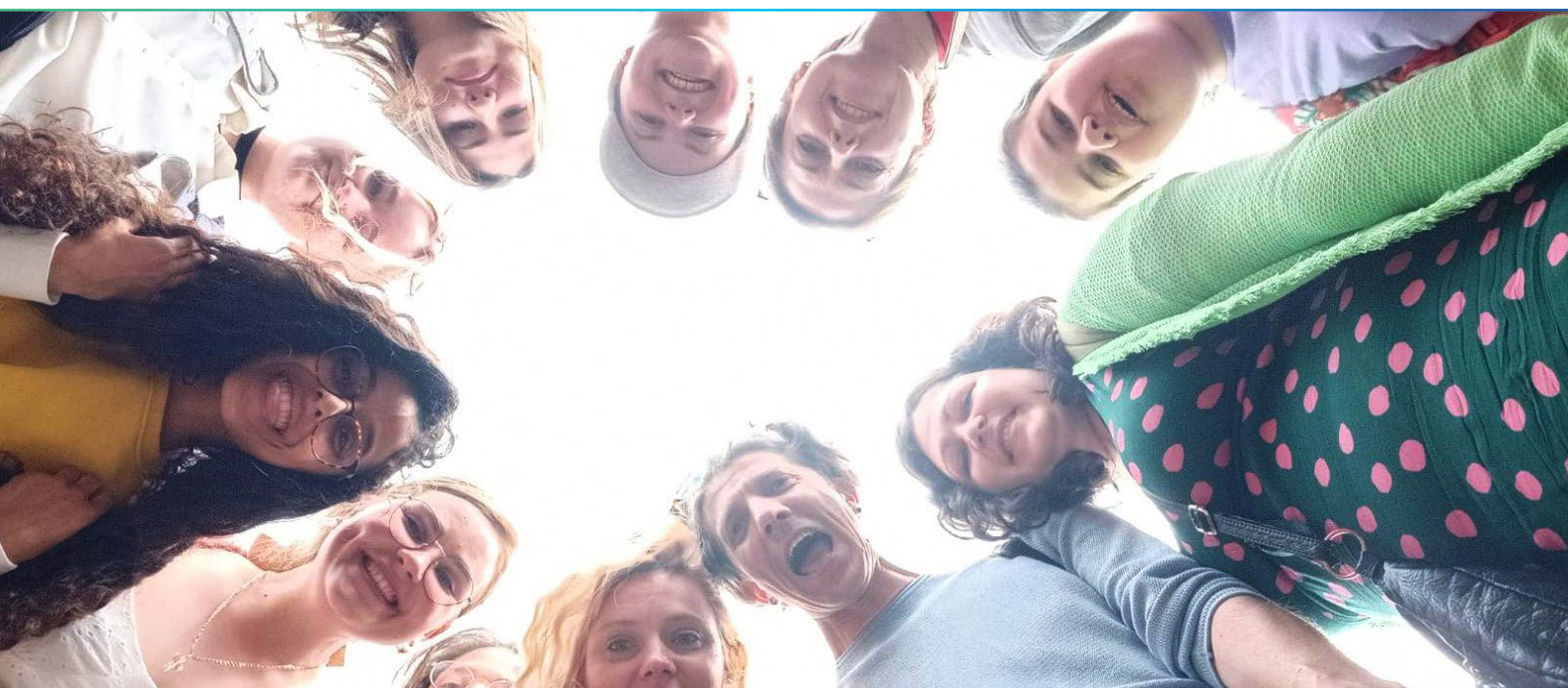
Higher education institutions (hereinafter - HEIs) play a key role in building a better future for society and the planet, so their commitment to being socially responsible and contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is essential.

The environmental impact of HEIs should be the first consideration in uncovering their impact on sustainable development. HEIs also have a negative impact on the environment because, like all other organisations, they consume resources, generate waste and contribute to CO₂ emissions.

Thus, green initiatives are also becoming important for HEIs: organisations are becoming greener through the introduction of energy-efficient technologies, waste reduction programmes and sustainable building practices.

Emphasising the social responsibility of HEIs must first and foremost focus on proper working conditions and labour relations, not only in compliance with the applicable laws but also in the development of ethical and harmonious relationships. To answer the question of how HEIs can be more socially responsible, the first focus is on ethical and socially responsible governance, that is, the implementation of ethical governance practices to ensure that decision-making is transparent, fair and considers the broader impact on society.

Social responsibility to students is most often associated with quality and market-driven studies as



well as additional benefits for students. Studying is not only a process of acquiring knowledge and information, building important competences, but also a process of building relationships based on mutual respect.

Higher education institutions need to build relationships with local communities and actively collaborate to contribute to their well-being through partnerships, projects and outreach programmes.

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is just as important. Higher education institutions are integrating sustainable development into their curricula, promoting the development of information on sustainability issues, and developing the competences of their students and teachers, as well as the public, to meet the present challenges.

Focusing on social responsibility to people, whatever is the role of the concerned party, equality and inclusion of people is important. Social responsibility is enhanced by promoting diversity, equality and including people in VIKO community and in education.

HEIs can contribute to sustainable development through three areas:

- **Study organisation and education:** integrating sustainability across disciplines ensures that students from different disciplines acquire the knowledge they need to address sustainability challenges in their future careers. Sharing knowledge with the public is equally as important.
- **Research and innovation:** HEIs can lead research initiatives focused on sustainable solutions to societal challenges, contributing to the development of sustainable ideas and practices.
- **Cooperation with social partners:** building collaborative links with local communities, NGOs and businesses to resolve social problems and promote sustainable development.

Altogether, sustainable development and social responsibility are important factors for higher education institutions. By integrating these principles into their core values and activities, HEIs contribute to a more equitable, responsible and sustainable world.

Since December 2018, Vilniaus kolegija / Higher Education Institution (hereinafter – VIKO) has been a member of the United Nations Global Compact, which is committed to creating and promoting the well-being of society based on the principles of social responsibility and sustainable development. According to the Law on Higher Education and Research, HEIs' social responsibility is linked to the sustainable development of the region by working with local community, business and government groups and by developing the individual's and the community's capacity for independent and creative thinking and action.

Considering the above, VIKO has been planning its activities in recent years in line with the objectives of VIKO Strategy 2021-2025, which are focused on creating sustainable change. The strategy's mission of HEI "to provide modern higher education studies in line with European standards, to ensure the development of nationally and internationally recognised applied research and professional art, in effective cooperation with the business world, in order to achieve a successful professional career for students and the welfare of the Vilnius region and Lithuania," is focused on all three of the previously mentioned areas.

HEI's social responsibility and sustainable development policy and strategic directions are formulated considering the strategic priorities and needs of the United Nations, the European Union, the Republic of Lithuania and the municipalities of Vilnius City and District in the context of social responsibility and sustainable development.

It should be noted that HEI has been a socially responsible higher education institution for many years (even before it became a member of the UN Global Compact or formed the 2021-2025 strategy), based on tradition, innovation, tolerance and responsibility to the environment and the community. VIKO, constantly challenging itself, expresses its desire to improve and promote the development of society, to teach educated, independent, active and responsible members of the society, to develop the intellectual potential of the society to ensure that knowledge and science ensure the harmonious implementation of economic, social and environmental goals.

As an active member of the country and the world, VIKO is aware of the urgency of contributing to the green transformation and highlights the implementation of globally relevant activities in its strategy.

The Social Responsibility and Sustainable Development Programme of Vilniaus kolegija / Higher Education Institution for 2022-2025 emphasises the following principles of social responsibility and sustainable development:

- **Community** – the desire to work together, collaborate, create and develop joint projects.
- **Initiative and leadership** – the drive and motivation to act and develop new initiatives in line with personal and community value priorities.
- **Equal opportunities** – to ensure that all persons have non-discriminatory working conditions and to promote social inclusion.
- **Environmental responsibility** – the aim to improve the quality of the environment and making responsible environmental choices.
- **Citizenship** – prioritising the needs of society, active participation in building the well-being of the state and the community, participation in civic action, respect for the historical memory of the state, the democratic system and statehood.
- **Volunteering** – the aim of making an unpaid personal effort to contribute to public initiatives or to the solution of a public need.
- **Transparency and accountability** – the commitment to carry out its activities in a fair, open and informative manner and provide information to all interested parties.

It is planned that in the end of 2024 or beginning of 2025, meetings of the working group for the renewal of the social responsibility and sustainable development programme of Vilniaus kolegija / Higher Education Institution will start with the aim of shaping the new strategy of Vilniaus kolegija / Higher Education Institution for 2026-2030. The international project “[Universities for Sustainable Development](#)” (partners: Pablo de Olavide University of Spain, University of Applied Sciences of Savonia in Finland, Vilniaus kolegija / Higher Education Insti-

tution in Lithuania) will start in autumn 2022.

The project participants identified [indicators for sustainable development of VIKO](#) in 2023 (the list will be expanded every year, as improvement and greater organisational involvement is the main goal of every HEI). A methodology for the implementation of sustainable development in higher education was launched in 2023 and will be presented in 2024.

In order to ensure the smooth preparation of the Social Responsibility and Sustainable Development Report, Social Responsibility and Sustainable Development Working Groups have been established in 2020 in all the faculties of VIKO to ensure the implementation of Social Responsibility and Sustainable Development in the faculties and to prepare, in cooperation with all the faculties, the annual Social Responsibility and Sustainable Development Reports of Vilniaus kolegija / Higher Education Institution from 2021.

The annual Social Responsibility and Sustainable Development Report for VIKO is intended to inform the HEI community, social partners, the public and all stakeholders about HEI’s socially responsible activities, orientations and achievements. The report is an official document of VIKO and is submitted to the United Nations Global Compact each year. Previous VIKO Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainable Development reports are available on VIKO website: <https://www.viko.lt/kolegija/socialine-atsakomybe/socialines-atsakomybes-ataskaitos/>.

This year’s report (as well as the previous ones) is prepared in accordance with the guidelines for social responsibility and sustainable development for the entire VIKO community presented by the HEI’s Research Department in 2019, highlighting the integration of the principles of sustainable development and social responsibility into all study programmes and subjects, and the need to highlight not only the contribution of each faculty in this process according to the thematic focus and potential of each faculty, but also the cross-faculty priorities.

The Social Responsibility and Sustainable Development Programme of Vilniaus kolegija / Higher Education Institution for 2022-2025 highlights the main guidelines for HEI’s social responsibility and sustainable development activities, the implementation of which is described in the following sections of this report.

Sustainable education, science and competences for sustainable development

Education has the power to shape a better future for the world, so it should promote change in society, foster common human values and play a key role in helping people build an equitable, peaceful and sustainable world.

The Education 2030 Declaration, adopted at the World Education Forum in 2015, also highlights the importance of global education for a peaceful and sustainable world. The declaration emphasises that education is a key to sustainable development, and that providing opportunities to develop the knowledge, skills and values that enable people to make wise choices that respond to local and global chal-

lenges is an important factor in the quality of education.

Goal 4 of the 2015 United Nations Sustainable Development Agenda focuses on quality education. It aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning. The objective 4.7 of this goal also highlights the importance of global education: by 2030, ensure that all learners have the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among other things, education on sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, the promotion of peace and a culture of



non-violence, global citizenship, and the valuation of cultural diversity and the contribution of culture to sustainable development.

Higher education institutions integrate Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) into their curricula, thereby promoting awareness and understanding of sustainability issues not only among their students and employees, but also among the public, thereby developing the competences needed to address the challenges at hand and changing people's attitudes to enable the development of innovations and solutions that are conducive to societal progress.

In order to ensure sustainable education and the development of sustainable competences among students, all VIKO faculties focus on social responsibility and sustainable development: relevant issues of sustainable development and social responsibility are included in study programme descriptions (the content of the study programmes is reviewed annually and updated as necessary, developing the themes of social responsibility and sustainable development in various study subjects), and relevant issues are addressed through assignments (case studies) and written work, coursework and projects, especially students' final theses. In 2023, 175 theses and dissertations were prepared in all fields of science, contributing to the promotion of sustainable development or social responsibility through their ideas.

Social partnerships with various organisations are important in the study process, as they provide opportunities to organise outgoing lectures or study excursions (i.e. in 2023, visits were made to Algimantas Vaupšas Farm, UAB DHL Logistics Lietuva, UAB Western Union Processing Lithuania, UAB Teltonika, UAB Avia Solution Group, UAB Grant Thornton Baltic, UAB Shift4 Payments Lithuania, AB Šiaulių bankas, UAB Maxima LT, UAB Rimi Lietuva and many others.). Representatives of organisations are also invited to present lectures to students and/or employees. Representatives of organisations share their knowledge and encourage VIKO community to take an interest in current issues and trends and to find solutions to the challenges they face.

Dr Gaurav Sharma from Singapore, promoter of innovative food and founder of Shandi Global, vis-

ited the Faculty of Agrotechnologies. He was interested in VIKO's outsourced project activities, the spectrum of research activities, the practical base for applied research and studies, laboratory equipment, and the cooperation of the Faculty of Agrotechnologies with its strategic partner - UAB Thermo Fischer Scientific Baltics.

The Faculty of Agrotechnology invites food technologists to teach students about sustainable food production, food safety and quality, and food innovation: Food Technology (FT) students had a lecture on [24/02/2023](#) given by Liucija Makovska, a technologist from the New Product Development Department of UAB Biovela Group; FT students had a visit to the main culinary-confectionery and bakery of UAB RIMI LIETUVA on [21/02/2023](#); Food Technologist of UAB Rimi Lietuva gave a lecture on "The work of a food technologist - experience and challenges" and a study tour to the main culinary-confectionery plant of UAB Rimi Lietuva on [18/04/2023](#).

This is in line with VIKO guideline to develop the themes of social responsibility and sustainable development in study programmes, ensuring that each subject reflects relevant aspects of social responsibility and sustainable development. Systematically updating study programmes to incorporate innovation and new scientific developments, with reference to sustainable development. Introduce sustainable educational innovations that expand the opportunities and accessibility of lifelong learning.

VIKO is not just a place to get a specialisation - it's a place where students can fulfil their scientific potential. The faculties of VIKO have student scientific societies. Students together with lecturers carry out research, organise student scientific conferences (e.g. "[Economics. Business. Management](#)", "[Youth in a Changing Society](#)"), participate in conferences organised by other HEIs in Lithuania and abroad, where they give scientific presentations. In 2023, as many as 1,514 VIKO students prepared and presented 164 papers and articles at international and republican scientific-practical conferences: "Modern Technologies for Sustainable Environment", "Youth in a Changing Society", "The Role of Higher Education in Society: Students' Applied Research 2023", "Synergy of Science and Art 2023", "Thinking - Researching - Applying", "Econo-

my, Business, Management 2023”, “Future Creators 2023”, “Forum of Ideas 2023”, “Trends in Research and Innovation in the Context of Computer Science”, “YTIC - Young Talents International Conference”, “Trends in Research and Innovation in CS”, “Society and Culture: Genesis of Values and their Transformation”, and others.

Students’ competences are developed during their studies, through lectures, independent assignments and events. The last year has been special because VIKO has organised a number of Erasmus+ Blended Intensive Programme (BIP) events where students from VIKO and other HEIs from other countries have come together to discuss specific topics (e.g. “Sustainable Tourism”, “Lifestyle Matters”, etc.), and to address real challenges formulated by representatives of organisations.

The Erasmus+ exchange programme is an opportunity for students to develop their skills. Those who do not dare to go abroad for a longer period (for part-time studies or internships) have actively participated in BIP events at other higher education institutions. In the academic year 2022-2023, the following students used the Erasmus+ exchange programme: 77 students went for part-time studies, 38 students went for internships, 77 students went for a short-term study visit and 34 students took part in project activities.

Strengthening social partnerships with Lithuanian schools, education centres, youth organisations and clubs, teachers’ associations and societies, and developing HEI community initiatives, educational visits to schools or student visits to HEIs are organised to motivate students to pursue their higher education studies and qualifications, and to underline the importance of lifelong learning. **To attract as many motivated applicants as possible, studies are publicised every year by promoting the study programmes organised by VIKO, highlighting their advantages and relevance to the needs of the labour market.** Lecturers, students, employees, in cooperation with VIKO Study Office in 2023 (as well as every year) carried out information and publicity activities: study programmes were presented at the Open Doors events, on the websites of VIKO and faculties, and in social networks. Meetings were held with students in gymnasiums and schools, students were invited to attend meetings at the facul-

ties, and distance learning lessons were organised for students.

Sustainable education would not be possible if HEI lecturers did not consistently and purposefully upgrade their skills through participation in various events, or if they did not go abroad to upgrade their skills through the ERASMUS+ exchange programme. In the academic year 2022-2023, 391 employees travelled abroad (some more than once a year) for teaching and training at international conferences.

In order to spread the message of social responsibility and sustainable development to the society and VIKO community through openly accessible public lectures and seminars, trainings, public events, scientific conferences, forums, roundtables, initiatives to disseminate the ideas of social responsibility and sustainable development, 65 competency development events were organised at VIKO in the year 2023, which were attended by the members of VIKO community and other interested parties.

VIKO organises conferences that have become traditional and attract researchers from other national and international higher education institutions. In 2023, 12 scientific and practical conferences were organised, 3 of them international.

Active participation in conferences. VIKO lecturers and students have presented at international and practical conferences, in Lithuania and abroad, and have made more than 125 presentations, e.g. at the UN Climate Change Conference COP28 in December 2023 in the United Arab Emirates, the Higher Education Higher Technology Institution, together with the European Association of Institutions of Higher Education (EURASHE), organised a panel discussion on the topic “Higher Education Institutions’ role in promoting local governance of climate mitigation & adaptation”, in which discussion was held with Dr Waddah S Ghanem Al Hashmi (United Arab Emirates), researcher, Anna-Stina Tähkävuori (Finland), Director of the Innovation Centre of the Metropolia University of Applied Sciences, and Dalia Karlaitė (lecturer at the Faculty of Business Management who is responsible for the coordination of VIKO’s sustainability and social responsibility activities), the discussion was moderated by Dr John Edwards, Secretary General of EURASHE.

Public events or activities organised by HEI. In 2023, the Faculty of Arts and Creative Technologies offered non-formal education programmes: clothing tailoring courses at various levels (beginners, advanced), preparatory courses for applicants to the Fashion Design and Image Design study programmes. As many as 62 residents of the capital acquired professional competences in sewing, designing and drawing during the courses.

Lecturers' knowledge is not only applied in their work with students and research but also expanded through participation in various research projects. In 2023, 46 national and international projects were carried out at VIKO.

Lecturers write scientific articles and present papers at conferences. The total number of publications on the promotion of scientific and artistic results in 2023 was 278, of which 55 were published in scientific journals of high scientific standing.

Lecturers also share their professional knowledge in the media or through consultancy.

Sustainable education and science, as well as the development of competences for sustainable development, are therefore important investments for the future, as they not only help to create a generation of conscious and responsible citizens but also play a key role in building a long-lasting and sustainable society.

Panellists (from left to right): Anna-Stina Tähkävuori, Director of the Innovation Centre at Metropolia University of Applied Sciences (Finland), Vilnius kolegija / Higher Education Institution lecturer Dalia Karlaitė, EURASHE Secretary General Dr John Edwards, scientist Dr Waddah S. Ghanem Al Hashmi (United Arab Emirates).



Social partnership

Social partnership of higher education institutions refers to cooperation and social dialogue between HEIs and a wide range of organisations: businesses, public institutions, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and other societal entities. Social partnership is important and beneficial for both the academic community (lecturers and students) and the wider society, and therefore Vilniaus kolegija / Higher Education Institution gives social partnership special attention and priority. VIKO aims to promote social partnership with associations, NGOs, business enterprises, public sector organisations, and municipalities in the Vilnius

region that are interested in education, applied research, partnership projects, and joint initiative activities in the context of social responsibility and sustainable development. Strengthen social partnerships with organisations interested in volunteering, citizenship and social support.

Some important reasons why social partnership is important for cooperating countries:

- **Career and labour market orientation:** HEIs, in cooperation with businesses and other organisations, can inform and ensure that study programmes meet market needs and requirements, which is why social partners are



involved in HEI's curriculum and programme committees.

- Practical training and professional experience:** Representatives of organisations take part in career days organised by VIKO faculties, share their expertise and give lectures to the academic community of VIKOs, as well as organising outgoing lectures to organisations. If needed, advises students on the preparation of their final theses, reviews them, and participates in final thesis defence committees. Scholarships are awarded to the most successful students (e.g. UAB Teltonika scholarship programme for first-year students of the Faculty of Economics "The future belongs to me!"). To give VIKO students practical experience in dealing with real professional situations in the study process, coursework assignments are formulated in cooperation with social partners, and there is also cooperation in organising internships for students. It is a way for students to put their theoretical knowledge into practice and better understand their future career options. HEIs work with organisations to attract the best professionals they need. It should also be stressed that not only students but also employees (academic and non-academic personnel) can undertake internships in organisations.
- Research and innovation:** Partnerships with businesses and other organisations foster research that responds to practical challenges (44 outsourced design/artistic development contracts with natural and legal persons, public bodies, businesses, municipalities and associations have been awarded by VIKO in 2023); and organisations can provide financial support or resources to HEIs to carry out innovative projects and to develop novelties. VIKO students work on thesis projects commissioned by social partners. In 2023, 176 theses were prepared, which is 13.93% of the total number of theses.
- General society development:** Social partnership allows HEIs to contribute to the development and well-being of the local community (social and philanthropic initiatives); HEIs

can act as catalysts for community projects and programmes, contributing to education, health and social well-being (public lectures organised by VIKO).

- Promoting sustainability and social responsibility:** Partnerships with organisations with an interest in sustainability and social responsibility help HEIs to embed these values in their activities; working with a wide range of stakeholders can help shape sustainable and ethical policies and practices.

Social partnership in HEIs is thus mutually beneficial, as it promotes interaction between academia and society, contributes to the quality of education and the development of research, and shapes responsible citizens.

On 16 December 2021, the Director approved VIKO's Strategic Partnership Programme 2021-2025 and the Action Plan 2021-2025 by Order No. V-354 of 16 December 2021, which provides for the purpose, directions, implementation and coordination of the strategic partnership to improve the quality of services provided and the impact of the strategic partnership in the region. Based on the recommendations for strategic partnerships and the strategic partnerships identified by the departments, the faculties identify national and international strategic partners on an annual basis.

VIKO aims to carry out applied research, experimental development and professional arts, and commissioned project activities in science and applied arts that foster sustainable development and social responsibility.

In 2023, 69 joint activities with municipal administrations and public organisations in the Vilnius region were implemented at Vilniaus kolegija / Higher Education Institution.

VIKO lecturers provide professional qualification development training (i.e. on 9 May 2023, the Faculty of Health Care concluded a cooperation agreement with the Multiple Sclerosis Society "Feniksai" to organise joint qualification courses on various topics, such as "Movement - for the sake of health" (18/05/2023), "Multiple Sclerosis - Today's Challenges" (31/05/2023), "Has Obesity Become a Norm?" (20/06/2023), "Insomnia - causes, tips,

solutions” (21/09/2023), “Diagnosis - oncological disease, how to help yourself and your patients?” (04/10/2023), “The link between lifestyle and headache” (16/11/2023), “Neurodegenerative diseases: diagnosis, treatment, care. News” (23/11/2023), “Non-medical management of anxiety, stress, tension” (6/12/2023)), **co-organise joint scientific and practical conferences**, i.e. 11 May 2023 “Biomedical diagnostics 2023: science and practice”, **representatives of organisations are also invited to events organised by VIKO**.

Students and lecturers from the Faculty of Arts and Creative Technologies participate in the events of the social partners through artistic performances or by co-organising artistic events (see section 9 for more details).

VIKO aims to strengthen social partnerships with Lithuanian schools, education centres, youth organisations and clubs, teachers’ associations and societies, by developing initiatives from VIKO com-

munity to organise educational visits to schools or visits by school students to VIKO, motivating students to study and obtain higher education qualifications, and emphasising the importance of lifelong learning.

VIKO lecturers organise open lectures that are open to pupils. Lectures for pupils are also held in schools - not only in Vilnius, but also in other cities. Sometimes pupils come to the faculties too. The Faculty of Arts and Creative Technologies hosted the “Student for a Day” project, which brought together more than 120 students from different learning institutions across the country (April-May 2023). Pupils are invited to participate in the student scientific conferences organised by VIKO, and it is pleasing to see the interest shown by pupils every year.

In summary, social partnership is a mutual benefit: for higher education institutions and for the collaborating organisations.



Strengthening social inclusion

Vilnius kolegija / Higher Education Institution aims to reduce social inequalities and develop harmonious relationships by organising various activities.

VIKO is guided in its activities by the provisions of the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania, which establishes the equality of persons and the prohibition to restrict the rights of human beings and to grant privileges to them based on gender, race, nationality, language, origin, social status, faith, convictions or views. Any discrimination on the grounds of a person's gender, sexual orientation, race, nationality, language, origin, citizenship

and social status, religion, beliefs, opinions, marital status, intent to have a child, affiliation to political parties and associations, or age is prohibited at VIKO. In 2023, the results of the study on the [state of gender equality in Vilnius kolegija / Higher Education Institution in 2022](#) were presented at the meeting of the Directorate.

The questionnaire is based on the Gender Equality Questionnaire (with the consent of the Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsman). 168 Vilnius kolegija / Higher Education Institution employees and 111 students participated in the survey. The survey aimed to find out the situation of gender



equality in VIKO and to provide recommendations on how the current situation could be improved in the future.

In 2023, the meetings of VIKO community were translated into sign language, not only to meet the guideline “Strengthen and promote the Lithuanian Sign Language study programme to meet the specific needs of the country’s citizens”, but also due to the real need of people with hearing impairment.

VIKO runs projects aimed at improving the learning environment for students with special needs. From 1 February 2022, the Faculty of Economics is implementing the Erasmus+ Higher Education Strategic Partnerships project “Educational Empowerment and Social Inclusion of students with disabilities through Digital Solutions and Assistive Technologies” (EESI-DIGI; project No. 2021-1-EL01-KA220-HED-000027605), coordinated by the University of Patras (Greece). The aim of the project is to enable students with disabilities to acquire digital skills by providing a qualification to bridge existing skills gaps, considering the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The project will run until 31 January 2024. To further improve the studies of people with disabilities, another Erasmus+ project “Promoting people with disabilities employment by enhancing their digital skills and competences to support a remote working scheme (DigitAbility)” (No. 2022-1-IT01-KA220-VET- 000087590) has been launched at the Faculty of Economics from 2023.

Lecturers working with **students with special needs** use individualised teaching and assessment methods to help them achieve the intended learning outcomes. Students from socially disadvantaged groups and students with special needs can get advice on accessibility issues from VIKO Study Office and/or Faculty Study Departments. In 2023, 41 students with disabilities/special needs were enrolled. Flexible forms of assessment of studies and achievements are used to assess the performance of students with special needs, adapting to their abilities (e.g. distance learning, blended learning methods, extended time for final exams). For example, for a student with a visual impairment at the Faculty of Economics, assignments are presented in Word (for a student with a **visual impairment**, the computer program reads the infor-

mation presented out loud), while visuals, graphs, charts are annotated verbally, and additional one-to-one guidance is provided.

Students with **mobility disabilities** can not only study remotely, but can also study by contact, as most faculties have facilities that are accessible to people with mobility disabilities.

Accessibility of buildings for people with different disabilities is crucial to ensure that students and employees have the opportunity to be with other members of the community and not feel unwelcome. VIKO’s buildings located at Studentų st 39A (which includes the Faculties of Agrotechnologies, Economics, and Pedagogy), Didlaukio st 49 (Faculty of Business Management), and Didlaukio st 82 (Faculty of Arts and Creative Technologies) are sufficiently adapted for the mobility of students with disabilities: the main entrances to the buildings have sloping ramps or stairways, the stairways are marked with bright stripes, many of the lecture theatres do not have thresholds and are of a suitable width, and there are lifts to move between floors. The Faculty of Economics (Studentų st 39A, 3rd floor) has a toilet for people with reduced mobility (this toilet is also available to students and employees of the Faculties of Agrotechnologies and Pedagogy who have reduced mobility).

In the Faculties of Economics and Arts and Creative Technologies, prominent numbers corresponding to the number of the classroom are placed near the entrances of the classrooms for visually impaired people. In 2022, HEI signed a cooperation agreement with the Lithuanian Audiosensory Library to improve the accessibility of studies for people with visual, reading or other disabilities.

HEI employees not only improve their skills in promoting social inclusion (i. e. From 22-26 May 2023, lecturers from the Faculty of Pedagogy **took part in a placement** in German schools to learn about inclusive education in Germany, and the ways and methods used by teachers to help pupils with special educational needs; on 23 November participated in the Disability Forum “Inclusive Higher Education 2023”, which aimed to discuss the challenges of students with disabilities/individual needs in the process of individualisation of studies, adapting study programmes, study materials, and academic integrity), but also organise

such events themselves for VIKO community and the public. VIKO has organised a number of social inclusion events in 2023:

On 8 March, an open lecture on “[The social worker’s relationship with families at social risk](#)” was organised, during which the role and challenges of the social worker in interacting with families at social risk were discussed, and experiences and good practices were shared.

On 13 March, a screening of the film “[Man viskas gerai](#)” (en. I’m fine) and a discussion with a psychologist encouraged people to talk about their feelings - there is no need to be ashamed of being depressed or experiencing other psychological difficulties, and it is important to look for a solution to the problem and to discuss the prevention of suicide.

On 29 March, a workshop on “[Inclusive Physical Activity](#)” was held to increase awareness and skills of educators working with children with disabilities.

On 12 April, the event “[Prisoners’ Relatives - Towards Empowerment](#)” was held with the aim of

presenting the project of Caritas and the Lithuanian Prison Service to provide support and counselling to prisoners and their relatives in order to reduce discrimination against prisoners and their relatives.

On 11 October, representatives of the [International Network for Parent-Focused Studies and Research](#) met with [Dr Roberta Metsola, President of the European Parliament](#), and [Eva Mitsopoulou, Head of the EU’s Education Programme](#), to focus on tackling the issues of domestic violence, migration, climate change, poverty, and human rights, which affect a wide range of social groups and families, and to showcase the international research on parenting and the prevention of domestic violence.

On 19-20 October, an [international scientific conference “Social Work with Vulnerable Groups”](#) was held to discuss relevant problems of social work with vulnerable groups and ways to overcome them, presenting the results of the latest scientific research.

On 30 October, a seminar for educators and non-educators on “[Inclusive Physical Activity: men-](#)



tal and social well-being” was organised, with the aim of introducing participants to the principles of inclusive education, enabling all children to participate in the learning process and in the life of the community, the benefits of physical activity for mental and social well-being, the types of disabilities and their specificities, the potential of tricycling, etc.

The Faculty of Pedagogy is active not only in organising events, but also in organising guest lectures in prisons: 31 March at Marijampolė Prison and 23-24 November at Pravieniškės Prison No. 1, where they learned about the system of execution of sentences, challenges and opportunities, the specificity and importance of social work in prisons, as well as interacted with prisoners and their social workers; On 11 December 2023, visited Alytus Prison, where participants got acquainted with the practice and experience of social work in the

penitentiary system, and had discussions with prisoners’ resocialisation specialists and prisoners. On 24 May 2023, the Faculty of Education hosted the presentation of the book “Mes nuteistieji” (en. We are convicts) by the Centre for Prisoners’ Counselling, a book which contains people’s stories and their experiences regarding the situation of prisoners and their reintegration into society.

Graduates of the Faculty of Arts and Creative Technologies, Department of Fashion Design, presented their creative works on the conscious consumption of natural resources at the Orthodox church of St Nicholas the Wonderworker in Lukiškės Prison, at the National Culture Forum “Culture and Ecology” (28 November 2023).

Strengthening social inclusion is an essential aspect of achieving an equitable, equal and sustainable society.



Lietuvių gestų kalbos pirštų abėcėlė

A	Ą	B	C	Č	D
E	Ę	Ė	F	G	H
I	Į	Y	J	K	L
M	N	O	P	R	S

Promoting information literacy and the digital society

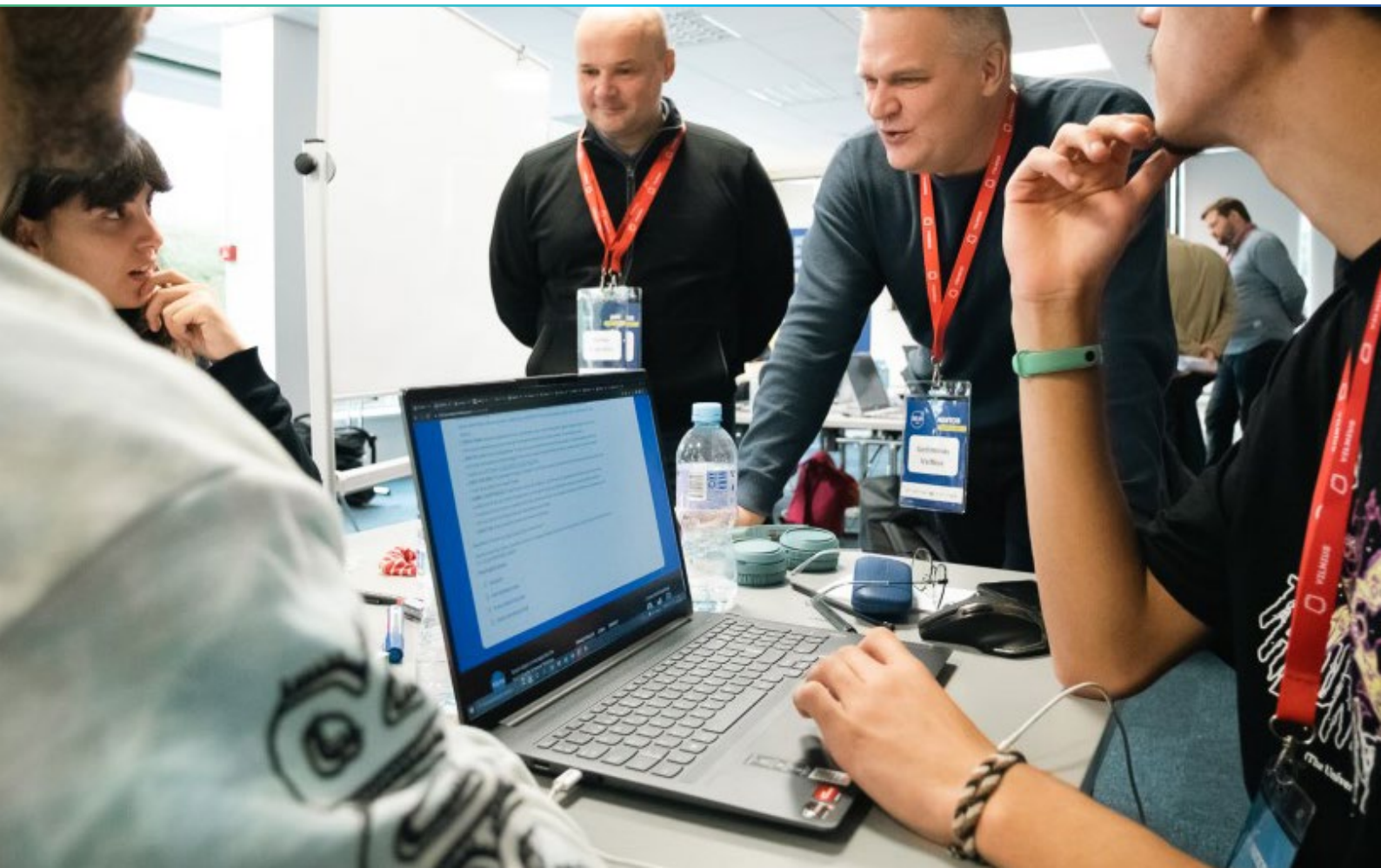
Vilniaus kolegija / Higher Education Institution aims to promote the themes of digitisation, information literacy, sustainable digital innovation, cybersecurity, and robotics for the well-being of the society by creating as many opportunities as possible to educate the Lithuanian society in these areas, developing applied research and social partnership with organisations that are interested in these issues.

Sharing information with the public also requires the adoption of innovative information and digital technologies in our own operations.

HEI documents are managed using the electronic document management system (DMS) “Kontora”.

The **virtual learning environment MOODLE** has long been used in the study process and training is provided for beginning teachers, for example, HEI lecturers have participated in workshops organised by the LieDM Support and Development Consortium, i.e.: 6 April 2023.

“Artificial Intelligence in Studies: possibilities and limits”, on 21 May, the use of gamification elements in MOODLE environment in the training of primary education teachers was presented and dis-



cussed “(Un)Exploited Possibilities of MOODLE Environment. Sharing of good practices among higher education teachers”.

The Faculty of Electronics and Informatics (EIF) focuses on the promotion of information literacy, the enhancement of cybersecurity, the development of digitalisation and the introduction of e-innovations, and the development of robotics for the welfare of the society, especially in the light of the vision of the Vilniaus kolegija / Higher Education Institution Strategy for 2021-2025, which inspires VIKO community to actively participate in the development of a socially responsible society. The Faculty aims to educate professionals, actively develop applied research and educate society.

Promoting information literacy – is an important strand of Lithuania’s sustainable development, which strengthens the capacity of community members to make use of new technologies, thus helping them to adapt to rapid technological change. Information literacy is essential for critical thinking and lifelong learning and is essential for socialisation and active life in civil society. Promoting information literacy is part of lifelong learning, an important part of society’s development, enhancing social inclusion among its members of all races, genders and age groups.

The Faculty of Electronics and Informatics implements various activities to promote information literacy, primarily through studies and non-formal education. In this way, the ability of members of society to identify, obtain, evaluate, select and use ethically and responsibly the information they need from a variety of information sources is developed. It empowers people to achieve their personal, social, work and educational goals. It is a fundamental human right in the digital world. Information literacy helps members of society to protect their privacy in the public space and builds their capacity to use new digital technologies intelligently and creatively. At the same time, it fosters public creativity by improving the skills of members of society to create new content through the effective use of images, sounds and texts. An initiative related to the promotion of information literacy among Vilniaus kolegija / Higher Education Institution students and employees is the annual competition “Misconceptions”, organised by the Faculty of

Economics and Informatics, which is a comic book competition for members of the Vilniaus kolegija / Higher Education Institution community to celebrate the United Nations’ English Language Day and the World Innovation and Creativity Day. The 5th Creative Comic Competition “Digital Labyrinths or Digital Lifestyle” took place in 2023. This comic competition, which involves creative students and employees of VIKO, strengthens the integrity of the community and fosters communion among community members of all ages, genders and nations. Hilarious stories, without avoiding self-irony, foster trust in each other and shape VIKO community as a cohesive social partner.

Strengthening cyber security – is a necessary direction for Lithuania’s sustainable development, leading to a secure information society. Cyber security is a critical IT area, whether for business, public organisations, government or even globally. Cyber security knowledge, skills and research are a key component in ensuring cyber security at the organisational or even national level. Lithuania is an EU leader in cybersecurity, which is why Lithuania’s priority is to ensure a high level of Lithuania is committed to a high level of cyber security throughout the country.

The Faculty of Electronics and Informatics trains cyber security specialists, and the Faculty has established and successfully operates the Cyber Security Laboratory, where applied research in cyber security science is carried out, as well as cyber security training courses.

Developing digitisation and e-innovation – Lithuania’s sustainable development, which develops digital skills in society and promotes sustainability and modern technologies. This is in line with the objective of the National Progress Framework 2021-2030 to “Promote the digitalisation of the country - the public sector, the economy and society - by developing solutions that empower businesses, the public sector and academia to access the necessary computing, data management or cyber-security capabilities, to enhance the capacity of citizens themselves to make full use of new technologies, to raise awareness of the coming technological changes and to empower the country to adapt to them”. The European Commission has set a target that by 2030, all essential public

services will be fully digitised and delivered online, 80% of citizens will have a digital identity, at least 80% of the national population will have basic digital skills, and 75% of EU businesses will use cloud and big data technologies. The Faculty of Electronics and Informatics will directly contribute to the achievement of these important goals through the development of digitisation and the introduction of electronic innovations.

The work in the field of digitisation development and implementation of electronic innovations is dominated by the activities of the Software Development Department of the Faculty of Electronics and Informatics, as the activities of this department are directly oriented towards digitisation, when information from paper sources is transferred into the electronic space.

Students in the Application Systems programme develop websites, mobile applications and other information systems that not only facilitate work, but also enable the transition to electronic documents from paper-based versions, with strong positive socially responsible environmental impacts. This directly contributes to saving the planet's resources and to reducing CO₂ emissions in subsequent paper recovery or recycling processes.

In February 2023, a group of researchers from the Faculty of Electronics and Informatics, together with foreign partners, completed the international project Knowledge Alliance of Business Idea Assessment: a Digital Approach (KABADA), coordinated by Banku Augstskola/School of Business and Finance (Latvia). Developed an innovative digital tool to prepare a business plan based on the CANVAS model and use artificial intelligence to test it and assess the weaknesses and strengths of the business plan. The tool integrates systems that provide information on macroeconomic indicators. This advanced tool can also be used by students who need to prepare a business plan as a reporting assignment and by future entrepreneurs planning to set up their own business.

Developing robotics for society – is an important direction for Lithuania's sustainable development, developing robotics technologies without compromising the fundamental values of society. The new challenges of our time, generated by rapid technological advances, especially in the fields of

artificial intelligence, robotics and big data, call for a very responsible application of robotics technologies in society. This is in line with EU policy, which stresses that AI should be used for the well-being of human beings, not for the control of their populations by totalitarian states and the development of human surveillance systems. In today's context of rapid technological progress and an ageing society, robots are an essential part of the solution to the shortage and cost of manual workers. Robots that operate in hazardous or unpleasant conditions and perform repetitive tasks autonomously are particularly useful for replacing workers who do dirty, boring or unsafe work. Robots also help workers avoid the dangers of hazardous chemicals and working conditions and reduce physical, ergonomic and psychosocial risks. Robotisation of prosthesis and implant technologies, the development of brain-computer interfaces, prostheses connected to the nervous system, artificial vision, IRT implants, and even neuromicrochips, are all enabling the development of technologies that make people's lives easier, and which not only help to eliminate disabilities, but also to dramatically improve the abilities of the able.

Students of the Faculty of Electronics and Informatics are actively developing their innovativeness in the study process using robotic systems. The guiding principle of robotics education is that artificial intelligence must be reliable, unbiased, transparent, fair and safe, and that the technology must be developed based on ethical principles in order to contribute to society. The Electronics and Computer Engineering Department of the Faculty of Electronics and Informatics is developing the Robotics Workshop of the Robot-Humanoid EIFURE project. The Computer Engineering programme has a distinctive learning outcome in the category of personal competences: "To be able to study independently, to improve one's knowledge, and to understand the impact of engineering solutions on society and the environment". One of the ways to achieve this learning outcome is through the students' extracurricular activities in the Robotics Workshop, where they work independently to improve their knowledge and practical skills by developing robotic systems geared towards assisting mobility-impaired groups. During the intern-

ships of the Computer Engineering and Electronics Engineering study programmes carried out at the Faculty, second-hand / decommissioned electronic equipment obtained from social partners is partially integrated into the process to familiarise students with the internal structure of electronic devices, their assembly peculiarities, and to increase the level of students' practical skills in assembly and disassembly.

The initiative, related to the development of robotics for the benefit of society, was carried out by the lecturers of the Department of Electronics and Computer Engineering of the Faculty of Electronics and Computer Science. Taking part in the Robotics Solutions Exhibition and the interactive workshop "How to prepare your robot for greater public recognition?" organised by Agrifood Lithuania on 7 February 2023, publishing an article on 23 January, and participating in the LNK TV show "Labas vakaras, Lietuva" (en. Good evening, Lithuania) on 17 February, presenting an AI-controlled relaxation system for children on the autistic spectrum with a disturbance. This encourages interest in modern robotics and artificial intelligence among a broad cross-section of society, in the hope that the knowledge gained about AI-controlled robots for human welfare will spread awareness of the benefits of robotics and promote the real-life application of robots. The education work promotes the idea that robots, like people, create jobs - jobs for professionals who program, maintain and repair robots. In the face of labour shortages, this problem is being addressed by the robotisation of manual jobs.

In the context of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, the value of higher education has risen significantly, as the increasing deployment of robots and automated systems in manufacturing and services is creating a parallel demand for highly skilled professionals related to these innovations. Faculty of Electronics and Informatics lecturers, aware of the promise of robotics for the well-being of future generations, deliberately promote robotics best practices to the teacher and student communities. On 3 March 2023, a practical educational lecture "Prisijaukink robotukus" (en. Tame the Robots) was presented to the pupils of Vilkaviškis "Aušra" Gymnasium, and a practical lesson "Linksmieji ro-

botai - pažinkink ir kurk!" (en. Funny robots - meet and create!) was given to the pupils of Radviliškis Lizdeika Gymnasium, Utena Saulės Gymnasium, Jonava J. Ralis Gymnasium and Vilnius Šv. Kristoforo Gymnasium. All this demonstrates the wide potential of robotic systems for the development of social welfare.

The expertise of the Faculty of Electronics and Informatics professionals and students is evident in the annual "Erdvėlaivis Žemė" (en. Spaceship Earth) event. In June 2023, interactive workshops on "Building a Chat Bot" and "Build an FM receiver", a demonstration lecture on "Creating 3D models", a demonstration-lecture on "Fun Robots - Know, Create and Control" and a demonstration lecture on "Artificial Intelligence in an Electronic Device" were organised.

Research on information literacy is relevant not only for the community of the Faculty of Electronics and Informatics, but also for the faculties and departments that organise other research fields. For example, collaborative research between students and lecturers in the field of medicine: Applied research conducted by a lecturer of the Department of Nursing at the Faculty of Health Care and a student of the General Practice Nursing study programme and published article Rabkovskaja, G. & Kielė, V. (2023). [Application of virtual reality in wound care: a literature review](#), *Nursing Science and Practice*, 4 (10 (322)), pp. 10-18. Povilas Paulauskas, a graduate of the radiology study programme, has prepared his thesis "Artificial Intelligence in Radiological Research" and on 26 September 2023 participated in the international teleconference "Conference of Baltic Radiographers: Research and Practice" 2023.

Project activities on the promotion of digital and information literacy are carried out not only at the Faculty of Electronics and Informatics but also at other faculties. In 2023, the Erasmus+ Higher Education Strategic Partnerships project "Digital Readiness and Capacity Building of Humanities Professors in Universities Through Partnership with Digital Technologies Companies" (DigitUni), which was launched in 2022, was continued and completed at the Faculty of Economics with the aim of strengthening the capacities of professors in the humanities to provide high quality, inclusive,

digital education by improving their digital competences and strengthening the cooperation with digital technology companies - experts. The Faculty of Agrotechnologies, together with the project coordinator - Jagiellonian University in Krakow (Poland) and partners from Italy, Latvia, Austria and Belgium, implemented the Erasmus+ Higher Education Strategic Partnerships project DISTINCT (Digital Support for the Teaching of Chemistry) in 2023.

Strengthening knowledge not only in Lithuania but also abroad. From 6-10 November 2023 in Belgium, students and lecturers from the Faculty of Education increased their knowledge of [digital](#)

[work with young people](#) (more specifically, with children experiencing social exclusion).

The achievements of Vilniaus kolegija / Higher Education Institution graduates are extremely important for every higher education institution. For example, on 5 October 2023, it was announced that [alumna Agnė Draučikaitė had been named Teacher of the Year of Vilnius City](#) because she is an enterprising, innovative and courageous educator who introduces new methods in educational programmes.

Information and digital literacy are an important human skill today.



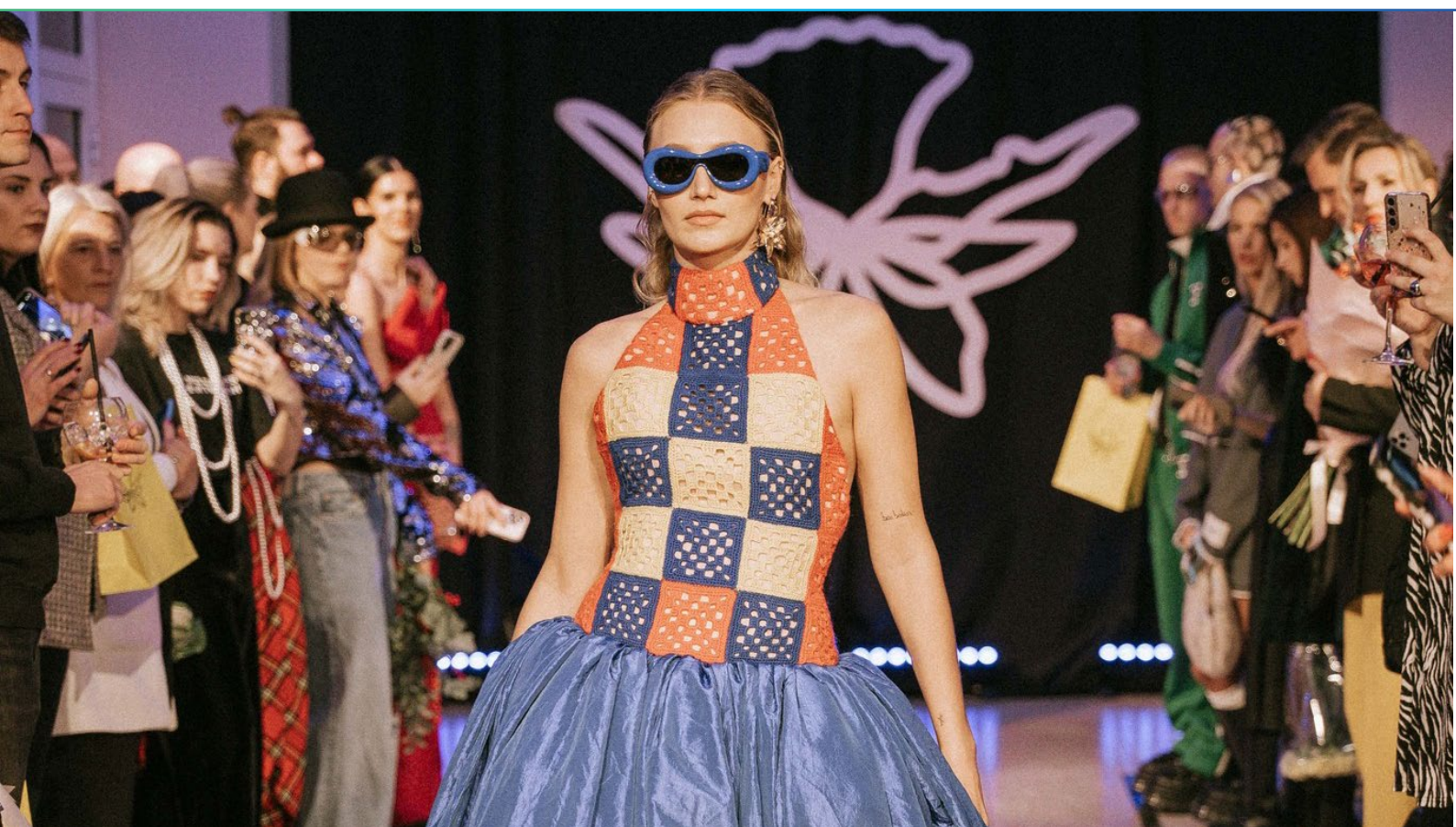
Developing creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship

Creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship are key drivers of economic and technological growth, societal progress and business success. Creativity is commonly defined as the ability to generate new, original and valuable ideas, and creative people can find new ways to overcome problems, thus contributing to innovation to solve challenges. Creativity is important in everyone's life, stimulating individual growth and bringing benefits in fields ranging from arts and culture to science and business. Innovation matters because organisations that invest in innovation can create a competitive advantage and increase efficiency by contributing to technological, economic and soci-

al progress. Entrepreneurship creates jobs, boosts economic growth and contributes to shared prosperity, and creative and innovative businesses are often better placed to differentiate themselves and to take on growing competition.

Creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship are thus linked to the challenges of the modern world and the search for opportunities and solutions. Businesses and societies that foster creativity, invest in innovation and nurture entrepreneurship are better equipped to adapt to rapidly changing conditions and achieve long-term success.

Vilniaus kolegija / Higher Education Institution aims to develop the applied creativity and creative



thinking skills of the community and society, to foster a creative environment and sustainable innovation, and to encourage openness to sustainable innovation and entrepreneurship. VIKO teaches creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship regardless of the programme of study. Even if this is not included as a separate subject in the study programme, students have the opportunity to develop these competences by studying free electives. Students are interested in innovations, they rush to try them out themselves, and some of them boldly generate innovative ideas by participating in business problem-solving events (hackathons, entrepreneurship events, international intensive programmes - BIPs etc.).

Creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship are emphasised in all faculties. For example, the Faculty of Business and Management cooperates with LSIK (Lithuanian Social Innovation Cluster), conducts project activities (VAKEN, Teaching and Learning in

Multicultural Classrooms), short exchange weeks (BIP: [International Short Exchange Weeks Sustainability Oriented Creativity](#)). The content of the study programme of Food Technology of the Faculty of Agrotechnologies, Sustainable Food Production and Environmental Protection, includes the topics of entrepreneurship fundamentals, which are relevant to the development of the region and the country, linked to the directions of sustainable development, and includes the development of entrepreneurship and social responsibility. The innovativeness of studies is enhanced and the creativity of students is fostered through annual creativity camps using the creative playground methodology.

Creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship are the objects of academic interest at Vilniaus kolegija / Higher Education Institution. For example, the report [“The use of social platforms by primary school teachers to organise the educational process, promoting creativity of students in grades 1-2”](#) by a



student of the Faculty of Education was recognised as the best paper in the section “Youth in a changing society” at the international scientific-practical conference.

Students and lecturers of the Fashion Design Department of the Faculty of Arts and Creative Technologies took part in the 20th International Scientific Student Conference “Ideas Forum 2023” at Kaunas HEI. Gabrielė Sedlikovska, a third-year student of the Fashion Design study programme, gave a presentation on “Psychological Health as a Stimulus for Creativity”, and Karina Knyzaitė - on “Fashion Trends in the Prism of Sustainability”. The students shared their creative ideas and research for their final projects. The graduates were prepared for the conference by the lecturers of the

Fashion Design Department Asta Kisieliūtė and Jolita Raupelienė (21/04/2023).

We are also proud of the innovation and creativity of Vilniaus kolegija / Higher Education Institution graduates. Ieva Savulionienė, a graduate of the Faculty of Pedagogy, is voted the **most innovative primary school teacher**. The award was given for her creativity and innovation, the use of new methods and tools in primary education, the promotion of students’ critical thinking, problem solving and initiative.

Creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship are thus key elements for economic, social and cultural development. Developing these areas is important because they contribute to the growth and success of different sectors.



Enhancing public health

Not only does Vilniaus kolegija / Higher Education Institution organise compulsory health check-ups for its employees in accordance with the law, but VIKO has also set itself the goal of promoting the topic and importance of public health and healthy eating among the members of VIKO community and the general public by providing opportunities to educate the Lithuanian public and VIKO community on the topic of health and well-being, by developing research and social partnership with organisations interested in these areas.

Promoting physical activity in the community. The buildings on Studentų st. and Didlaukio st. house sports halls, which are used for basketball,

volleyball, football and other sports, as well as for high-level sports competitions.

Students participate in the SKL A league, autumn and spring basketball championships, Vilnius FUTSAL football championship, Lithuanian volleyball championship rounds, Lithuanian college championships in basketball, football, volleyball, table tennis, weightlifting, orienteering, athletics competitions. The gyms are staffed by professional trainers who provide personal and group training, nutritional advice and individual training plans.

For members of the community who are not high-level athletes, there are faculty basketball, volleyball and football competitions, which are at-



tended not only by students but also by employees.

In order to promote physical activity and healthy lifestyles, students have the option of taking Athletic Training (free elective). From October 2023, the Faculty of Arts and Creative Technologies will also provide **physical education training** for VIKO community.

Members of VIKO community take part in hikes, regattas and various sports events. On the occasion of the end of the academic year in June, the Faculty of Business and Management organises hikes on the occasion of the Tourism Day, which has become a tradition for several years in a row, to promote an active lifestyle for staff and students.

In 2023, 437 members of HEI community took part in the **#walk15** challenge and walked a total of 107,900,983 steps, which is the equivalent of circling the earth 2 times.

Students also contribute to active mobility initiatives by organising sports events. On 13 December 2023, the Christmas volleyball tournament “**Let’s be united**” was held for the Ylakai Gymnasi-

um and the Mosėdis Orphanage, initiated by Inesa Mitkutė, a student of Cultural Activity Management KV21.

In 2023, students contribute to and participate in the organisation of the Lithuanian Colleges, Vilnius kolegija / Higher Education Institution faculty, 3x3 basketball tournament and Christmas volleyball tournament.

HEI researchers and students carry out research on health topics and organise events on health topics not only for VIKO community. Lecturers of the Department of Nursing of the Faculty of Health Care, dr Zyta Kuzborska and Milda Kuskienė, together with the students of the Department of Nursing and the Radiology programme, disseminated the results of the applied research “Cancer Prevention Opportunities and their Publicity” by presenting poster presentations: from 14/11/2023 to 28/11/2023 - at the Medardas Čobotas University of the Third Age (MČTAU), from 29/11/2023 to 29/12/2023 - at the All-University Hospital of Vilnius University in Santaros Clinics. On 6 April, the Fac-

In the photo: Jurgita Veliulytė, lecturer at the Department of Rehabilitation at VIKO SPF



ulty of Pedagogy organised a lecture on didactics of physical education on the occasion of World Health Day. On 5 February 2023, an event was organised for the community and the general public at the Faculty of Health Care to mark World Cancer Day, with the aim of raising awareness of cancer prevention, the nutritional peculiarities of cancer patients, psychological support, and the role of relatives in cancer patients, etc.

On this occasion, lecturers and students presented poster presentations at the Medardas Čobotas University of the Third Age, the National Cancer Institute, the Vilnius University Hospital Santaros Clinics, the Faculty of Health Care of Vilniaus kolegija / Higher Education Institution, and the salad bar “Mano guru”. On 25 April 2023, SPF lecturers organised a seminar “Human Immune System and Factors Affecting It” for students of the Faculty of Healthy Lifestyle at the Medardas Čobotas University of the Third Age, where they gave lectures on “Age-related Changes in the Immune System” and “Immune System of the Skin”, and answered questions from the participants. Jurgita Veliulytė, Lecturer at the Rehabilitation Department of SPF, gave a practical lecture “The Influence of the Thorax on the Spine Control” to the members of the Academy of Bodybuilding on 23 September 2023, and a workshop “Physical Activities for Children with Special Physical Needs in Physical Education Classes” to the teachers of Physical Education and Primary Education on 9 November 2023.

It's important to take care of your emotional health as well as your physical health. On 23 May 2023, a lecture on “[Children's emotions. What is important for parents to know?](#)” was organised to provide scientific and practical information on the development, functions and effects of children's emotions on their health, learning and communication. It also discussed ways in which parents can promote children's emotional self-regulation, the ability to recognise and express their emotions, and provide them with appropriate emotional support. A mixed intensive programme on “[Parenting in Stressful Situations](#)” was organised on 24-28 April. On 20 October, the SPF lecturer organised a remote event on World Mental Health Day, during which

Greta Klidziūtė, coordinator of the NGO “[Mental Health Perspectives](#)”, and Martina Vaičiūnaitė and Milda Ulozaitė, mental health ambassadors, talked about mental health, the stereotypes and myths prevailing in the society, the ways of self-help for people with mental health problems, etc.

Mental Health Ambassadors shared their personal experiences of anorexia nervosa and other eating disorders in an open and sensitive manner. On 1 December, EKF students attended the course “[Safe-TALK - how to talk about suicide?](#)”.

Lecturers share their experiences in the media. On 20 November 2023, a lecturer at the SPF Department of Nursing spoke to [Delfi](#). [It about her experience of working with patients](#) with diabetes and how to recognise diabetes and how to live with this insidious disease, which, if left untreated, can lead to severe complications and disabilities. On 16 December, the SPF lecturer spoke on Žinių Radijas talk show about “[Parenting in practice](#)”, which focused on the physical health of parents and children, correct posture, exercise and sport.

Lecturers and students in higher education institutions in Lithuania and abroad are qualified in health-related topics. On 13-17 March 2023, PDF lecturers and students participated in the [Suicide Prevention and Intervention Training at HOWEST University \(Belgium\)](#). On 18-25 April, a PDF lecturer developed her skills in Ancient Olympia (Greece).

There is also a strong focus on health and health promotion for the older generation. On 21 November 2023 at 12:00 pm, SPF lecturer organised a conference “[Ageing and Health](#)” at the Faculty of Healthy Lifestyle of the Medardas Čobotas Third Age University, where presentations were given on topical issues of healthy ageing: The harmony between physical and mental health, the conditions for its development; the management of diseases and ailments - utopia or reality; the benefits of a health-enhancing diet; physical activity that improves motor and cognitive functions; and skin care measures for ageing.

Thus, promoting public health is an essential aspect of building a healthy, vibrant and long-lived society. It is not only important to maintain individual health, but also to raise the level of public health.

Developing environmental initiatives

Vilniaus kolegija / Higher Education Institution actively seeks to promote the importance of green environments, sustainable agro-ecosystems and animal welfare by creating as many opportunities as possible to educate the Lithuanian public in these areas, by developing research and social partnerships with organisations concerned with these topics.

Volunteering of students and lecturers of the ATF Faculty of Veterinary Studies at horse races at Širvintos Hippodrome (08/04/2023, 23/04/2023). Collection and donation of animal food bank for homeless animals in Ukraine (11/05/2023).

VIKO is constantly striving to ensure that the faculties' research activities are as closely linked to the environment as possible, thus contributing to sustainable agriculture and the food industry, to the greening of the environment, and to the promotion of a green economy and sustainable business principles. Sustainable development is discussed without exception in all study programmes.

VIKO community was invited to participate in various environmental events and initiatives: In January 2023, HEI hosted the environmental campaign "Christmas trees are not rubbish!" to collect and preserve Christmas trees and fir trees grown in pots and decorated for Christmas, so that they are



not simply thrown away but have the opportunity to continue to grow; on 19 March, the “[Day of the Nesting Boxes](#)” was celebrated and several more nesting boxes were placed in the VVF yard; 27 April [Waste Culture Examination](#); 16-22 September, the community encourages to join the [Urban Sustainable Mobility Campaign](#) by walking or using sustainable transport to HEIs: bicycles, scooters, public transport; On 23-29 October, HEI faculties actively contributed to the Climate Week events initiated by the Ministry of Environmental Protection, during which important topics were discussed: ‘Decarbonisation: problems, methods, solutions’, ‘[Green energy development - between the reduction of fossil fuels and the challenges of its implementation](#)’. Vilnius kolegija / Higher Education Institution lecturers share their environmental knowledge at various events: For example, on the eve of Earth Hour on 24 March at the European Commission Representation in Lithuania at the conference “Environmental Education: from Theory to Practice”, the Head of the Department of Landscape and Agribusiness Technologies of the ATF, Assoc. Prof. Dr Gražina Palaitytė, gave a presentation on the topic of “[Responsible Consumption - an Everyday Practice or a Challenge?](#)”. On 14 November, Dr Darius Ryliskis, Associate Professor of the Department, gave a lecture “Invasive plants - threats to natural flora” to VIKO community. Environmental initiatives and students’ interest in ATF’s study programme Chemical Analysis and the application of chemistry are promoted through the annual seminar series for students “Chemistry - it’s everything that surrounds us”. Practical laboratory work develops the young researcher’s skills in practical laboratory work and safe handling of chemicals and laboratory equipment, as well as in the study of environmental objects and food quality. Actual analyses of the chemical composition and quality of water and food products are carried out.

Employees and students develop their competences at various events. The Department of Landscape and Agribusiness Technologies has twice organised continuous training for students of the Landscape Design degree programme on sustainable tree pruning and more. Arboriculture as an interdisciplinary activity aimed at adjusting the growth of woody plants while maintaining their bi-

ological viability, well-being and protection in the context of ecology and landscape. On 15 March and 12 May, the Lithuanian Arborists’ Association held a training course “Fundamentals of Tree Pruning”.

VIKO aims to strengthen the environmental social responsibility by introducing sustainable innovations and participating in initiatives related to saving natural resources and improving the quality of the environment.

In line with the resource saving targets set by the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, a lighting system with motion sensors will be installed in 2023 in the EKF (fourth and fifth floors of Studentų st.), as well as in the PDF and ATF (third and ground floors of Studentų st.). This system allows to reduce electricity consumption. Smart lighting will be installed in the VVF as early as 2021 after the building renovation. In 2023, solar panels integrated on the roofs of the VVF and the SPF started generating electricity.

VIKO is also striving to become a paperless organisation, with the process being carried out entirely in electronic format.

Documents are managed at VIKO using the electronic document management system (DMS) “Kontora”. However, some documents (e.g. tripartite practice agreements) are still printed and stored in paper format.

The use of paper in the study process is actively reduced every year. Lecture assignments, midterm assignments and exam assignments are increasingly being made available to students and reported on the Moodle platform, and the printing of final theses has been eliminated by checking the authenticity of students’ work with the plagiarism detection system integrated into the Moodle environment.

The work in the area of digitisation development and e-innovation is dominated by the activities of the Software Department of the EIF, which is directly focused on digitisation, where information is transferred from paper-based sources to the electronic space. Students in the Application Systems programme develop websites, mobile apps and other information systems that not only make work easier but also enable the transition to electronic documents from paper-based versions, with a strong positive socially responsible environmental impact. This directly contributes to saving the

planet's resources and resources and to reducing CO₂ emissions in subsequent paper recovery or recycling processes.

EIF promotes the reuse of items and the reduction of environmental pollution before they are finally recycled. In the FixLAB workshop, students repair electronic equipment used by faculty members. In doing so, they contribute to an environmental initiative aimed at reducing environmental pollution from secondary electronic waste.

The renovation work was initiated and coordinated by Vytautas Netikša, Head of the EIF Computer Centre and lecturer. In both the Robotics Workshop and the Prototyping Laboratory, environmentally friendly, organically degradable PLA plastic is used for the three-dimensional printing of the test models.

The development of the green economy depends on advances in digital technologies. The ETF, together with EIF colleagues, is continuing the Erasmus+ project launched at the end of 2021 - the Higher Education Strategic Partnerships project "Development of a Virtual Learning Space as a Tool for Developing Students' Critical Thinking, Communication, Collaboration and Creativity Skills in the Context of COVID'19". The aim of the project is to introduce students to new innovative learning spaces (virtual reality rooms) and to address the challenges of applying modern teaching methods in the social sciences by digitising the content of studies. The project runs until 31 May 2024.

In order to be at the forefront of green accounting and reporting research, the professors of the Department of Accounting carried out a study on "Assessing the Green Aspect of Lithuanian Banks' Sustainability Reports", to be published in 2023.

Climate change, the continuing loss of biodiversity, the indiscriminate use of resources and other problems associated with the rapid degradation of the environment are forcing us to accelerate the transformation of our economy to one that is as environmentally friendly as possible, making efficient use of knowledge in the fields of biology and the environment, while at the same time securing economic prosperity and a dignified life for people.

Building a green economy is an important part of the development of a sustainable Europe and a sustainable Lithuania, with ecological sustainability at its core. The EKF, aware of the importance of the challenges, intends to further strengthen social responsibility in the field of the environment and, following the guidelines of the Green Deal, to pursue a decoupling of economic growth from resource use, a zero-emission economy, while at the same time ensuring the quality of life of the people.

The EKF contributes to the development of a socially responsible society through the consistent development of various social activities, such as participation in projects and the organisation of seminars.

Green economy principles complement the classical EKF study programmes. Students and teachers are encouraged to explore green finance, the consumption of renewable resources and innovations that reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The EKF aims to educate young people to understand that global challenges are a shared responsibility and must be tackled globally. The EKF understands that a rapid double economic transformation can only be achieved through collaboration with scientists from other disciplines such as physicists, mathematicians, biologists and others, and therefore encourages interdisciplinary research and projects. The EKF contributes to the Green Deal by carrying out research in the following areas: green finance purification, analysis of economic sectoral change, development of green insurance. The EKF aims to ensure that a smooth economic transition towards a green economy preserves competitiveness and is therefore also studying the impact of various crises (financial, pandemic) on economic growth.

In summary, the development of environmental initiatives is critical to maintaining the sustainability of the planet and ensuring the long-term environmental well-being of future generations. Environmental initiatives are not only aimed at protecting the environment from harmful actions, but also at promoting sustainable development and civic awareness, which is something that Vilniaus kolegija / Higher Education Institution actively pursues.

Strengthening Lithuanian culture, statehood and the continuity of historical memory

It is important for every organisation, especially those working in the field of education, to foster the continuity of Lithuania's statehood and historical memory by joining state events and initiatives, commemorating important dates and personalities significant to Lithuania, and by taking part in initiatives significant to the country, such as the Constitution Examination, the National Dictation Contest, and others.

VIKO always celebrates national holidays, during which community, especially the younger generation, emphasises the importance of national values and history in the global world, upholds traditions, promotes patriotism and a sense of pride, reflects the country's freedom and its fragility, and seeks to feel the common spirit of history together.

This is just a small part of the artistic activities organised by the MTF: on 25 January 2023, students and lecturers from the Department of Performing Arts took part in the [Vilnius 700th Anniversary Concert](#), which was broadcast live on Lithuanian National Radio and Television. On 8 February, the Department of Cultural Management and Dance Pedagogy together with the young artists of Vilnius Pupils' Creative and Educational Centre organised an exhibition of creative works "700 potepių", dedicated to the honourable 700th anniversary of Vilnius. On 15 February, the lecturers of the Department of Performing Arts organised a concert to celebrate the restoration of [Lithuania's independence](#) for the faculty community and guests, and on 16 February they took part in the ceremony of commemorating the 16th of February at the Signatories House.



On 10 March the Performing Arts Department organised a concert “The Wind of Freedom” for VIKO community, and on 11 March participated in the commemoration of the anniversary of the Restoration of Lithuania’s Independence Day at the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania and in the ceremony of awarding of the [Little Christofores](#). On 3 June, the Performing Arts Department took part in the commemoration of the [35th anniversary of the Sajūdis](#) at the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania and performed the most popular songs by Lithuanian authors that accompanied thousands of participants of the Sajūdis rallies and the freedom-hungry Lithuanians in their pursuit of independence.

VIKO organises events dedicated to culture, e.g. on 28 November 2023, the Department of Performing Arts of the MTF organised a forum “[The Musical in the World and in Lithuania: Development and Prospects II](#)”. On 1 December 2023, the Department of Cultural Management and Dance Pedagogy organised a republican scientific-practical conference “[Challenges of Culture and Education in the 21st Century](#)”.

Lithuanian culture is unimaginable without the participation of HEI representatives in various events, and their voices have been heard in many national and city events: Capital 700th Birthday Concert 25/01/2023, MYTHOS musical 30/01/2023, Vilnius 700th Anniversary Exhibition 09/02/2023, February 16th Concert at the Faculty of Arts and Creative Technologies 15/02/2023, February 16th Celebration at the House of Signatories 20/02/2023, World Art Day 18/04/2023, Under the Church Vaults

25/09/2023, Most Innovative Teachers Awards on 27/11/2023, the Advent Concert “Under the Church Vaults” on 08/12/2023 and many other events (for more information visit <https://mtf.viko.lt/visuomenei/socialine-atsako-mybe/>).

VIKO organises thematic exams and Olympiads. On 24 February 2023, the Lithuanian Language Olympiad for pupils of national minority schools took place, and Deimantė Varmauskaitė and Edita Sventickytė, the third year students of the Musical Theatre Study Programme of the Performing Arts Department of the MTF, greeted the participants and the guests with the most beautiful pieces of music. On 20 March, PDF organised the Lithuanian Language and Literature Olympiad for Lithuanian and foreign Lithuanian schools in grades 9-12 (I-IV), which aims not only to stimulate students’ interest in Lithuanian language and literature, but also to develop their creative abilities, strengthen their national consciousness and community. As every year, the VVF organised examinations to celebrate Europe Day (9 May) and Constitution Day (25 October). HEI students organise excursions to learn about cultural heritage and history, visit state organisations (e.g. the Seimas, the State Archives) and museums (e.g. the State Cognition Centre of the President of the Republic of Lithuania).

Strengthening Lithuanian culture, maintaining statehood and fostering the continuity of historical memory are important tasks that contribute to strengthening the country’s identity, the development of civic consciousness and the general well-being of society.



Preserving national heritage and promoting Lithuanian ethnocultural

Although most of the study programmes, organised artistic activities and research are oriented towards the application of innovative and original ideas, it is equally important to promote Lithuanian ethnocultural and national heritage by fostering cooperation with organisations that are interested in the promotion of Lithuanian ethnocultural and the preservation of national heritage, and therefore, making sense of the heritage in study programmes and artistic expression is of great importance.

During international events, foreign guests have the opportunity to hear Lithuanian folk music and songs by the folklore ensemble Želmuo, to join in a joint performance and try out folk instruments, to dance folk dances with the dance ensemble Voruta, and to taste a product of Lithuanian national heritage - šakotis.

Students and lecturers of the MTF Fashion Design Department organised an exhibition of students' creative works, thus contributing to the congratulations to Vilnius on the occasion of its 700th



birthday. A collection of costumes in the style of a Lithuanian medieval townsman was exhibited.

The preservation of national heritage and the promotion of Lithuanian ethnocultural is possible through various types of art: music, dance, performances, etc., and the members of VIKO community have actively contributed to this important mission. On 16 September 2023, in the programme of the Fair of Nations “I and You are Vilnius VI”, students of the Dance Pedagogy study programme, dressed in national costumes of different regions, danced the Lithuanian folk dance “Kepurinė”, which they prepared together with the lecturer Živilė Adomaitienė. On 22 November 2023, members of the Vilnius Nightingale House Theatre, in collaboration with PDF students and staff who helped with the script, music and set design, presented the premiere of the well-known Lithuanian folk tale “The Amber Tale of Jūratė and Kastītis”, a play for people of all ages and social status.

The students and teachers of VIKO not only cherish the national heritage and popularise Lithuanian ethnocultural, but also strengthen their contribution to music in Lithuania. On 16 September 2023, at the Nations Fair, Evita Cololo, a student of the Pop Music Studies Programme, together with Ainis Dulaitis, Ridas Katkauskis, Simas Makiejevas and Justas Petrikauskas, performed four of her own compositions.

VIKO emphasises the importance of old crafts, and the lecturers constantly stress the need for high quality and creativity in all activities by sharing best practices with the students, because what is sustainable will survive for future generations.

Ethnocultural initiatives are promoted in the Food Technology study programme’s Ethnic Heritage Food Technology course, which aims to stimulate students’ interest in the ethnic heritage foods of the Lithuanian region, and to enhance their practical skills in applying the traditional recipes and technologies of that region. In 2023, lecturers of the study subject Visual Communication Content Expression Tools for Public Relations students created an independent work task to visualise Lithuanian proverbs.

On 1 October 2023, PU23 students shared their knowledge with the children, introducing them to

the mushroom kingdom and its role in nature and culture. The event promoted Lithuanian ethno-culture and national heritage, showed the diversity, beauty and benefits of mushrooms, thus encouraging creativity, aesthetic taste and self-esteem among pupils and students.

On 7 December 2023, HEI became a partner in the project “Continue: come, improve, contribute!”, which aims to present the project’s activities and an invitation to Lithuanian educators to study Primary Education Pedagogy at PDF.

The country’s ethnocultural traditions are reflected in students’ final theses. For example, the final thesis of Evelina Pochorenko, a student of the ATF Food Technology study programme, entitled “Implementation of the production of ancient Lithuanian bakery products in the bakery Grūdas” (commissioned by UAB Baltic Food Republic), promotes the production of ethnic heritage food products using only raw materials grown in Lithuania, using only the food products of small farms in our country, and applying the traditional production technologies and recipes based on historical sources.

Today’s business realises that knowledge from the past is still useful today. For example, on 12 October, at the final conference of the project “Promoting the preservation, accessibility and development of intangible cultural and local historical heritage, improving the competitiveness of sustainable cultural tourism in Latvia, Lithuania and Belarus” “Rediscover the roots of the regions”, the participants of the conference “Rediscover the roots of the regions” explored the links between “National culture - Professional design - Business” (Best practises in craft and design interaction - Experience of LV, LT craft company) and looked for positive examples in Lithuania.

We recommend VIKO community and the readers of this report to visit folk art exhibitions, the Kaziukas Fair, the folklore festival “Skamba skamba kankliai” and other events aimed at maintaining traditions, revitalising handicrafts, and promoting folk art. Such festivals take place not only in Lithuania but also in other countries.

Developing sustainable business and a sustainable economy

Sustainable business and sustainable economy ideas are practice-oriented, designed to ensure the long-term economic success of organisations, while at the same time encouraging them to consider the well-being of society and the environment.

Climate change, the continuing loss of biodiversity, the indiscriminate use of resources and other problems associated with the rapid degradation of the environment are forcing us to accelerate the transformation of our economy to one that is as environmentally friendly as possible, by efficiently

applying knowledge in the fields of biology and the environment, and, at the same time, by ensuring economic prosperity and a decent life for people.

HEI has been a socially responsible higher education institution for many years, basing its principles on tradition, innovation, tolerance and responsibility to the environment and the community. It is constantly challenging itself, expressing its desire to improve and promote the development of society, to educate educated, independent, active and responsible members of society, and to develop the intel-



lectual potential of society, so that knowledge and science can ensure the harmonious achievement of economic, social and environmental goals. As an active member of the state and the world, VIKO is aware of the urgent need to contribute to a sustainable transformation and emphasises the pursuit of activities of global relevance in its strategy.

HEI aims to promote green economy, socially responsible investment, sustainable business and management, sustainable tourism and hospitality, and sustainable fashion by creating as many opportunities as possible to educate the Lithuanian public in these areas, by developing applied research, and by developing social partnerships with organisations with an interest in these areas.

Creating a green economy is an important direction for a sustainable Europe and a sustainable Lithuania, which is based not only on economic but also on ecological sustainability. The EKF contributes to the Green Deal by carrying out research in the following areas: green finance purification, analysis of changes in economic sectors, development of green insurance. The principles of green economics complement the classical study programmes of the Faculty of Economics.

Promoting socially responsible investment is not only about the financial profitability of the business, but also about promoting positive (or reducing negative) social and environmental impacts.

Promoting socially responsible investment can achieve a wide range of positive results. The EKF promotes SRI through active student education and research, as well as through articles analysing the concept of ESG.

To ensure that the market of the future is populated only by **sustainable and responsible businesses**, businesses that are not just about quick but also about long-term profitability, businesses that make ethical and responsible decisions and mitigate all risks, and businesses that have a reputation for being a trustworthy business, businesses that produce and deliver quality and safe products and services, thereby securing consumer trust and loyalty, businesses that ensure not only safe and harmless working conditions, but also a creative working environment, involving employees in decision-making processes, thus ensuring higher employee motivation, and businesses that care about the voice of the community. Socially responsible and sustainable businesses are more adaptable to changing (and especially tightening) legislation, and are focused on investing in sustainable innovation, which helps them to compete successfully in the market. At EKF, all study programmes include a Sustainable Development module. Socially Responsible Business and Business Ethics and Occupational and Civil Safety promote students' critical thinking, enhance their creativity and help them to make the best de-



cisions in unexpected situations. Lecturers carry out a wide range of research related to organisations.

Sustainable tourism and hospitality are important objectives for building a sustainable and responsible tourism industry where service providers and service users meet. These principles focus on how tourism can be developed in a way that respects the environment, local communities and promotes economic development, while at the same time promoting responsible tourist behaviour and respect for biodiversity and the natural environment. Preserving the environment is not the only goal of tourism and hospitality, although sustainable tourism is focused on protecting and preserving the environment by promoting sustainable travel. However, there is a strong focus on respect for culture and communities, as sustainable tourism principles encourage tourists to respect and understand the culture of local communities and not to abuse hospitality. This includes conscious behaviour by tourists that respects local traditions and values and contributes to cultural change. Sustainable tourism encourages tourism operators and local businesses to be socially responsible. This includes fair labour relations, fair remuneration conditions, investment in local social projects and other actions aimed at improving the quality of life of communities. Sus-

tainable tourism seeks to raise tourists' awareness of environmental, social and cultural impacts, and includes educational programmes, cultural exchanges and other activities that help tourists better understand the environment they are visiting. The VVF trains professionals in tourism management and the hotel and restaurant business. Researchers in the Department of Tourism carry out research on sustainable tourism.

Sustainable fashion is increasingly important in today's world and is becoming an essential aspect of the fashion industry. It focuses on the responsible, sustainable and environmentally and socially friendly creation and consumption of fashion. Sustainable fashion is not only growing in popularity due to the increasing environmental challenges, although the negative impact of the fashion industry on the environment cannot be denied (the fast fashion cycle, cheap mass production and frequent changes of clothes in society often lead to high levels of waste and environmental pollution). Sustainable fashion aims not only to reduce negative impacts through the use of renewable materials such as organic cotton, bamboo, wool, linen, etc., or by recycling materials, reducing waste and using renewable resources, but also to ensure safe working conditions and a sustainable supply chain, by pro-



ducing quality products that can be refurbished and renewed when needed after a long period of wear and tear, which encourages innovation and creativity in the fashion industry. Sustainable fashion therefore also aims to raise consumer awareness. All these aspects show that sustainable fashion is not just a temporary trend, but a necessity in order to create a sustainable, responsible and innovative fashion sector in today's world.

From 20-24 November 2023, the MTF joined the European [Week for Waste Reduction](#) by organising events to raise public awareness about responsible waste management and the importance of sustainable consumption. Initiatives carried out by the MTF included lectures on sustainable textiles, textile waste and other secondary raw materials, their sorting and recycling, fast and sustainable fashion, participation in educational workshops "The Second Life of Plastic" and "Worn Textiles: pet beds", and the presentation of the author's own experimental collection, NON-/ MATERIALS; "Sustainable Branding" (from concept to implementation; creative-industrial collection MEMORIES; creative collection Pain Under Water, synthesis of minimalist art and sustainability in a fashion collection; Exhibition of student work "Sustainable Fashion Project: deconstruction of the men's jacket; "Presentation of one

product of the final project", to get acquainted with exhibitions, expositions NON-/MATERIAL. All events focus on sustainable fashion and responsible tourism, helping to promote conscious and responsible behaviour and highlighting the importance of preserving the environment.

Lecturers share their experiences in the media. On 24 July 2023, Gražina Skripkienė and Monika Polunina, lecturers of the MTF Fashion Design study programme, talked about the new requirements of fast fashion in the [LNK news show](#). On 20 September, Asta Kisieliūtė, a lecturer at the MTF Department of Fashion Design, gave practical tips on how to tidy up your wardrobe after the summer in [LNK Noon News](#). Advice on what to wear and what to avoid at Christmas and New Year by Rimantė Rimgailaitė, a lecturer at the MTF Department of Fashion Design, was published on 19 December on several news websites, e.g. [LRT.lt](#).

Sustainable business and economic development can only be achieved through a strong social partnership between public authorities, the business sector, academia and civil society (see also Chapter 3). Collaboration and multi-stakeholder engagement allows for more effective promotion of sustainable and socially responsible initiatives in Lithuania.



VIDURDIENIO
ŽINIOS

IŠ EK – NAUJI REIKALAVIMAI GREITAJAI MADAI

12:49

MDICINĖ TARPTAUTINĖ KAPITALO RINKŲ KONFERENCIJA

G. ŠIMKUS: ECB PRADEDA LABAI ŠV

Volunteering, civic engagement and social support initiatives

Opportunities for self-expression and volunteering are provided to promote the personal social responsibility of every member of the community - student, teacher, employee, social partner.

Vilniaus kolegija / Higher Education Institution maintains a responsible and civically active academic community, where volunteering and citizenship are priority values. Students, lecturers and employees willingly and actively participate in various environmental and charitable initiatives every year to beautify the environment, reduce exclusion and foster community relations.

In 2023, VIKO community continued to contribute to various social actions: fundraising for Ukrainian victims of the war, the Mothers' Union's Cake Day on 6 November; Half-litre jar collection organised by the Food Bank, blood donation day organised with the National Blood Centre at HEI (e.g. [blood donation campaigns](#) were organised on 7 March and 30 November 2023. To SPF this is a traditional event in cooperation with the National Blood Centre, members of VIKO community donate blood to patients in need, often in a life-saving way). **Many of the initiatives have become tradi-**



tional and are eagerly awaited. Those who do not want to wait for the initiatives organised by VIKO make a personal decision to volunteer in the charity and volunteering initiatives of their choice. We are proud of the personal volunteering initiatives of HEI community members, and by their example invite other HEI community members to volunteer for sensitive problems: in 2023, emotional support was provided to the “Vaikų linija” VŠĮ (en. Children’s Line), legal counselling was provided by volunteering at the Lithuanian Family Association, and help was given to Ukrainian refugees by volunteering at the Red Cross or by providing asylum to Ukrainian refugees.

Other specific initiatives should also be celebrated: The EIF has been cooperating with Ukrainian universities for many years and has close links with the Poltava regional administration. Prior to the Russian aggression against Ukraine, there were intensive inter-institutional academic exchanges and joint projects with Ukrainian partners. Since the outbreak of the war, our partnership has prioritised the provision of humanitarian assistance to the communities of our partner universities. In August 2022-2023, equipment was collected to support Poltava Oblast general education schools and school shelters with Wi-Fi routers, network switches and other computer network equipment. Lithuanian businesses and other institutions took part in the fundraising campaign. The collected donations were successfully delivered to schools in the Poltava region. In 2023, the EIF collected humanitarian aid to support Ukrainian children with missing items. The charity collected in all the faculties of VIKO, under the coordination of the Dean of the EIF, Dr Romanas Tumasonis, was dispatched and successfully reached the families in need. On 20 April, EKF students visited the VŠĮ “Tautmilės Globa” and spent time with the animals left without permanent care. After the visit, the students encouraged members of the community not only to donate money, but also to devote their time to the care of homeless animals.

Students are also the initiators of social initiatives. On 1 December 2023, a cultural-social charity evening “Miraculous Steps of Kindness”, organised by KV21S student Loreta Gasiūnaitė, was held to raise funds for the establishment of a creativity studio at the children’s kindergarten “Drugelis”.

Meetings with NGOs are held to increase the involvement of HEI community members in volunteering, civic engagement and social support initiatives. For example, on 12 April 2023, a meeting was held with the employees of the Vilnius Archdiocese Caritas project “Families of Convicts - Towards Empowerment” to attract more volunteers to provide social support to the relatives of convicts.

Free advice from Vilniaus kolegija / Higher Education Institution specialists: ATF lecturers advise students on project research or matriculation work in chemistry, and on the installation and maintenance of plantations in the area. We are also pleased that [cooperation with the municipalities of the Vilnius region](#) is taking shape. On 29/11/2023, the Dean of ATF Ramunė Vanagaitė, Dr Rimantė Kondratienė and Rimantas Kondratas, lecturers of the Department of Landscape and Agribusiness Technologies, met with the Vice-Mayor of Šalčininkai district Valdemar Sliževski. During the meeting, the vision of the project for the renovation of the municipal square in Šalčininkai district was discussed, and an invitation was extended to schools in Šalčininkai district to participate in VIKO Open Days on 5-7 December 2023. Chemistry laboratories carry out, for a nominal fee, on-demand analyses of the quality of drinking water and soil in boreholes and wells for natural and legal persons, with a view to improving the status of water and soil, sustainable soil fertilisation, and sustainable crop and livestock production.

Student volunteering at HEI social partner events and initiatives is becoming a tradition. On 3-5 March 2023 VIKO volunteered at the [International Dog Show organised by the Lithuanian Cynological Society](#); 17-18 October “HACK AgriFood’23 Out-of-the-box Lab”; 27 October at the Study Fair in Kėdainiai; 15-17 November at the IT conference “Buildstuff”; 14 November Agromaisto_23 Forum “Food for Peace: sustainability, security for society and the planet”; 23-24 November at the Transport Innovation Forum; 29 November at the LiMA DAY LIE- TUVA’23: MUTATIONS conference; 29-30 November at the Public Procurement Conference; 9 November at the Career Days at Varėnos Oak Gymnasium; 30 November at the presentation of designer Rimantė Rimgailaitė’s collection; 1 December at the Women in AgriFood Summit23, 13 December

at Juozas Statkevičius's Spring/Summer 2024 collection; students of the Food Technology study programme on 06/11/2023 joined the initiative "Day of the Cakes" organised by Mother's union, which is aimed at supporting children with cancer.

And this is just a small part of the events where HEI employees and students volunteered. The VVF has an events assistant group, and students from this group take part in events organised by social partners or organisations.

Lecturers are also happy to volunteer at the events: For example, on 12-21 July 2023, Jurgita Stankūnienė, Head of the SPF Department of Nursing and lecturer, volunteered at the camp of the Lithuanian Community of Care for People with Intellectual Disabilities "Viltis". ATF Department of Chemistry and Food Technology lecturers took part in the Researcher's Day events on 22/11/2023 at Radviliškis Lizdeika Gymnasium; Irena Čerčikienė and Jolanta Jurkevičiūtė advised students of Vilnius Lyceum and Vilnius Žvėrynas Gymnasium preparing project research works in chemistry subject. Jurgita Lazdauskienė and Elena Grinė, Head of the Department, conducted food technology education for gymnasium students in Vilnius region.

MTF students organise various initiatives. On 17 January 2023, the Širvintai District Young Talent Contest "Žibėk" was organised, where students were also members of the jury. The aim of the competition was to discover young talents and evaluate them.

MTF lecturers and students are also frequently invited to various events, usually without remuneration.

In order to raise students' awareness and sustainable consumption, VVF 2023 organised a mixed international short exchange week "Sustainability oriented creativity", where students from HEI and its partner institutions tackled a sustainability-oriented challenge by VINTED.

We can also celebrate the students' final theses (FTs), which aim to address socially sensitive issues. In 2023, the following theses were prepared and defended: "Colour Recognition Device for the Blind", "Aspects of Environmental Adaptation for People with Mobility Disabilities", "Adaptation of the Church Heritage Museum for Visitors with Disabilities", "Improving the Accessibility of Accommo-

modation Services for Guests with Disabilities at Grand Hotel Kempinski Vilnius". These are just a few of the final works, but the list is not exhaustive. ATF students from all study programmes have final papers that analyse sustainable development from environmental, social and economic perspectives in order to meet the basic needs of society.

The aim is to develop HEI community volunteering initiatives to increase social inclusion, to raise awareness of the theme and importance of social exclusion and social inclusion among members of VIKO community, its social partners and the public, and to provide effective support for learners with special educational needs.

The individual departments of Vilniaus kolegija / Higher Education Institution collaborate with various initiatives or organisations to make a significant contribution to strengthening social inclusion. This report presents only a small number of significant initiatives:

On 25 March 2023, the Lithuanian Association of the Blind and Partially Sighted was selected to participate in the International Low Vision Song Contest for people with visual impairment in Germany, and the artist Eglė Juozapaitienė was a member of the jury. The aim of the competition was to promote the community spirit of the members of the Lithuanian Association of the Blind and Partially Sighted and foster artistic self-expression and creativity.

The lecturers of the Department of Fashion Design collaborate with the Vilnius Verkiai Multifunctional Centre and conduct various educational activities for students with intellectual disabilities. On 22 May 2023, the students visited the Faculty of MTF, where they learnt about fashion and image design specialisations.

In 2023, SPF organised 15 educational visits to the day-care centre "Šviesa" for people with intellectual disabilities and their relatives, during which educational employment activities were organised and carried out, thus reducing the social exclusion of people with intellectual disabilities and mitigating negative attitudes towards people with intellectual disabilities.

From 30 October to 2 November 2023, SPF and PDF students took part in a mixed intensive programme "Social work with addicted and codepen-

dent persons”, organised by the University of Liepaja (Latvia). During these days, the students listened to various lectures on addictions, made presentations on narcotic substances, visited various organisations that educate young people and provide help to people suffering from addictions.

“Teen resource centre, YOU+, State probation service, Addiction prevention centre - these are the organisations whose representatives warmly welcomed the students and presented their activities, achievements, challenges and success stories.

On 24 November 2023, as the biggest holiday of the year approached, the SPF community was invited to take part in a kindness campaign - to share kindness, warmth, attention, and the anticipation of the holidays with the people around them. Throughout the month of November, teachers, students and guests were designing, making Christmas

decorations, greetings and sharing festive decorations brought from their homes. All the gifts and warmest wishes were taken to the BJ Fabijoniškės Social Services Home. Faculty lecturers, students, together with seniors, inspired by the mood of kindness, decorated the social services home (the doors of each resident’s apartment, corridors, leisure spaces), shared the Christmas spirit.

On 28 November 2023, the Fabijoniškės Social Services House hosted a “Beauty Day” organised by Vaidutė Navickaitė-Šakėnienė, a lecturer at the SPF Department of Beauty Therapy, who gathered a team of volunteers from the first and second year of cosmetology studies. The seniors received manicures, pedicures, make-up and hand massages.

Volunteering, civic engagement and social support are important tools for promoting social well-being and sustainability.



Overview of the Operational Guidelines

The Social Responsibility and Sustainable Development Report builds on the social and environmental performance of existing and planned activities, assessing the results already achieved, and thereby informing its partners, opponents and civil society about its socially responsible practices. Sustainable education and science, as well as the development of competences for sustainable development, are important investments for the future, as they not only contribute to the creation of a generation of conscious and responsible citizens but also play a key role in building a long-term and sustainable society.

Creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship are key drivers of economic and technological growth, societal progress and business success. HEI aims to develop the critical thinking and problem-solving skills of community and society members, to foster a creative environment and sustainable innovation, and to encourage openness to sustainable innovation and entrepreneurship. Sustainable business and sustainable economy ideas, with a focus on practice, are developed to ensure the long-term economic success of organisations, while encouraging them to consider the well-being of society and the environment. The promotion of socially respon-



sible investment not only aims at the financial profitability of a business but also seeks to promote the positive (or minimise the negative) impact of business on social and environmental aspects.

The development of sustainable business and a sustainable economy can only be achieved by strengthening social partnership between public authorities, the business sector, academia and civil society.

VIKO aims to strengthen its environmental social responsibility through sustainable innovations and initiatives to save natural resources and improve environmental quality.

Promote the importance of green environments, sustainable agro-ecosystems and animal welfare by maximising opportunities to educate the Lithuanian public in these areas, through research and social partnerships with organisations with an interest in these themes. The development of environmental initiatives is critical to maintaining the sustainability of the planet and ensuring the long-term well-being of the environment for future generations. Environmental initiatives are not only about protecting the environment from harm, but also about promoting sustainable development and citizen awareness, which HEI is actively pursuing.

Although most of the study programmes, artistic activities and research are oriented towards the application of innovative and original ideas, it is equally important to promote Lithuanian ethnocultural and national heritage by working closely with organisations in this field and by making sense of these activities and research in study programmes and artistic expression.

Strengthening Lithuanian culture, maintaining statehood and fostering the continuity of historical memory are important tasks that contribute to strengthening the country's identity, building civic awareness and the well-being of society at large.

HEI fosters a responsible and civically active academic community, where volunteering and citizenship are priority values. Students, faculty and employees willingly and actively participate in various environmental and charitable initiatives each year to beautify the environment, reduce exclusion and foster community relations. HEI offices cooperate with organisations developing various initiatives, thus making a significant contribution to social inclusion.

This report highlights only some of the significant initiatives.





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