



# EMPOWERING SUSTAINABILITY

THE LIBRARY'S ROLE AT  
VLERICK BUSINESS  
SCHOOL

- Founded in 1953 (by André Vlerick)
- **Private non-profit institute** (public utility foundation)
  - Diverse revenue streams to fund our activities: degree programmes, executive education (open & customised), research for business, ...
- **Autonomous** institute for **post-graduate education**
  - Collaboration with parent universities for the doctoral programme
  - Parent universities: faculty links, joint research projects,...
- Triple accredited, FT rank 2024: #33

## 5 DIMENSIONS OF SUSTAINABILITY

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1. **Strategy:** development of a Vlerick sustainability strategy through the use of a materiality exercise
2. **Reporting:** compliance with reporting requirements (CSRD, rankings, accreditations, prme...)
3. **Product:** *business development and implementation of a go to market strategy for sustainability*
4. **Communication:** *development and implementation of a communication plan for sustainability*
5. **Governance:** *installation of a governance structure for the long run*

# HOW CAN THE LIBRARY HELP?

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**STRATEGY – THROUGH A MATERIALITY EXERCISE**

# MATERIALITY EXERCISE IN THEORY

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- **Aim:** define material topics on which we can have most impact and that have most impact on us (double materiality)
- **Process:**
  - **Step 1:** define long list of material topics – by desk research in combination with 8 focus groups (degree students, corporate clients, staff & faculty)
  - **Step 2:** get to short list of material topics - by survey sent out very broadly and massively: degree students, alumni, corporate clients (research & education), staff, board, other external stakeholders,...
  - **Step 3:** prioritisation in materiality matrix (axes: impact according to stakeholders vs business impact) - by workshop with managers/partners and further validation by ExCom

# IDENTIFYING AREAS OF FOCUS: **THE PROCESS**



DESK RESEARCH



FOCUS GROUPS

=

**23**

MATERIAL TOPICS



**554** STAKEHOLDERS  
SET PRIORITIES

Masters and MBA students, Vlerick staff, researchers and faculty, clients from open and customised programmes and research partnerships helped us to rank topics in order of importance.

## Defining materiality

We aligned to these standards...



## WE USED A DOUBLE MATERIALITY APPROACH

### Impact materiality

Our impact - positive or negative - on society, people and the environment.



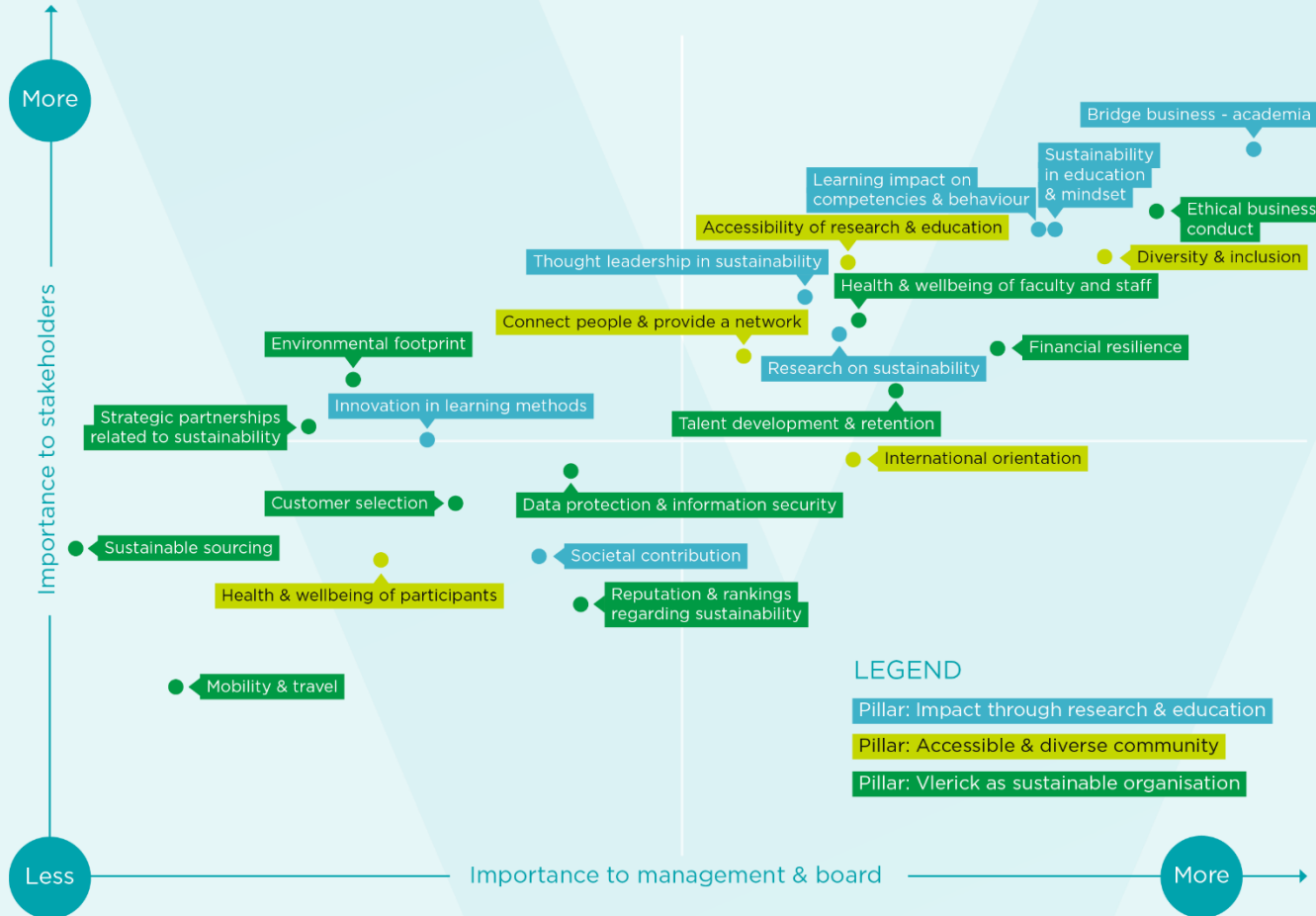
double  
materiality



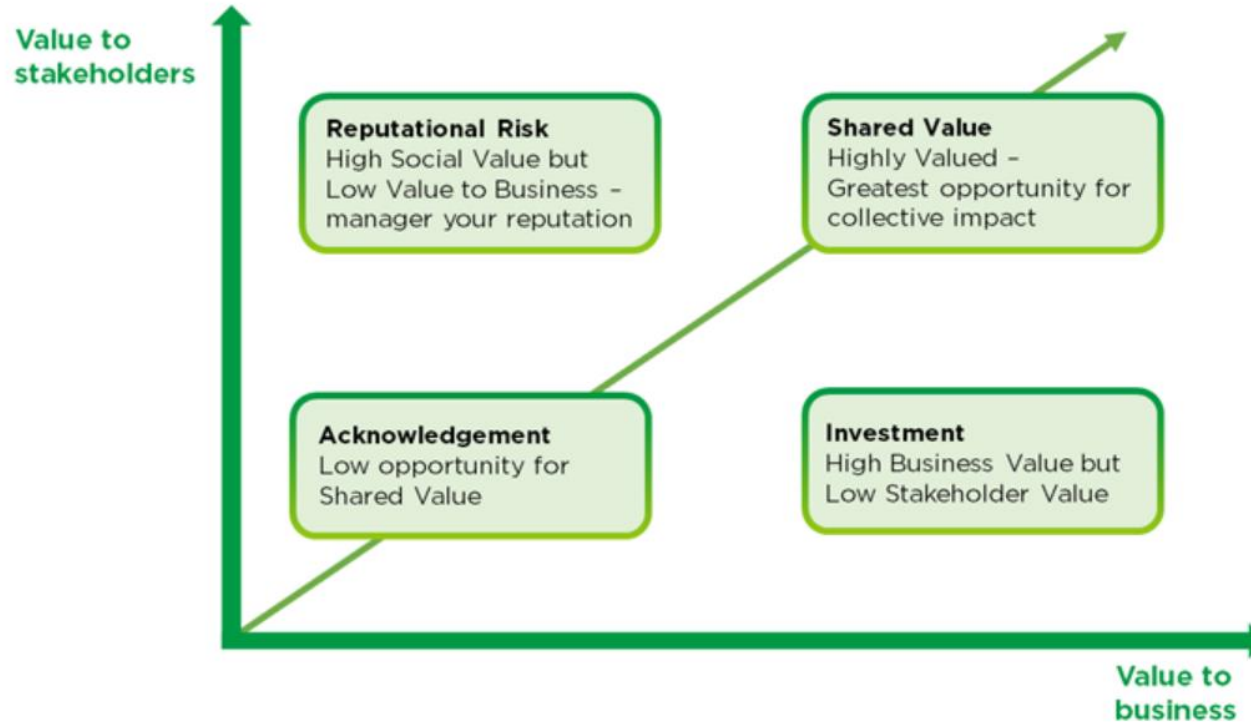
### Financial materiality

Activities - or inactivity - that could result in critical risks or opportunities to the school.

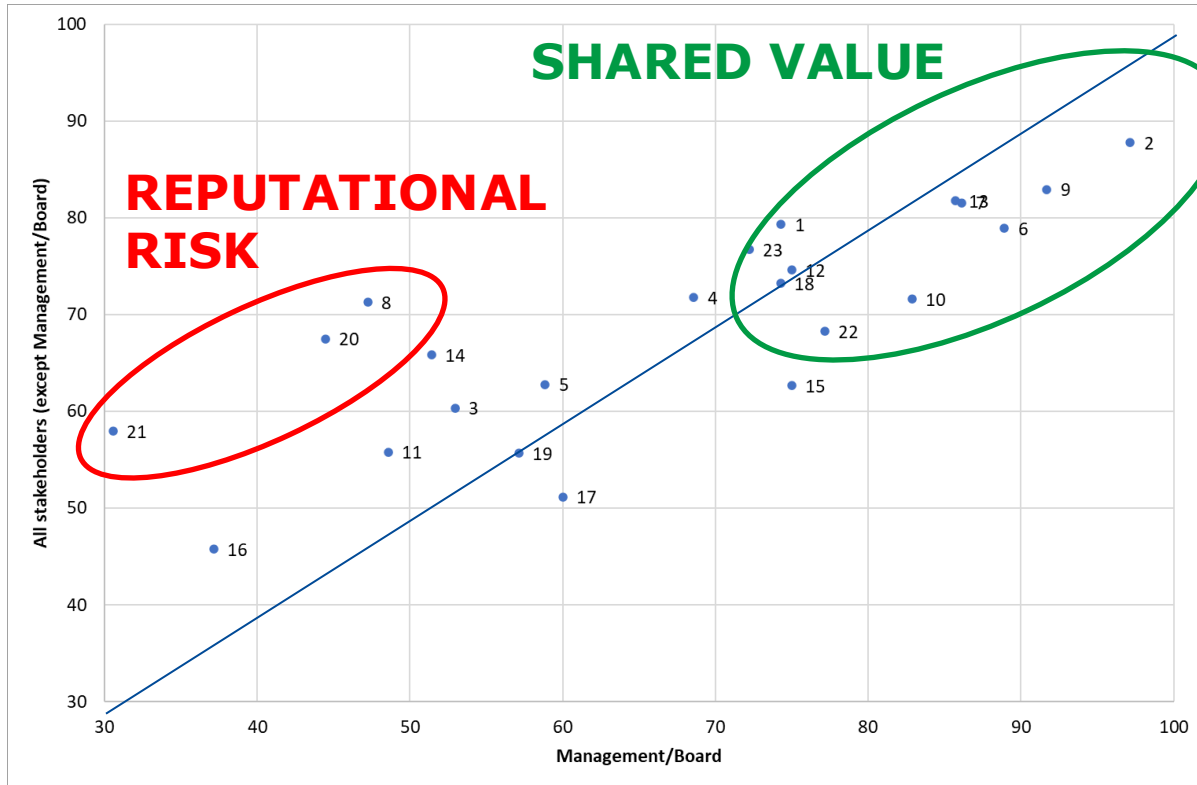
# VLERICK MATERIALITY MATRIX



# 3. HOW TO INTERPRET MATERIALITY MATRIX?

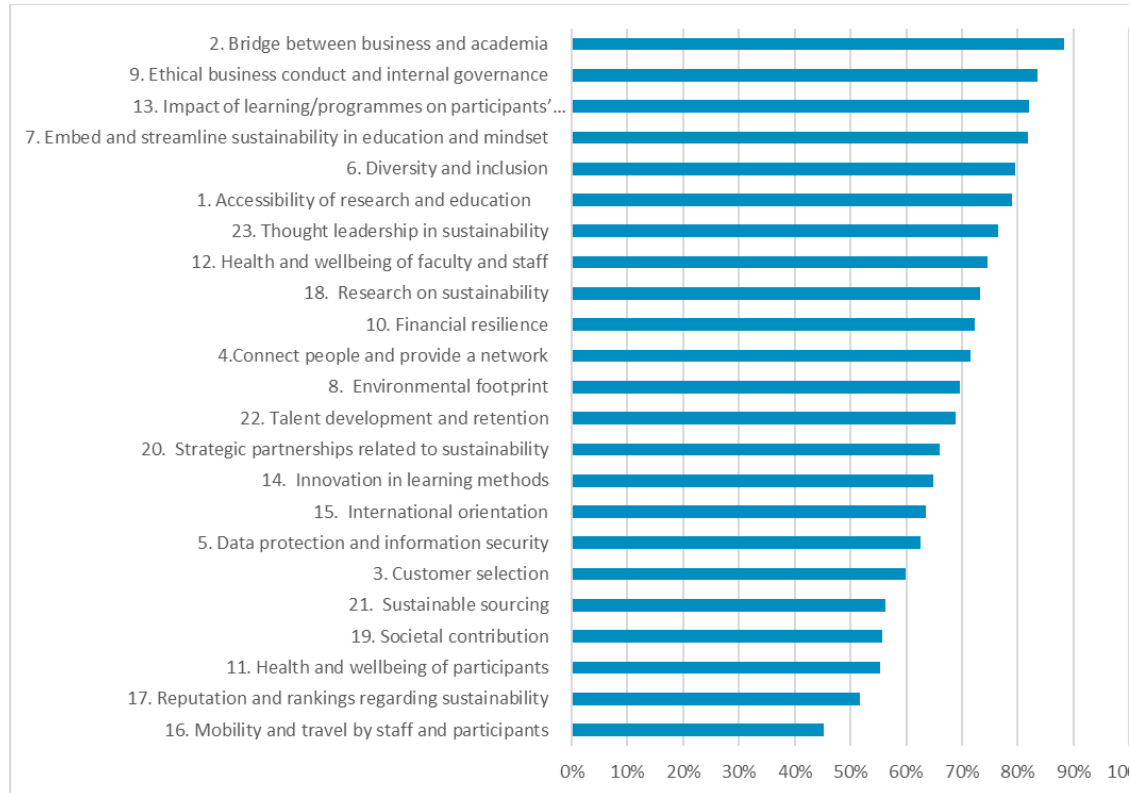


# MATERIALITY MATRIX



- 2. Bridge between business and academia
- 9. Ethical business conduct and internal governance
- 13. Impact of learning/programmes on participants' competencies and behaviour
- 7. Embed and streamline sustainability in education and mindset
- 6. Diversity and inclusion
- 1. Accessibility of research and education
- 23. Thought leadership in sustainability
- 12. Health and wellbeing of faculty and staff
- 18. Research on sustainability
- 10. Financial resilience
- 4. Connect people and provide a network
- 8. Environmental footprint
- 22. Talent development and retention
- 20. Strategic partnerships related to sustainability
- 14. Innovation in learning methods
- 15. International orientation
- 5. Data protection and information security
- 3. Customer selection
- 21. Sustainable sourcing
- 19. Societal contribution
- 11. Health and wellbeing of participants
- 17. Reputation and rankings regarding sustainability
- 16. Mobility and travel by staff and participants

# IMPACT MATERIALITY - ALL STAKEHOLDERS (SUM % VERY HIGH & HIGH IMPORTANCE)



# SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY – THREE PILLARS

**Impact on  
sustainability  
practice through  
research and  
education**

Bridge  
Impact  
Mindset  
Thought leadership



**Build an  
accessible and  
diverse  
community**

Accessibility  
Diversity & inclusion



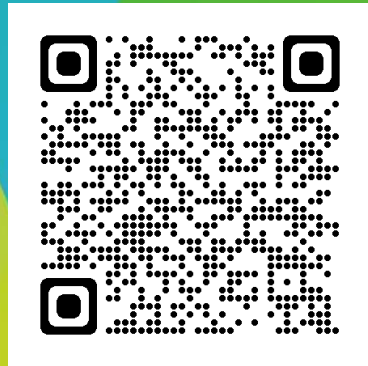
**Walk the talk as  
a sustainable  
organisation**

Environmental footprint  
Talent development &  
retention  
Health & well-being  
Financial resilience  
Ethical business conduct



**REPORTING**

# SUSTAINABILITY REPORT 2023



## CONTENTS

### CHAPTER 1



#### OUR APPROACH TO SUSTAINABILITY

[READ MORE >](#)

### CHAPTER 2



#### CREATING IMPACT THROUGH EDUCATION

[READ MORE >](#)

### CHAPTER 3



#### CREATING IMPACT THROUGH RESEARCH

[READ MORE >](#)

### CHAPTER 4



#### VLERICK AS SUSTAINABLE ORGANISATION

[READ MORE >](#)

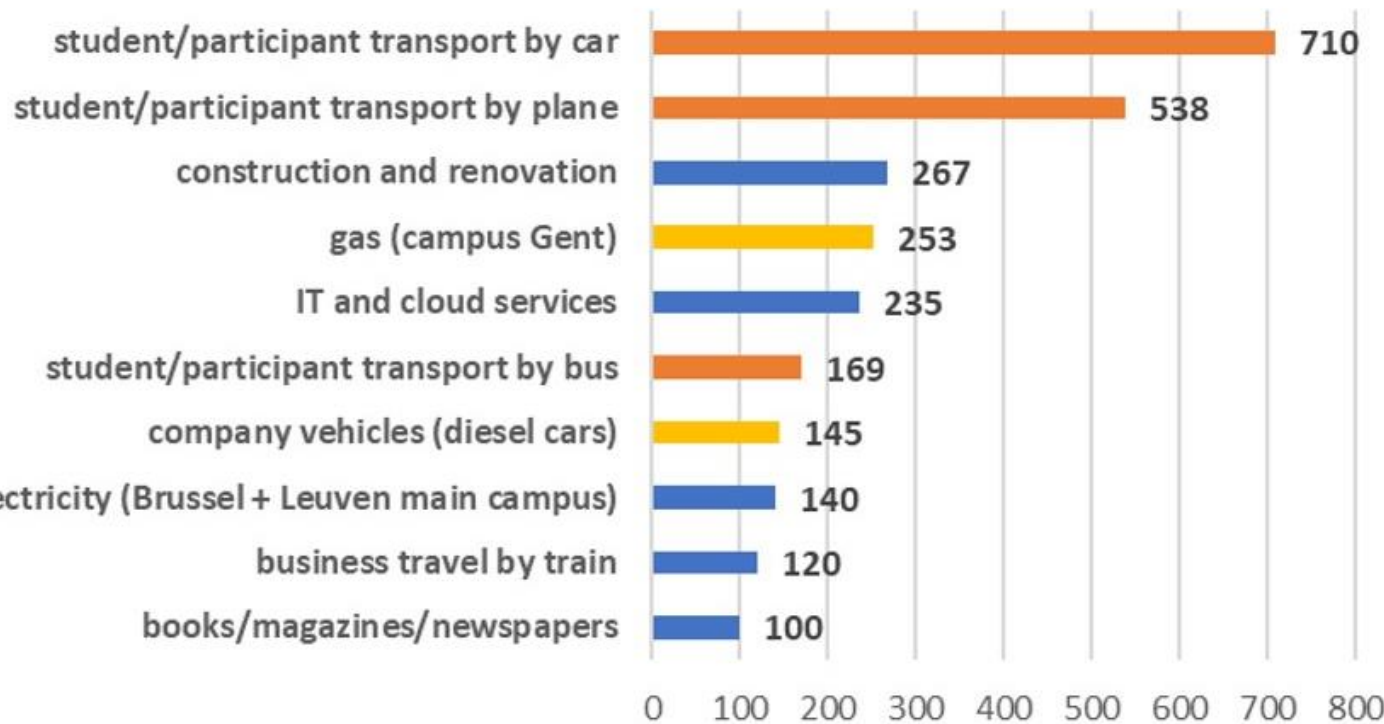
# REPORTING DUTIES AND ACTIONS

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## ■ Carbon footprint measurement

- First full measurement (scope 1, 2 & 3 emissions)  
Spring 2024 on 2022 data, currently processing 2023 data
- Target net zero year: 2030 (with roll out of carbon reduction plan)
- Report is publicly available

# TOP 10 = 75% OF EMISSIONS (2022)



Scope 1

Scope 2

Scope 3  
upstream

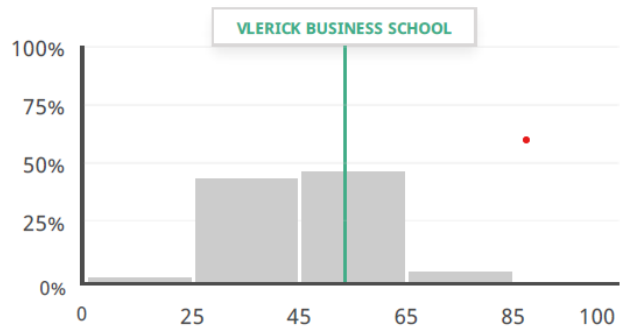
Scope 3  
downstream

# REPORTING DUTIES AND ACTIONS

## ■ EcoVadis assessment

- First assessment Fall 2023, resulting in bronze medal
- Action plan in implementation to reach silver or even gold medal (3-year commitment)

Overall score distribution





**United Nations**  
Global Compact

**PRME** Principles for Responsible  
Management Education

*an initiative of the* 

PRME is a key actor of UN Global Compact's enabling ecosystem, focused on transforming management education to equip today's business students with the understanding and ability to deliver change in businesses tomorrow.



Responsible  
Management Education



Responsible  
Business Leaders



Sustainable  
Business



Achievement of the  
SDGs

**PRME**

**BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT**

# VLERICK SUSTAINABILITY CENTRE



## VLERICK SUSTAINABILITY CENTRE

The Vlerick Sustainability Centre unites faculty from across disciplines to drive the sustainability agenda, on topics including:

- Creating a sustainability mindset
- Sustainability reporting and data
- Sustainability and target setting
- Designing sustainability governance
- Developing sustainable business models
- Promoting diversity, equity and inclusion



## Launch of Vlerick's Sustainability Centre

In November 2023, our Sustainability Centre threw open its doors for its first ever event. Keynote speaker Gunter Pauli, the eco-entrepreneur and founder of The Blue Economy, presented new and inspiring business models – showing that sustainability, regeneration and profitability can go hand in hand.

Vlerick's Dean, Marion Debruyne, said: "I'm super excited about the launch of this centre, the way it can enact the school's purpose and the contribution to the Vlerick Scholarship Fund it enables."



# AGENDA 2025



20 January

**From Standards to Action: Bekaert's Approach to ESG Data and Reporting**



12 February

**Carbon reduction & carbon credits: in setting and off setting**



3 April

**Sustainable marketing: The importance of transparency for building brand reputation**



15-16 May

**Residential Seminar: Circularity – From gradual shift to radical changes**



Workshop (in person)



Webinar

June

**Designing inclusive workplaces for a sustainable future**



September

**Learnings on CSRD & external assurance**



October

**Exchange on CS3D's impact**



November

**AI in Sustainability reporting – Meet the CFO**



# **COMMUNICATION & GOVERNANCE**

# WORK IN PROGRESS

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- Some actions were taken – for now mainly top-down and ad hoc communication on different channels
- Governance
  - Sustainability core team
  - DEI team
  - Working groups on Research, Education, community & operations (incl. library)
    - Sounding board
    - Prioritise/implement projects in line with the KPI targets
    - No nonsense & creative
    - Minimize “not-in-my-backyard” & maximize “let’s do it”

**AND THE LIBRARY?**

## HOW CAN WE CONTRIBUTE?

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*The Vlerick Library is a trusted source of information for business students, practitioners & academics. It is a (virtual) safe space where they can experiment with real-life data on companies, industries and society at large. It's the first stop for course preparation, assignments, and project guidance in Vlerick's different knowledge domains. It's the primary place for (academic) literature, (research) skills development and information literacy. The library keeps a close eye on the collections of its parent universities and constantly interacts with new technologies while further building its sustainable collections, space, and services. The library wants to play an active role in the preservation of Vlerick's legacy for future generations.*

# HOW CAN WE CONTRIBUTE?

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- Active on all three pillars
  - We provide info to managers/researchers to address real-life business issues
  - We make knowledge accessible
  - Being a physical space on campus & being an information provider, we want to contribute to reducing our carbon footprint & “walk the talk”



## Reducing carbon footprint

- From print to digital textbooks (Kortext) – Pilot project evaluation + push to Kortext for all degree programmes AY 25-26.
- End-of-year book sale of 2<sup>nd</sup> hand materials, always for a good cause

## Accessibility of research

- CRIS/Dspace Repository project - In line with the Belgian OA policy we will further encourage green open access as the preferred way – in collab. with the research team.

# FUTURE PRIO'S

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- Further developing a sustainability collection
  - In collab. with DEI team & center for sustainability (focus on ESG data)
  - Consider a collection exchange with other institutions/libraries
- Communication
  - Make our sustainability efforts visible in the library/on campus
    - Example of Vives
    - Provide information on certain actions taken by the school (ground source heating) – in collab. with marketing & comm.
  - Bottom-up approach – invest in good ideas coming from students.

**VIVES  
GLOBALLY  
CONNECTED**



13 CLIMATE ACTION



vives GLOBALLY CONNECTED

9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE



vives

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES



CLIMA D'...



4 QUALITY EDUCATION



4 QUALITY EDUCATION

6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION



vives

14



vives GLOBALLY CONNECTED

7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY



vives GLOBALLY CONNECTED



17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS



2 ZERO HUNGER



1 NO POVERTY



3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION



16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

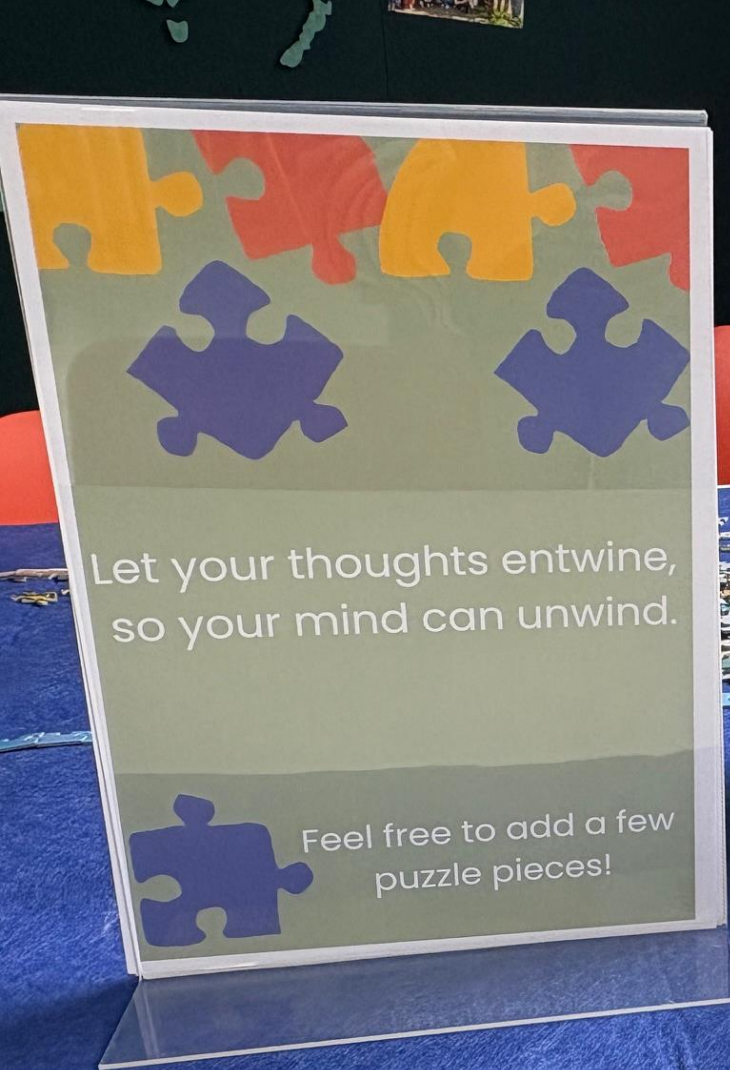


11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



15 LIFE ON LAND





Let your thoughts entwine,  
so your mind can unwind.

Feel free to add a few  
puzzle pieces!





LET THE  
good things grow

Erasmus+  
2024

Magis of Recognition  
Vives



A Mutual Learning  
Central Blue-Vives University of Agriculture

2024  
Buurzaam  
Ondernemen  
Lauréaat

VZW Vives Zuid &  
VZW Vives Noord  
2023  
Buurzaam  
Ondernemen  
Lauréaat

For the mutual success  
of our institutions



Cooperation from  
Erasmus University  
September, 2018 Vives Vrije  
Universiteit