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INTRODUCTION

This annual report is published at a time when Israel continues to recover from one of the most challenging periods in its history. Following an extended period of instability and hardship, communities across the country remain in various stages of rebuilding lives, infrastructure, and resilience. As the leading academic institution in northern Israel, the University of Haifa has embraced a central role in supporting this recovery.

Despite these challenges, the University has remained steadfast in its commitment to excellence in research, teaching, and societal engagement. Our commitment to sustainability continues to receive international recognition: in the 2026 Times Higher Education Impact Rankings, the University of Haifa maintained its position among the world's top 101-200 universities and once again ranked as Israel's leading university in advancing the sustainable development goals, with standout performance in SDG 5 (Gender Equality, 54th globally) and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions, 92nd globally).

This year also marks an important milestone in our efforts to understand and measure the broader societal contribution of universities. In our recent article, *Beyond Teaching and Research: Measuring the Societal Impact of Universities*, published in Education Sciences journal. This article introduces a comprehensive framework for assessing universities' contributions to society, moving beyond traditional measures of teaching and research to offer a systematic, evidence-based way of identifying, mapping, and evaluating institutional societal impact.

Alongside this, we continued to promote research and teaching initiatives with direct societal or environmental impact, namely through our Impactful Research Project grant program (five funded projects this year) and our Impactful Education initiative (four winning programs). Additionally, we secured funding to develop three new sustainability projects on campus: (a) a community garden built on sustainable practices (b) a heritage orchard that is also designed to reduce wildfire risk, and (c) a fully accessible therapeutic garden supporting recovery from trauma.

I am especially proud that this report not only highlights our initiatives advancing the SDGs but also reflects our growing commitment to rigorously measuring and strengthening our societal impact. As we look ahead, we remain guided by resilience, innovation, and a deep sense of responsibility to our communities, to the State of Israel, and to a more sustainable future for all.

Prof. Ofer Arazy

Director of Innovation & Sustainability



Younes & Soraya Nazarian Library (Credit: Hilla Klor)