Akademia WSB

WSB University

SDG 10
Tracker Report

2025

10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES



Reduced Inequalities: WSB University's SDG 10 Report 2025

WSB University (Akademia WSB), Dąbrowa Górnicza · Reporting year 2025

Executive summary

Reduced inequalities is the goal on which WSB University performs best in international assessments. The University serves a diverse community: students from dozens of countries, a large cohort from Ukraine, working adults, people with disabilities, children and older learners. Its work on SDG 10 combines free support services, anti-discrimination structures, intercultural programmes and projects that address inequality between regions.

Key results for the reporting year:

- **External assessment:** the THE Impact Rankings 2025 placed WSBU in the global top 300 for SDG 10. In the THE Sustainability Impact Ratings 2026 the University ranked 88th worldwide for this goal, its strongest result of all SDGs.
- **Internationalization:** Perspektywy 2025 ranked WSBU first among all Polish universities for internationalization, ahead of every public university.
- **Accessibility:** the project "Development, Education, Learning Without Barriers" (PLN 8.3 million, 2025–2028) began building a permanent accessibility model across eight areas. All services of the Centre for People with Special Needs remain free of charge.
- **Recognition:** the Accessibility Gala, held with the City of Dąbrowa Górnicza during the University's thirtieth anniversary, awarded "Accessibility Statues" to people who advance accessibility in public life.
- **Refugee education:** degree programmes taught in Ukrainian continued, and the SHORE project involved 191 children and young people from Ukraine under temporary protection.
- **Intergenerational inclusion:** the European Solidarity Corps project EKSPonad, launched in July 2025, supports AWeSomeBand, a band of children, students, older people and people with disabilities.

Context

SDG 10 aims to reduce inequality within and among countries. Its targets of particular relevance to universities are:

- the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic status (10.2);
- equal opportunity and the elimination of discriminatory laws, policies and practices (10.3);
- the facilitation of orderly and responsible migration, including through well-managed policies (10.7).

The Times Higher Education Impact Rankings assess universities through the proportion of students from under-represented groups and from developing countries, the proportion of staff and students with disabilities, and policies on non-discrimination, accessibility and anti-harassment.

SDG 10 is not among the seven priority goals named in WSBU's Sustainable Development Strategy to 2030, although the University's results in this area are its strongest. The Strategy addresses the

substance of SDG 10 through its SDG 4 commitment to equal access to education for people in vulnerable situations, including persons with disabilities. In practice the commitment is implemented through the Diversity Policy, the Gender Equality Plan, the anti-discrimination framework and a portfolio of EU-funded projects.

The University's own context makes this work necessary. WSBU teaches across ten campuses in a post-industrial region, admits a large international and Ukrainian student body, and serves learners from children to people in their eighties.

External assessment



In the THE Impact Rankings 2025 WSBU was placed in the global top 300 for SDG 10, and the ranking identified reduced inequalities as one of the University's standout goals. The 2026 edition of the ratings, which reflects the activity described in this report, placed WSBU 88th worldwide for SDG 10 among 1,646 institutions. The University was ranked joint second in Poland in the overall rating.

The result rests on measures documented in the sections below: free accessibility services, admission and support policies for students from under-represented groups and from outside the European Union, anti-discrimination structures and intercultural programmes.

Accessibility and students with special needs

Centre for People with Special Needs

All services of the Centre for People with Special Needs (COSP) are provided free of charge. They include:

- individual adjustment of examination and assessment conditions;
- teaching materials in accessible formats;
- the assistance of an academic support person;
- psychological crisis support, Social Skills Training and specialist support for learning difficulties.

In January 2025 the former Office for Persons with Disabilities was transformed into COSP, and its remit was extended beyond students to staff, doctoral candidates, participants in postgraduate programmes and learners of the Children's and Third Age Universities.

Learning Without Barriers

The project "Development, Education, Learning Without Barriers" (European Funds for Social Development, PLN 8.3 million, 2025–2028) is building a permanent accessibility model for the whole University. It covers eight areas, among them:

- **Architectural accessibility:** adaptation of buildings and teaching spaces.
- **Digital accessibility:** accessible websites, learning platforms and electronic resources.
- **Information and communication:** alternative forms of contact and information.
- **Technology:** assistive equipment and software.
- **Organisation and procedures:** institutional rules that embed accessibility in daily practice.
- **Training:** development of staff competences in working with people with special needs.

The project also funds research and educational activity on accessibility, and support for students, staff and doctoral candidates.

Recognition: the Accessibility Gala

As part of its thirtieth anniversary, WSBU held an Accessibility Gala at the Zagłębie Palace of Culture together with the City of Dąbrowa Górnicza. The event brought together University leaders, city officials, non-governmental organizations and the academic community. "Accessibility Statues" were awarded to people who have advanced accessibility in public life, among them the board of the Third Age University and the University's accessibility specialist. The Rector framed accessibility as a foundation of the institution rather than an additional service.

Disability in research and public debate

- **Conference:** the 4th interdisciplinary conference "Quality of life conditioned by disability" took place on 5 December 2025. It combined academic sessions with preventive health examinations and consultations.
- **Assistive technology:** within EduLider, a WSBU team developed solutions that improve the mobility of people with special needs.
- **Accessible tourism and safety:** the Erasmus+ project RESCUER developed virtual-reality training that prepares older people and people with disabilities for safe hiking in mountain areas. It was tested with participants in Slovakia in April and July 2025.

International students and migrants

The most international university in Poland

Perspektywy 2025 ranked WSBU first among all Polish universities for internationalization, ahead of every public university. The University teaches in Polish, English and Ukrainian, and its international community includes students from Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America.

Education for students affected by the war in Ukraine

WSBU offers degree programmes taught in Ukrainian, which allow students displaced by the war to obtain a recognized European qualification in their own language. On 12 July 2025 the University held a graduation ceremony in Kraków for graduates of first- and second-cycle programmes taught in English and Ukrainian.

Support for young people affected by the war extends beyond degree programmes:

- **SHORE** (Horizon Europe): in the 2025/26 academic year the project's educational activities involved 191 children and young people from Ukraine under temporary protection.
- **mentUwell** (Erasmus+, EUR 400,000, completed December 2025): the project produced a methodology and toolkit for educators, non-governmental organizations and volunteers working with young war migrants, published in eight languages.
- **BIG-U** (Erasmus+ CBHE, from November 2025): the project supports the internationalization of three Ukrainian universities, so that students can continue their education in their own country.

Support for international students

The International Office provides guidance on admission, legalization of stay and settling in Poland. Student organizations AIESEC and the Erasmus Student Network cooperate with the University in welcoming and integrating international students. International volunteers aged 18 to 30 come to WSBU through the European Solidarity Corps project "United in Action", and work in the Social Innovation Hub, the Academic Career Office, the library and the Children's and Third Age Universities.

Access to education in partner countries

WSBU's capacity-building projects widen access to quality higher education beyond Europe:

- **AGILE** (from November 2025) develops green, digital and business competences at universities in Kenya, Albania and Kosovo, and builds a shared e-learning ecosystem with open educational resources.
- **DUALKO** introduces dual education in ICT in Albania and Kosovo.
- **SPARK-COIL** built a network of 155 faculty members in the Philippines trained in Collaborative Online International Learning, which gives students international experience without the cost of travel.
- **Namibia University of Science and Technology:** in the 2025/26 academic year Erasmus+ staff mobility opened cooperation on joint COIL classes and social-innovation marketing.

Reducing regional, social and generational inequality

Access for students in difficult circumstances

The University's support system reduces financial barriers to study:

- social scholarships and scholarships for students with disabilities;
- one-off hardship grants of up to PLN 5,000, available twice per academic year;
- non-repayable tuition support for 30 Nursing and Emergency Medical Services students, funded by the Ministry of Health from the National Recovery Plan.

EduConnect (European Funds for Social Development, PLN 2.5 million, from December 2025) addresses the main cause of drop-out among WSBU students, the difficulty of combining study with work and family responsibilities. It introduces early-warning monitoring, a flexible Hy-Flex teaching model and digital services. The proposal was ranked among the three highest-rated of the 69 universities funded in the national competition.

Young people from smaller towns and post-industrial areas

- **Young women as future leaders:** an Erasmus+ youth project (EUR 120,000, 2024–2026) develops the digital and networking competences of young women from small towns and restructured areas, preparing them for leadership roles.
- **Teachers' digital competences:** research funded by the GZM Metropolitan Science Fund assessed the digital competences of secondary-school teachers in Bytom, Zabrze, Sosnowiec and Świętochłowice, and produced recommendations for training in cities undergoing economic transformation.
- **Access to higher education:** preparatory courses for the matura examination, the Open Academy of Science and partnerships with secondary schools widen access for pupils across the region.

Older people

The Third Age University network, with eleven branches and almost 3,500 learners in 2024/25, counters the social isolation of older people. It operates not only in Dąbrowa Górnicza and Tychy but in small municipalities including Ożarowice, Psary, Rogoźnik and Siemonia. The network received the "Senior-Friendly Place" certificate from the City of Dąbrowa Górnicza, and the University holds a "Senior-Friendly University" certificate from the MANKO Association, publisher of *Głos Seniora*. WSBU's commitments to older people are set out in its Senior Care Policy.

The Erasmus+ project LEuLiv (EUR 42,500, 2024–2027) develops new forms of biographical learning with people over sixty, to be integrated into courses in gerontology, social work and nursing.

Intergenerational inclusion

The European Solidarity Corps project EKSPonad (EUR 9,554, from July 2025) extends the activity of AWeSomeBand, an intergenerational band that brings together children, students, older people and people with disabilities. Music and non-formal education serve as a route into community life for people who might otherwise remain on its margins.

Social policy partnerships

In the 2025/26 academic year WSBU concluded a partnership agreement with the Regional Social Policy Centre of the Silesian Voivodeship, covering joint education, research and student placements. The University is also authorized to provide specialization training in the organization of social assistance, which supports the qualifications of professionals working with people at risk of exclusion.

Anti-discrimination framework

WSBU's protection against discrimination rests on four instruments:

Instrument	Content
Diversity Policy	Establishes an independent Rector's Plenipotentiary for Equality and provides for anonymous reporting of violence, including sexual violence
Anti-Bullying and Anti-Discrimination Policy (Rector's Order No. 61/2017/2018)	Defines prohibited conduct and the procedure for handling reports
Anti-Mobbing and Anti-Discrimination Committee	A standing body that examines reported cases
Gender Equality Plan	Commitments on gender balance in management and recruitment, work-life balance and inclusive language

These are supported by codes of ethics for employees and students, and by a register-based complaints procedure supervised by the Rector. As a signatory of the Magna Charta Universitatum, WSBU also commits to the principles of academic freedom and equal treatment within the academic community.

The University's HR Excellence in Research award commits it to the European Charter for Researchers, including non-discrimination and open, transparent and merit-based recruitment.

Intercultural learning and awareness

Diversity Hub

The Diversity Hub brings Polish and international students together for an eight-month multicultural project, concluding with Cultural Diversity Day. Participants work in mixed teams, which develops intercultural competence through practice rather than instruction.

Diversity and Inclusion in the curriculum

The Erasmus+ Blended Intensive Programme "Diversity & Inclusion" is a five-day international course open to students of all disciplines. It combines online preparation with an intensive on-site week.

Awareness Days

The University's Awareness Days programme marks occasions that address inequality and human rights, among them:

- days devoted to human rights;
- the prevention of modern slavery;
- World Religion Day;
- International Women's Day.

Volunteering for inclusion

Volunteers of the "United in Action" project ran workshops against discrimination and disinformation, and presented their countries of origin, including France, Romania, Egypt, Spain, Colombia and Turkey. Their activities addressed educational, cultural and geographical barriers, and brought international perspectives to children and older learners who would not otherwise encounter them.

Research on inclusion and cohesion

WSBU researchers study inequality between regions and communities:

- **Cross-border cooperation:** within the Visegrad Fund project led by Uzhhorod National University, WSBU examines institutional forms of cooperation that can support Ukrainian border regions on the path to EU membership.
- **Inclusive urban development:** the HEIsCITI project (Erasmus+, completed November 2025) studied universities as drivers of sustainable urban development, including the inclusive engagement of refugees from Laos in border towns.
- **Dialogue on rights:** the 1st Silesian Symposium on Human Rights in Public Service (14 May 2025), organized with the Prison Service, the Silesian Police and the regional office of the Ombudsman, addressed the dignity and rights of people in the care of public institutions.

Continuing activities in 2026

- **Learning Without Barriers:** the project continues building the University's permanent accessibility model until 2028, across all eight areas of accessibility.
- **Retention:** EduConnect enters its first full year, supporting students who combine study with work through flexible learning and early-warning monitoring.
- **Lifelong learning:** in the 2025/26 academic year the Third Age University network grew to 16 branches and about 4,500 learners.
- **Intergenerational projects:** EKSPonad and LEuLiv continue to develop inclusive cultural and educational activity with older people.
- **International access:** AGILE, DUALKO and BIG-U enter their first full year, widening access to quality higher education in Kenya, Albania, Kosovo and Ukraine.
- **Social policy:** cooperation with the Regional Social Policy Centre of the Silesian Voivodeship opens opportunities for joint research and student placements in work with people at risk of exclusion.