



# Progress Report & Future Directions



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## Our mission is...

...to support WU's societal responsibility  
as a **driver of sustainable transformations.**

### WE DO SO BY

- Bundling knowledge across different disciplines and disseminating it in a variety of formats, making [STaR Faculty Members'](#) research more accessible to a broader public
- (Co)organizing and hosting academic and public events and workshops
- Serving as a liaison between the WU community (faculty, staff, student organizations) and its external stakeholders (international sustainability networks, intergovernmental organizations, businesses, public)
- Supporting curricula development and sustainability-oriented theses
- Fostering intra-institutional collaboration on sustainability related topics at WU
- Attracting external funding and carrying out Third Mission projects

#### CROSS-CAMPUS COLLABORATIONS

- ↻ [WU Sustainability Reports](#)
- ↻ [STaR Involvement for All](#)

#### RESEARCH

- ↻ [STaR ePub repository](#)

#### CURRICULA DEVELOPMENT & SUPPORT

- ↻ [STaR For Students](#)
- ↻ [Sustainability Challenge \(RCE Vienna\)](#)



**STaR**

Center for  
Sustainability Transformation  
and Responsibility

#### THIRD MISSION

- ↻ [STaR SDG-Hub](#)
- ↻ [RCE Vienna](#)

#### KNOWLEDGE DISSEMINATION

- ↻ [STaR website](#)
- ↻ [STaR Events](#)
- ↻ [STaR LinkedIn](#)

STaR activities at WU  
Hyperlinks are clickable

# Overview of 2020–2023: *Events*

All STaR events are related to encouraging research on and fostering awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals of the UN 2030 Agenda. They vary in format (in-person, hybrid, virtual) and size (from specialized expert workshops of 10-15 invitees to broader public events with 100-300 attendees).

## IN EACH INDIVIDUAL YEAR FROM 2020 TO 2023, WE (CO)HOSTED AT LEAST:

- One academic conference or workshop
- One WU Matters WU Talks event
- One smaller, thematically focused public dissemination event in collaboration with external partners
- One student-engagement event

We actively engage [STaR Faculty Members](#), WU staff, and distinguished alumni as speakers.

See [STaR Event Archive](#) & [STaR Video Archive](#).



# Overview of 2020–2023: *STaR* SDG-Hub

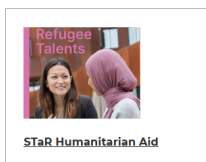
One of our major undertakings during 2020-2023 was the establishment of [STaR SDG-Hub](#). Our initial idea was to create a first of its kind resource bank for SDG-related research and teaching at WU. However, as we proceeded with the project, it expanded to a much larger knowledge dissemination endeavor.

After three years in the making, the STaR SDG-Hub resulted in five separate components: [STaR SDG Videos](#), [STaR Humanitarian Aid](#), [Impact Podcast](#) series, [STaR intro to ESGs](#), and [STaR Resource Library](#).

## STaR SDG Videos

**FOR EACH OF THE 17 SDGs, WE RECORDED, EDITED, AND UPLOADED ON OUR WEBSITE THREE (OR MORE) VIDEOS:**

- A conversation between WU student volunteers from a range of bachelor's and master's programs
- STaR interview with a WU researcher, including STaR Faculty Members, postdoctoral, and PhD researchers
- STaR interview with an expert from the business world or civil society, including seasoned business executives, founders of sustainability-focused start-ups (especially, WU alumni), and leaders from nonprofit organizations based in Vienna



During his stay at STaR in 2023, Visiting Scholar Aljaz Kuncic from the UN Development Coordination Office produced an advocacy and educational booklet, [SDG Haikus: Short Poems About Sustainable Development Goals](#), now available for purchase. All profits from this project will be donated to charitable developmental causes related to the SDGs.

### Interested in additional resources?

- [STaR Resources](#) (useful links, videos, event archives...)
- RCE Vienna [Third Mission](#) projects
- [WU Reports](#) on sustainability

# Overview of 2020–2023: *STaR Humanitarian Aid*

## Supporting WU's wider humanitarian relief efforts is inseparable from our role as a responsibility-oriented center.

- In 2022, we mobilized a group of 20 student volunteers to produce a trilingual “Welcome to Vienna” brochure with useful information for asylum seekers in Vienna. In addition, our team compiled a carefully curated Google spreadsheet with links to volunteering and donations locally, information platforms, tools for learning German, and job search platforms for refugees.
- Also in 2022, we initiated a six-month research project that resulted in a publication of an employer guide, in collaboration with Austrian Economic Chamber (WKÖ) and Federation of Austrian Industries (IV) (authors: Judith Kohlenberger, Milda Žilinskaitė, Teresa Riosa). It presents research insights into refugee employment, dispels common misconceptions, and provides useful tips for recruitment, onboarding, and management of persons with refugee backgrounds. The official launch took place in summer 2023, at the ÖBB.
- Another major undertaking during 2022–2023 was [ViaGerman](#) program, led by WU alumnus Lukas Pichler together with STaR. Over the two years, its efforts added up to more than 600 hours of free German language lessons for more than 150 Ukrainian children taught by more than 40 volunteers, including, but not limited to, WU students, staff, and alumni. These efforts were formally recognized by the WU Rectorate, with appreciation certificates. In addition, in 2022, the initiative was nominated for The Global Business School Network's, of which WU is a member, impact award.





# Overview of 2020–2023: *Contributions to sustainability teaching*

SDG4 – “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”—is at the core of STaR’s mission as a university-based Competence Center.

Below are some examples of our engagement in WU’s sustainability curricula development & support:

- RCE Vienna runs [Sustainability Challenge \(SC\)](#): a unique, innovative, cross-disciplinary, and cross-institutional course dedicated to the objectives of sustainable development. The SC offers two tracks: Service Learning and Start-ups.
- We have been actively involved in knowledge and practice exchanges on sustainability-teaching through the global

## [Network for Business Sustainability](#)

(NBS) community (200+ business school sustainability centers from around the world); also by serving on the NBS Advisory Board (Milda Zilinskaite).

- We have been closely collaborating with WU’s [Executive Academy](#), supporting them in the development and implementation of several sustainability-oriented curricula initiatives.
- We have worked with WU’s Program Management and Teaching & Learning Support team and the external institutional partners from the [ENGAGE.EU](#) network, with Günter Stahl leading the faculty development group of the General Sustainability Management Program.



From the EA AMBA accreditation report (2024):  
*“A series of topical and transversal formats and activities were designed to strengthen responsible leadership competencies and sustainable transformation together with researchers at WU Vienna’s Center for Sustainability Transformation and Responsibility.”*



### Starting a Business School Sustainability Centre

Maria Fichtner, Abby Latham, Peri Langford, Milda Zilinskaite, Maria Diaz-Molina | September 12, 2022



Centres can improve business schools’ sustainability impact. Here’s how to get one off the ground.

If you work on sustainability at a business school, you’re likely passionate about impact. You want to see the world change.

A sustainability centre can be a way to focus a school’s positive impact. Centres are units set up to facilitate work on sustainability. They have staff and resources dedicated to advancing research, teaching, and/or outreach and engagement.



# Overview of 2020–2023: *Student engagement and support*

Our [For Students](#) site, created in 2021 and regularly updated ever since, comprises:

- Dedicated to sustainability-oriented [Student Organizations](#) with whom we collaborate on regular basis. Notable examples are Oikos Vienna and Thinkubator.
- A page titled [Studying Sustainability](#) that provides an overview of courses on sustainability offered at WU and links to the Zukunftsfähiges Wirtschaften (ZuWi) program.
- [BA/MA Thesis: Writing for Impact](#). This unique site guides students who want to write their theses on sustainability issues. Since 2020, we have provided an annually updated list of more than 170 Faculty Members from over 50 WU Institutes, focusing on their theses supervision areas. In addition, we have been conducting and posting on our communication channels interviews with students who have successfully completed their theses on sustainable development topics. This promotes the efforts of both students and their supervisors.





Competence Center →  
for Sustainability  
Transformation and  
Responsibility

# Future Directions (2024-2027)



Over the next three years, we will continue serving as a platform for networking, knowledge exchange, curricula development, and outreach. We are planning our specific activities along these **two pathways**

*Fostering* the reputation and relationships we have already established by maintaining our core activities at the highest quality level

*Initiating* new long-term projects that *engage* new stakeholders in Austria and internationally

*Our view is that sustaining our core strengths is just as important as breaking new ground.*

**FOSTERING ESTABLISHED REPUTATION AND RELATIONSHIPS**

- **Supporting** STaR Faculty Members and other WU faculty (including mid- and early-career researchers) who work on sustainability related topics
- **Connecting** these faculty to potential theses supervisees and to external stakeholders looking for expert speakers and academic collaborators
- **Collaborating** with other organizational units at WU: Executive Academy, International Office, Program Management and Teaching & Learning Support, Innovation Office, Environmental Management (Green Buddies), Volunteering@WU, ZuWi, and other Competence Centers
- **Liaising** with student organizations and responding to individual student/alumni inquiries
- **Representing** WU at Austrian (Allianz, CCCA), European (Copernicus), and global (NBS, PRME) sustainability networks
- **Assisting** WU in its reporting and accreditation efforts (AACSB, EQUIS, and AMBA)

**INITIATING NEW LONG-TERM PROJECTS**

- **Engaging in** new sustainability-oriented curriculum and content development
- **Expanding** external STaR stakeholder network: seeking out additional contacts and collaboration opportunities within UNIDO, the Ban Ki-moon Center for Global Citizens, the International Anti-Corruption Academy, the Federal Ministry Republic of Austria Interior, Ashoka, IKEA Austria, ÖBB, World Data Lab, Ada, Institute for Human Rights and Business
- **Working toward** research-focused long-term collaboration with the World Bank (details currently under discussion with the WU's Rectorate)
- **Developing, securing funding, and carrying out** new Third Mission projects: UNcode Hackathon: AI Creativity for UNIDO Goals (funded by UNIDO), The Urban Shift (funded by Erasmus+), Green Leap (funded by Erasmus+), and more





## RECENT & UPCOMING EVENTS\*:

- **Kick-off (Feb 26-March 1):** Sustainable entrepreneurship workshop with 40 international students and consortium partners
- **UNcode Hackathon (March 13-14):** A workshop in collaboration with UNIDO
- **The SDGs and Global Anti-Corruption Efforts: The Private Sector Perspective (April 8):** A workshop and networking event in collaboration with the UN International Anti-Corruption Academy
- **Sustainable Threads (April 23):** Student event with SEEP and Master's Programs. Expert talk on changing fashion consumption behaviors, followed by an interactive part
- **Linguistic Diversity in Professional Settings (May 2-3):** An international, multilingual research conference in collaboration with the Department of Business Communication
- **Climate Launchpad Bootcamp (May 4-5):** A student start-up event, in collaboration with Thinkubator. If successful, STaR will support participating WU student teams in the [regional and global finals](#).
- **Towards Multispecies Societies (May 29):** A public dissemination event in collaboration with the Change Management and Management Development Institute
- **SpeakOut Festival (June 6):** A Vienna-wide event held in the Museums Quarter; several involvements by STaR and its partners
- **GREEN LEAP trainings (tbd, late 2024):** A series of trainings for young professionals in SMEs and start-ups on the enhancement of Green Skills and Resilience and Sustainable Leadership Skills
- **Research Handbook on Sustainable Project Management (Oct 3):** Book launch, by STaR Faculty Member Martina Huemann and her coeditor Gilbert Silvius
- **Economic Fallacies of the Green Transition (January 15, 2025):** WU Matters WU Talks event

\*The planning for most of our events occurs on an annual and/or semester basis.



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