



# NEWTON UNIVERSITY

UN SDG Report 2023/2024

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# Introduction

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide a shared framework for addressing the world's most urgent social, economic, and environmental challenges.

**A Business University for Life, NEWTON aligns with the SDGs as they reflect the very purpose of our institution: equipping people with the skills, judgement, and resilience to improve their lives, their organisations, and their communities.** In 2023/2024, we advanced eight SDGs that directly connect to who we are and what we teach:

**Good Health and Well-Being (3)**: essential for resilient leadership and sustainable performance; **Quality Education (4)**: the foundation of lifelong learning and personal mastery; **Gender Equality (5)**: reflected in our commitment to fairness, respect, and equal opportunities; **Decent Work and Economic Growth (8)**: central to business education and applied learning; **Reduced Inequalities (10)**: expressed through widening access, scholarships and flexible study; **Climate Action (13)**: a responsibility for every future leader in a changing world; Peace, **Justice and Strong Institutions (16)**: underpinning ethical conduct, transparency, and trust; and **Partnerships for the Goals (17)**: the basis of our international collaborations and practice-oriented education.

These priorities are anchored in our values: **personal mastery**, which drives our focus on academic excellence, professional innovation, and personal self-efficacy; **innovation**, shaping our contribution to green and digital transitions; **community**, reflected in our student support systems and public-facing activities; and **practicality**, which ensures our teaching and partnerships create real-world impact.

In February 2024, we adopted our first **Gender Equality Plan**, strengthening our commitment to inclusion and fairness across the institution. **This report summarises the activities undertaken between September 2023 and September 2024 that demonstrate how NEWTON contributes to the SDGs** through its teaching, research, partnerships, and institutional culture. It reflects our belief that responsible, future-oriented business education can—and must—play a meaningful role in building a more equitable, sustainable, and resilient society.

In Prague, 2 October 2024



**Anna Plechatá Krausová, DPhil.**

Chancellor of NEWTON University



# Good Health and Wellbeing

## Promotion of Psychological Safety and Stress Resistance

The so-called Generation Z is reporting increasing levels of stress, as well as experiencing record levels of anxiety and other mental health issues. We are committed to developing both open discussions, pedagogical approaches, and academic research into issues of mental health in academia and beyond, from promoting psychological safety to training stress resistance.

*"Most of us need a playbook for failure"*

**Amy Edmondson**

Following the May 2024 invited lecture by Prof Amy Edmondson on the Science of Failure as part of the NEWTON Research & Innovation Week 2024, we launched a Blended Intensive Programme on the topic of **The Art of Failure**, positioning psychological safety and intelligent handling of mistakes as part of NEWTON's educational offering.



This commitment is also reflected in our long-standing provision of managerial training, from **Authentic Leadership Bootcamps** to our signature **X-tream training**, built on the foundations of Meichenbaum's research into stress-inoculation and our colleagues' work on **connatural management**. Our Chancellor participated in the English-language **pilot** of the programme, enabling students from partner universities to participate for the first time this year.

## New Technologies in Health and Wellbeing

We are proud to support innovation and equality of access in the provision of medical care. One of our star alumni, **Jiri Pecina**, founded the now global telemedicine company **MEDDI** in 2017. Between 2021 and 2023, we ran an applied **research project** looking into localising

the “tools and processes to support international virtual teams in a telemedicine application environment”, as Meddi was scaling globally.



*“Meddi, with its hundreds of thousands of patients, would not exist without NEWTON.”*

#### **Jiri Pecina**

In 2023 and 2024, MEDDI hub a.s. expanded access to medical treatment across countries including the **Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Poland, and Mexico**, allowing patients in remote or underserved regions to consult qualified doctors virtually and without delay via its telemedicine platform.



# Quality Education

Innovation and excellence in education are at the heart of our mission. As detailed in our [Strategic Implementation Plan 2024](#), our focus during this period has been on innovation of curricula, blended learning, and development of students' 21st-century competences through practice and internships. Of the Top 10 most-needed skills in the World Economic Forum's 2023 [Future of Jobs Report](#), we have focused our pedagogical innovation on the following skills: 1. analytical thinking, 2. creative thinking, 4. leadership and social influence. 5. resilience, flexibility and agility, 6. curiosity and lifelong learning, 9. motivation and self-awareness, and 10. empathy and active listening.

## Innovative Practical Education

NEWTON University is committed to providing practical education beyond the classroom. We focus on bringing expert advice to our classrooms, from the [practical application of cognitive management in crisis situations](#) to sharing real-life experiences and case studies of management models from our partners like [Martin Barry, CEO and founder of Manifesto Market](#). Students and staff also participated in our new book club, where we discussed selected works such as Prof Amy Edmondson's '[Right Kind of Wrong](#)', or Tomas Studenik's [Art of Failure](#), allowing in-depth conversations about the intersections between failure, learning, innovation, and psychological safety.

## Lifelong learning and Outreach

Part of our commitment to spreading knowledge beyond university grounds is our long standing [cooperation with high schools](#) in the Czech Republic, bringing topics such as presentation and communication skills, as well as a business and entrepreneurial mindset to high school classrooms. This is exemplified by our guest lecturer Dr. Jerome Dumetz, who brought the topic of [Cross-cultural Management](#) to the Pražské humanitní gymnázium or the Secondary Vocational School in Pardubice.





## AI in Education

Part of our commitment to innovation entails the implementation of latest technologies to help us deliver the highest quality education. In December 2023, NEWTON collaborated with **Game Developers Session** in Prague and the Chancellor delivered a keynote on integrating AI into education and preparing graduates for the gaming and tech industries.

## Education for Entrepreneurship

Annually, we host the **European Forum of Entrepreneurship**, an interdisciplinary conference bringing together experts in economics, management, business studies and related disciplines. In 2023, the theme was “Business Environment in the Minds of Turbulent Changes”, focusing on fostering the agility and resilience needed to tackle the challenges of today’s world.

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# Gender Equality

## Providing Equal Opportunities

NEWTON is a women-led institution, being one of the few higher education institutions in the Czech Republic with a woman at the helm; moreover, 36% of our senior staff are women. We are committed to promoting equal access to economics, management, and social sciences education, highlighted by the proportion of women in our study programmes in these areas - 53%.



*“the GEP will act as a lens to help us communicate our strategic goals more clearly and prioritise our actions”*

**Chancellor Anna Plechata Krausová**

## Cohesive Gender Equality Strategy

Our vision and commitment to reducing inequalities is reflected in our **Gender Equality Plan 2024-2027** and the establishment of its responsible Equality and Diversity Coordination Team.

This strategy lays out the measures and activities planned to **ensure equal opportunities and anti-discrimination measures** across all the elements of our university ecosystem. This includes raising awareness about our commitment to gender equality and the importance of this topic in Czechia to delivering workshops of gender equality and discrimination for staff across the university.

The GEP is also a crucial element of our continuing internationalisation as well as our commitment to the UN SDGs more broadly. It was also discussed as an example of **good practice in internationalisation & diversity at EAIE 2024**, confirming NEWTON University's view towards upholding and promoting international standards for social responsibility.



## Student research on gender equality

Our students are heavily involved in research on gender equality, spanning topics such as **“Discrimination against women in the workplace”** focusing on causes and forms of workplace discrimination, as well as further theses on gender equality and women in management, including on the topic of **gender differences and self-development**.



# Decent Work and Economic Growth

## Job Security and Working Conditions

As part of equal working conditions, NEWTON ensures that employees have equal access to maternity and paternity leaves as established by Czech legislation and international best practices. This includes clearly communicating the maternity, paternity, and parental leave options and rules in Czechia, as well as adding two extra weeks for new fathers, in the new **Life Situations Manual**. Moreover, our flexible working arrangements suit both colleagues looking for job security on long-term contracts and those looking for flexible hours and home office options, promoting a healthy work-life balance. Above all, we pride ourselves on our individual approach to our relationship with both our students and our staff.

## Student and Alumni Labour Market Outcomes

We provide **professional practice and internships** embedded in all programmes and are working on expanding our network of partner companies, including English-language placements, for new English-taught programmes.

Within the **NEWTON ecosystem**, students are offered relevant job opportunities through the NEWTON Career Centre and our annual **Job Fair**, hosting local and international companies looking for talent. More entrepreneurial students can enrol in the **NEWTON Business Accelerator** already during their studies, explicitly supporting student start-ups and entrepreneurial activities. In the Academic Year 2023-2024, we accelerated 12+ student ventures, many of which were then presented at our annual **Pop Up Market**.





*“Each of us can contribute to a cleaner and healthier environment by choosing reusable alternatives to single-use cups and utensils.”*

**Wojtech Toman**

This included the sustainable **One Cup Project**, one of the projects that moved onto the next stage, namely successful funding through the **NEWTON University Angel Fund**. The One Cup project was founded by our student Wojtech Toman in order to dramatically reduce plastic waste at music festivals and similar events. Other projects include locally made cosmetics for men, **Bogroti**; and locally produced office supplies made from sustainable materials, **Basefound**.



# Reduced Inequalities

## A Community of Equals

Reducing inequalities begins with cultivating a community where everyone can be themselves and where differences are recognised, respected and openly discussed. Managers are trained to foster everyday practices that support inclusion, dignity and equal treatment for all members of our academic community. Our **Gender Equality Plan** also strengthens the systems and structures that support an inclusive academic environment. For the first time, NEWTON has established clear procedures for reporting concerns, defined responsibilities across units, and introduced regular monitoring of equality indicators. This provides a transparent framework that makes inclusion measurable, actionable and embedded in the everyday functioning of the university.



*“A focus on equality and diversity is being woven explicitly into the fabric of our strategic transformation”*

**Chancellor Anna Plechata Krausova**

## Support for underrepresented groups

Supporting underrepresented groups is a core part of this commitment to belonging. Through the **Erudikon Foundation's endowment fund**, we provide financial and mentoring support to students who face barriers to entering or completing higher education, and we offer extraordinary scholarships to those experiencing sudden hardship. Flexible study arrangements and individual plans for students with health conditions, pregnancy or caregiving responsibilities ensure that different life situations are recognised and accommodated, so that every student can participate fully in university life.

## Education Anywhere

Our commitment to supporting and connecting talent wherever it may be explains our focus on providing accessible education through our **hybrid and remote teaching** modalities. This allows NEWTON to provide education to students from all corners of the world, **bringing down obstacles to access education** on the basis of economic resources for relocation or due to migration status. NEWTON currently has enrolled students from **20+ countries all over the world, from Afghanistan to the United States**. Moreover, our International cooperation extends to **Erasmus+** mobility and partnerships in 14+ countries plus **Taiwan, Georgia and the USA**, enabling students from diverse backgrounds to enjoy an international experience within structured funding.



# Climate Action

## Smart City, Smart Education, Smart Life

NEWTON University is committed to looking for practical innovative solutions to the most pressing problems of today. Prof. Dagmar Caganova (Vice-Chancellor for Internationalisation at NEWTON University), has worked on the Smart City and Smart Life agenda for decades, and has served as **General Chairwoman** of the **EAI Smart Life Summit 2023**. Under her chairmanship, the summit included technical tracks on IoT, smart cities, AI, cyber-security, and sustainable energy, among others. Prof. Caganova played a key role in bringing the Summit to **Bratislava**.



*"I feel a happiness and self-satisfaction that the Summit Smart Life highlighted the human potential and collective drive to make the world a better place for life"*

**Prof. Dagmar Caganova**

Prof. Caganova also co-edited the Springer volume **"Smart Cities: Importance of Management and Innovations for Sustainable Development"** as well as presenting at the **11th EAI Mobility, IoT, and Smart City International Conference**, organized by Da Nang University, Vietnam.

## Hosting GreenHack 2024

*"An international hackathon focused on sustainability, ecology and future challenges. The event connects innovators, developers and experts looking for solutions for a better world."*

**"GreenHack 2024"** was held in May 2024 at NEWTON University in Prague and tackled sustainability challenges, with a focus on practical application and commercialisation, with



finalists awarded their prizes at the Prague Castle, as the event was held under the auspices of the First Lady of the Czech Republic.

## Sustainable Research Projects

Our commitment to sustainability is also evidenced by a number of international research projects that ran throughout the 2023/2024 period.



This includes the **ChemSkills project**, funded by the European Union aiming, over four years, to **support the development of skills in the chemical industry for the green transition**, digitalisation and the circular economy. The project connects companies, schools and associations, identifies skill needs and prepares specific learning opportunities for different levels – from secondary schools to lifelong learning.

The TRIREME project – **Digital & Green Skills Towards the Future of the Mobility Ecosystem** – supports the aim of **green transition** through the identification of future competences, curriculum innovation, and the connection of vocational schools, employers and other partners. The project thus contributes to a harmonised and practically anchored development of the sector across Europe.



## Sustainable Mobility Implementation

Out of 47 participants in our mobility programmes, 15 chose low-carbon travel options such as train or bus, representing 33% of all outgoing mobilities. This proportion indicates that a significant share of students and staff are actively opting for greener travel when supported to do so. The shift towards rail and bus transport aligns with the environmental objectives of Erasmus+ and reflects the institution's broader efforts to promote sustainable choices. It also provides a clear baseline for further increasing the share of sustainable mobility

in the coming years. Moreover, through the top-up scheme, we supported the mobilities of 7 students with fewer opportunities

## **Student research on sustainability and climate change**

Our students engage in the advancement of sustainability through their Bachelor theses including ***"The development of the electromobility trend in the European Union as a business opportunity"***, "Social responsibility in the fashion industry and its impact on consumer perception of the product Fashion marketing - ecology as a trend" or "Human resource management as a tool for business sustainability".





# Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

## Academic Freedom

The **Statutes that guide NEWTON University** provide safeguards to fundamental academic freedoms, including **research freedom for junior and senior academics alike**, and the guiding principle of freedom to choose areas of research and to speak and teach publicly about the area of their research.

## Student Union

Students organize in the form of the **Student Council**, which provides support and representation to students vis a vis the academic and managerial structure of NEWTON University. The Student Council partakes in the continuous **improvement of the functioning** of the University, the improvement of the **conditions for study** at the University, the management of **educational quality, creative and related activities, as well as in the overall development** of the University.

## Hosting PORGMUN 2024 – Model United Nations conference



**“PORGMUN: Students unite for global dialogue at NEWTON”**

In March 2024, NEWTON hosted PORGMUN, with **300+ delegates from international high schools (incl. Irish, German, Turkish)**. Committees debated the **climate crisis, human rights, AI in education, defending journalists from attacks, interstate litigation at the ICJ**, etc.

## Implementation of whistleblowing system (Whistleblower Protection Act)

The Strategic Implementation Plan 2024 sets **completion of the whistleblowing system** (started 2023) as a specific target under Priority D (Organisation, management and operation). The University maintains a dedicated **“Whistleblowing platform”** link alongside **Ethical Codex** and the GEP, in accordance with the operationalisation of compliant reporting mechanism Transparency and Accountability. In this context, NEWTON University has joined the whistleblowing project Nenech to být (Czech for “Don’t let it be”). **NNTB** serves as an online reporting platform, allowing individuals to report any concerns, wrongdoings, unethical behavior, or provide comments for improvement.

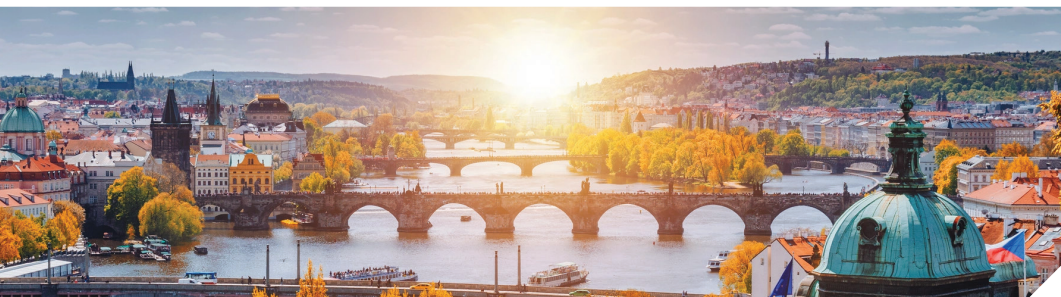


# Partnerships for the Goals

## Sustainability in Higher Education

NEWTON University and our Vice-Chancellor co-organised the **SmartLife Week 2023** in **Bratislava**, contributing to the conversation on IoT, smart cities, AI, cyber-security, and sustainable energy, among others.

*“The summit builds on a tradition of its own in connecting the best minds and most influential stakeholders to create a multidisciplinary setting where ideas on innovation and improvement come together”*



## Accreditations for the Goals

In June 2024, we are proud to have hosted the **AMBA & BGA Business School Professionals Conference** in Prague. Members of the **Business Graduates Association (BGA)** since 2023, we are now actively working to start this international business school accreditation process, one which is centred around a Continuous Impact Model, tied explicitly to meeting the UN SDGs.

## Multi-Partner EU Projects

As mentioned above, NEWTON University takes a lead in a number of international projects focused on sustainability in various ways. Within **aLIFEca**, an Erasmus+ project coordinated by VŠB-TU Ostrava, we co-developed a **virtual open course on Life Cycle Assessment (LCA)** tailored specifically for the automotive industry, helping to raise environmental

consciousness among students. This MOOC includes certification, real-world case studies, and is aligned with European standards, supporting the shift toward sustainable mobility.

## International Mobility and Partnerships

NEWTON University maintains a global network of **27 partner institutions across 14 countries**, supported via **Erasmus+** and other frameworks. These partnerships **enhance mobility**, deepen cross-cultural learning, and reinforce NEWTON's role in a global academic ecosystem.

### NEWTON in Oxford

Our internationalisation strategy also includes dual-degree programmes and initiatives such as **"Newton in Oxford"**. We partnered with **St Antony's College** to host an impactful Oxford Summer School. This program offered NEWTON students the opportunity to delve into questions of leadership and entrepreneurship in the Age of AI, and to learn about and practice the self-efficacy skills that will be needed to make a difference in the community and in the world of tomorrow.



# Final Remarks

This first annual report underscores our **commitment to the UN Sustainable Development Goals** remains a central part of what it means to be a **Business University for Life**. It reflects the work of our students, academics, professional staff, and partners, and I would like to thank all of you for your contribution to this shared effort.

Looking ahead, our priorities for the coming period are clear. We will continue **strengthening the eight SDGs that shape our mission**—quality education, resilient well-being, gender equality, decent work and economic growth, reduced inequalities, climate responsibility, strong institutions, and global partnerships. These themes will guide our decisions and investments across teaching, research, partnerships and institutional culture.

**Specifically, we aim to, over the next years:**

- **Expand psychological safety and resilience programmes** to reach at least 200 student and alumni participants over the next two years.
- **Launch three new Blended Intensive Programmes (BIPs)** for international intensive programmes per academic year.
- **Reach 700+ high school students in the year 2026/27** through outreach activities, supported by a formally established baseline of participation.
- **Publish annual Gender Equality Plan (GEP) progress reviews**, ensuring transparent monitoring of equality objectives.
- **Deliver biennial equality, diversity and anti-harassment training** to 100% of managers and 70% of staff.
- **Secure at least five new English-language internship partners annually** to expand global employability pathways.
- **Expand hybrid and remote study options**, and enrol students from at least 30 countries by 2026.
- **Integrate sustainability modules or cases into all programmes by 2026.**
- **Increase the uptake of sustainable travel options** for staff mobility and exchanges from 33% to more than 50% next year.
- **Ensure full adoption of the whistleblowing platform**, accompanied by an annual usage and trust report.
- **Develop and monitor a short Academic Freedom Statement** aligned with NEWTON's institutional values.
- **Increase student mobility participation by 50%** (physical and virtual) across Erasmus+ and other international programmes.

Across all of this, our values - **personal mastery, innovation, community, and practicality** - will continue to guide us. They shape how we teach, how we work together and how we engage with society. And they ensure that our contribution to the SDGs remains grounded, relevant and oriented towards real-world impact.

Thank you for being part of this journey, and for helping NEWTON University play an active role in building a more equitable, sustainable and resilient future.