

2022 POSITIVE IMPACT STARTUPS

ECOSYSTEM
OF CHANGE

REPORT



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REPORT

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OF CHANGE



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kozminskihub.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/baza_SPW_2022.pdf

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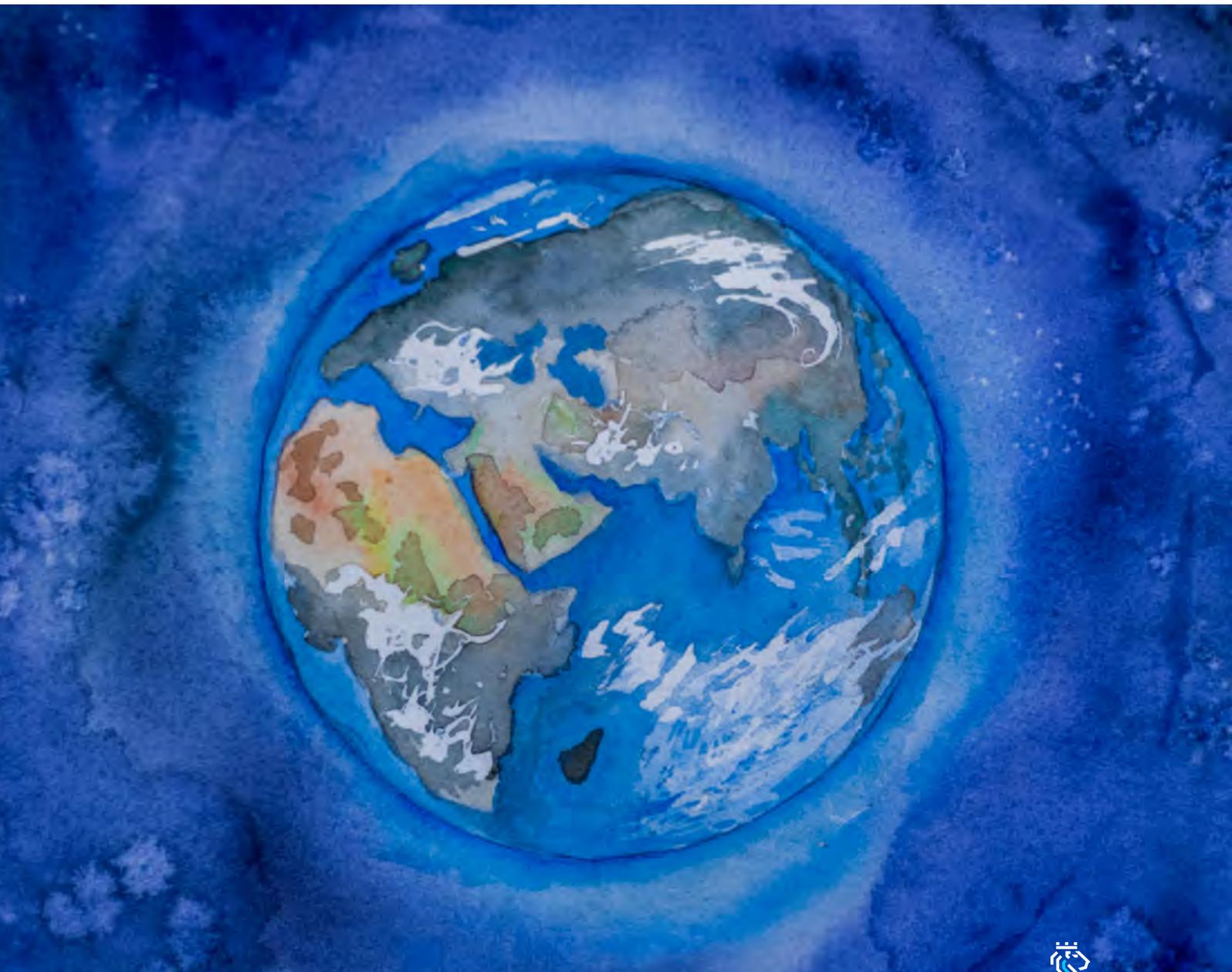
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What is being presented today by positive impact startups

will soon become a standard in the entire economy

Professor Grzegorz Mazurek

Rector, Kozminski University

Until recently, the entire startup movement focused on searching for original business models that, thanks to the scalability of products, would provide investors with growing, possibly stable and, of course, large profits. The measure of success was the valuation of a company, which is a simple tool proven in traditional business.

It was the valuation that allowed to identify unicorns, i.e. – as defined by PFR Ventures – young, innovative companies that have reached a value of at least EUR 1 billion and which can talk about international success. In Poland, only the DocPlanner platform for booking medical

appointments has been considered a unicorn, although according to Google for Startups, in addition to DocPlanner, unicorns are also such entities as InPost, CD Projekt, Huuuge Games, Ten Square Games, as well as such market veterans as eObuwie, Wirtualna Polska and Allegro.

Measuring success in financial terms is no longer enough

Companies and brands – not only those from new businesses – have been experiencing an unexpected crisis, when consumers massively renounce their loyalty due to the mistreatment of employees, abuses of subcontractors (such as lack of care for the environment, using labour of children or prisoners), unethical finances located in controversial tax havens or, as is the case recently, due to the lack of unequivocal withdrawal from doing business in Russia after its aggression against Ukraine.

Companies that have been socially assessed as unethical, anti-democratic or pro-war cannot hide their activities under a changed logo or under the guise of symbolic charitable acts. The global consumer – especially the younger generation – is

constantly checking whom to entrust the money when buying goods and services, increasingly taking into account genuine social commitment, care for the environment, ethics and transparency of operations.

The most important areas in business consulting and management practice have recently included the principles of ESG (environmental, social, and governance framework). According to an international McKinsey survey, as many as 66 percent of senior managers in consumer businesses associate the adherence to ESG rules with an increase in the company's value to shareholders (56 percent in B2B industries). Sensitivity to doing good becomes a megatrend. Similarly, UN experts define this need by pointing to the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that should be achieved by 2030 if we want to preserve planet Earth and make its human inhabitants healthier and happier.

This kind of ethical sensitivity and thinking about the future of the world dominates in the young generation

20-year-old entrepreneurs – and most startups in Poland are currently founded by people up to 30 years of age – declare the desire to change the world for the better as the main goal of their business activity. Of course, they won't despise capital rent and high valuation, but they don't want money if that would mean compromising with their values or giving them up entirely. Similarly, young consumers are willing to pay more if they identify themselves with the supplier on ideological, social and cultural grounds (e.g. minority rights or preventing various forms of discrimination).

There is a need to measure the good and all the positive values that startups bring about, as well as to measure evil (in its various manifestations) which constantly arises as a side effect of mass production. We are already considering the size of

the carbon footprint and ways to reduce it, but how to improve on this process and ensure credibility? And more generally: how to measure the positive impact of a company on the environment?

Kozminski University is committed to activities aimed at positively impacting upon its environment

Not only do we teach students this kind of sensitivity, but we also set an example. We have introduced a number of changes, procedures and actions that are aimed at both improving the quality of life of people and protecting the environment. We save water and energy, eliminate plastic, introduce educational innovations – including remote learning solutions – to reduce carbon dioxide emissions. We also practice equal opportunity policies on a daily basis. The authors of the international Positive Impact Rating indicated our quick and concrete assistance to civilian war refugees from Ukraine as a special case for other business universities in the world.

This year, in the fourth edition of the Positive Impact Startups report, its authors ask themselves such global questions and attempt to show concrete examples of how the whole world, or at least part of it, can be changed for the better and not being limited solely to providing profits for investors or basic functionalities of products and services for customers and users. There is no way to not appreciate the innovativeness of this approach.

It is likely that such – completely voluntary – forms of presenting the position of enterprises and brands in social, ideological and cultural reality, their stance on key contemporary problems (such as climate change, social inequalities, income differences or minority rights) will soon become a standard in the entire economy. They are a response to the growing expectations and requirements of consumers and users adopting the attitude of activists, involved in changing the attitudes and behaviours of their suppliers, fully aware that they can effectively impact companies, brands and public institutions, and at the same time organizing themselves for this purpose via the Internet and social media.

Congratulations to all startups who can be counted among the positive impact companies

They break through especially in the area of education, health, environmental protection, but also in agriculture or smart city development. Particularly active in this field are women who, contrary to the common stereotypes, often work in technology industries and contribute a deeper, human dimension to many projects.

The projects described in this report have already changed our world for the better, and more importantly – they have set the direction in which all economic and social life should go. As a leading business school in Poland, we see a number of new tasks for ourselves, related to the preparation of our students and graduates to running their businesses in the truly twenty-first century manner: ethical, focused on people and their environment, and at the same time transparent and taking into account social expectations.

POSITIVE IMPACT JURY 2022

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Positive Impact Startups



Selection of this year's winners of Positive Impact Startups was possible thanks to the work of the Positive Impact Jury



WINNERS IN THE CATEGORY PRODUCTS/SERVICES BEST FOR THE WORLD 2022

Bez Ości – Vegan Fish

facebook.com/bezosci.veganfish

They propose vegetable fish based on 100% natural ingredients, including low-processed vegetables, enriched with high-quality cold-pressed oils.

BreadPack

breadpack.pl

They created the technology of producing delicious, fully vegetable, edible dishes, resistant to heat and cold and baking them in ovens designed by them.

myEgg
myegg.pl

They have developed an innovative, vegan replacement for the chicken egg - a vegetable egg that will meet the needs of even the greatest gourmets.

Outriders
outride.rs/pl

They are a group of reporters who help to understand the changes taking place in the world. They are looking for answers to social problems, fears and needs.

Rebread
rebread.com

They focus on the circular economy to prevent bread waste and work on upcycled food and bread-based beverages.

ZNIKA
znika.pl

They use plant-based materials such as corn starch, making their bioplastic packaging more environmentally friendly and simply... disappear after use



Hydrum
hydrum.eu

Proprietary solution for the management of post-process water in full harmony with the natural environment, allowing the production of green hydrogen.

Lumelabel
lumelabel.wixsite.com/website

A solution that allows you to label compostable packaging using luminescent super markers, guaranteeing the identification of the material.

Orbify
orbify.com

Orbify provides innovators with access to Earth observation technologies and interactive solutions that transform geospatial data into practical insights.

Plenti
plenti.app

With Plenti, you can take advantage of the value and efficiency of your equipment, without the need to buy and spend money on devices that sooner or later will only be suitable for disposal.

SafeKiddo
safekiddo.com/pl

An application created by parents for parents used to comprehensively protect children using the Internet, facilitating the education process.

Wektoo
wektoo.com/pl

An application for the effective management of products approaching their expiration/use-by date, which does not require integration with the company's existing internal IT systems.

FibriTech
fibri.tech

They create unique, biodegradable materials from plant fibre and additives of natural origin, which in the future will replace plastic and other environmentally harmful materials.

FoodBugs
foodbugs.pl

Producer and distributor of products based on edible insects, innovative, rich in protein, which are a real alternative to unhealthy products of animal origin.

Humati.co
humati.co

Technology that gives the opportunity to create high-quality organic fertilizers from any available organic raw materials, including organic agricultural waste.

Nanoseen
nanoseen.com

They provide all people with unlimited access to clean and drinkable water through a technological solution for water purification and desalination.

Slow Media Production
slowmediaproduction.com

They help to adapt the tools in such a way that production in the cultural sector is carried out in a spirit of sustainability by introducing eco-coordination, e.g. on film sets.

Swapp!
swapp.zone

By creating a refilling-based system for the sale of liquid products in a closed loop, they help protect the Earth and future generations from excess plastic waste.



Calmsie
calmsie.ai

They help children suffering from depression and anxiety by providing a digital therapeutic program that streamlines the recovery process by combining games with conversational artificial intelligence.

Co z tym seksem?
web.coztymseksemapp.pl

They teach about important things using inclusive language, providing in-app content that answers users' questions.

Her Impact
herimpact.co

An educational and social platform that helps women spread their professional wings, offering real development tools for women in every position.

Legalden - Kancelaria adwokacka
legalden.pl

They provide legal advice to all those who want to act for the benefit of their communities, in accordance with the principle of #LawForGood.

RESQL
resql.pl

An innovative system supporting schools in solving the problems of peer violence, created together with members of the school community, based on the application.

SeniorApp
seniorapp.pl

A platform created for all people in need of help and their families looking for support in care and everyday life matters.

Part I

Good Texts

On the necessity of radical changes



1.

Defending our only Planet!

Maria Andrzejewska

General Director, UNEP/GRID Centre Warsaw

This year's celebration of World Environment Day was associated with the 50th anniversary of the United Nations Environment Programme and the 50th anniversary of the UN Stockholm Conference and was held under the motto that accompanied this historic event: #OnlyOneEarth. In Poland, we presented the Manifesto in defence of our only Planet. We encourage you to sign! You can sign here: dlaplanety.pl

We have only one planet that provides us with liveable conditions. We admire its beauty, enjoying the spring greenery, the smell of flowers, the singing of birds. It is also our breadwinner, providing the resources needed for our existence and economic development. However, in our

pursuit of a better, more comfortable, more modern life, we exploit it beyond all measure, leading – over the period of just a few decades – to a huge degradation of ecosystems, the climate crisis and dire threat to the survival of millions of plant and animal species.

The pandemic stopped us for a while

However, it was a very short moment of reflection. And now the war in Ukraine, which has made us realize how disastrous is our dependence on fossil fuels, but also how negatively can such a military conflict affect the food of hundreds of millions of people in the world. War is exacerbating the climate crisis. War destroys ecosystems and

species. The United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (1972) convened with the Vietnam War in the backdrop. One could say that 50 years later we are not only in a similar position but, above all, we are seeing that the environment – along with us, the humans – is in a much worse state than it was 50 years ago.

What's next?

Since we have so many treaties, conventions, regulations. If climate conferences do not work, if the knowledge provided by scientists from all

over the world is not taken into account, if only economic development, raising the standard of living, money count – where are we going?



At the time when we follow with such a great concern the continued drive towards a climate and environmental disaster, the war in Ukraine additionally makes us realize how fragile are the foundations of our life and how real is the possibility of unimaginable tragedies and suffering. Our awareness of the threats and potential consequences of climate change is all the more acute as it may significantly increase the risk of intensification of armed conflicts in the coming years, destroying the entire ecosystem, both material and intangible assets of mankind, as well as existing social ties and the necessary relationships between humans and nature.

Thus, we recognize that the fight for the climate as we undertake it today is also a concern for peace, well-being and justice in the world. The concern for peace is increasingly connected with the fight for the climate and with the care about proper functioning of ecosystems.

For years, the United Nations has been consistently fighting for the observance of human rights and protection of the environment and climate. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), established at the historic United Nations Conference on the Environment in Stockholm, has for the past 50 years combined the concern for the health of people and the planet with such values as responsibility, peace and respect for the principles of equality. As a result of activities undertaken by UNEP in cooperation with numerous organizations, we have nowadays been witnessing an increasingly widespread effort to decouple further social development from the use of fossil fuels and to strengthen all possible efforts towards a zero-emission global economy. These aspirations maximize our chances to maintain peace on Earth at the same time.

Many of us are already committed to saving Earth's climate, but the gravity of the current situation demands that everyone would join the combat. We need now – quickly and on a large scale – to implement renewable energy technology and to remove any fossil-fuel subsidies. Solid foundations for the transition to a zero-carbon economy and a world without war, demand urgent safeguarding of the climate justice, starting a global process of restoring damaged ecosystems, and putting an end to all violence.

We have less and less time to save the Planet, but there is still time to change and rebalance of the Earth.

SIGNATORIES



LET'S ACT TOGETHER! LET'S CHANGE THE COURSE OF EVENTS!

We declare our support for the activities carried out by the United Nations and its constituent agencies. The success of these activities requires great commitment from many stakeholders, but also from ourselves, as we are probably at a pivotal moment in the social and economic development on Earth.

2.

Climate Tech, the technological beneficiaries of the climate transition

Marta Lesiewska

Founder, INSPIRED

The world has 10 years to halve global greenhouse gas emissions and avoid global warming of more than 1.5°C, above which scientists warn that dangerous effects will occur. To achieve this, every sector of the economy must undergo huge changes.

Some companies started creating new, more sustainable business models more than 20 years ago. Others are starting to wake up now that in Europe and the United States, the regulations of the *Green Deal* force many strategic decisions. The decline of some branches of the economy means the birth of others – primarily solutions rooted in technologies and supported by the IT

sector. ClimateTech, Food & AgriTech, PropTech, CleanTech, ClimateFinance, InsureTech, GreenIT and solutions based on blockchain or AI, protecting ecosystems, are just examples of the opportunities offered by the climate transformation. However, the question arises whether Polish companies are ready to co-create the future?

Impact awareness

The reduced tariff for the technology industry ended a few years ago. Creating technologies that facilitate everyday life is no longer enough – more and more often it is no longer only *what is created* that counts, but also *how it is created*. Carbon footprint, ethics and human rights are already becoming as important to tech companies as code quality or user interface.

Experts have calculated that the technology sector is currently responsible for 4% of global greenhouse gas emissions and taking into account the exponential pace of its development, it can be expected that this number will only grow. The environmental advantages of modern

technologies, such as the reduction of business trips or the elimination of paper, do not allow us to forget about the disadvantages – a huge carbon footprint due to a significant increase in energy consumption, or problems with recycling and e-waste management.

Modern technologies are also risks other than environmental ones. For example, encryption technology on the one hand provides us with security and privacy, and on the other hand it is difficult to track by law enforcement and intelligence services, which facilitates the development of crime and the expansion of the illegal market. Specialists¹ also point to the risks associated with the perpetuation of stereotypes and discriminatory decisions by artificial intelligence systems, threats to user privacy, solutions enabling the spread of hatred and fake news, the use of so-called conflict minerals extracted with the participation of children or modern slaves.

Technology companies are also not free from challenges common to all organizations: issues related to employee diversity, equal pay for women and men, care for a stable foundation

of corporate governance (organization structure, business model, ways of observing the principles of business ethics).

When changing the world, start with yourself

In the last quarter of 2021, the consulting company INSPIRED and Sebastian Kulczyk's InCredibles conducted a pioneering study on the sustainable development of IT sector enterprises in Poland. The prepared report shows that the majority of Polish IT companies carry out unsystematic activities in this area, which may not meet legal and social regulations. This is a big challenge, because – according to the principle that similarities attract each other – founders, engineers or corporations undergoing transformation of business models, looking for IT partners for their solutions, look at the approach to sustainable development.

Poland ranks fifth among European countries in terms of the number of registered companies in the ICT sector and seventh place in terms of growth dynamics should be a driver of climate innovation. Meanwhile, only 11% of Polish IT

companies approach the issue of ESG strategically, while those who are unaware, i.e. those that have not implemented any actions resulting directly from the desire to cause positive social change, are about 45%.

The commitments of the leaders attract public attention, which translates not only into growing expectations towards smaller entities. These trends have been intensified by the coronavirus pandemic. The technology sector has introduced new sustainable initiatives such as Green IT or Tech for Good.

GREEN IT is a project that aims to reduce the amount of electricity consumed by computers, servers or computer equipment. Companies participating in the initiative decide to use cloud services, report their carbon footprint and reduce

it. They aim where possible, which is to optimize the supply chain, use server optimization, and firmly refuse to do business with companies that do not care about environmental issues.

¹ 10 Human Rights Priorities for the Information and Technology Sector, 2016, [bsr.org/en/our-insights](https://www.bsr.org/en/our-insights)

In turn, Tech for Good aims to implement in Tech environments such values and goals that, when implemented, improve well-being and measurably help society to achieve benefits, which in turn improve the situation in various areas of our lives, e.g. occupational safety, health, education, environmental sustainability and equal opportunities.

New opening

At the stage of voluntary projects, one could wonder whether following the path of sustainable development is a way to create a competitive advantage or an investment with uncertain returns. Currently, with the goal of the global economy reaching net-zero carbon emissions by 2050, this is a prerequisite for survival. The development and scaling of new technological solutions supporting this change is a great opportunity for the broadly understood IT sector.

ClimateTech, or *climate technologies*, is an umbrella term that hides many categories of innovation, the aim of which is to address climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions or supporting the process of adaptation to already felt effects, especially in the agricultural area. These include

innovations related to the generation, transmission and use of electricity, support for electromobility, sustainable construction, increasing the efficiency of supply chains or supporting responsible consumer choices.

Each of these categories requires the cooperation of physical and digital technologies. Their introduction and development requires the collection, storage, analysis and management of a huge amount of data. Experience shows that it is easier to understand the potential of this sector and its capabilities for IT companies that have themselves learned their own climate impact.

And there is something to fight for. PwC's 2020 climatetech startup spending survey shows a 3750% increase in early-stage VC funding between 2013 and 2019 – from \$418 million to \$16.1 billion. This is three times the growth rate

of VC investments in artificial intelligence in the period known for the increase in investment in artificial intelligence. So it's worth finding your place on the map of green transformation.



Part I

Good Texts

On some very positive activities



1.

#StartupsStandWithUkraine

Magdalena Andrejczuk

PhD student at the Warsaw School of Economics,
Sustainability & ESG Expert Allegro

The AULA meeting, a cult meeting for the startup community, is underway. A hundred people fill the audience on 22 Białostocka Street in Warsaw, hundreds more watching the online broadcast, and Ukrainian startups are on stage. Lidiya Terpel from Skyworker, Oleg Bolotnov from Gradual, Vladimir Leshchenko from Getpin and Iryna Andriushchenko from Handy.ai talk about their ventures, share their failures and successes. It is Wednesday, 20 April 2022. Two months earlier Russia's brutal invasion of Ukraine began. This is not without impact on their presence. We hear about their determination, courage, but also about the need to join in action - in helping Ukraine.

Kiev, Odessa, Kharkiv, but also Lviv, Ternopil and Dnipro - these are the cities in which the startup ecosystem has been dynamically developing. Ukraine ranks 34th among the 100 countries with the greatest potential for startup development, according to the StartupBlink report from 2021. Kiev ranks 48th out of 1,000 metropolises surveyed. Due to the ongoing armed conflict, as well as

the economic crisis, the city fell by 16 positions compared to the previous ranking. However, as the authors of the report point out, *the Ukrainian startup ecosystem is really inspiring. The country has been experiencing economic difficulties for several years, but it still manages to create a scalable and global technology*¹.

At the same time, Kiev ranks eleventh among European innovator-friendly cities, ahead of cities such as Dublin, Zurich, Copenhagen, Hamburg or Brussels. The capital of Ukraine is also in the top twenty in the world in terms of technological solutions for marketing and sales, as well as software and data. Among the innovative hubs, UNIT.City leads the way as the largest facility in Central and Eastern Europe providing innovative products. Under one roof you can find startups, computer science students, talented entrepreneurs, and creative industries².

¹ The Global Startup Ecosystem Index Report 2021, lp.startupblink.com/report Retrieved May 15, 2022

² ukraine.ua/invest-trade/startup-ecosystem-ukraine/ Retrieved May 15, 2022

All hands on deck

We want to turn Ukraine into a country of startups, President Volodymyr Zelensky said on 8 February 2022. In recent years, the startup environment in Ukraine has developed significantly. Investors quoted by Forbes estimate that there may be more than 4,000 projects of this type in the country³. The most famous of them are **Grammarly, GitLab, Readdle, MacPaw, PetCube, Reface, People.ai, Depositphotos, AJAX, Preply, Competera, Restream, Firefly Aerospace, 3DLOOK, Inflū2**.

The first of this group is Grammarly – a unicorn worth 13 billion USD, also well known in Poland. The company announced that it had been transferring all funds earned in Russia since 2014 to support Ukraine. Another startup

making an international career - GitLab declared the termination of its operations in Russia and Belarus, as well as support for humanitarian and social organizations. AJAX donates part of the sale of its products to support Ukraine.

More companies are joining in humanitarian and social assistance. A Polish-Ukrainian initiative **Startups 4 Ukraine** has been established. Since 28 February it has been collecting funds through the Polish Humanitarian Action - they go to those in need from Ukraine, also ones from the startup community. At the same time, **Save Ukrainian Startups** is born – a project whose goal is to support startups and startappers in the country affected by the war.

HandyFriendsBot: helping Ukrainians abroad!

Irina Andryushchenko has accumulated 23 years of business experience in marketing, PR and communication. Her achievements have been appreciated, she has won a distinction as one of 25 Successful Ukrainian businesswomen, she participates in the work of the Ukraine EFFIE Awards. She is also the founder and CCO of the startup Handy.ai. Irina, like her team, perfectly understands the need to exchange information – this is the basis of the business model of Handy.ai, a communication tool for 500,000 active users working in different languages, modes, and positions, and above all in various communication systems. However, the purpose of her speech is different.

In her emotional address at AULA, the founder - like other startappers - refers to the situation in her country. Just like the entire Ukrainian nation, she appreciates the solidarity and support that

comes from Polish families for refugees arriving in our country. She also sees the need for access to information and knowledge for all those seeking refuge outside Ukraine.

³ Rebecca Szkutak, *The Russian Invasion Provides A Glimpse Into Ukraine's Formerly Robust Startup Market*, www.forbes.com

HandyFriendsBot is a digital assistant that is a chatbot compatible with the most popular messengers in Ukraine, such as Viber and Telegram. It aims to help the 4 million people seeking refuge due to the war adapt in the new country by providing information on accommodation, work and medical care abroad.

The digital assistant was developed to inform people; provide them with decent life opportunities and, when the war is over, helping them return home. You can use it as a normal end user, or also become a volunteer. This is an initiative of the Handy.AI team and Galagan Branding Agency in cooperation with the Foundation for

the Development of Central and Eastern Europe, the Open Mind Foundation (OMF), as well as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, Rakuten Viber and Google for Startups. The service is growing very quickly, is available in forty-four countries and, within 2 weeks of its launch, has amassed over 20,000 users.

#TechForUkraine

Tech To The Rescue Foundation connects technology companies with non-profit organizations. In response to the war situation in Ukraine, the organization launched a #TechForUkraine campaign aimed at supporting Ukrainian NGOs in meeting their technological needs. The organizers describe the problem they want to solve: *NGOs are the heart of the civil society in Ukraine. Although the digital age has arrived, charities are still far behind private companies and state institutions. Weak cybersecurity systems, outdated software, and a lack of user-friendly UI and UX make it difficult for them to operate*⁴. Thanks to the campaign, it was possible to involve nearly 300 companies and over 600 freelancers who want to help by sharing their competences.

As part of the campaign, work is underway on 20 projects, such as [SOSUA.pl](#) – a type of AirBnB platform connecting those who seek and those who offer help, or [razemzwami.pl](#), a service collecting information about various aid initiatives focused on Ukraine. The #TechForUkraine initiative has already included such companies as: Divante, Netguru, Boldare, ServSoft, BeeTalents, Amazon Cloud Services, Salesforce, Nord VPN, Twilio, Orange, Packhelp, Droids on Roids, Just Join IT, Astek Polska, RTB House, Allegro, Nocode, Tooplox and others⁵.

⁴ techtotherescue.org/tech/tech-for-ukraine

⁵ Krzysztof Jędrzejczyk, #TechForUkraine, czyli technologia w służbie pomocy, publicystyka.ngo.pl/techforukraine

Startups and the power of helping

There are many more examples of engagement by startups from Poland, Ukraine and other countries. One of them is [ukraina.services](#) platform which, thanks to the work of a group of socially engaged people, took off four days after Russia's aggression against Ukraine, before relevant government websites were created. Among its creators are Wojciech Bachtą and Da Vinci Studio from Bielsko-Biała, the initiator of the project and the supplier of key technical resources, Kuba Juncewicz, Yevhenii Shpakov, website developers responsible for web development, as well as Paulina Wojtas and Magda Zarychta, who took care of the content, communication and development.

Just as the Poles organized themselves into a great surge of assistance, they were accompanied by smaller and larger companies, including startups, which, thanks to their technological competence and experience, could really engage in help in accordance with the slogan: **#StandWithUkraine**.

2.

How to help wisely?

Mirella Panek-Owsiańska

CSR expert, lecturer, consultant,
works at the interface of the non-governmental,
public, business, and academic sectors

The war in Ukraine has shown us how important it is to help wisely, one that is agreed, coordinated, adequate and comes at the right time and to the right place. Such help has a positive impact.

We're all learning

While the government has not passed the exam, local governments, non-governmental organizations, and individuals have been performing heroic deeds since February 24th 2022. The crisis has shown that we are able to act spontaneously. Without the efforts of thousands of volunteers, it would not have been possible to respond to the need of the moment in such a short time. At an accelerated pace, we all learned

to help, it turned out that organizing a fundraiser on the Internet is not so difficult, applications and platforms were created at a frantic pace that were to facilitate the flow of information between helpers and those seeking help, neighbourhood spurts facilitated transport to and from the border, and social networks allowed to search for and equip housing for people fleeing the war.

But it was also visible how much practical knowledge is needed, for example, about how to pack clothes and food donated (describe sizes, group things of the same type), so that subsequent people do not have to spend unnecessarily additional time on segregation; it is necessary to listen to the appeals of non-governmental organizations and bring only the things that are needed at the moment, not those that we want to get rid of. There is also a need for coordination between organizations, at the level of the district, municipality, city, not to mention the whole state.

Lublin sets an example

One of the cities in which the aid was coordinated in an exemplary way was Lublin. The Lublin Social Committee for Aid to Ukraine was established there - a cross-sectoral group of volunteers managing information about all assistance in the city - the systemic one offered by the city hall and non-governmental organizations and residents. More than 170 volunteers coordinated in working groups manage seventeen different areas of support from round-the-clock helpline for refugees, through the management of housing allocation for people in need, psychological and medical legal assistance, coordination of food supplies, to transports for people and translations.

Anna Dąbrowska, the leader of the Homo Faber association, which has been working for many years for migrants and refugees described what is important in such cross-cultural activities:

- We do not do special events for immigrants.
- We do not do special events for immigrants - we include them in what we do for everyone.
- The aim of our activities is not only to meet cultural needs or activate refugees, immigrants, but TO CONSTANTLY WORK AROUND BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS.

The example of Lublin shows that it is possible to wisely help at the local level and build cross-sectoral coalitions.

Business for Ukraine

Since the outbreak of the war, small, large, Polish, and international companies very quickly began to help on the scale of their capabilities.

Many citizens of Ukraine have been employed by Polish companies for a long time. After the information about the beginning of the war, they were given additional days of leave and help in relocating their families, as well as previously paid salaries. Such internal actions related to ensuring the safety of people working in Poland and their families in Ukraine testify very well to the company workplace responsibility.

Biedronka company has decided to grant all employees with Ukrainian citizenship, employed under an employment contract, non-refundable financial support in the amount of PLN 1,000. DB Cargo has prepared an aid package for Ukrainian employees working for the DB Cargo Polska Group - to support their families and loved ones.

Another form of business assistance to Ukraine was employee collections, often organized from the bottom up, but with the support of the company, which often added additional funds.

Throughout Poland, food, clothing, medicines were collected, convoys and shipments were prepared. Some of the fundraisers also included the company's customers.

Many companies have decided to provide their goods and services to refugees. This form of assistance was a response to the current needs of people crossing the Polish border.

Bank BNP Paribas has introduced a number of facilitations for Ukrainian citizens. They can open accounts in the branch in a much simpler way than before. All you need to do is show your identity card (passport or Temporary Foreigner's Identity

Certificate), have a TIN (Ukrainian tax identification number) and Polish phone number. The bank also provided them with free cash withdrawals from all ATMs in the country and free deposits and withdrawals at the bank's branches.

To support the citizens of Ukraine in a difficult time for them, the CCC Group decided to expand the action #DajSwoimButomDrugieŻycie (Give your shoes a second live). As part of it, the company collects shoes, refreshes them, and gives them to those in need. In connection with the events in Ukraine, all the footwear received in each week, the CCC Group handed over to refugees. The campaign was conducted in cooperation with a positive impact startup, WoshWosh, which deals with professional disinfection of shoes.

An important form of helping is also employee volunteering. Especially the business know-how of scaling activities is very useful nowadays to many

NGOs. Donations are also needed to humanitarian organizations, which are on the front line of support for refugees from Ukraine.

The Allegro Group donated PLN 1 million to support the activities of the Polish Migration Forum, PLN 700,000 to the Ocalenie Foundation and PLN 300,000 to support the activities of the Homo Faber Association. The funds will be used for legal, psychological, and social assistance for refugees and will be used to help them organize their lives in exile in our country. In addition, Allegro has launched charity bricks worth PLN 10, 20, 50 and 100 to support the activities of the Polish Centre for International Aid (PCPM) and the Santa Claus Foundation - their value is currently over PLN 7 million.



As part of solidarity with Ukraine, CD Projekt donated PLN 1 million to the Polish Humanitarian Action. The LOTOS Foundation has decided to donate over PLN 3 million to help the inhabitants of Ukraine. The funds went m.in to Caritas or the Polish Red Cross. Google.org, a charitable branch of Google, as part of its involvement in humanitarian activities for Ukraine, donated PLN 10 million to the Polish Center for International Aid. Funds from direct contributions of employees of the company have been additionally doubled by Google.org, and the amount of support continues to grow, along with the transfer of further donations.

Many companies and corporate foundations organized transports to Ukraine, sent food or necessary equipment. The Group ANG Foundation bought two ambulances and sent six transports of

humanitarian aid to Kiev. The voice of business regarding systemic and long-term assistance as well as cooperation with public administration is also important.

Consumer boycotts

In the face of war for many consumers, an extremely basic and obvious decision of companies, as well as the measure of their responsibility, should have been to withdraw from the Russian market.

Most retail chains in Poland, a few days, or weeks after the outbreak of the war, informed about the withdrawal of products from Russia and Belarus. These are products marked with a code starting with 460-469 and 481. In turn, researchers from the Yale School of Management have prepared and update a list of companies that remained in Russia, many of them were forced to explain and comment on their decision.

The branches of Auchan, Decathlon and Leroy Merlin in Poland faced social ostracism and actions calling for boycotts, which reduced the revenues of these enterprises. We have never had so many measures and evidence showing the effects of consumer activities on an ongoing basis. From

the study of the volume of traffic around stores, through the intensity of discussion and emotions on the web, to the value of transactions paid for by credit cards. In the past, the effects of boycotts could be questioned, in this case we have confirmation in the numbers.

The attitude of many companies has shown how important and underestimated the area of responsibility is human rights, hopefully more companies will understand the importance of their decisions in this aspect.



Social entrepreneurship of migrants

The arrival of migrants to a country is always a chance for a surge of new experiences and new energy that is worth using. This is the purpose of the Hello Entrepreneurship project implemented by Ashoka Polska, which searches, supports and rewards businesses of people with migrant experience, which additionally have a positive social impact. In the third edition - projects of

programming courses for migrant women from Poznań, a new method in the diagnosis of children on the autism spectrum with migration experience, a Barbershop project for people from the LGBT+ community, a café and co-working for people with migration experience in Sopot or a music studio supporting musicians from the Eastern Europe were selected.

I hope that in the next reports of Positive Impact Startups we will be able to describe these and subsequent initiatives of migrants and that they will grow and develop.

Find your way to help

Helping wisely is not easy. The initial energy and adrenaline begin to subside, now we need systemic help and a long-term thinking. People who have been helping since the beginning of the war are often already burned out, in humanitarian work taking care of themselves is especially important, unfortunately there is often no time for this.

On the other hand, people who would like to become volunteers are encouraged to choose the form of helping that suits them best. Not everyone has to go to the border or help at the railway stations, equally important is competence volunteering, creating databases, applications, coordination, work in social media, fundraising activities, etc.

Many NGOs now need the scaling and management knowledge that business has. For example, I do not know how to cook soups or play with children, but I know how to connect business and NGOs and run Facebook groups, so I try to help in this way. The „Aid for Ukraine” Facebook group, of which I am one of the moderators, currently has almost 600,000 members.

Volunteer work will certainly not be lacking, and every person will find something for themselves, but wise, coordinated and adequate help remains very needed and important.



5.

Now and together for a better future

Agnieszka Michalik-Stankowska

CSR and Sustainable Finance Manager,
BNP Paribas Bank Polska S.A.

The reality around us has never before changed so quickly. From our position at the centre of events, we can observe social, environmental and economic changes which, so far, have not been encountered. At the same time, we are living in the best and worst times for humanity. The best – because we have reached places and achievements that our ancestors could not even dream of. The worst – because our achievements have been reached at a huge cost for the planet and for a significant proportion of its inhabitants, as well as spelled threat to the future of next generation.

Multiple players

The answer to the challenges that accompany us is the Agenda 2030, adopted by UN Member States in 2015. It sets forth 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 tasks, all to be implemented with the participation of many players – governments, international and non-governmental organizations, academics, citizens, but also business entities. I see here a huge role of startups which are the entities that respond most quickly to economic, social and environmental challenges and also are best at adapting to the changing realities.

At Bank BNP Paribas, which is part of the international BNP Paribas Group, we are aware of the special role of financial institutions as the bloodstream of the economy, which is why, among other things, we are constantly developing an offer of products and services that respond to global challenges and local market conditions.

We also want to responsibly stimulate the development of innovation, which is why we support startups that generate a positive impact as a result of their business activity and also offer this type of positive solutions which can be implemented in our bank or in the operations of our clients.

The world's largest positive event

BNP Paribas has become a partner of the world's largest event presenting scientific achievements and innovative technological solutions protecting climate and the planet - ChangeNOW, which took place in May 2022 in Paris.

The organizer of ChangeNOW is the startup of the same name which was created in 2015 (at the same time France hosted COP21 and the Paris Agreement was formed), out of a sense of isolating developing ambitious goals from scalable solutions. The idea of the startup is to accelerate solutions for a more resilient and sustainable world

by connecting people and ideas. ChangeNOW supports people and innovation through a network of cooperation and training, as well as by organizing a global meeting of entities making up the positive impact ecosystem: innovators, investors, entrepreneurs, businesses, media, the science sector, and the society.

Trade fair of solutions for the planet

This year, a comprehensive conference program involving the participation of leading experts from around the world was accompanied by a large trade fair of solutions for the planet, divided into 16 categories such as: health, biodiversity, inclusion and education, energy, circular economy. Over the course of three days, the visitors were able to test new technologies and innovative ideas and get familiar with many startups.

Among the presented solutions was RegAgri Explorer, created in cooperation with Bank BNP Paribas and Polish startups SatAgro and 300Codes (Kerris Group). An innovative tool is used to estimate the potential of soil sequestration of carbon. This is the first solution of this type

in Europe and one of the few in the world. The tool will be made available to Polish agricultural producers in June 2022. Registered users of the Agronomist.pl platform will be able to use it free of charge.

The study of the potential of cultivated land to reduce its own emissions and to capture CO₂ from the atmosphere, which is what RegAgri Explorer enables, will allow agricultural producers to more easily and effectively implement regenerative farming practices that protect the quality and viability of soils. Additional information that can be found in the RegAgri Explorer report describes the potential profit from the sale of a certain number of tonnes of CO₂ equivalent captured from the atmosphere by the soil on the site indicated by the manufacturer. Each tonne of CO₂ accumulated in this way is called a carbon certificate (or credit) and could potentially be sold on the market to companies or institutions that are looking for ways to lower their carbon footprint.

Although today few Polish agricultural producers participate in the carbon certificate market due to the lack of infrastructure and appropriate legal regulations, it is expected that soon it may be an additional factor supporting the development of regenerative agriculture in Poland.

Very positive startups

During ChangeNOW, other startups and solutions supported by BNP Paribas were also presented:

- ACT FOR IMPACT – bringing together entrepreneurs working for a positive social and environmental change
- CarbonWorks – dealing with the capture and conversion of CO2 into natural raw material by micro algae
- ECOLE TRANSITION – teaching young people who have given up further education, manual work, supporting ecological transformation
- Impact Investing - specializing in the design and promotion of sustainable investment funds
- KAYRROS – monitoring physical assets for a green and better future
- Le Choix de l'école – an association that trains and supports young graduates who want to become teachers in poor areas

DekoEko – a startup that is part of the Polish ecosystem of positive impact – was also present among the exhibitors.

The organizers, in collaboration with ClimateSeed, measured and offset the carbon footprint of the event by investing in conservation of biodiversity in Peru's Amazon rainforest.

Participating in ChangeNOW and the opportunity to meet great experts from around the world gave me the feeling that although as humanity we have done enormous damage to the planet, we still have a chance to minimize its effects. It is

necessary to act in accordance with the idea of the 17th Sustainable Development Goal: "Partnerships for the goals". Acting together, here and now. This is what I wish the readers and startups whose solutions were included in this year's report.

More information about ChangeNOW and the full database of presented solutions:

changenow-summit.world

More information about RegAgriExplorer:

agronomist.pl

6.

Ecosystem for innovation

Monika Kulik

Communication and CSR Expert,
Orange Polska

The term *innovation* comes from the Latin *innovatio* and literally means *renewal*. So it means not only something new, but also something that, after modification, works differently or has a new quality. Innovation can be about a product, service, process, or a business model. And, in principle, it is something desirable in business operations provided we are able to limit the risk of its failure – which is not so easy.

Poland is not among the leaders of innovation. In the Global Innovation Index (GII) we are ranked 40th out of 132 countries, 27th in Europe. When it comes to the maturity of business innovation, we are ranked 38th, but as far as 71st in terms of business building innovative links with universities, startups and institutions ¹.

What to do to be an innovative company? This question is asked by many companies, especially those operating in the field of new technologies – like ours. We have three ways – our own research department, cooperation with other startups, and using employee innovation. At Orange, we use all these three ways to look for ideas to develop our business in a sustainable way.

Services supporting the development of smart cities

Polish Orange Labs belong to the international Orange Labs network which includes research and development units and Orange laboratories.

Orange Labs are responsible for defining and managing the development of fixed, mobile network architecture and selected IT systems, as well as for defining network development plans and appropriate technical concepts. An essential

element of the Labs' activity is also the process of creating, selecting and implementing innovations, including cooperation with external partners and the implementation of research and development activities for Orange Polska and Group Orange.

¹ wipo.int/edocs/pubdocs/en/wipo_pub_gii_2021.pdf

The projects are conducted in cooperation with partners from all over the world within the framework of both own programmes and EU framework programmes supporting the development of innovation and international cooperation.

One of the projects we have been implementing at Orange Labs is 5G-TOURS. The aim of this project is to create new services supporting the development of smart cities, which will be provided using a 5G network using the same network infrastructure.

Smart Cities is one of important directions of our business development. Thanks to innovative technologies, smart cities can develop in virtually every field: from public transport, through the management of water resources, to the control of public parking lots, city activities and waste management.

One of such cities in Poland is Ścinawa in Silesia. Soon, 12 neighbouring villages in this municipality will use a modern, intelligent Smart Light system to operate streetlamps. This is another large project using modern Internet of Things (IoT)

solutions. This is a great benefit not only for the municipality's budget, but also for the safety of residents or the environment. Several other towns in Poland also use these solutions.

Street lighting systems account for 19% of global electricity consumption and for up to 40% of the city's electricity bill. Poland, according to the National Fund for Environmental Protection and Water Management, is illuminated by about 3,3 million streetlamps.

Already 33 cities in Poland use the intelligent water supply network management system by Orange Polska. According to the World Bank, globally up to 40% of the purified water injected into the water supply network does not reach the taps. In some cities, it's even... 60%. It is estimated that if water losses could be reduced by a third, 90 million more people could be properly supplied. Water disappears due to leaks, theft, breakdowns, or simply cannot be invoiced due to a damaged water meter. Thanks to the Smart Water management system, losses do not exceed 5-10%.

Remote reading of water meters, daily balancing of flows and around-the-clock monitoring of the water and sewage network are the most important advantages of this system. This is made possible by special overlays mounted on water meters. Thanks to the built-in SIM card, the overlays send data on water flows. Their analysis is a source of knowledge a.o. about network failures, increased consumption in a specific building, or attempts to tamper with the water meter.

Cooperation with startups

The Polish startup market is developing despite the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the „Polish Startups 2021” report, for 37% of startups the impact of the pandemic on business was positive, and for 40% it was basically imperceptible. At the same time, the venture capital market was highly active, Docplanner became a Polish unicorn, and many corporations developed cooperation programs with startups. For us, the past period was a time of continued effort on the digital transformation of business. We also worked on new projects related to 5G technology. Our activities served both to meet Orange’s internal needs and to prepare products and services for our customers.

As part of the cooperation after the acceleration period, we have established relations with companies in such areas as IoT, virtual reality training, or energy. As for the latter, we focused on providing the Smart Energy Controller solution.

It is a device for monitoring and managing the consumption of energy from traditional and renewable sources. It helps increase the efficiency of photovoltaic panels being used and thus shorten the payback time.

Other startups dealing with energy also participated in our acceleration programme. One of the supported startups is SEEDiA – a manufacturer of solar-powered, intelligent infrastructure for cities and business customers. Their offer includes solar benches, solar stops or solar infokiosks. All products are designed to serve residents using USB and inductive chargers, timetables shown on electronic displays, as well as provide managers with valuable data and the possibility of communication with the user via the cloud panel. SEEDiA creates a smart city ecosystem by transforming the immediate environment into one that’s both ecological and intelligent.

We are also looking for innovative solutions, especially those using 5G technology. So far, we have analysed over two hundred projects in detail and, as a result, we are now establishing cooperation with five companies.

The products they develop concern such areas as in-building location, virtual reality, video analytics, or visualization of the production process (the so-called „digital twin”). We also analyse solutions that involve drones. We also test services based on remote support of employees in the field using augmented reality.

Orange Fab’s operating model is based on careful matching of startups and business units within Orange already at the early stage of establishing cooperation. Combined with the additional benefits we offer to startups at Orange Fab, this results in high cooperation efficiency and a high success rate. Over the past three years, we have established cooperation with twenty-two companies. We cooperate with thirteen of them to this day. This means almost 60% effectiveness of business development jointly with Orange.

Employee innovation

Orange Polska operates the so-called internal innovation incubators – special programmes that encourage employees to submit innovations, offer appropriate tools and support for their development, and finally award and implement the best ideas.

- **We Listen and Act Clubs**

We Listen and Act Clubs are a comprehensive platform for the implementation of various improvements in the company. We provide our employees with know-how and tools and also guide them through the entire process from the creation of the idea to its implementation. Each employee can, via a special in-house application, run an improvement, find people willing to cooperate, etc. – so that the whole idea can be effectively carried out from A to Z. An additional incentive is a company-wide

competition with prizes, being a means to appreciate the initiatives and acknowledge the best of them. Participants of the Clubs can also present their ideas to the company's management. In 2021, as many as 184 *We Listen and Act Clubs* were created and involved over eight hundred people. The improvements may concern various areas: processes, technology, robotization, savings, pro-client activities, but also the working environment, innovation, and ecology.

- **Board of Ideas**

Another company incentive for employee innovation is the Board of Ideas. On the virtual board, you can submit ideas for innovation in two areas – customer experience and employee experience. Ideas are commented on by employees who also cast votes in favour or against a given idea. Those that collect 100 points or more (an average of 42% of all submitted ideas) are submitted for evaluation by business owners. Each newly submitted idea receives the Active status. We regularly update their status, changing it to: Under review (pending verification of the business owner), In progress

(after a positive assessment of the business owner, taken further for implementation), Delivered (implemented), or Archived (will not be implemented because it received too few points and/or the business owner made such a decision based on its analysis). On average, 22% of ideas that have obtained 100 or more points are being implemented. The Board of Ideas is also used to announce the so-called thematic challenges. In 2021, we conducted three challenges, related to combatting myths about the harmfulness of 5G technology, ecological activities, and services for seniors.

Behind all these innovations, there are people – full of passion, ideas, enthusiasm to change the world for the better, more friendly, and more sustainable. As a company, we want to create space for them to develop and to implement their ideas.

8.

Positive impact startups

in the bubble of expectations?

Marcin Małecki

Editor-in-Chief of [MamStartup.pl](https://mamstartup.pl)

The bubble of inflated valuations of startups has burst, the Puls Biznesu daily informs on its homepage. Slaughter of unicorns – yet another strong and scary title coming this time from the popular blogger and startup influencer Artur Kurasiński.

Despite the fact that it is still difficult at this point to talk with full responsibility about any bursting of the bubble, or even its sheer existence, we actually see a large downward trend when it comes to the valuations of technology companies, especially those listed on the American stock exchange, where many giants in new technologies have experienced record declines.

Lack of optimism?

Echoes of the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine, tensions in Asia, broken supply chains, rising inflation, galloping prices of raw materials and food, and finally the spectre of economic stagnation and even stagflation – all this does not sound optimistic.

The already iconic Y Combinator, an accelerator from Silicon Valley, considered one of the best in the world, whose portfolio is filled with such startups as AirBnB, Stripe, Coinbase or Dropbox, sent to all of its current participants a list of 10 tips on how to help companies create a „plan to prepare for the worst”. A similar correspondence was sent to own startups by the Andreessen Horowitz fund, one of the largest and most influential VCs in the world.

The headlines quoted at the beginning may not yet fully reflect our reality (and they better never do), but they certainly very well describe the mood among startups and investors as of late spring of 2022.

But is there any good news?

Fortunately, there is. Especially if we look at the Polish ecosystem. In the first quarter of 2022 alone, PLN 1.1 billion flowed through the Polish VC market. This is the total value of capital that Polish and foreign funds have invested in domestic innovative enterprises. Historically, this is the strongest opening of the year. For comparison: in the first three months of 2020, PLN 249 million was invested, which accounted for about 12% of the value of the entire financing, and in 2021 it was PLN 243 million (6.7%). Such refreshing information can be read in a quarterly report summarizing the transactions on the Polish venture capital market, which is periodically prepared by PFR Ventures and the Inovo Venture Partners fund.

What's more, prospects for the next quarter also seem quite good. In May 2022 alone, only six Polish companies: Tidio, Hotailors, Synerise, Nomagic, Talkin' Things and Zowie raised a total of USD 129 million (equivalent to about PLN 550 million) from the funds. So there is a good chance that we will have another record good result.

Investments in impact startups

The good news, especially for impact startups, is the gaining momentum of initiatives undertaken by the National Centre for Research and Development, Polish Development Fund and PFR Ventures.

Polish Development Fund has been implementing the PFR Green Hub strategy for over two years, under which it has been investing in renewable energy sources, managing a fund dedicated to green technologies and conducting educational activities dedicated to novice entrepreneurs. As part of PFR GreenHub, the public investor plans to invest nearly PLN 200 million in 3-4 funds. Private investors will also provide their capital (at least twice as much). In mid-May 2022, the Accelerero Ventures fund raised PLN 35 million – PLN

28 million from PFR Ventures and PLN 7 million from private investors. The funds will be allocated to investments in startups operating in the areas of clean technologies (the so-called cleantech), green energy, the use of renewable energy sources, as well as projects at the interface of biotechnology and clean energy (biomethane and biohydrogen), as well as in the area of IT/ICT and FMCG. Accelerero Ventures will invest up to PLN 4 million per company.

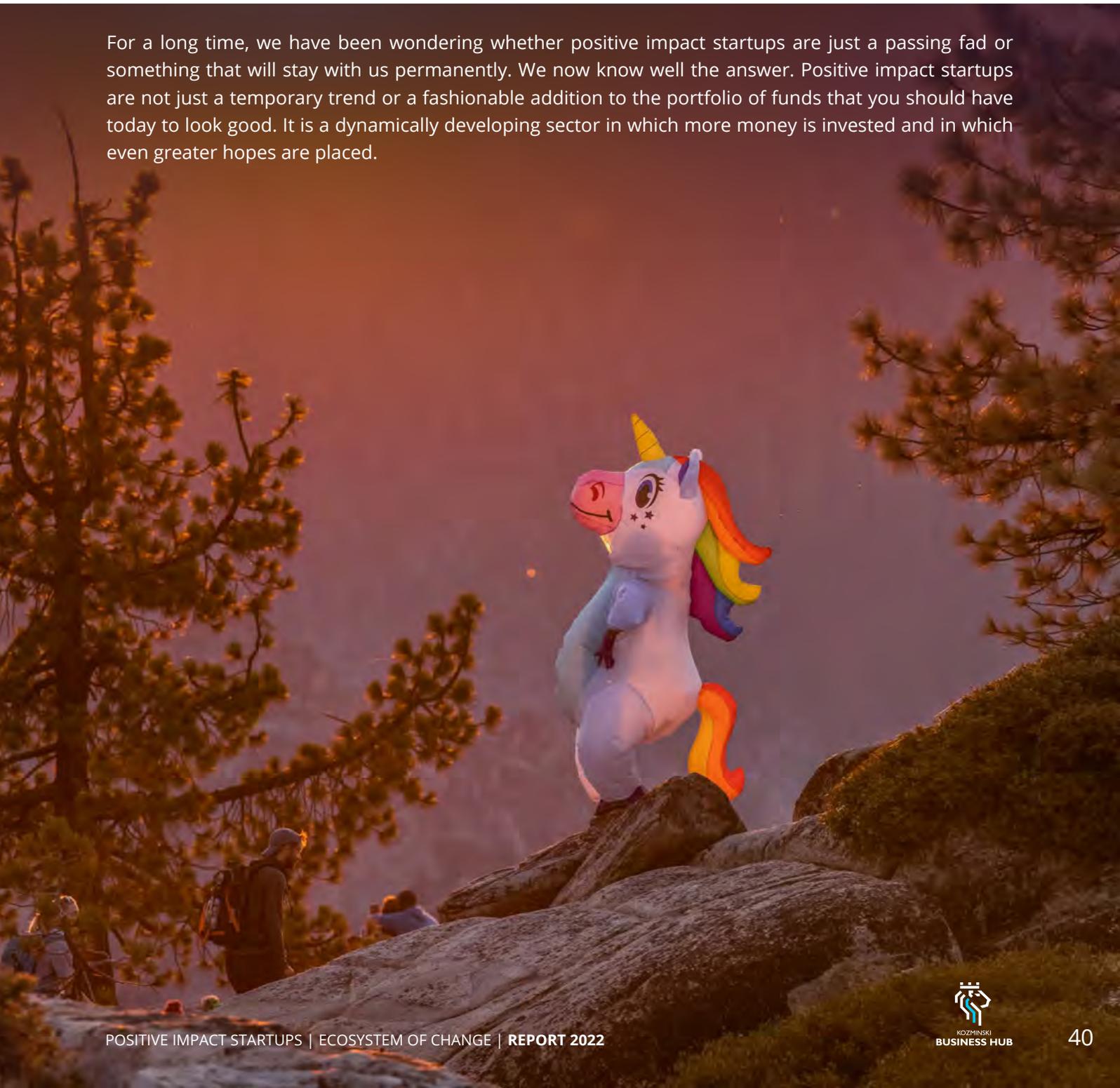
The National Centre for Research and Development, in turn, creates a number of initiatives supporting research on innovative technologies beneficial for the climate and environmental protection. Currently, it offers development programmes for green projects with a total value of nearly PLN 600 million.

Good climate for the impact

Private investors are also looking warmly towards positive impact startups. Many funds already have companies in their portfolios that fit this definition.

So, we can safely say that there is no shortage of money for the development of this type of ventures and in the near future there should also be no shortage. The public sector understands the need to develop pro-ecological and environmental technologies to support the transformation of the Polish economy towards climate neutrality. Private investors, on the one hand, certainly sense the potential for some good business that lies within positive impact startups, but on the other hand they also feel the need for a change.

For a long time, we have been wondering whether positive impact startups are just a passing fad or something that will stay with us permanently. We now know well the answer. Positive impact startups are not just a temporary trend or a fashionable addition to the portfolio of funds that you should have today to look good. It is a dynamically developing sector in which more money is invested and in which even greater hopes are placed.



9.

Positive cooperation

**Startup Impact Programme
in partnership with
Żabka Group**

Bolesław Rok

Kozminski University

Sustainable development requires wise cooperation to achieve a positive impact, as the scale of challenges – in the context of long-term business strategies – covers an extremely wide spectrum. The challenges of the climate crisis, social change and ethical dilemmas are leading to changes in business models and putting companies of all sizes and industries – and their leaders, founders – in a new role.

Nowadays, responsibility in business generally concerns the adoption of such strategies and taking such actions that, while responding today to the needs of an enterprise and its diverse stakeholders, aim at safeguarding the proper maintenance and strengthening of natural and social resources that will be needed in the future. A responsible entrepreneurial model is becoming an inspiration for many business leaders who already understand that competitive advantage is increasingly determined by social, environmental, climate, and even *carbon* efficiency.

Combining the knowledge and skills of executives of large companies with a passion for changing products and business models, supported by technology presented by the founders of impact startups, is the best way to advance for the common good. Many startups undertake tasks that, in the not-too-distant perspective, may lead to the reduction of the scale of the climate crisis, restoration of the value of ecosystems, ensuring food and energy security and basic human rights, or eradication of poverty – thereby solving (through own business activities) the most important social and environmental problems that are of major importance from the point of view of sustainable development principles.



Partnership with Żabka Group

That is why Kozminski Business Hub has built an acceleration programme for impact startups in partnership with Żabka Group. We were looking for young companies that need additional support to fully develop. We want to strengthen startups that strive to increase value by improving the quality of life of various groups as well as the quality of the natural environment. Responsibility in such companies lies therefore not only in reducing harmfulness, but also – and perhaps – in increasing positive impacts and changing the world for the better. A positive impact enterprise is an economic activity thanks to which – through innovation towards sustainability using modern technologies and by increasing the level of diligence and efficiency – people acting with passion for the sake of the common good can galvanize a rapid increase in the company's value, quality of life of people and the environment within the sphere of their impact.

More than 30 startups have joined the Startup Impact program. We discussed the positive impact criteria at length and conceded that we would develop such criteria during the programme. We know that leaders of large companies that would potentially establish business relationships, as well as institutional and individual investors and finally the clients, need clear evidence of a real impact. This has been so far the biggest problem of the entire movement of positive impact enterprises

and the main barrier to their further development, and a threat to credibility. There are already many methodologies showing potential ways and forms of measuring positive impact at a more or less advanced stage, but there are no standards that allow for a clear and transparent approach to impact assessment. There is also no common level of understanding of specific indicators related to the assessment of impact startups.



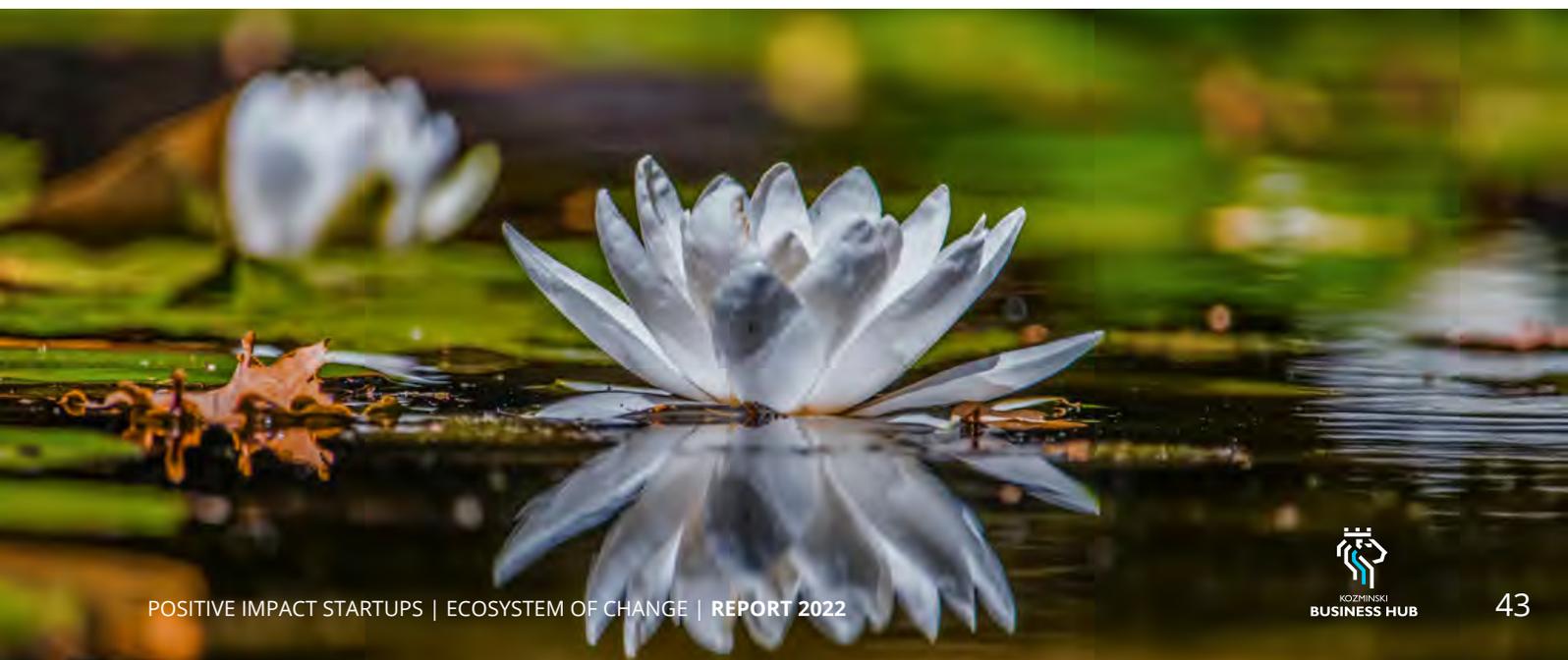
Evaluation criteria

We discussed many possible criteria. Does the project consider the implementation of selected Sustainable Development Goals? Will and how will the project contribute to reducing the negative impact of human activities on the environment? Will and how will the implementation of the project contribute to improving the quality of life of humans and other species on the planet? Will the implementation of the project lead to any negative social and environmental impacts? Does the technology used have a positive impact on the implementation of the principles of sustainable development? Does (if yes – how) the submitted project contribute to the transition towards climate neutrality?

Does the process of scaling this solution increase the positive impact on society and the environment? Does the choice of suppliers and business partners depend on their carbon footprint, emission reduction plan and other environmental indicators? Are any (if yes – what) forms of sustainable value (economic, social, ecological) delivered to the market are included in the commercial offer? Does the project contribute to the implementation of the principles of the circular economy, regenerative economy, net positive economy (in the area of emission balance)? Has the need to systematically reduce the carbon, water and biodiversity footprints been considered at the product/service design stage? Is this solution innovative and to what extent – in terms of innovation for the climate and/or innovation for sustainability?

As a result, we have narrowed down the criteria for evaluating the presented projects and already implemented solutions to three forms of impact:

- impact on the quality of life of humans and other species/ecosystems – i.e. is this solution in general good for the world?
- the impact on closing the loop of circulation of raw materials and/or the reduction of emissions and/or resource consumption and/or social inclusion, i.e. whether we have a business model directly aimed at climate neutrality, circularity, waste management, reduction of water consumption, social participation, etc.?
- innovation in the implementation of the principles of sustainability – that is, among others, the possibility to avoid the risk of negative social/environmental impact in the scaling-up process, e.g. when solving one problem at the same time deepens another.



Presentations

After long discussions, the jury consisting of: Jan Dąbrowski, President of Kozminski BusinessHub; Karol Gajewicz, Head of Venture Studio, Żabka Group; Bartek Kondaszewski, Director of KBH Acceleration Programs; Anna Kozłowska, Junior Mergers & Acquisition, Żabka Group; Professor Bolesław Rok, Kozminski University; Rafał Rudzki, ESG Director, Żabka Group – selected 9 startups with varying degrees of advancement, which aroused the greatest interest and were to the largest degree compatible with the selected three forms of impact. And these very startups presented themselves on 10 May 2022 at the Kozminski University during the Open Day, the final event of the Startup Impact Programme organized jointly by Kozminski Business Hub and Żabka Group. It is worth monitoring the development of all of them, because we will certainly hear about them more than once.

Envirly envirly.pl

The first step to decarbonisation is to be aware of the sources of emissions. The largest EU companies must report their carbon footprint, and smaller companies should now prepare themselves for this obligation. Trends demonstrate that companies without a sustainability strategy lose their competitive advantages. Companies that take action for sustainable development can faster acquire customers and the best employees. Reducing the carbon footprint optimizes processes and has a positive impact on the company's efficiency and profit. Envirly enables to manage an organization's carbon footprint.

Epicer epicer.co

The app allows you to reduce food waste while providing personalized recipes. Just open the app and select the ingredients you already have, and you'll see a recipe that meets any dietary restrictions. The platform uses state-of-the-art artificial intelligence algorithms to create unique recipes based on ingredients in the user's possession, dietary restrictions, and the user's long-term taste preferences. By integrating with the grocery shopping platform and using a previous purchase history, the application can select the appropriate list of products and suggest it to the user during shopping. This method allows you to create meal suggestions that even have never existed before, or that have never been tailored to specific dietary requirements. Epicer is a win-win service – while the user gets high-quality ingredients at the lowest price, the grocery chain can benefit from reduced losses, thanks to better optimization of the product shelf. Such personalized shopping can also increase customer loyalty to a particular store brand.



GREENFILL3D greenfill3d.com/pl

They make 3D printing environmentally friendly by developing innovative additive manufacturing solutions based on natural materials. The goal is to implement the zero-waste idea in 3D printing and to establish new ecological standards in the creation of everyday objects. It is a company operating at the interface of three areas: production of ecological bioplastics based on biodegradable or recycled materials, additive manufacturing, and production of own everyday objects or industrial applications. They are looking for ecological alternatives to popular plastics, whose specificity and physicochemical properties make their disposal extremely difficult or even impossible – and thus, they will stay with us forever. They are also looking for solutions that will result in either the development of real and useful alternatives to high-performance plastics commonly used in industrial production, or the use of recycled plastics.

Hempeat facebook.com/hempeat

They developed a technology to produce an alternative to meat using textured hemp protein. Hemp is one of the most environmentally friendly plants that can be grown without any fertilizers or pesticides. One hectare of hemp absorbs approx. 25 tonnes of CO₂ per year. Hemp can be grown locally in Poland, reducing the costs and carbon footprint of the supply chain. This hemp replacement for traditional meat products can help significantly reduce the carbon footprint of the average consumer, without having to compromise on the taste, texture, and nutritional qualities of meals. Hemp, unlike other proteins used to make plant alternatives, is hypoallergenic and offers a complete source of protein for a healthy diet. Today, most plant alternatives rely on soy, pea, or wheat proteins which can cause allergies and are difficult to digest. Hemp protein is a complete source of vegetable protein that is easily absorbed.

Leaves – urban farm facebook.com/liscie.miejska.farma

They solve the problem of a lack of access to real, organic food from Poland by producing organic micro-herbs, micro-plants in the city centre, in the formula of a vertical farm. For 365 days a year, regardless of weather conditions, seasons or natural disasters, they grow „real”, healthy food for the local community. In addition, their goal is to design mobile mini production cabinets, in which fresh green products will grow in stores or restaurants, thus being readily available. Micro-leaves have up to 40 times more nutrients than sprouts or mature varieties of the same vegetables. One form of the positive impact is the absence of groundwater contamination with harmful fertilizers needed to produce crops in fields exposed to drought or other weather anomalies. In turn, a closed water cycle saves 90% of water compared to traditional agriculture.

Res Solution ressolution.pl

Res Solution supports companies in the efficient use of electricity. They also help to save water, gas, thermal energy. In addition, they enable automation of some processes in order to maximize the benefits of implementing these solutions. The system allows to monitor energy consumption in the company and react to irregularities, control expenses, monitor ecological parameters. Current electricity prices have significantly increased the cost of doing business, which is why more companies are looking for solutions to support the reduction of energy consumption. The developed system works based on cloud computing, thanks to which any number of objects can be managed from one place. In addition, it employs advanced analytics that conducts automatic analysis in real time and indicates to the user which of the devices and in which locations require service, replacement or repair.

Sunflower Plant Power facebook.com/SungurtPL

They produce sungurt - completely vegetable yogurt based on sunflower seeds and pack them in glass jars. They are transparent and ecological. So far, they have created recipes for yogurts with three flavours: strawberry, vanilla and natural. They want to reach people with this product so that as many people as possible can taste such yogurt. A great achievement was the introduction of yogurts to the first several stores and receiving positive feedback from the customers. What's more, the product was tested by a group of over 200 people at events such as Plant Powered Perspectives and received about 90% of positive feedback. Market demand has been verified through consumer research. More than 70 people, including vegans, vegetarians and people on a traditional diet, have tried sungurts. 94% of respondents said sungurt could compete with other plant-based alternatives on the market, and 88% declared that they would buy sungurt again.

TerGo tergo.io

It is a startup founded by 2 women, supporting businesses and individual users in calculating, measuring, reducing and offsetting the carbon footprint. In addition, they run their own agroforestry project (VERs). They support companies in carbon labelling and offering carbon-neutral products and services by issuing carbon neutral certificates. Thanks to the partnership with UNEP/GRID-Warsaw Centre, they also support ecosystems in Poland. In addition, they offer programmes that encourage employees to jointly reduce emissions and collect TERs (True Emissions Reduction) in an application that is soon to be available on the market. In this way, they respond to one of the biggest environmental challenges - reducing CO2 emissions. Thanks to their solutions, both companies and individuals can gain knowledge about their carbon footprint, receive ready-made solutions on how to reduce / emit less, offset what has not been reduced, or even support ecosystem restoration efforts.

ZeroShame

This is a teenager project for teenagers – a chatbot in the form of an application, based on artificial intelligence, powered by medical knowledge in the field of sexual health. The founders emphasize that in this age group there is a problem with the lack of verified knowledge about sexual health being one of critical issues, which is why they talk to their peers and conduct social research in order to develop the application. The main problem is the lack of access to reliable information about puberty and sex, reluctance to talk to experienced people face to face about taboos, ill awareness about sex and puberty based on conversations with peers, poor sex education in Polish schools, false information drawn from the Internet or from friends. Some people have no one to talk to. This creates myths, fears and results in lack of knowledge. The result is a large number of unwanted pregnancies, as well as mental problems and illnesses such as depression or various anxieties. The application is designed to improve the well-being of children and adolescents, with particular emphasis on their mental health and emotional balance.



Winners

All startups participating in the Open Day had extremely mature and brilliant presentations in which they addressed the most important social and environmental challenges, proposing innovative solutions with great passion. Based on the voting, three startups were selected to participate in the acceleration:

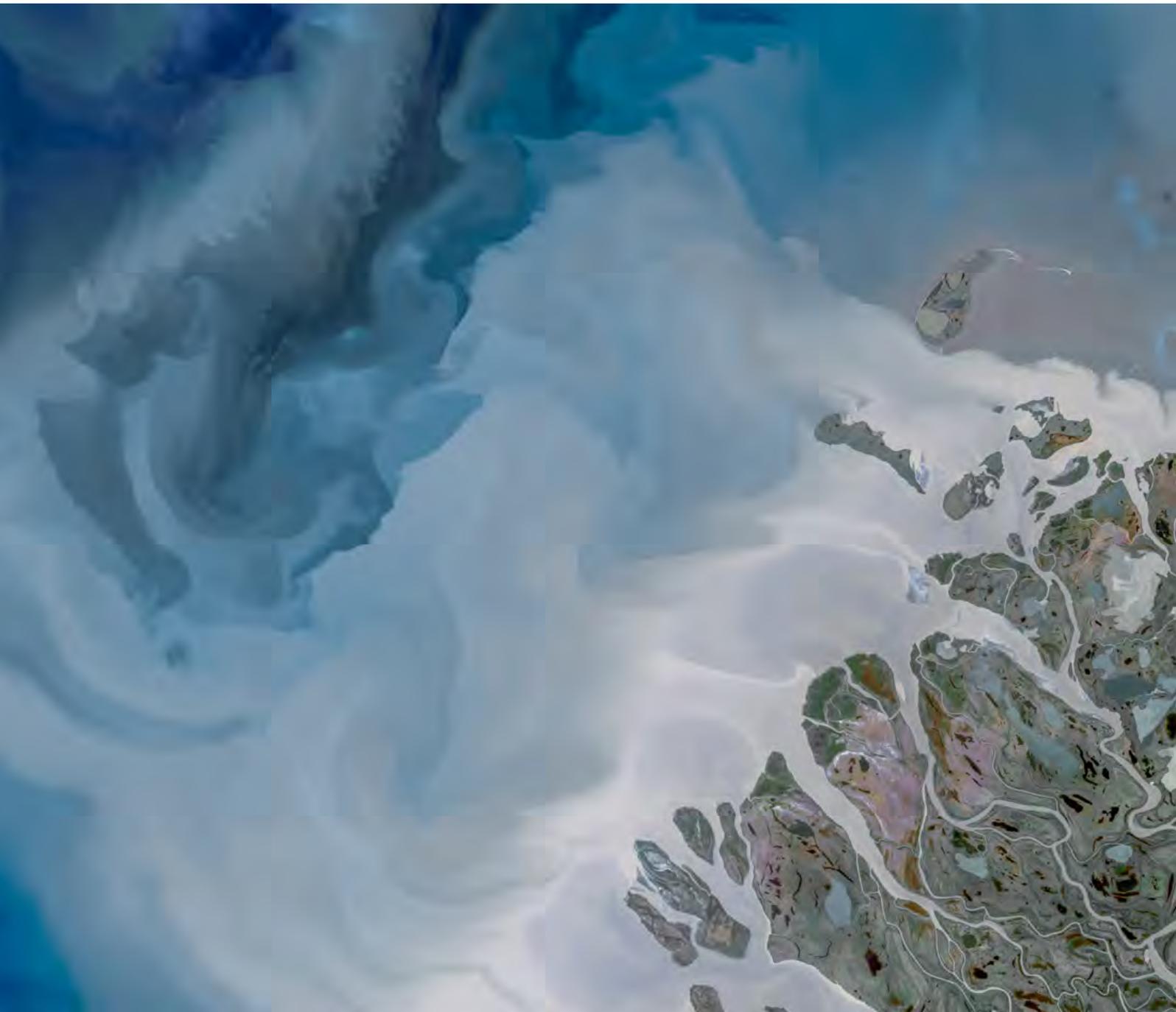
- Hempeat – production of an alternative to meat using textured hemp protein
- Epicer – an application that uses artificial intelligence to create personalized recipes, allowing to reduce food waste
- Res Solution – a system enabling effective management of energy, water, gas, heat consumption as well as automation of processes and equipment operation

The Startup Impact Programme is a cyclical acceleration programme. Under its framework, promising young companies receive the opportunity to develop their wings under the care of a wide range of mentors and using the opportunities offered by the Kozminski University community. The Programme's partner is Żabka – the fastest growing modern of convenience chain. Thanks to this cooperation, the winners of the Startup Impact Programme can test their projects and services in the Żabka Group modern convenience ecosystem environment.

Part I

Good Texts

On the solutions which
we already have



1.

How to automate the process of calculating the carbon footprint of an enterprise

Wojciech Przygodzki

Responsiblee, Tar Heel Capital Pathfinder

The path of incorporating a company into the world of ESG should start with the carbon footprint assessment. The built-in system and internationally recognized GHG protocol, on which Responsiblee is based, allows for a fast and precise calculation. The result is data of widely respected quality, which allows the company to conduct a policy consistent with the demands of the natural environment protection.

In many countries, especially in the European Union, a law is being introduced that exerts particular pressure on respecting the ESG aspects by an increasing number of entities. Responsible business understands the importance of ESG. However, introducing such changes requires

a huge amount of work, knowledge and technology. For years, the largest corporations have been devoting powerful resources to build teams and implement solutions that allow them to adapt to social expectations or legislative requirements.

In this rush for change, however, entities with less possibilities were left on melting ice. The lack of accessible information, business education (in the broad sense), and clear shaping of the law which more and more boldly absorbs new market participants – led to the situation in which small and medium-sized enterprises may not even be aware of the challenges they will very soon have to face. The perspective of penalties imposed by state authorities, as well as lost opportunities for some companies compared with those that have already understood the value of ESG, is beginning to be visible on the near future horizon of entrepreneurs.

It is necessary to introduce solutions that will easily, without a staff of advisors and consultants, allow small and medium-sized enterprises to adapt to extensive requirements related to the natural environment, corporate governance or social responsibility. Solutions that will deliver a clear and simple system for collecting data necessary

to generate reports, without the need to learn a vast number of legal acts, complicated models or protocols. At the same time, these solutions must allow to maintain high quality, allowing their business users to compete with other companies in the ESG space, and even surpass them in the quality of reporting.

Responsiblee's mission was simple. The idea was to create a tool enabling the employee, in the shortest possible time, to prepare a transparent and proper report on the company's carbon footprint, which will have indisputable value and credibility on international markets.

Responsiblee has developed a simple system that automates the process of measuring the company's carbon footprint. Every entrepreneur, without specialist knowledge, will be able to set up a profile of his company in the Responsiblee panel. The system will guide the user through the entire calculation path in a clear and friendly way, suggesting and indicating the next steps of

calculating the carbon footprint. The emission factors database and authorized pathways based on the requirements of the GHG protocol ensure full compliance of the process and its results with the adopted norms. The built-in panel also enables to create reports on greenhouse gas emissions by the company, fully compliant with international standards.

In the current realities of small- and medium-sized enterprises, the biggest barrier is the unavailability of databases containing emission indicators, which could be used by an entrepreneur to study greenhouse gas emissions in the company. These databases are often paid, dispersed, incomplete, or require specialist knowledge to interpret. Responsiblee has created and continues to expand its own emissions database, which contains the results of studies and reports, including the IPCC, EPA, and other sources recognized by the GHG protocol.

This database provides the users with comfort of certainty as to the correctness of calculations, simultaneously removing the burden of searching for appropriate emission indicators on their own. The technology used by Responsiblee allowed to create and operate the largest available database in Poland, which will enable real and valuable reporting of all three carbon footprint scores.

Responsiblee has an affordable subscription plan, which aims to include as many entrepreneurs as possible. A monthly subscription allows to continuously track emissions across the enterprise and provides the ability to generate an ad hoc report for current vendor/customer/bank requirements. Flexibility is a key element of the system and the ability to adapt it to changing regulations and other legal requirements ensures continuity in proper reporting.

In the near term, Responsiblee will aim to expand its services to also cover other environmental, social responsibility and corporate governance objectives to help companies in the transparency of their sustainable reporting system. We are convinced that efforts focused on creating a holistic tool that helps small and medium-sized enterprises participate in the transformation of the global market are extremely important on the way to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

3.

Trends on the market of positive impact startups

Michał Miszułowicz

Cooperation with the Innovation Sector,
Director, BNP Paribas Bank Polska S.A.

I don't know who cast the old Japanese curse „may you live in interesting times“. The fact is that from year to year things just get more interesting. As we prepare for the post-COVID economic crisis and slowly return to normality, the world was shaken by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Supply chains, severely damaged by the pandemic and the obstructed Suez Canal, have again fallen apart. Energy prices soared.

All this is compounded by the crisis of social responsibility – many well-known companies have not decided to leave the Russian market and continue their business activities in Russia. The world is not the same anymore...

Looking optimistically – Poland passes the test of humanity, helping war refugees, the most important alliances are stable, the real fight against disinformation and fake news is starting. Technology companies are undertaking unprecedented initiatives – side by side with the largest companies, they support those most in need. Positive impact is important and tangible like never before. Added to all this are the ESG obligations – for the time being targeted at the larger entities. However, there are already discussions whether VC funds should require the application of such standards to their portfolio companies, or even verify them already at the stage of an investment agreement.

From my observations, positive impact startups can be divided into two main categories: those that generate a positive impact themselves and those that help other companies generate a positive impact. The next division will be the assignment of an impact to the ESG categories. This is a meaningful change in the market – after

all, a common dictionary has been created to help understand and measure the positive impact generated by corporations. I have the impression bordering on certainty that measuring profit also through social and environmental aspects has ceased to be a niche and has entered the mainstream for good.

At this point I would like to cite a few, in my opinion, noteworthy trends:

Counteracting food waste and using by-products/waste from production

One of the positive impact startups is **EcoBean**, which converts coffee grounds into useful products such as cutlery and disposable plates. They obtain the raw material through cooperation with tenants and administrators of corporate real estate. Currently, the startup is working on a refinery that will allow to process coffee grounds in even more ways.

F4A (Food for All) addressing the management of the food supply chain to the stores. Thanks to advanced artificial intelligence solutions, it arranges the most effective procurement schemes – so that as little food as possible is wasted. In addition, certain surpluses can be donated to charities easily and effectively.

On the verge of this trend are still solutions for innovative plant growing – for example, the **Hydropolis** project, which offers custom designed vertical farms. Thanks to their solutions, it is possible to shorten the supply chain and optimize the cultivation environment-wise.

Alternative energy sources

It is true that this company is no longer a startup (congratulations on its growth!), but nevertheless it deserves a distinction: **Sunroof**. Solar roofs are a more ecological solution than panels. In addition, the company is developing a new product – solar shelters adapted to charge electric cars.

NG Heat – offering an innovative solution to the heating problem. Thanks to their solution, heating buildings becomes much more ecological and economical. **SolHotAir** – also offers heating

systems, but this time based on a solar-powered recuperator. The solution significantly improves the energy profile of production halls or dryer facilities.

Optimizations in transport

ProperGate offers a solution to optimize the supply of materials to construction sites and digitizes the traditional industry. Thanks to these optimizations, it is possible to reduce the carbon footprint by effectively managing the supply and movements of vehicles.

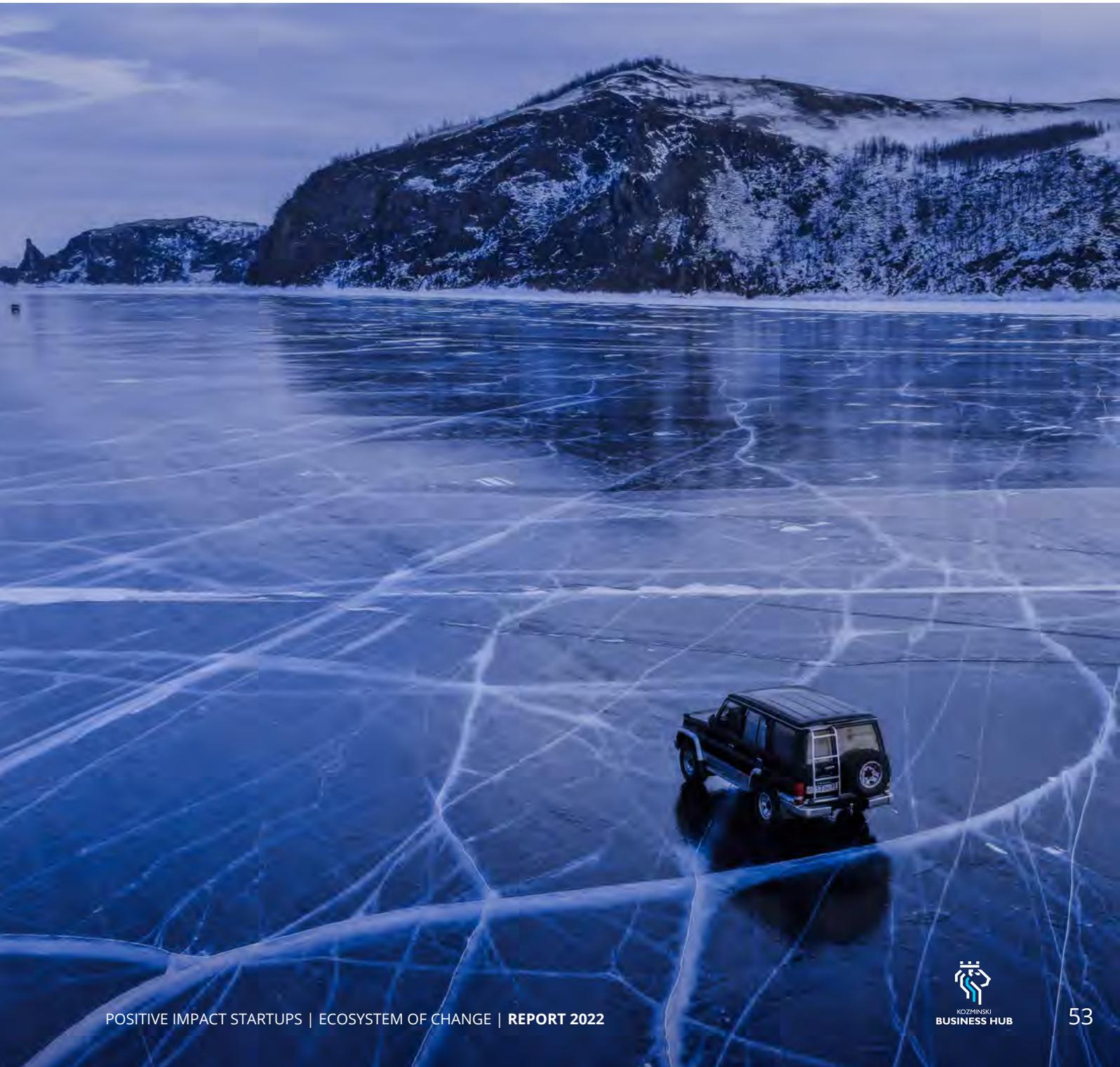
Delibike project is a system for managing a fleet of electric bicycles intended for transport (last mile delivery). Their solution has a good chance

of revolutionizing traffic in cities – thanks to the use of electric bikes, air quality should improve significantly.

As you can see, each of these entities generates economic benefits and a positive impact – intentionally, not on the side of routine business activities. Among startups, it is the norm to emphasize the positive impact at the pitch stage. Environmental issues are in the first place – in my opinion, this is due to favourable regulation and the global struggle to slow down climate change and minimize its effects.

Social aspects are currently a little less popular – although in the context of the refugee crisis there have been several of them, such as those provided by **Autenti** – a very quick launch of the Ukrainian language version of their platform. Despite the *interesting times*, there is a growing awareness of the positive impact – especially in contrast to

brands that have stained their reputation in the context of the Russian market. I hope that the next year will further strengthen the need to generate returns, not only in financial terms but also those having a wide and significant impact on the world in which we live.



6.

Solve for Tomorrow – the path of positive impact startups

begins at the stage of education

Magdalena Olborska

CSR Manager, Samsung Electronics
Poland

Young people on the threshold of adulthood are more and more frequently looking for ways to introduce real changes in their environment. They often lack the support or competence that would allow them to turn their ideas into practice. There is also a lack of knowledge and understanding of the tools that could help evaluate the impact of these ideas.

For young people, a positive impact startup can be a real goal that is possible to achieve in the near future. Therefore, already at the stage of learning, it is worth supplementing their education with competences that allow for the creation of innovations, whose value lies in both supporting sustainable development – preferably, using technology – as well as in the effectiveness and usefulness of the products or services created.

Samsung is a company that has been paving the way for startups in Poland and other countries for many years. The origins of this path date back to 2012 and the establishment of the C-lab Inside laboratory in South Korea, supporting innovative ideas of employees using the company's products. Projects with high market potential started their independent existence as startups. The success of the C-Lab Inside initiative gave rise in 2018 to C-Lab Outside edition which extended Samsung's support to startups outside the organization.

Startups on the Vistula also lived to see the Polish edition of the programme supporting their development under the name Samsung Incubator. In 2017, the first incubator in Rzeszów was created to support novice entrepreneurs from eastern Poland. This incubator localized in Podkarpacie has been followed by "sister" hubs in the Lublin and Podlasie regions. The network

of these facilities inaugurated a pioneering programme on a global scale – an incubator for innovators creating solutions inscribed in the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals. The initiative focused on social responsibility projects and modern climate solutions based on innovative technologies.

The experience gained through the Samsung Incubator has allowed Samsung to continue its mission of supporting young innovators under the Solve for Tomorrow umbrella. It is a global educational programme, implemented in nearly 40 countries around the world, which encourages young minds to use their imagination to create solutions designed to address the challenges faced by their communities.

Solve for Tomorrow is a platform that combines the development of competences of the future and engaging young people to take unconventional actions, develop creative solutions, and nurture ideas for social innovation in the teamwork setting.

The program focuses on the competences needed in building a better tomorrow by referring to the 4c rule: collaboration, creativity, critical thinking, and communication.

In September 2021, Samsung announced the first Polish edition of Solve for Tomorrow, inviting teams consisting of secondary school students accompanied by teachers and teams of students of the first and second year of bachelor studies. Interested groups could submit a project focused on one of the three biggest challenges of the modern world – health, security or climate.

The Solve for Tomorrow programme is being implemented in three stages:

1. Participants – selected in groups – apply to join the project. The teams choose a challenge which they want to address. They submit the application by filling out an online application form.
2. Groups qualified for this stage receive support in the form of mentoring from a team of SFT experts specializing in various areas of knowledge necessary to implement the planned projects. Participants take part in workshops on Design Thinking methodology and work on their chosen challenge. The summary of their several months' work are showcased in video presentations from which the programme jury selects the finalists of the programme
3. The teams nominated for the final phase prepare their presentations, improving the existing effects of work in cooperation with Samsung employees who play the role of volunteers. During the so-called *Demo Day* presentations of individual projects takes place – each team talks about the concept, previous activities, and conclusions. The evaluation is conducted by a group of experts who select the winners. The Solve for Tomorrow project ends with a ceremonial announcement of the results.

The challenges of the modern world or even of local problems often require creativity. What to do when we do not know how to put certain plans into practice and whether the impact will be positive? Samsung Design Thinking is a modern method of design thinking – based on key competences such as empathy, cooperation, or communication.

Empathy refers to the people or group of people for whom a project is created. This method assumes that the users are most important – getting to know their needs, problems and dreams is crucial. According to Design Thinking, there is no problem that cannot be solved together. The whole thought

process and its constituent elements are repeated until a satisfactory result is obtained. This way of thinking can be described as „creative courage“. In other words, everything we come up with is worth testing.

This method also assumes an immediate transition from creating plans to action, avoiding unnecessary theorising. Its essential elements are also learning from mistakes and appreciating the educational value of a failure. Drawing conclusions from failures gives room to look for novel solutions.

In Solve for Tomorrow, the design process consists of 5 phases: empathization, problem definition, idea generation, prototyping and testing. This approach allows to let go off the usual schemes, look at the idea from a distinct perspective. During the implementation of the projects, Solve for Tomorrow participants will also learn the STEAM method, which assumes undertaking activities in which at least two of the five fields of science are used (S – Science, T – Technology, E – Engineering, A – Arts, M – Math).

In the 2021/2022 call for proposals, 138 applications to the Solve for Tomorrow programme were received. Most of them came from the following voivodships:

- Mazowieckie – 24
- Śląskie – 23
- Wielkopolskie – 19
- Pomorskie – 12
- Zachodniopomorskie – 9
- Podkarpackie – 9
- Świętokrzyskie – 8

Only 11 applications came from 8 universities, and 127 applications were submitted by secondary schools and other entities.

The total number of pupils who have been registered for the project is 459 and, on the student side, 41 individuals. Among this group, 252 people were girls and young women. The submitted applications showed how important it is for the young people to take care of the mental condition of their generation, support the underprivileged and protect the environment around one's own place of residence. Among all completed applications, 60 related to health, 45 to climate and 33 to safety.

For the next stage, the jury selected 25 teams. Among them, 5 teams were dealing with the subject of safety, 12 were implementing climate projects, and 8 teams had set themselves challenges in the area of health. In the next stage, the participants took part in Design Thinking workshops and worked on improving their ideas. For this purpose, each team held 4 workshops with Solve for Tomorrow trainers. The coaches worked in pairs, thanks to which the teams received support tailored to their needs, individual attention and expertise from various areas.

The teams had the opportunity to come back to their initial ideas for the project, rethink the target group, clarify and deepen their knowledge about the chosen persons and their needs, and then work on defining the challenge, look for the best solution and start working on its prototype. Thanks to joint meetings, the possibility of sharing

experience and feedback, the participants could improve their ideas. As a result, video summaries were created in which the teams showed the creation process and the effects obtained. The films and the ratings given by the mentors formed the basis for the jury's debate.

Do finałowej dziesiątki zakwalifikowały się następujące zespoły:

1. I Tadeusz Kościuszko High School in Bielsk Podlaski – Application *Pathfinder. Safe returns at any time* – **winner of the first prize in the programme**
2. Poznan University of Economics – Application *Feel safe in Poznan*
3. General Jakub Jasiński High School No. V in Wrocław – Application *G-CAN – change the world by walking around*
4. Akademeia High School in Warsaw – Project *Seaweed vs. CO2* – **zdobywca II nagrody w programie**
5. Academic High School of the Silesian University of Technology in Rybnik – *Drones - we help nature to green the heaps in Rybnik*
6. I Aleksander Omieczynski High School in Gryfino – Composter *Fertilizer needed immediately* – **winner of the third prize in the programme**
7. Jagiellonian University in Krakow – *Mask OFF* application – a solution supporting people with mental disorders
8. Spartacus Uniform High School in Kwidzyn – *Help me App* or mental health support for young people from young people
9. VIII High School with Bilingual Classes named after Maria Skłodowska-Curie in Katowice – *Terrain Story* – a field game about how to take care of mental health

More information about the ideas can be found on the programme website: solvefortomorrow.pl

The first Polish edition of the Solve for Tomorrow programme was under the patronage of the Ministry of Climate and Environment, the GovTech Polska Center and NASK. The project partners are Copernicus Science Centre, UNEP/GRID-Warsaw Centre, Digital Dialog Association, Zwolnieni z Teorii and Hostersi.

The Solve for Tomorrow programme is being presented in secondary schools as one that brings about a number of competencies necessary for the students. Project work, which should be a natural form of schoolwork, is used rarely or to a small extent because secondary school teachers frequently give up on extracurricular activities for

students, often treating them as something that takes away too much valuable time of preparation for exams. That is why Solve for Tomorrow has attracted the interest of school career counsellors: the programme, apart from a set of competences useful on the labour market, enables the young people to define their strengths in practice.

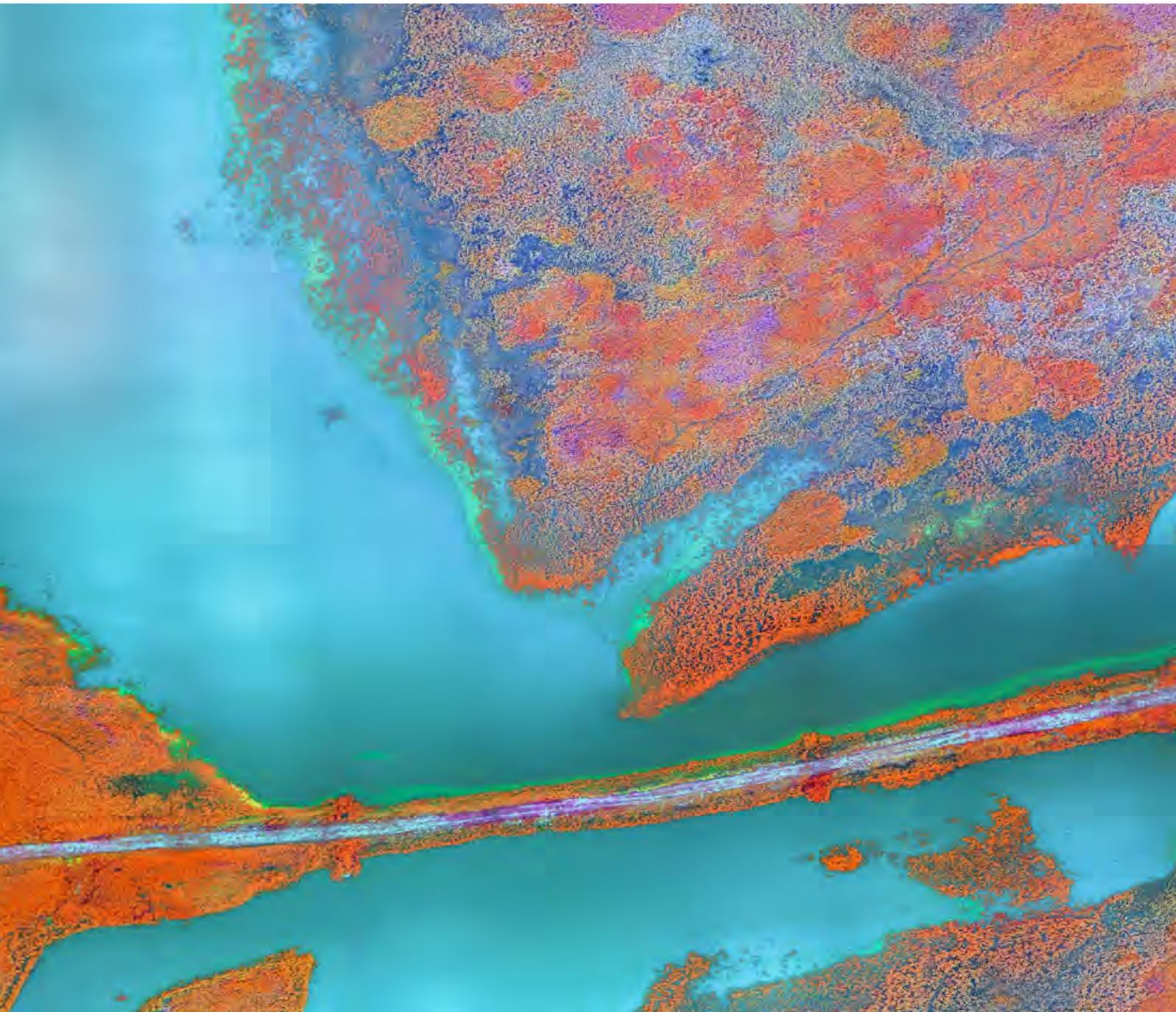
Solve for Tomorrow shows the right direction for activities in the school, including the systemic ones. Holistic educational experiences developed through interdisciplinary, team projects should be shared by young people being on the threshold of professional independence. The programme is a valuable experience and a good start for future startups or entrepreneurs in planning responsible innovations in the economy.



Part I

Good Texts

On the management and measurement of a positive impact



1.

Sustainable business model of a startup

Responsibility for climate innovation

Anna Czarczyńska

Kozminski University

A very difficult time, a time of breakthrough, a time of radical changes and, at the same time, a time of extraordinary threats announced in the previous edition of the Positive Impact Startups report turned out to be a reality. The accelerating climate changes were compounded by the military operations carried out right across our borders, directly affecting the lives of many people but also having a very strong impact on the economy and the environment.

In the face of such challenges and threats, do startups matter? Can they really have a noticeable impact? And can they change this destructive trend towards the more integral and holistic care for society and the environment? Yes, they can. The current events show that the impact of these *business micro-organisms* has the power to impact the global ecosystem in each of the three dimensions of sustainability.

Community of values

Positive impact organizations are not neutral. They are not indifferent. They are engaged and responsive to the needs of society and the planet. They notice humans and the environment. They are inclusive and focused more on cooperating than competing. Positive impact startups mean something more than just organizations or businesses, or even more than an ideological desire to act. They form a community of values and a generator of breakthrough innovations based on collective intelligence.

The goal of a positive impact organization is to create value based on the Sustainable Development Goals and stimulating economic and social growth while still keeping an eye on the environment. Positive impact is defined as the process of creating goods and services in a way that simultaneously responds to the most vital

interests of our planet. Positive impact startups prove that business and the environment are not positioned in contradiction. On the contrary – enterprises that have historically generated negative externalities are replaced in this case by organizations pointing us in the direction of solving key problems of the Anthropocene era.

What does this mean in practice? How to create organizations working for our common better future? Ones based on values such as climate innovation, which are cross-border by nature and generate cross-border impacts – being not limited by the scale of the challenge or the proposed solutions. These startups go beyond economic models, accumulate distributed knowledge at exceptionally low own costs, showing pragmatic solutions often so obvious that it is difficult to believe that they remained unseen. They become leaders of the future, incubators of thinking without limits, generators of a new mindset.

A new context for the business environment

At the same time, these startups create a new context for the business environment, forcing others to imitate and fill the gap in knowledge and involvement of less agile large organizations. Their market effectiveness is not based only on ideological premises – the success is also dependent on sound managerial and leadership competences supporting passion-based projects of new leaders who strive to shape the context of sustainable business culture. Today's positive impact startups are an example of a genuine sustainable model of "organization 3.0": pursuing its values in all dimensions such as management, organizational culture, subjecting to external evaluation (an example of which is this very report) as well as higher goals of pro-climate innovation. This is the model which now sets the horizon of action.

Implementing climate innovations is an inclusive process that involves everyone. Success, being measured by the sheer chance of our survival, depends to a considerable extent upon bottom-up initiatives – that is, on the formation of a new culture of thinking. Sustainable energy, lifestyle and pro-climate consumer decisions must become the most natural and preferred choice. Startups are closer to people, find innovations faster and also

react faster and more pragmatically to external threats. Also, they more easily see the arising opportunities to act. We have no more than 30 years to conduct the energy transition if we want to leave the planet liveable for future generations. Positive impact startups give all of us hope that this is possible, do not dodge responsibility for our civilization, and make us believe that a better future exists.

Community of high trust organizations

Positive impact startups are an example of a mature model of sustainable business, which is the opposite of greenwashing or the recently observed warwashing. These organizations venture into areas of activity where they were not previously present, traditionally reserved for governments and large corporations; they respond not only to environmental challenges, but also to economic or social challenges such as war or migration. They create a new business environment based on the integrity and consistency of the organization's vision and mission with the response to whatever is happening around. This changes our paradigm of thinking about entrepreneurship.

This way of doing business is the future and this trend is irreversible. It creates a new community of high trust organizations based on credibility. This increases efficiency and reduces costs – consequently, this model becomes incomparably more competitive than traditional models. As it turns out, profit generated in a responsible way generates more profit, not just in terms of satisfaction, i.e. satisfying the need for a positive contribution to the lives of others.

Organizations that are co-creative, radically innovative and engage all possible stakeholders are increasingly frequently demonstrating the inadequacy of traditional organizations, including public ones, in meeting social needs and responding to various crises, including those related to climate change. Whether we manage to win over time depends on these very startups: operating in a mature sustainable organization model based on creating value in the long term. This is primarily because they just do the right things. And this, through the integrity of attitudes, significantly multiplies the range of their impact. Hopefully.

There will be more of them.

2.

How to measure the environmental and social impact?

Justyna Markowicz

Sustainable Business Podcast,
Startup Development House

How to measure the environmental and social impact of such an action as protecting the forest from cutting down? How to compare the impact of this action with the impact resulting from the replacement of plastic packaging with packaging based on the use of symbiotic yeast and bacterial cultures? After all, how do we measure the impact of a social enterprise whose activities focus on supporting biodiversity and at the same time employs socially excluded people? Measuring and managing impact is one of the biggest challenges facing organizations that operate in this area right now.

We are seeing a global increase in investment in impact assets (up from \$502 billion in 2018 to \$715 billion in 2019 according to the Annual Impact Investor Survey, 2020, GINN). Not to mention the significant shift in the focus of traditional investors towards investing in sustainable companies – just read the famous letters of Larry Fink, CEO of the world's largest investment fund BlackRock, which from year to year put more emphasis on climate risks and investments in sustainable businesses.

With the growing interest in impact investing, more and more heads are leaning over Impact Measurement and Management (IMM), because although measuring impact has been practiced by various institutions not since yesterday, it is not the simplest task and still remains high on the list of challenges.

Analysis of its impact and striving to eliminate the negative impact should characterize every company or institution. However, for organisations where social and environmental challenges are at the heart of their activities and which seek to maximise positive impact, measuring and managing impact should form the basis for all activities. Measurement and management of impact should take place both at the stage of creating visions (estimating impact), strategies (impact planning), pivots in action (based on impact monitoring) and finally, after the implementation of individual activities, their evaluation, allowing to prove the social value of the project.

Measuring and managing impact is also a very important area of activity from the perspective of investors who, without developing methods and using the existing methodologies and frameworks, do not know how their financial and non-financial support translates into addressing social or environmental challenges. In the two cases mentioned above, the lack of an implemented process of measuring and managing the impact may indicate *impact washing*, which, in addition to *green washing* and *purpose washing*, is currently a big challenge.

Each activity in the area of measuring and managing impact should be carried out with the active involvement of stakeholders who, firstly, will indicate the aspects of the impact of our activities on the environment and society that are

important to them and, when asked, will share what change our activities make to the functioning of them and the environment. A great support here is the development of a stakeholder map and a materiality matrix.

Measuring impact should start with the identification of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the implementation of which our activities are to bring the world closer. Seventeen SDGs identify these major challenges and make up the Agenda 2030, which is a compass for action for people, our planet and prosperity.

Nevertheless, we should not stop at identifying objectives, because the reference point in the process of measuring the impact should be for us primarily the targets and indicators that make up the Agenda. A thorough analysis, selection of those from among 17 goals, 169 targets and 231 indicators that we can include in our strategy, gives us confidence that the direction of our activities is consistent with this plan developed by dozens of organizations around the world.

The second essential element, which is the starting point in the process of measuring and managing one's impact, is the development of the theory of change, which is a method illustrating the logical path through which we plan the implementation of social change (and later verify it). The basic theory of change should include the problem we are mitigating, the actions implemented to bring us closer to addressing the problem, measurable results of these activities (outputs), but above all changes (short and long-term; positive and negative) that occur as a result of our actions (outcomes).

The whole thing makes up our impact and should be logically connected to the problem we identified at the beginning. The theory of change is alive and over time it should evolve and expand with various key elements for the implementation of activities, such as our assumptions, input values, success indicators, minimum expectations of the main recipients, stakeholders, mission or values. The process of creating the theory of change gives the organization space for internal dialogue regarding the most important assumptions of the business, it also allows for consistent vision and setting priorities and identifying risks. A well-prepared theory of change also increases our credibility among stakeholders and is a crucial information for potential investors, for whom verification of the theory of change is one of the first steps in the *due diligence* process.

Stakeholder engagement, identification of SDGs, and development of theory of change form the basis for the organization's next efforts to measure and manage impact. Depending on the area of activity of the organization, its stage of development and the main motivation to measure impact, the organization has a choice of a number of tools, methodologies that can help in creating an internal system for measuring and managing impact.

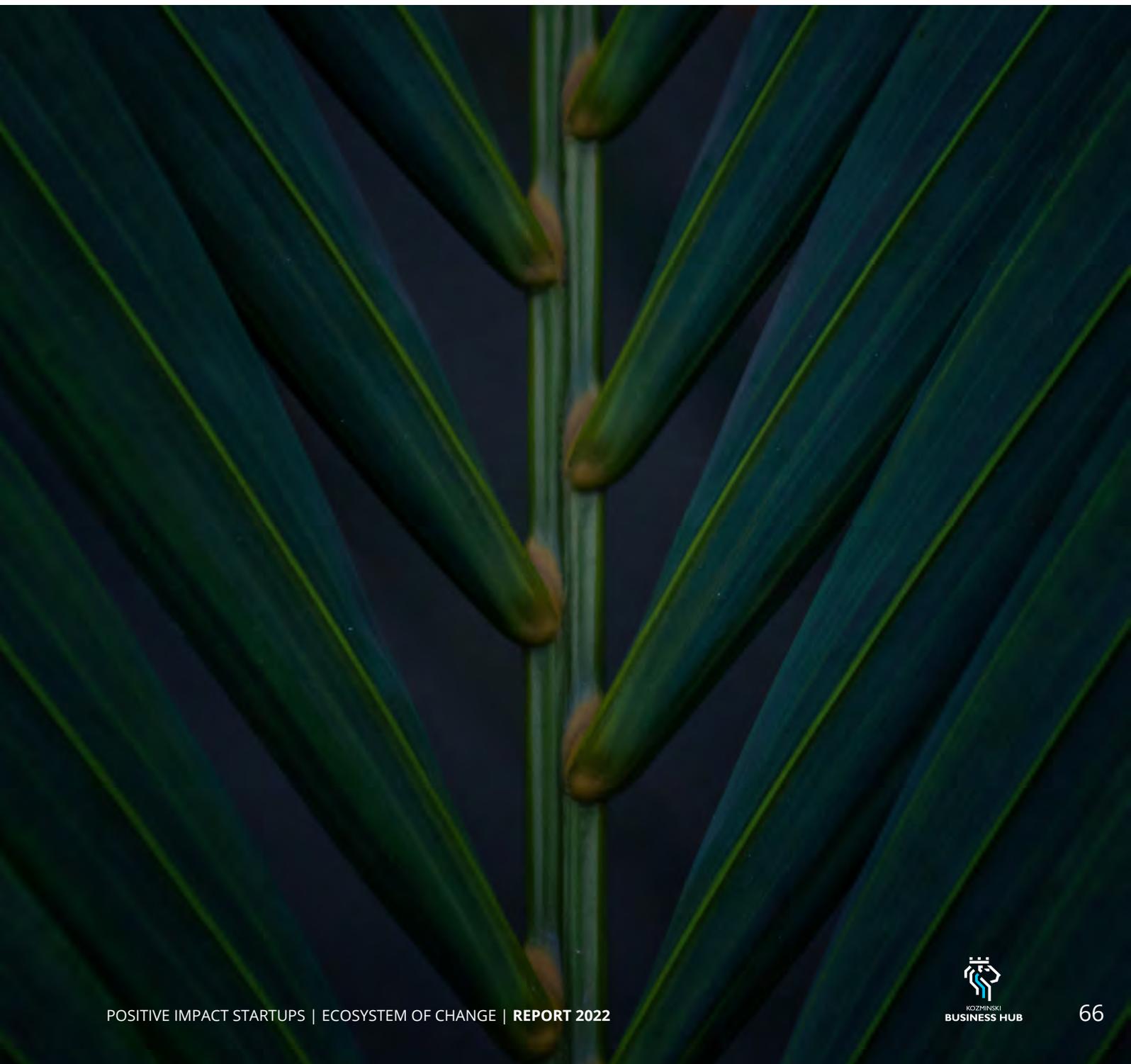
Examples of helpful tools and methodologies are the aforementioned Sustainable Development Goals, as well as the catalogue of IRIS and IRIS+ indicators, Impact Management Project, Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) standards, B Impact Assessment (BIA) and B Analytics. An indicator that has been gaining popularity for some time in both the private and public sectors is the Social Return on Investment (SROI), based on the assumption that the social result can be expressed in financial measures and calculate how the invested Euro, Dollar or Polish Zloty translates into a social return on investment, also expressed in chosen currency.

Although this indicator is not perfect – its calculation in some areas is very complex, and in the case of some areas (e.g. requiring *monetization* of the new-born's life) raising ethical doubts - it is a strong alternative to traditional ways of measuring impact, which are often limited only to measurable

effects of actions, e.g. the number of beneficiaries covered by the action. Capturing impact with SROI allows different investments to be compared with each other and is also a much-needed bridge for communication between the *financial world* and the *world of impact*.

To address the challenges of the world and maximize positive social and environmental impact, we need to develop our competencies in measuring and managing impact, and this requires cooperation and partnerships in many dimensions. First of all, impact investors should better cooperate with positive impact startups or social enterprises and educate each other. In turn, positive impact startups, which in many cases are paving the way in completely new areas of social innovation, should enter partnerships with researchers to develop ways to measure the impact of their activities, products, and services.

Partnerships to better measure impact is crucial, which is why we need industry cooperation and cross-sectoral knowledge exchange between positive impact businesses, NGOs, public administrations, and international organisations. In each of these areas, there is an impact measurement, and it is worth harmonizing methods and developing best practices.



4.

Investing in impact

- debunking myths

Wojciech Mróz, Przemek Pohrybieniuk

Ashoka Poland

Every action we take has an impact. It impacts upon ourselves, other people around, our family, our co-workers – a but also, in a broader sense, on our surroundings: the whole environment in which we live. It is us who decide what is the nature and strength of this impact. As the American anthropologist Margaret Mead once stated, *Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.*

We have a deep awareness of our impact on the individual scale of single human beings. But once we add to it a broader impact in the form of our investment choices, a whole new perspective

opens up: the prospect of changing the scale of impact. Through engagement into the so-called impact investing, we can actively introduce positive changes that the world needs.

Investing in impact has been developing dynamically in recent years in Western Europe and the USA. According to the Global Impact Investing Alliance (GIIN), the amount and diversity of capital allocated to these investments has increased dramatically over the past ten years, with the current market estimated at 715 billion USD (2020). Since 2012, 179 impact unicorns (companies with a market valuation of over 1 billion USD) have already been created, 40% of which have been in the last 15 months.

The impact investment market in Poland is growing. New initiatives, as well as funds ready to invest in impact projects are being created, more and more ideas, ventures and companies emerge, and a whole ecosystem of support for their development is being built.

However, we also observe some ambiguity or myths around impact investing, which we would like to debunk in our article. They are based on the mistaken belief that investing in impact is only about putting money in – in order to do good things – and not about actually making money. Overall, we often confuse it with charity. The main purpose of investing in impact is to achieve a social or environmental impact along with achieving a financial benefit in the form of a return on our investment. Below we address the key myths about investing in impact.

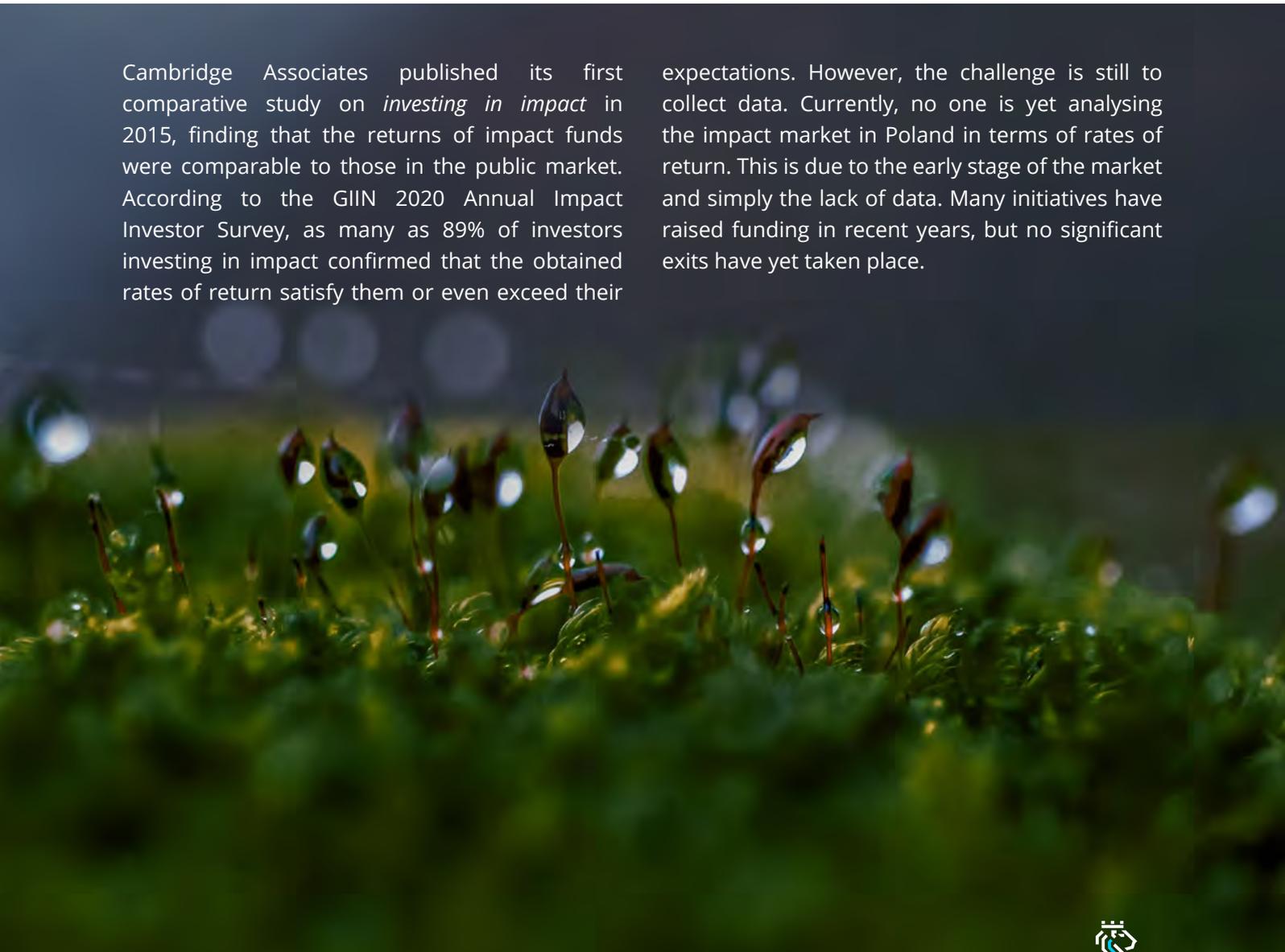
Myth 1

Investing in impact means reduced profits

Investing in a company whose DNA contains a positive impact on its stakeholders does not have to mean sacrificing profits. A key feature of impact-oriented companies is that they are designed to both make a profit and simultaneously positively impact the area in which they operate. Innovative companies have multi-billion-dollar capabilities that allow them to successfully deliver solutions to address the challenges facing society and the planet. If we exclude this element from their business model, such companies would cease to exist.

Cambridge Associates published its first comparative study on *investing in impact* in 2015, finding that the returns of impact funds were comparable to those in the public market. According to the GIIN 2020 Annual Impact Investor Survey, as many as 89% of investors investing in impact confirmed that the obtained rates of return satisfy them or even exceed their

expectations. However, the challenge is still to collect data. Currently, no one is yet analysing the impact market in Poland in terms of rates of return. This is due to the early stage of the market and simply the lack of data. Many initiatives have raised funding in recent years, but no significant exits have yet taken place.



Myth 2

Impact investments and ESG investments are one and the same

Investing in impact is primarily about generating positive results in the area of this impact and a positive financial return. ESG, on the other hand, is more about the responsible way companies behave, taking into account the risk to a company's value resulting from environmental, social and corporate governance factors.

We also note that for many investors in Poland impact activities are synonymous with charity actions, where they expect positive results from doing good. For them, investing remains the sphere of the standard philosophy in which only the financial return is expected. The forms of impact investment can be well shown graphically.

 <p>Capital investments</p> <p>Investing that engages capital with the expectation of obtaining financial return to the investor, but without waiting for any positive social and/or environmental impact being generated.</p> 	 <p>Positive impact investments</p> <p>Socially motivated investment which engages capital towards generation of financial return for the investor, with simultaneous positive social and/or environmental impact.</p> 	 <p>Philanthropy</p> <p>Socially motivated financing which engages capital towards generation of positive social and/or environmental impact, but without financial return to the financing entity.</p> 
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Myth 3

Investing in impact is only suited for large investors and banks

Large banks and investment firms certainly have a vital role to play when it comes to investing in impact. By expanding their portfolio with more socially conscious investments, they normalize this practice among traditional audiences. However, the sheer size of these institutions dictates the scale that a venture must reach before it becomes attractive to their investments. This leaves out early-stage ventures that need the support of regional or concentrated investment groups in order to develop them to such a scale that they become interesting to larger funds.

But what about smaller investors? There are several networks of business angels across Europe, which focus on investing in impact startups. In Poland, the first such network was created this year as part of the international cooperation of the Ashoka Foundation and the Cobin Angels network. Within the framework of the newly established

[ImpactAngels.pl](https://www.impactangels.pl) network, a single investor can already invest PLN 50,000 in 1 project. This form of investing, in addition to less restrictive barriers for entry, allows for better risk management through the possibility to build an entire investment portfolio.

Crowdfunding platforms can also be an interesting formula for investing in positive impact projects. In Poland, there are already interesting funding initiatives of this type, while abroad already entire platforms operate that accept only impact startups.

Myth 4

You can't measure the impact

Admittedly, impact measurement is not as black and white as measuring financial returns. But that does not mean it can't be done in a meaningful way.

The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which identify the world's most pressing environmental and social challenges, are a useful and universal benchmark for investors active in impact projects. Assuming that these goals address the issues of paramount importance to people and the planet over the next 20-25 years, the activities of companies that contribute to their achievement do have a positive impact.

To assess the extent of this impact, we can determine key performance indicators that are consistent with a particular SDG. They will be important for a company's operations. For example, we can measure the impact of a renewable energy company in terms of the carbon emissions reduced. By measuring performance over time, we can assess a company's progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals.

Myth 5

Investing in impact is just a passing trend

It is not without reason that the impact investment sector has been developing very dynamically over the last two years. The main reason is that consumers, entrepreneurs and investors are increasingly aware of the need to change their perspective on the world and their impact thereon. The new generation has a different system of values, the emanation of which is caring for our common good, not only for one's own. Investors of this generation are getting increasingly motivated by both impact and profit.

A survey by Morgan Stanley found that 95% of millennials are interested in investing in impact, and because they are the largest generation in the market, there is potential for a rapid growth in the

sector over the next decade. We are beginning to live in the era of the increasingly aware consumer, and the era of the aware investor is just ahead of us and the first signs of this are already visible.

Myths that arise around issues related to investing in impact seem to arise to a large extent as a result of the lack of information and lack of knowledge on this subject. Each of the topics discussed could be described in more detail and we plan to do so quite soon by releasing the first podcast about impact investing. We believe that, among other things, education will contribute to the creation of a truly professional market and increase the number of entities on the part of companies and investors. We have been developing many initiatives such as the first network of impact business angels in Poland [ImpactAngels.pl](https://www.impactangels.pl), or courses for people who want to invest their time [inwestujwimpakt.pl](https://www.inwestujwimpakt.pl).

5.

Women founders of positive impact startups are not afraid

to act differently and in their own way

Marta Zucker

Author, she connects the world of startups from Silicon Valley and Poland

We are facing an era of saving, and most importantly, an era of reuse of goods. Some of us have already entered this era.

Reach for the *Medal of the Ecologist*

Generations of our grandmothers, as well as our parents, have saved because of general social poverty, historically and socially conditioned. From my childhood, I remember diligently folding the breakfast paper in which my sandwiches were wrapped and bringing it back home. So did my friends. In the eighties, there was nothing disposable in Poland. My mother, for as long as I can remember, has always used all kinds of packaging many times, and she still does so today. In communist Poland, this saving resulted from a widespread lack.

Today, such behaviours are described on social media and gain thousands of likes. And this is fortunate, because the persuasive power of social media sometimes works wonders. A salesperson from the green market where my mother buys repeats that my mother should get an *ecologist's medal* because she not only uses her bags and recycles every plastic bag a hundred times, but also returns egg trays, and when she buys seedlings in the spring, she brings last year's casings for replacement.

We should all fight to receive the *Medal of the Ecologist* and not only from the salesperson at the green market, because saving in the twenty-first century takes on the characteristics of key values, enters a higher level. It reflects a level of mindfulness and responsibility in the use of resources that we have created ourselves. That is, responsibility in our daily business, in our daily purchases – both the first and the second need, because we buy excessively. It's time to put the

lifestyle known as a lot and cheap on hold until further notice. In my latest book, *Responsible. Women of the future. Conversations with pioneers* (Warsaw 2022, Nieoczywiste Publishing House) I talk to pioneers of the latest trends. The heroines of my book have already got to work. They do not look at others, they do not give in to adversity. They just do their thing – often taking tiny steps every day.

Let's also start with ourselves. Let's get started today. Let's take that first step. Maybe it be a day without a plastic bag, a day without meat, a day without disposable cups, a day without a car, a day of saving water, a day of opening up to other cultures.

How it's done in California

The fact that the climate is changing is hard to deny. Climate change is being drastically felt on all continents, from the fires in California, Siberia, and Australia to the melting ice of Antarctica.

In California, climate change poses a serious threat to the food industry. California alone produces one-third of the food for the entire United States, so the threat of drought is one of the key problems facing the state's economy. Many startups are working on solutions that would reduce the

demand for water in agriculture. Scientists warn that drought-resistant plant species should already be introduced. California has about 30 days per year with extremely hot temperatures, and by 2050 this number is likely to double.

Will new technologies help save the world from changes caused by climate catastrophe? Will Silicon Valley's innovative environment rise to the occasion – will responsibility take precedence over profit? Silicon Valley is not only well organized, but it can create ideas and provoke research. Silicon Valley's mantra for many years has been *changing the world for the better*. Today, there is a lot of money behind this slogan and with the development of innovative technologies, it has unfortunately become a marketing gimmick rather than a real force for change.

Business model innovation

In Poland, the socially responsible startup industry is developing very dynamically. Often, the innovation of these startups consists of changing the already existing formula, i.e. using new technologies to use resources that have existed for many years. This means that traditional activities are in a sense *launched*.

This applies, for example, to some craft activities that have existed for centuries. The startup **WoshWosh**, whose founder is Martyna Zastawna, has made customers prefer to give a second life to their old shoes rather than buy new ones. The process of turning old shoes into new ones is nothing more than an innovation in the business model. The value proposition remained the same. Once a shoemaker repaired shoes due to shortage. Today, WoshWosh's business is the result of excess, and growing consumer awareness. We don't want to buy new shoes.

Today, the key is to figure out how to reuse what already exists so as not to produce a replacement. Agata Frankiewicz, the founder of **Dekoeko**, is coming up with a way to connect those producing waste with those using this waste in the upcycling process - announcing the beginning of the end of the linear economy. Zosia Zochniak, in **Ubrania do Oddania** (Clothes to Give Away), undertook to revolutionize the second-hand clothing market – which was not an easy task.

Nina Józefina Bąk in the **Kooperatywa Dobrze** (Cooperative Well) focused on local food, motivating consumers to limit purchases from global suppliers. Kaja Rybicka-Gut decided to take care of women: the startup **Your KAYA**, of which she is a co-founder, produces ecological hygiene products. Aga Maciejowska, in the startup **Plan Be Eco**, started an activity that has not been talked about much so far - she measures carbon footprint.

It is worth being inspired by people who do remarkable things, while remembering about their own style of building a business. You also have to dare to do things your own way and often completely differently than everyone around you. Such are the heroines of my book. They are not afraid to act differently and in their own way.

The role of founders of positive impact startups

Studies show that it is women, more often than men, who take the initiative in responsible ventures. Research done at Berkeley's Haas School of Business in California found that women are more likely than men to prioritize corporate social responsibility and pay attention to environmental issues. Researchers show that men have milder ethical standards than women. This means that men are more likely than women to justify decisions that can be considered ethically questionable. In turn, research conducted by Illuminate Ventures shows that women and men are guided by different motivations when starting companies. For women, the motivation associated with the financial side of the venture is less important than for men.

Many of today's consumers prefer to buy products or services that have responsible sources. Customers are beginning to expect companies to adopt a responsible attitude regarding social, environmental, or humanitarian problems. In recent weeks, public condemnation has befallen companies that have decided not to leave the Russian market, despite Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Successful entrepreneurs usually try to create something that will change the world,

something that will have a positive impact. It turns out that the pioneers of these positive changes are usually women. More and more women are occupying high positions in both the business and political worlds. More and more young girls are not afraid to act. This is happening both in the United States and in Poland. Will women revolutionize our wasteful lifestyle? Will they prevent a climate catastrophe? The answer is not obvious. I bet on women.

7.

We build partnerships for a positive change

Karol Gajewicz

Head of Venture Studio, Żabka Group

Rafał Rudzki

ESG Director, Żabka Group

Our ambition is to create conditions in which green and sustainable living for everyone, every day will be possible. Responsibility is a part of DNA of the Żabka Group, which is why we want our activities not only to simplify the lives of our customers, but also to have a positive impact on the stakeholders of our company, their environment, community, and finally on our planet.

Żabka is one of the most recognizable brands in Poland, serving nearly 3 million customers each day. We operate based on a unique business model – the ultimate convenience ecosystem, the aim of which is to simplify people's lives. It consists of solutions created for consumers for whom time and convenience are special values.

We respond to their diverse needs, and our services are available via both physical and digital channels. We are aware that achieving the goals that we have set for ourselves in our Responsibility Strategy is only possible in cooperation with a wide range of partners who, like us, want to develop in a responsible and sustainable way.

Societal challenge

The United Nations stresses that meeting the challenge of effectively implementing the Agenda 2030 for sustainable development requires partnerships between governments, the private sector, and third sector organisations. Activities carried out in partnership – at the global, national and local levels – should be established based on common values and principles, as well as a coherent vision and defined goals. That is why Żabka Group, together with scientific institutions, business incubators and other business partners, creates solutions that provide a chance to develop and attain the Sustainable Development Goals.

Proposed solution

One of the strategic areas defined in Żabka Group's Responsibility Strategy is to build partnerships for a positive change, including supporting innovation – which is why we have been actively looking for partners offering solutions supporting the transformation of the convenience ecosystem, also in the area of sustainability. We focus on combining our own competences and resources with the knowledge and skills of external organizations and institutions in order to develop, test, implement and scale products and services that make life easier for the network's customers. This way, we increase the group of recipients of our activities and stakeholders actively using their effects.

The social impact

At Żabka Group, we understand that introducing responsible changes requires innovative and bold initiatives, which is why we have launched the Venture Studio platform whose task is to search for and attract to our organization such modern solutions that give new prospects of development for the entire Group. The team of experts appointed within our Group closely follows the market and analyses business solutions of Polish and foreign startups operating in such areas as trade automation, stores of the future, or sustainable development. Solutions focused on ESG are being created as part of the acceleration programme called MIT Enterprise Forum CEE. Our attention is particularly attracted to projects concerning alternatives to plastic packaging and alternative sources of dietary protein, i.e. solutions supporting the reduction of meat consumption.

Together with the Huge Thing accelerator of innovative solutions, we launched the Żabka Future Lab acceleration programme. We solicit collaboration with startups whose solutions may for example allow to reduce the amount of food waste by facilitating storage inventory management or increased convenience of our autonomous stores for the consumers.

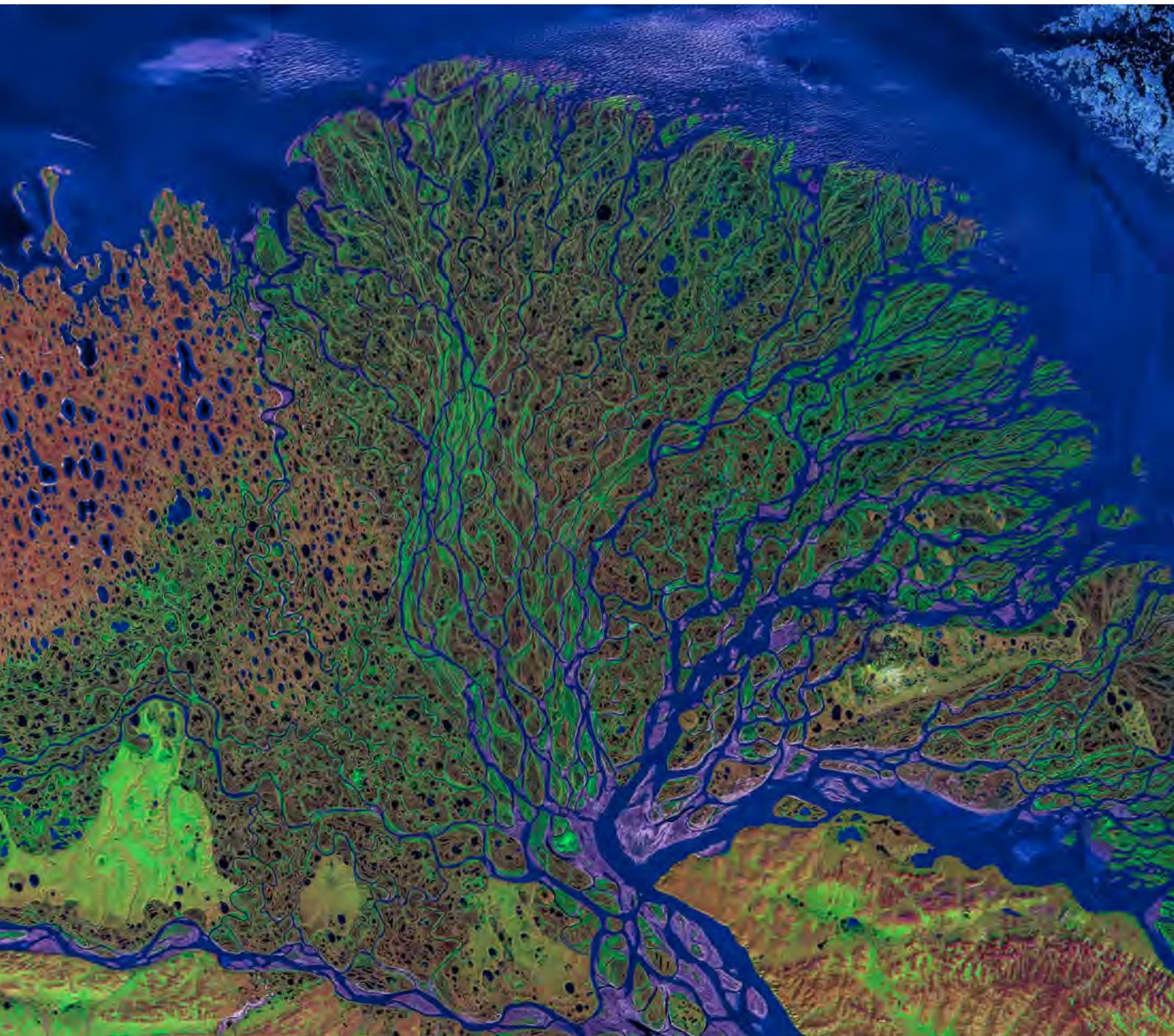
In 2021, a total of over 350 startups applied for all acceleration programmes carried out or supported by Żabka Group. From among them, we have selected the most promising ones, with whom we continue to cooperate. Collaboration with the American startup AiFi resulted in the creation of the largest network of autonomous Żabka Nano stores in Europe.

We not only support emerging businesses but also engage in partnerships with entities whose business position is already established. With the help of the Advanced Customer Insight Tool (ACIT) data exchange platform, we continue to work with business partners who value the quality of information about consumer choices and their business decisions are based on sound data analysis. The analysis tools used, artificial intelligence and advanced algorithms are the foundation of our technological development which is one of the key elements of the transformation we have been undergoing as the Group.

Part II

Positive Impact Startups

Good examples



2.



BreadPack

Less waste, more care

There is no doubt that humanity will not completely abandon the use of disposable dishware. It has many advantages – is easy to store, lightweight and practical. It also does not need to be washed – after use, we simply throw it away. But what if such a disposable dish was not waste but a tasty, vegan zero waste snack? BreadPack has created the technology to produce delicious, fully vegetable, edible dishware and bakes them in self-designed ovens.

Societal challenge

Of the more than 6 billion tonnes of plastic waste already produced by humans, a significant proportion is packaging waste. So far, only 10% of all plastic waste has been recycled, and the prospects for improving this condition in the

future are not satisfactory. Every raw material processed to a final product, in this case packaging, placed on the market has a negative impact on the environment and our health; this knowledge is not widespread enough.

Consumers still think that by choosing the eco option they care about something that is generally vague and distant. They do not see the immediate and harmful effects caused by the products they choose, and that is why they so easily give up on making responsible choices.

People ignore the direct influence of raw materials on human health – they see it only in the long term perspective as the degradation of our natural environment. Many disposables, still widely used in the catering industry, contain dangerous ingredients that penetrate meals and subsequently enter the human body where they accumulate and inflict damage on the cells. The magnitude of this challenge is compounded

by the still insufficient number of attractive, easily accessible and harmless alternatives. Biodegradable dishes are not better, and among those available on the market and declared compostable there are hardly any that can be composted in Poland. There are still no suitable conditions for composting. Thrown into landfills, in turn, they produce methane.

BreadPack has attempted to partially address this challenge by proposing an alternative that can reduce the volume of packaging waste in gastronomy – an industry that produces it in excess and uses packaging to handle food.



Proposed solution

Breadpack's proposed solution is an alternative to disposable dishware. Crispy bowls are baked from fresh dough. They cannot be compared with any dishes previously available on the market. They are suitable for use on a large scale in gastronomy, event industry, catering, zoos or in retail. The company focused equally on the quality and taste of the product, so that the term *edible bowl* was justified. It is a vegan, crunchy snack.

Breadpacks are created according to proprietary technology and baked in self-produced ovens designed specifically for this purpose. Thanks to this, it is possible to fully control each stage of the product creation process. The ingredients making

up the bowls includes wheat flour, ground flax, rapeseed oil, water and a pinch of salt and pepper. The dishes do not contain food chemistry, flavour enhancers or highly processed products.

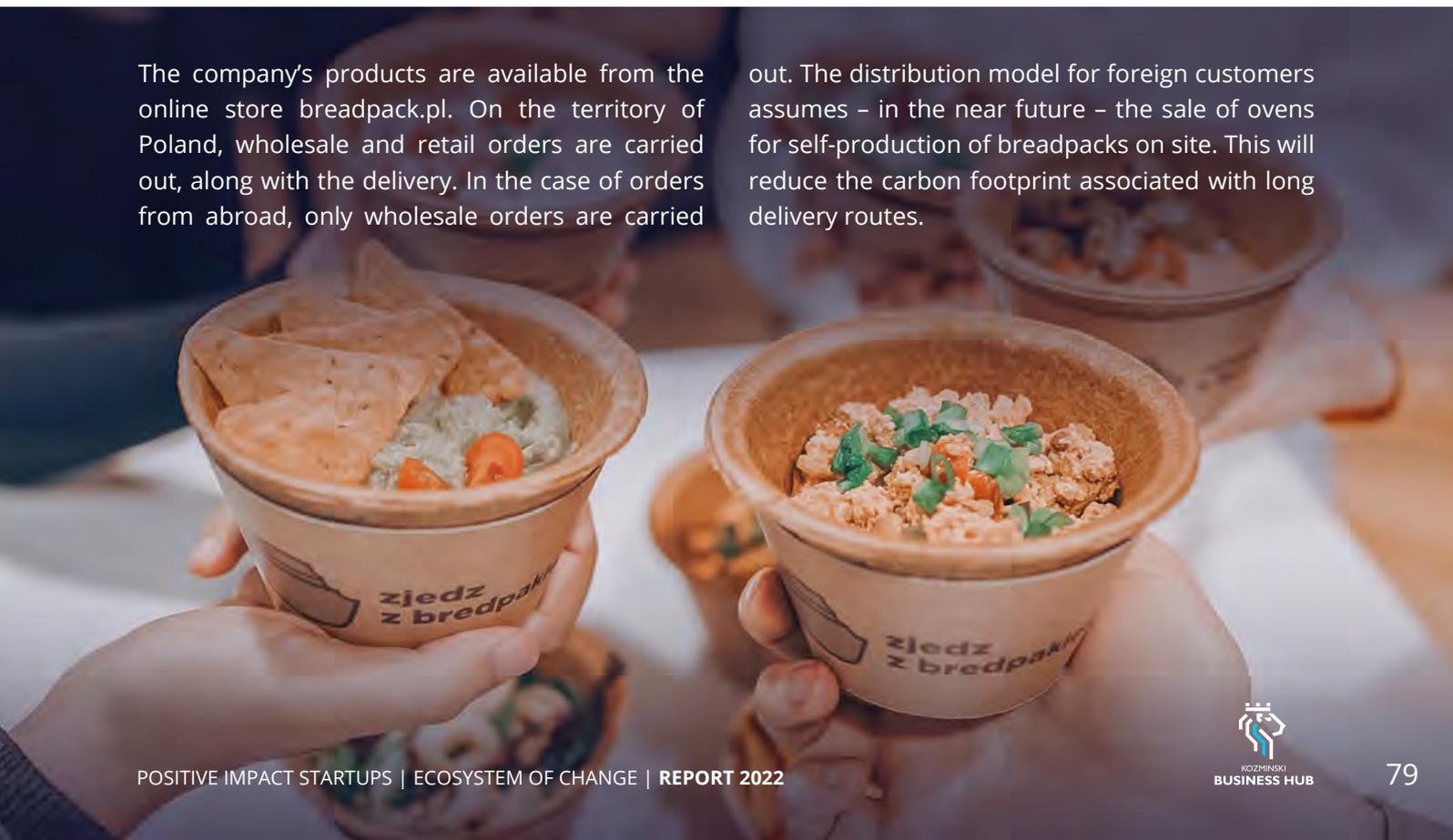
The production process of these edible bowls, compared to the production of plastic packaging, is associated with significantly lower CO2 emissions, which translates into a measurable benefit for the environment.

Operating model

Solutions introduced in the area of innovation are usually associated with the involvement of a very wide group of specialists and scientists. The model adopted by BreadPack is based on the independent action of a small group of young entrepreneurs open to opportunities and innovations in creating products needed by humans and the planet. This group – in response to social and ecological demand – designed, created, and delivered to the market a ready-made, functional product.

The company's products are available from the online store breadpack.pl. On the territory of Poland, wholesale and retail orders are carried out, along with the delivery. In the case of orders from abroad, only wholesale orders are carried

out. The distribution model for foreign customers assumes – in the near future – the sale of ovens for self-production of breadpacks on site. This will reduce the carbon footprint associated with long delivery routes.



Social impact

The company wanted to make consumers aware that choosing the eco option is a conscious decision of adopting a more advantageous solution rather than giving up on something. Both consumers and the planet deserve more in terms of the available range of packaging options. The startup, in addition to providing the product – namely, edible bowls – also conducts environmental educational activities, thus raising the level of consumer awareness in the field of ecology.

The company has already established cooperation with Inna Bajka – a Polish producer of natural breakfast and dinner dishes. Since both companies are guided by similar values, together they offered to their customers an innovative, pro-environmental solution: ready meals packed in edible dishes. BreadPack has been appreciated by experts from various areas. It became the

winner of the Mazovian Startup 2021 competition conducted by the Mazowieckie Voivodship. In addition, it ranked 14th in the 50 Most Creative in Business ranking by Brief magazine, and received the audience award in the Competition for The Engaged, as well as two distinctions in the provincial Start from Mazovia competition.

Plans for the future

This year, the company took steps to establish a branch in Slovakia. Further activities will be related to the development of sales on this market and further foreign expansion, while expanding the range of sales of breadpacks in Poland.

“We created BreadPack because we know that consumers and the planet – basically, all of us – deserve more. We believe that it is possible to revolutionize our awareness regarding human impact on the surrounding world without waiting for top-down decisions and signposts, and to finally spur a responsible approach to the use of raw materials in the production of disposable packaging. It is also about modernising safety standards for the contact of the packaging material with food.”

Angelika Szkołuda
co-founder of BreadPack

General information

Name	BreadPack
Legal status	Limited liability company
Year of registration	2020
Industry	Production of plant-based food, organic dishware
Name of founder(s)	Angelika Szkołuda, Eugeniusz Adintsov
Website	breadpack.pl
Contact	pr@breadpack.pl +48 516 487 553
Social media	instagram.com/bread_pack

5.



Karmnik

A local socio-economic mini-holding

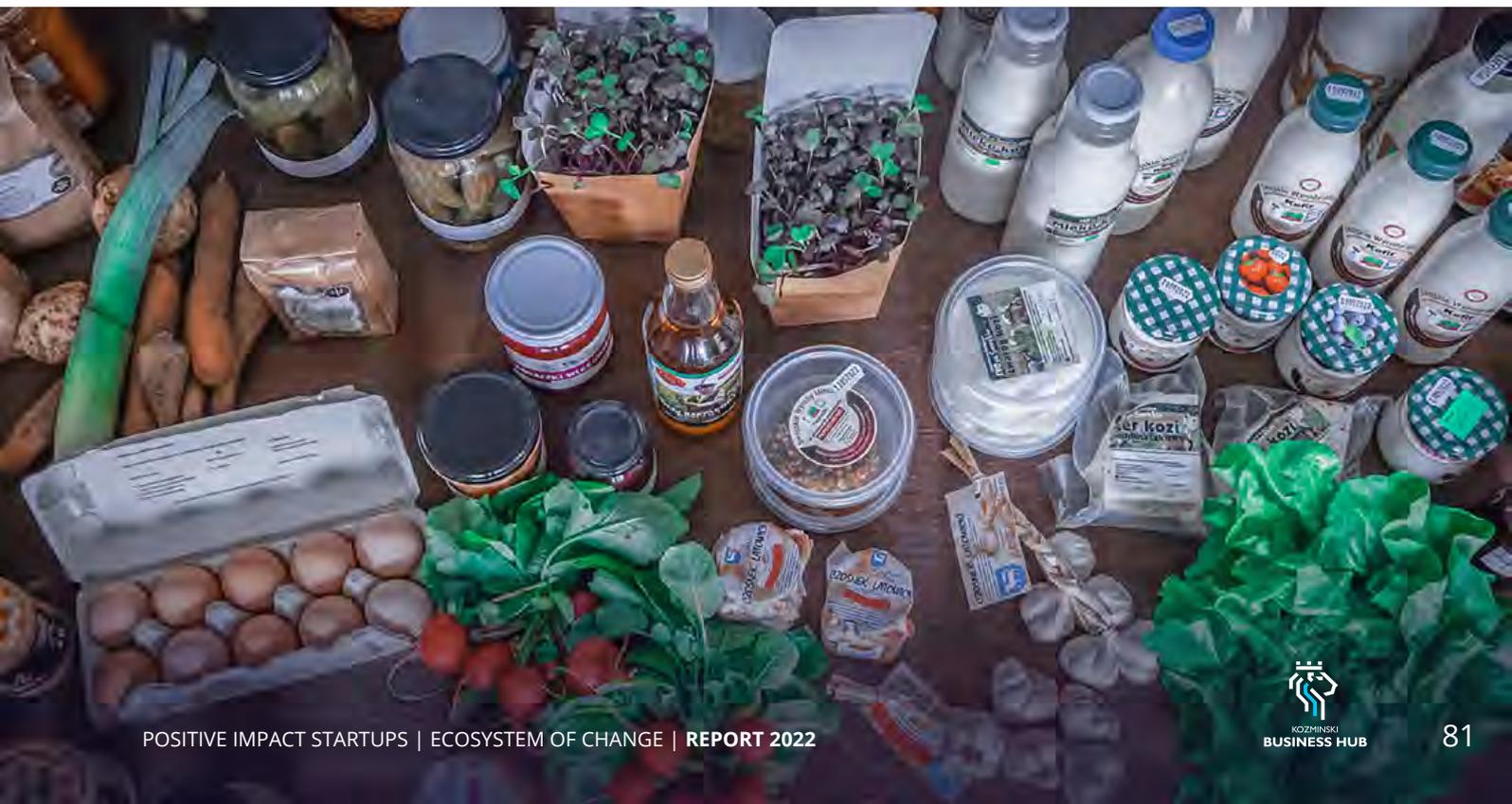
Karmnik (meaning *the feeder*) was created by three friends as a response to the needs of many Varsovians who wish to buy local and seasonal food. Thanks to the online platform, the producers from Mazovia can sell their products in the true zero-waste spirit.

Societal challenge

One of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic are new trends related to food – specifically, a sense of social responsibility for ways in which food is being produced and how it ends up on the consumer’s table. People are focused on communication, on knowledge about the origin of food, state of farms, the history of producers... *Humanization* of food shopping has been taking place. Local food produced in consistence with the natural agricultural calendar – that is, the seasonal food – begins to count. For the buyers, the naturalness of a product: traditional methods of its production, limiting to the necessary minimum the chemicals and preservatives used – in opposition to industrial production methods – become more and more important.

Such concepts as the short supply chain, low carbon footprint, clean label, or lossless food management occupy a key place in the social discourse. Not to mention ecology, understood as a way of production, packaging, and delivery of food. Consumer patriotism is increasing, which, with respect to food, means increased interest in

buying directly from farmers and small, artisanal producers, and consequently economically strengthening the Polish farms and these small producers. It is also worth noting that only 16% of food produced in the Mazovia region is delivered to Warsaw metropolis.



Proposed solution

The KARMNIK.ORG platform delivers tasty, natural and healthy food to the city of Warsaw straight from the farmers and small, local producers mainly from eastern Mazovia and the nearby Podlasie region. Most of the 40-odd producers engaged in cooperation were not previously present with their products in the capital city – it was simply economically not profitable. Through the platform, these farmers and producers can now increase sales and recognition of their products and brands – translating into direct economic benefit. On the other hand, Varsovians receive access to a database of proven producers and their quality products with verified origin and method of production.

The food they offer is **seasonal**: you cannot find tomatoes in winter – as well as **local**: there are no bananas, even those grown most responsibly, because many exotic products can be replaced with their *familiar* equivalents; for example, lemon

can be substituted by quince. New products are introduced carefully, checked and tested. As the owners admit, this is the most pleasant part of the Karmnik action.

Orders are carried out in the zero-waste model – only the products ordered by the customers in the store are then being ordered from the producers. It is possible to have the ordered products delivered home or collect them at one of several pickup points in Warsaw. The purchases are packed in paper bags and, upon request, can be repacked from transport boxes into the customer's own bags. Glass packaging and egg carton containers are also collected.

The established socio-economic mini-holding consists – besides Karmnik – of the Węgrów-Miasto-Wieś (or *Węgrów-City-Village*) Foundation and the *Czarny Bez* (or *Black Elderberry*) social cooperative producing preserves and ready meals. These three entities are united by the Value System of Karmnik.



Operating model

The company delivers local, seasonal, tasty and healthy food to Warsaw, acting in the spirit of practical ecology and inspiring changes in eating habits. The offer includes high quality products, preserves and seasonal dishes of documented origin: coming mainly from eastern Mazovia and western Podlasie regions and the surrounding areas. The principles of zero waste, low carbon footprint and short supply chain are implemented.

The e-grocery market is an e-commerce segment with very good development prospects. In addition to deliveries to individual customers and B2B (stores), catering services based on local products from suppliers are also being offered.

Most of the ready meals, preserves, tarts, cakes and catering dishes are made in the kitchen run by the social cooperative *Czarny Bez* in Węgrów. Its owners created 5 jobs, hiring the unemployed people. Currently, the cooperative also employs female refugees from Ukraine and carries out – at the request of the Marshal of the Mazowieckie Voivodeship – a project to prepare meals for a large group of refugees.



Social impact

Karmnik cares about fair earnings of its contractors – it is more willing to expand the offer of products from the already cooperating producers thereby building their turnover, rather than add a new supplier. Through social media, as well as the store karmnik.org itself, education activities are conducted, with recipes for seasonal dishes and zero waste recipes made available.

All entities operate based on the same principles but implementing them in slightly different ways: The *Czarny Bez* social cooperative prepares food based on seasonal and local ingredients, while the Węgrów-Miasto-Wieś Foundation conducts

ecological actions such as sewing and selling food bags sewn from used window curtains (*New sewing of old curtains*) and runs a programme of occupational activation of women from rural areas.

Plans for the future

So far, the company has grown organically, almost without any marketing expenditures. The current development plan assumes obtaining some financing as part of a round of equity crowdfunding, which will be conducted together with the **Emiteo** platform. Crowdfunding will allow for a much faster development and implementation of more ambitious intentions. What's more, the community-based form of such financing fits perfectly into how the business itself is being conducted.



The frequency of deliveries will be increased and marketing activities intensified in order to increase the group of customers and the average value of the basket. Also, the logistics facilities will be developed. The expansion of logistics and the commencement of B2B commercial activities on a larger scale will gradually increase the number of customers and stores with which they cooperate.

It is also planned to open stationary shops (called Karmniki – *the feeders*) in Warsaw, which will simultaneously serve as points for collecting online orders and for on-site selling of products offered by the social cooperative *Czarny Bez*. Over time, they will be enriched with bistros with ready-made dishes based on a short menu of groats and sauces.



Many customers care not only about healthy food for themselves and their families, but also for their pets – which is why a pet food production line will be created. Thanks to the use of returnable glass packaging and suppliers’ products (meat, inferior looking vegetables, groats with a shorter shelf life, etc.), the pet food will not only be healthy but also offered in the spirit of zero waste.

„Did you know that only a small percentage of food produced in Mazovia goes to Warsaw? If this is combined with the information that the largest number of farms in Poland are in the Mazowieckie Voivodship, it is hard not to sense the absurdity. Nowadays, common sense and EU strategies and programmes require city dwellers to use food from the surrounding areas. Genuine locality is the foremost Karmnik’s rule.”

Karmnik

General information

Name	KARMNIK
Legal status	general partnership
Year of registration	2020
Industry	Food
Name of founder(s)	Katarzyna Kolanowska, Magda Karpińska, Anna Gaik
Website	karmnik.org
Contact	karmnik@karmnik.org +48 502 555 503
Social media	facebook.com/karmnik.org instagram.com/karmnik



Ministerstwo Dobrego Mydła

Marta Grzywaczyk talks to the founders
Ania Bieluń and Ula Ośmiałowska

Ministerstwo Dobrego Mydła (or the *Ministry of Good Soap*) is a family company founded 9 years ago by two sisters from Kamień Pomorski, Ania and Ula, who are one of the precursors of natural cosmetics in Poland. The idea for the company was born out of need: both women already 10 years ago understood how important is the good composition and origin of ingredients, and it was difficult for them to find products that would meet these requirements.

It was then Ania who, in her waist-long dreadlocks, walked around the fairs in search for raw and natural materials. Until now this is remembered by her colleagues from the industry, for whom it was an exotic sensation at the time. Nowadays, the same people have entire catalogues full of natural products and would certainly *give Ania back her merit*. The sisters dreamed of escaping the scheme of working for someone else, with accompanying lack of agency and with focusing on other things than their own values – into a world without deadlines, negative impact on the environment, or imperative to constantly grow and chase targets. In the following interview, we ask what the positive impact means to them, what drives them in making decisions, and how they translate all this into their business.



What does responsible business mean to you?
Is positive impact on the world part
of your mission?

Ania: I am quite sceptical by nature and usually look at things from many sides, also having a high sensitivity to the abuse of eco or CSR concepts. Our dream and goal was to make a living in the most ethical way possible, while not forgetting that business is still... about business. I'm not sure if a business can in any possible aspect be completely ethical or ecological – it seems to me that this is impossible. But what we try to do every day is to run our business as best we can in a sustainable way.



From the very beginning we wanted to produce cosmetics while minimizing waste and losses, being aware that, on our way, there will be things that will verify our dreams. As the producer, however, we must consider that the legislator, the customer, safety requirements etc. make it necessary for us to operate in a legal framework that cannot be skipped. For example, we used to have sachets to pack glass bottles, and it seemed to us that a sachet used less paper than a cardboard box.

It turned out that because the sachets are not uniform material-wise and are made from paper and plastic foil, they are not recyclable even though there is less of this paper than in a cardboard box. After this verification, we are already starting to use regular cardboard boxes, which saves 15 kg of virtually non-recyclable waste per year. The weight of this carton is greater, but because it is made from corn that is biodegradable, it is fully recyclable. It's a story about the fact that apparently ecological or responsible solutions may, in reality, not be such at all.



We can also see that the whole surroundings is growing up to respond in some way to emerging needs – there are some materials which 10 years ago in Poland were not recycled at all or recycled poorly, while today it is being done very effectively. For example, the Scandinavian market is moving away from the use of glass in favour of recycled plastic (PCR). Therefore, we feel that this corporate responsibility is in fact constant work and mindfulness so that we can orient ourselves in the changing environment, continuously adapt to it and make the right decisions.



It sounds like a real challenge to be up to date not only with all the regulations, but also with technological novelties. Where do you get all the needed information? Are you using someone else's help?

Ula: There are several sources of knowledge. We learn a lot on our own by reading, participating in webinars, immersing ourselves in news from the world treating about environmental protection - this is something on which we constantly keep our eyes. We also belong to the Polish Association of the Cosmetic Industry, from which we receive the entire legislation into which we can then delve. We also have Paula: a person in our company dedicated to documentation, dealing not only with ecological issues but also with the so-called *New Deal* and related national legislation, including all relevant cruelty-free issues. For example, Paula pays attention to whether something that is described as cruelty-free truly is cruelty-free based on relevant documents.





You write on the website that in your plan for success is based, among other things, on good raw materials. What are good raw materials? Where do you get them from and how do you verify if they're indeed good?

Ula: Before we implement anything and decide on a particular raw material, we *scan* it in all ways - we collect documentation, perform tests in the laboratory, check the origin. We collect raw materials from all over the world when it is not available locally, such as the coconut oil. Otherwise, we would not be able to create many products and respond to the needs of our customers. Recently, we have been looking for upcycled materials, such as emulsifiers made from lemon peels. In this way, what would otherwise be waste can be re-used.

Ania: For us, a manufacturer of cosmetics, any arrangements start with a package of documents that are required by the Safety Assessor. This is a person with a chemical or medical background responsible for preparing documents required for the introduction of each individual product on the European market. While presenting the new recipe to the Safety Assessor, we must attach all documentation that accurately shows the chemical composition of the raw material. Without it, we cannot start production. The next step is to verify whether the raw material comes from eco-farming or is organic, fair trade. We consider all these aspects in terms of individual products. We are for example aware that, when producing a cheaper series, we will not use organic raw material because it is simply too expensive.



Another important issue are ecological farms which cannot afford certificates. In this case, after our verification that the raw material they provide is natural, we go on to undertake this cooperation, thereby supporting smaller enterprises. The only thing we do is try to put pressure on the suppliers to prove that their raw materials are grown responsibly if they do not have the certificates. By the way, we also do not have many of the paid certificates confirming, for example, the organic nature of our products.





What determines which specific certificate you are applying for? We know that there are some that you would easily get, and yet you give up.

Ania: These are business decisions. There are certificates that are important to us, such as vegetarian or vegan, as this is what we primarily wanted to communicate to our recipients. On the other hand, certificates such as Ecocert or COSOS require large budgets which we prefer to rather allocate to new implementations. In addition, we have products that are 98% natural, but we combine them with perfumery compositions that would automatically be excluded by Ecocert. We treat these compositions as art and do not want to get rid of them.

As a responsible manufacturer, we can also show the level of naturalness of a product, or NOI (Natural Origin Index) and, if we are able to calculate it, we may put it on the product label. Interestingly, there are some relative aspects of this classification. For example, many Safety Assessors treat beet or cane sugar as raw materials with NOI of 0 – that is, with zero naturalness – based on the premise that they are not intended for cosmetics. So are the walnut shells.



Ula: That's why often legislation and production must compromise - as in the case of natural ingredients, which are not described as such in all indicators. Legislation has been ultimately shaping up and keeping up, but with a delay, especially that the eco trend is constantly changing.

Ania: What a manufacturer can do is keep their finger on the pulse and avoid greenwashing. That is, make sure that environmentally and socially responsible decisions are taken, but also make the care of the safety and health of both the customer and employees the foundation of all actions. A good example is parabens which have been demonized and are thrown out of most compositions, and in their place other ingredients have been introduced that are considered better, despite the fact that we still know quite little about them. Currently, the practice of *free from* has been prohibited by law for ingredients that have been declared as harmless, but despite the imposed penalties many companies still use such marketing tactics that have unfortunately been based on unjustified intimidation.





Can you describe the organizational culture in your company?

Ula: A common sense prevails in our company. We are quite a small company, employing 30 people on employment contracts, so we try to create a relaxed, friendly atmosphere. At the same time, we do not forget about the rules and principles so that everyone can feel confident and safe performing their roles. For a long time we were looking for people who created our team - committed, wanting to do good things, with a high sense of responsibility. However, what is most important to us is to provide our employees with decent and adequate remuneration. Our salary range is written in the regulations because we care very much about transparency and a sense of justice.

What is in your opinion important and should be remembered when running such a business?



Ula: It is worth remembering that starting and running your own business requires patience. To persevere, you need to be flexible and ready for constant changes – in legislation, technology, bookkeeping - and not be upset about them but rather accept them with humility and an open head. Such businesses have the best chance of surviving in today's world.

Ania: I would like to add that, in my opinion, the best time to start a business is not when you finish your studies and take your first job or start a family, but still during your studies, when your parents can help you, for example by your still living with them. Of course, this means giving up student life, but *the game is worth the candle*. You also have a lot of power for constant learning, new challenges, space to try and room for mistakes.





Finally, for aspiring startups, will you share information about how long it took you to become profitable?

Ania: We set up Ministerstwo with a budget of 40,000 PLN (Polish zloty) in subsidies and with premises rented from our parents. Then, for the first years, we invested practically all profits in the development of the company and only after about five years we could pay ourselves our first salaries comparable to the national average, that is about 3,500 PLN net.





Skrojone

Ethically tailored in Poland

Skrojone (or Tailored) is a brand that designs and produces ethical underwear and reusable menstrual products in Poland. This is a proposal for women who are looking for comfort and convenience in their underwear. The products are certified, safe for health and made from materials free of animal ingredients. The brand's DNA includes education of customers, transparency and maximum reduction of waste.

Societal challenge

Reducing excessive consumption, impulsive and ill-considered purchases and buying low-quality products manufactured unethically. Supporting the movement of body positivity and diversity.

Proposed solution

The brand offers ethically produced clothing. Additionally, tries to educate its customers on social media, through content that communicates what are the consequences of excessive consumption and that it is worth buying sustainable products.

It also presents the good sides of making conscious choices and shows that ethical shopping is not only an environmental benefit, but also a profit from the economic perspective, the best example of which are reusable menstrual products.

This is a large, one-time expense, which, however, pays off after two years of use (compared to the cost of disposable items). With each subsequent year, the purchase becomes even more profitable.

The above example also promotes the idea of *cost per use*. A good quality product will withstand more washes/uses than a cheap low-quality product, so its cost per single use will be correspondingly lower.

Operating model

The brand operates according to the sustainable fashion idea – not under the belief that their products can change the world or save it from climate change, but under the belief that everyday consumer choices matter.

Skrojone reveals the costs of its business at every stage – from the price of the material, sewing, to taxes and the profit margin that allows to develop the brand. In the description of each product on its page there is a pie chart of the costs that make up the final price that appears on the tag. In this

way, the brand reveals what are the production costs in Poland and makes the recipients aware that in fact it is the chain prices of *fast fashion* that are not normal, not the prices of smaller brands producing in country.

The foundation of the activity is attention to the fabrics from which the underwear is sewn and their impact on the environment – both at the stage of production and later, when used by the customers. Tailored products are made of organic cotton with GOTS certificate, as well as Tencel™ Modal and Econyl, also confirmed by certificates.

Organic cotton with GOTS certification consumes 5 times less water during growth than conventional cotton. Also, the farmers who grow it work in a safe and non-toxic environment and receive fair remuneration. The certificate ensures that the fabric is not toxic – which is especially important in the case of underwear, because there is nothing more personal and closer to the body than underwear.

TENCEL™ Modal fibres are made from beech wood from sustainably managed forests in Austria and neighbouring countries. The production process takes place in a closed loop, thanks to which the environmental impact is minimal and is characterized by high rates of recovery of ingredients.

The brand's products are durable – thanks to the materials used, but also the quality of sewing. The brand also produces recycled products – the first swimwear collection was created from synthetic knitwear, which consists of 78% recycled polyamide (ECONYL®). The knitwear used in production is GRS certified – the certification process includes controlling the complete chain of origin of the product at every stage, from obtaining and processing the raw material, as well as verification of the content of recycled fibres in the final product.

Skrojone creates its products in small sewing facilities in Poland and maintains 100% control over the quality of sewing. The products use seams that are more expensive to make but more durable. The absorbent layer consists of bamboo fabric and is 100% natural. The only synthetic fabric used in menstrual products is PUL – a waterproof layer without which the products would not fulfil their function.

Social impact

Durable menstrual products primarily mean less waste (during her whole life, a menstruating person consumes an average of 130 kg of waste that cannot be recycled), but they also have a positive effect on women's health. Menstrual panties are sewn from organic materials of natural origin, which reduces the risk of infection. Conventional disposable menstrual products can be bleached with chlorine and contain toxins – their composition is not indicated on the package and is not subject to strict control. A disposable sanitary tissue can contain up to 90% of plastic, which also promotes the multiplication of bacteria.

Ordinary organic underwear made of materials of natural origin also minimizes the risk of infection. Also, the production of sustainable fabrics utilises the available raw materials to a minimum and respectfully, which also contributes to the improvement of the quality of life of society, if we take into account access to green areas, the absence of soil and air pollution (biodegradable fertilizers such as manure and garlic are used in organic materials during cotton growth), or access to decently paid work (adhering to ILO standards for GOTS certification).

The brand's DNA also includes education about responsible consumption – on social media it puts emphasis on education, not just the presentation of products. There is content about fast fashion, materials and environmental costs that this fashion incurs. The brand promotes slogans *buy panties if you really need them or it is better to buy one pair of high-quality panties than 5 pairs that will fall apart on the third wash.*

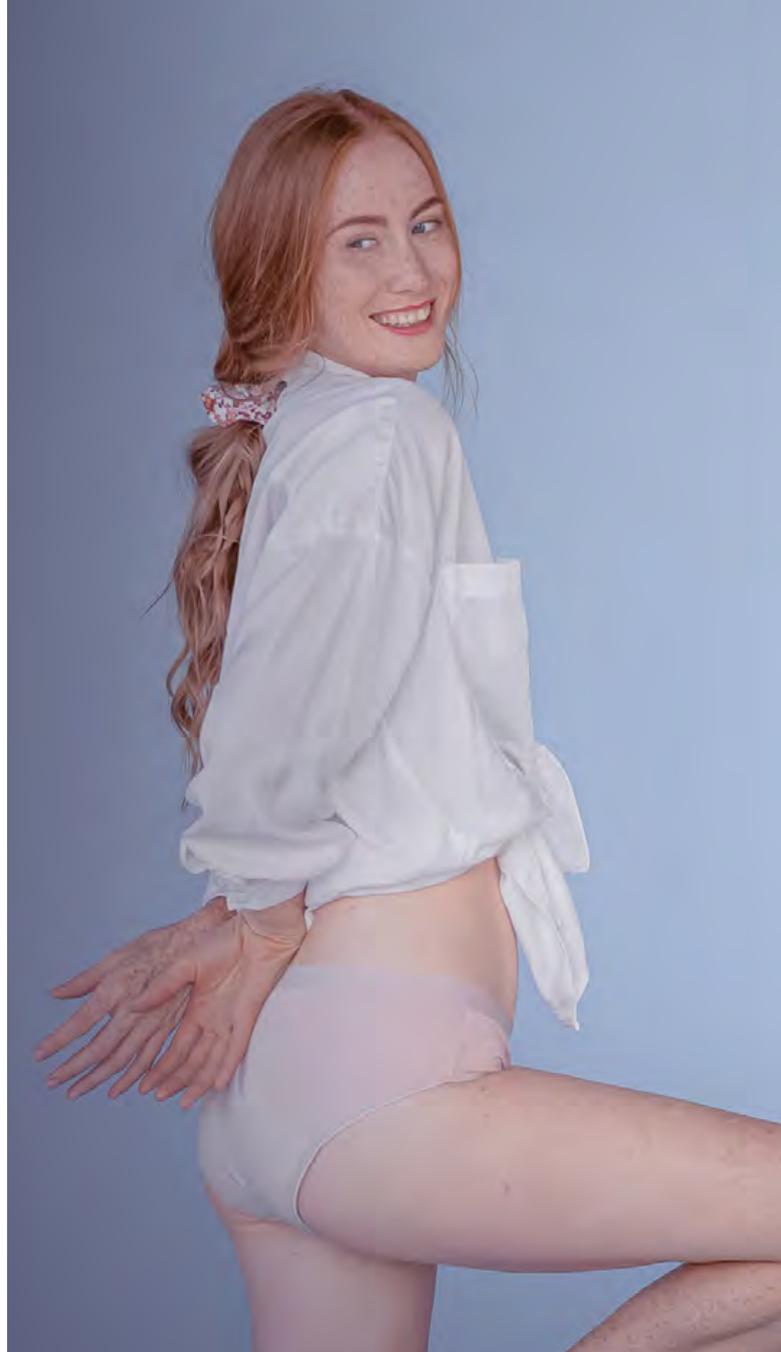
Plans for the future

Finding another place to sew in Poland – currently it is difficult to find a place for high quality sewing. Establishing new cooperation linkages with manufacturers of certified fabrics - Polish or European.



Just think about it: after all, there is nothing more personal than the clothes you put on your skin, especially if you think about underwear. Our panties may not change the world or protect it from climate change, but we truly believe that everyday consumer choices matter and that together we can play a small in creating a better world. We are not yet another brand developing according to the “business as usual” scenario, that’s for sure.

[Skrojone brand manifesto]



General information

Name	Skrojone Justyna Śmigasiewicz, Agata Bokiej civil partnership
Legal status	civil law partnership
Year of registration	2020
Industry	responsible fashion, reusable menstruation products
Name of founder(s)	Agata Bokiej, Justyna Śmigasiewicz
Website	skrojone.pl
Contact	kontakt@skrojone.pl +48 507 504 031
Social media	facebook.com/skrojone instagram.com/skrojone

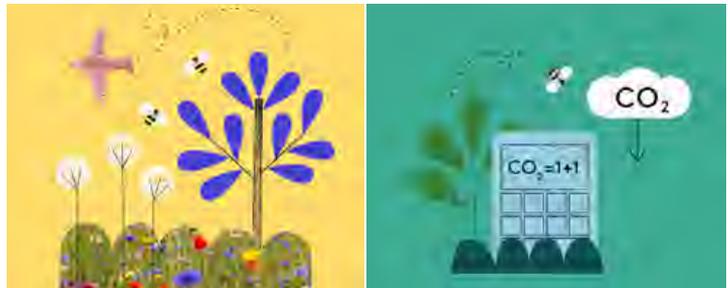


TerGo - what to do with greenhouse gas emissions

**Klementyna Sęga talks to Ewelina Sasin,
TerGo co-founder**

Carbon footprint reduction and zero emissions have recently become a prevalent, if not fashionable, topic. We hear everywhere that we need to measure, report, reduce, offset... Is measuring greenhouse gas emissions really that important, and how do you go about it? Especially if we do not have the ability of large corporations that report their environmental footprint with the help of a team of experts? TerGo seems to be responding to many of the problems we have today by measuring CO₂ emissions – both as companies and individuals who have the good of the planet at heart.

Ewelina, what is TerGo?



Ewelina Sasin: TerGo is a startup operating at the intersection of IT and ecology. We want to stop climate change by engaging individuals and businesses with the achievements of information technology. The spectrum of our activities is quite broad, and in a nutshell: we focus on innovative ways to reduce CO₂ emissions and offset the carbon footprint.

We respond to environmental challenges while also trying to fulfil the social mission faced by the business. We have set ourselves the goal of fulfilling as many of the points in the UN Sustainable Development Goals list as possible.



What was your path to TerGo?
This startup is not your first positive impact business.
Where did you start your sustainability efforts?

ES: For 16 years, I have been developing the Ewesa marketing agency, focusing on the consumer experience of brands and products. Increasingly, we can expand the list of priorities of Ewesa's customers with ecological goals, sustainable development, social responsibility or promotion of the circular economy. We strive to reduce the negative environmental impact of the event industry by supporting the organization of carbon-neutral events.

With TerGo, we recently won the MP Power Awards in the Sustainable Development of the Event Industry category. This award is a significant distinction, which I am pleased about due to my experience in events, now expanded with knowledge about ecology.

What environmental and social challenges does your startup address?



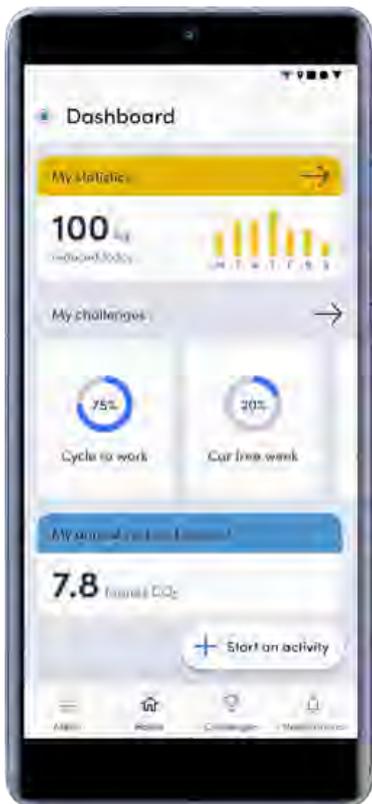
ES: First, we address Sustainable Development Goal no. 13: Climate action, but we don't want to stop there. Our activity in reducing and offsetting carbon dioxide emissions into the atmosphere is based on two pillars: traditional (reductions and offsets from our project) and innovative (application).

Emissions have no limits. Therefore, following the principles of climate justice, developed countries should invest in regions that are the most affected by climate change. Consequently, we launched our agroforestry project.



We have our land. We employ farmers and work directly with them. Additionally, our experts have developed a detailed planting plan that will allow us to generate about a million VERs (i.e. Verified Emissions Reduction carbon offsets used to compensate for those CO2 emissions that an entity cannot avoid). This amount corresponds to eliminating about one million tonnes of greenhouse gases from the atmosphere. The project has not only an environmental dimension: we also support the local community by building wells and donating our crops to the locals.

In addition, thanks to cooperation with the UNEP/GRID-Warsaw Centre, we support biodiversity, Polish ecosystems, and peat bogs. And here is an interesting fact: peat bogs occupy only 3% of the surface of the continents and absorb two times more carbon dioxide than all forests on Earth!



Who do you direct your business to – individual users or business?

ES: Only by joining forces we can save the planet. Our main goal was to create a platform where business and individual users would cooperate with a common goal: reducing the carbon footprint.

Our most significant innovation is the TERbit application. Thanks to it, it is not trees, solar panels or windmills but people who generate voluntary emission reduction units. We called them TERs (True Emissions Reduction).

For example: by riding a bicycle instead of a car over a distance of 10 km, we will save 2.64 kg CO2. The app verifies data about how we move and records our CO2 reductions by awarding TERs. Thanks to our platform, another entity can offset their carbon footprint with this user's reduction.

Another example: the company's team reduces GHGs, and the company buys reductions (accumulated TERs) from the team, thereby balancing those emissions it cannot avoid by paying out employee benefits.

We know that reduction is the essence. We offset only those emissions that could not be avoided by introducing eco solutions.

Measure – reduce – offset: these are three steps to carbon neutrality. We always stipulate that offsetting should be the final step applied only to non-avoidable or historical emissions.



The application is a validator and a huge incentive to be eco. It will boost our ecological choices and highlight our positive impact on the environment. Previously, measuring the carbon footprint in real time was simply impossible.

The application utilizes innovative gamification mechanisms. We all know that driving a car does not support global climate efforts. However, we need encouragement or hint to choose a tram, bike or walk at least sometimes – the TERbit application motivates you to do this innovatively.

What's more, we realize that few people know what a carbon footprint, carbon balance or CO2 reduction is. That is why TERbit educates in a modern way, showing an actual reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.

In addition to the application, carbon footprint calculators for individuals, flights, or events are already available on our website tergo.io. After calculation, you can offset the unavoidable emissions with our tailor-made compensation packages for emissions from our agroforestry project.

How exactly will TERbit help us reduce our carbon footprint?



ES: At the beginning, the beta version will mainly include logistics choices. We are already talking with cities and doing our best to add as many options for using green transport as possible. Initially, monitoring CO2 reductions resulting from cycling, walking or riding a scooter will be possible. Carpoolers will also be able to benefit from reducing CO2.

In later versions of the application, we plan to add the option of gaining TERs for taking a bus, tram or train, as well as for ecological purchases, e.g. buying carbon neutral products. Such products are still uncommon on store shelves. But if you look closely, it turns out that more and more manufacturers are offsetting their carbon footprint – one example is Wasa bread.



As TerGo, we have already offset the carbon footprint of, among others, the manufacturer of chocolates from the USA, children's products Napoo or Facemodeling PRO kinesiotapes. We are in the process of implementing a reduction and offsetting strategy for other manufacturers. Soon, more products with the TerGo Carbon Neutral Certified label will appear on the market.



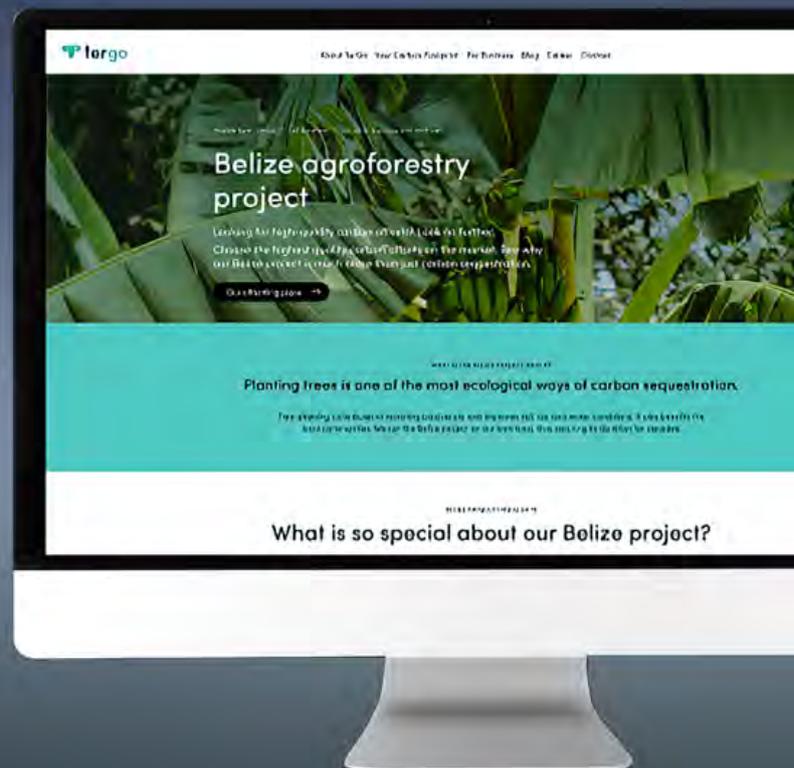
In the description of your mission, one can find the slogan *it pays to go green*. What does it mean that it pays to switch to the green side and live more ecologically?

ES: We know that an ecological lifestyle is rewarding, although sometimes it doesn't come easily. Following the green path requires stubbornness and believing in these actions. We try to live ecologically, but I realize that we often need encouragement or an explanation of why one choice is better than the other.

The application is just such an incentive – we motivate by the fact that it is *worth being eco* with us. We are revolutionizing the CO2 reduction market, making it accessible to everyone. The TERbit application is the first tool to measure real-time carbon footprint reduction. We are turning the tables – now it is companies (who want to reduce their CO2 footprint) that reward their customers who reduce CO2 daily. TERbit allows you to create an entirely new relationship between customers and companies.

What are your plans for the development of the startup? What awaits the team working on TerGo in the near and distant future?

ES: First of all, we hope to expand our team – although 25 people are already working on the application and other solutions, we are constantly developing the team. We refine the application and put most of our energy into it. Creating it requires a lot of work from CO2 emission specialists, lawyers, developers, designers, UX/UI department... An action that will take the user only a few seconds results from thousands of hours of work from the entire team.



Developing an innovative solution requires treading many paths that no one has ever walked before. On the other hand, many wrong steps have been taken while standing still, which is why we continue our efforts to blaze new trails.

At the same time, we work with our clients by providing carbon labelling services, i.e. we label products with information about their carbon footprint. Consumers are increasingly choosing products with a better influence on the environment. Our awareness is growing; we do not want to buy products that harm the environment.

At TerGo, we neutralize the carbon footprint of products and services and provide solutions for e-commerce, such as neutralizing the carbon footprint of online orders. We have developed an event calculator to support event organizers with an easy tool to measure and offset their emissions. TERbit application will be a cherry on top of many solutions we have already refined. It will support business customers from almost every sector.

I can also reveal that we are developing our own solution for the transparent carbon offset market. This is a massive project in which we hope to revolutionize the existing relations and curb all greenwashing practices. Today, we cannot check how many green activities a given company has implemented – thanks to our solution, we hope this will change. It is a long topic for a separate conversation. I can only say that we are working on green solutions based on blockchain technology.



We start (and win!) in many competitions. We show up at fairs, in May at the CSR fair in Warsaw and the convention devoted to green solutions for blockchain technology in Davos, Switzerland. We already know that the Belize project is just the beginning. We plan to buy land or establish partnerships in Poland and develop further sequestration projects. We are an international team open to new cooperation!

In the long term, I hope that TerGo will contribute to stopping climate change by positively motivating individuals and businesses to reduce their carbon footprint. Put simply: we want to save the world!

www

tergo.io

LinkedIn

linkedin.com/company/tergoW

FB

facebook.com/TerGo.Polska

IG

instagram.com/tergo_io



Part II

Positive Impact Startups

Good examples | Past Winners



Positive Impact Startups



WINNERS POSITIVE IMPACT STARTUPS 2021

- All Hands Agency allhands.agency
- Alternation the-alternation.com
- Associated.apps associatedapps.com
- Bazar Miejski bazarmiejski.com
- Circular Scrap circularscrap.com
- Cool Beans coolbeans.com.pl
- CoopTech Hub hub.plz.pl
- Dotlenieni dotlenieni.org
- eKodama ekodama.pl
- Heca atoheca.pl
- Microbe+ microbe-plus.com/pl
- Patronite patronite.pl
- Plan Be Eco planbe.eco
- Pożycz To pozycz.to
- Serce Miasta sercemiesta.waw.pl
- Słuszna Strawa slusznastrawa.org
- Sun Roof sunroof.se
- Take!Cup takecup.pl
- Tech To The Rescue techtotherescue.org
- Wojna warzyw wojnawarzyw.pl
- Zodzysq zodzysq.pl

Positive Impact Startups



WINNERS IN THE POSITIVE IMPACT SCALEUPS CATEGORY 2020

- Elementy elementywear.com
- HiProMine hipromine.com
- SiDLY Care sidly-care.eu
- Slowhop slowhop.com
- Syntoil syntoil.pl
- Warsaw Genomics warsawgenomics.pl

WINNERS IN THE POSITIVE IMPACT STARTUPS CATEGORY 2020

- BACtrem bactrem.pl
- Barents barents.pl
- Cosmetomat cosmetomat.pl
- Krakowska Elektrownia Społeczna elektrowniaspoleczna.pl
- Kuchnia Konflikty kuchniakonfliktu
- MakeGrowLab makegrowlab.com
- Mamo Pracuj mamopracuj.pl
- Planet Heroes planetheroes.pl
- Polishgreens listnycud.pl
- Pora na Pola poranapola.pl
- TupTupTup tuptuptup.org.pl
- Ubrania do oddania ubraniadooddania.pl
- Vege Smak vegesmak.pl
- Your Kaya yourkaya.com

Positive Impact Startups



2019

WINNERS POSITIVE IMPACT STARTUPS 2019

- Airror airror.pl
- Bezmięśny Mięśny bezmiesnymiesny.pl
- Bio2materials bio2materials.com
- Cantino cantino.pl
- EcoBean ecobean.pl
- Foodsi foodsi.pl
- Good Wood Poland goodwoodpoland.pl
- Jan Barba janbarba.com
- Mydlarnia Cztery Szpaki 4szpaki.pl
- Nieteraz nieraz.pl
- Offee offee.pl
- RoślinnieJemy roslinniejemy.org
- Solace Housing solace.house
- Some Wear Else swelse
- Wege Siostry wegesiostry.pl
- Woskowijki by Malu woskowijki.pl



Positive Impact Startups



2018

WINNERS POSITIVE IMPACT STARTUPS 2018

- Biblioteka Ubrań bibliotekaubran.pl
- Bioseco bioseco.com
- Deaf Respect deafrespect.com
- DEKOEKO ekoeko.com
- DrOmnibus dromnibus.com
- Earth-Heart earth-heart.pl
- Gerere gerere.com
- HandyShower handyshower.pl
- Holoroad holoroad.eu
- inijOB inijob.com
- KOKOworld kokoworld.pl
- Kosmos dla dziewczynek kosmosdladziewczynek.pl
- Leżę i Pracuję lezeipracuje.pl
- LokalnyRolnik lokalnyrolnik.pl
- Łąka laka.org.pl
- MAMA Pożyczka mamapozyczka.pl
- Manumania manumania.org
- Nepalove nepalove.com
- Panato panato.org
- Planeta Kreatorów Planeta-kreatorow
- Polska Witalna polskawitalna.pl
- Pszczelarium sklep.pszczelarium.pl
- REC.ON rec-on.eu
- Social Wolves Socialwolves
- Use Bike rentabike.usebike.pl
- Vegi vegi.eu
- Wióry lecą wioryleca.pl
- WoshWosh woshwosh.pl
- Życie jest fajne KlubokawiarniaZycieJestFajne

