

# 2018

Corporate  
Social  
Responsibility  
Report

# 2018.

**Marked the 10th anniversary of VdA's Pro Bono and CSR programme and the first steps of the Vasco Vieira de Almeida Foundation. It was a year of new challenges and commitments; of consolidating partnerships, elevating knowledge and growing through collaboration. A year of Future.**

# 10

Corporate  
Social  
Responsibility  
Report





# 2018

Corporate  
Social  
Responsibility  
Report

**VdA** VIEIRA DE ALMEIDA

 FUNDAÇÃO  
VASCO VIEIRA  
DE ALMEIDA



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**10 years  
of VdA's Pro Bono  
and Corporate  
Social Responsibility  
Programme:  
Reflections and  
Overview**



# A 10-year journey

In 2018, we celebrated the 10th anniversary of our Pro Bono and Corporate Social Responsibility Programme. Throughout this journey, we have always counted on the dedication and active citizenship of VdA's lawyers and staff, and we can now proudly affirm that our commitment to the community has become an intrinsic part of the Firm's DNA.

VdA's Pro Bono and CSR Programme was initially created to provide pro bono legal services, but it rapidly developed other dimensions to meet the diverse needs of the third sector organisations we collaborate with. In addition to the thousands of hours annually dedicated to pro bono work, we have come to play an increasingly relevant role in the capacity building of organisations with a social mission, by strengthening and empowering them to better fulfil their goals. Corporate volunteering has assumed growing importance and the engagement of non-lawyer staff has made our Programme more inclusive. Furthermore, VdA's Green Project continues its efforts to reduce the negative environmental impact of the Firm's activities, by monitoring our carbon footprint on an annual basis and by integrating environmental concerns in our KPIs.

During the past 10 years, hundreds of our lawyers and staff devoted more than 45,000 hours to pro bono legal services, capacity building and volunteering, having provided assistance to more than two hundred social economy organisations, many of which have already evolved from the traditional assistance-based approach to a multifaceted logic of social

entrepreneurship. We are proud of the part VdA has played in consolidating Portugal's leading position as one of the European countries with the fastest rate of social innovation and investment, as well as the fact that we helped launch almost every social enterprise currently operating in our country.

One of the most emblematic milestones of this journey was VdA's establishment, in 2016, of the Vasco Vieira de Almeida Foundation, which has reinforced and deepened our commitment to the community. The Foundation, which has as its mission to promote Human Rights and the Rule of Law through citizenship education and the exchange of values and knowledge, is a promising and exciting project that actively involves the entire Firm.

Finally, in an unprecedented move in Portugal, we created our Social Economy practice area in 2018 with the aim of specialising and professionalising VdA's response to this sector's specific needs, including those of the pro bono clients we assist.

With great confidence in the vitality and soundness of our project, in 2019 VdA renews its commitment to promoting the UN Agenda 2030 and contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), by carrying out its activities with respect for the ten principles proposed by the United Nations Global Compact.

We warmly acknowledge and appreciate the sustained support and dedication of those who have accompanied us on this 10-year journey, and we are counting on all to help us brave the path still ahead.

WE SUPPORT



João Vieira de Almeida

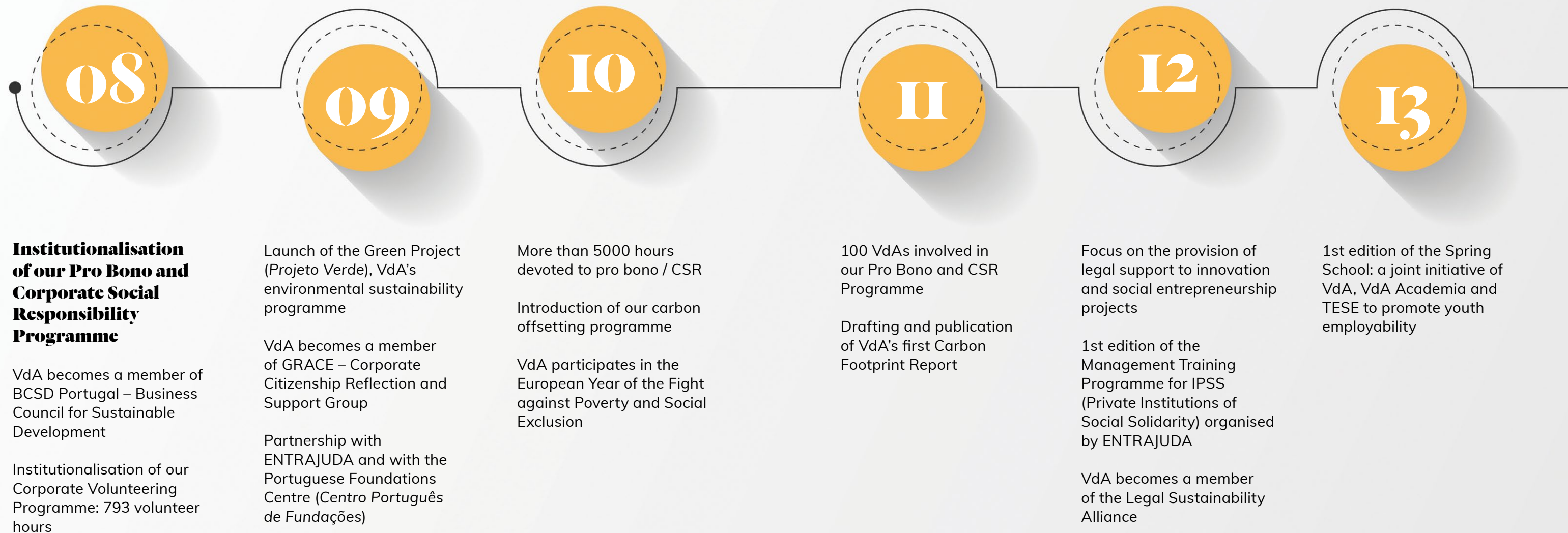
Managing Partner





# 2008—2018

## Overview of VdA's Pro Bono and CSR Programme





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More than 500 hours  
devoted to providing  
training to social economy  
organisations

More than 6000 hours  
devoted to pro bono / CSR

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Innovative Lawyers |  
Financial Times:  
VdA ranked as one of the  
Top 10 Most Innovative Law  
Firms in Europe, in the CSR  
category

Creation of the first two  
social enterprises "powered  
by" VdA (Social Help and  
Blindesign)

Publication of a case study  
on VdA's Green Project in  
the BCSD Sustainability  
Yearbook

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Establishment of the Vasco  
Vieira de Almeida  
Foundation

Green Project wins "Best  
Environmental Initiative"  
– The Lawyer Business  
Leadership Awards

Partnership established  
with Girl MOVE Academy

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VdA joins the United  
Nations Global Compact

VdA wins "Domestic Law  
Firm of the Year" – TrustLaw  
Awards

Protocol with Mozambique's  
Gorongosa National Park:  
Education of Vulnerable  
Children Project

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VdA elected President  
of GRACE's Steering  
Committee

1st edition of the internal  
initiative "VdA Got Social  
Talent"

VdA creates a Social  
Economy practice area

6th edition of the Spring  
School





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**Dimensions of our  
collaboration with  
the community  
and contributions  
to the promotion  
of the Sustainable  
Development  
Goals (SDGs)**

Recognising the importance of the **Sustainable Development Goals** in building a more equal and inclusive society, VdA and the Vasco Vieira de Almeida Foundation have integrated these targets in their corporate social responsibility agenda, in alignment with and respecting the commitments of the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC) proposed by the UN to the business sector, in the fields of human rights, labour practices, environmental protection and anti-corruption.

In 2018, the year in which it assumed the presidency of GRACE's Steering Committee, VdA had the opportunity to publicly promote (in representation of GRACE and CSR Europe) respect for these principles in Portugal through two workshops directed at the CSR, Human Resources and Procurement Directors of GRACE member companies. These events were organised to raise awareness about the main issues related to sustainability in the value chain, by identifying the risks and impacts, sharing best practices and reflecting on how to incorporate respect for human rights in a company's business strategy.

Since its accession, in 2017, to UNGC's global and local networks, VdA has contributed (in an integrated manner and in partnership with other entities) towards the implementation of the SDGs, including in the context of its participation in the SDG Alliance, which currently operates as the Portuguese network's main initiative.

VdA and the Vasco Vieira de Almeida Foundation have sought to address key challenges through network collaboration, in line with the global commitment of governments, the private sector and civil society to achieve the 17 (social, environmental, economic and institutional) sustainable development goals by 2030.

In 2018, we highlight the first projects implemented by the Vasco Vieira de Almeida Foundation within the framework of the 17 SDGs, with a view to contributing to the achievement of the UN Agenda 2030.

This Report reflects VdA and the Vasco Vieira de Almeida Foundation's contribution to corporate social responsibility, presenting the various dimensions of our collaboration and engagement with the community, and outlining the main initiatives carried out by these two organisations in 2018, including the SDGs each initiative sought to address.







## Pro Bono Legal Services

VdA believes that access to the law is a fundamental pillar of citizenship and social cohesion. Recognising lawyers' critical role as intermediaries in accessing justice, we cooperate with numerous third sector organisations, sharing what we do best and placing our expertise at the service of the community, thus helping to strengthen and further develop Portugal's social economy sector.

We do this through the provision of pro bono legal services to third sector entities, increasingly focused on providing support to innovation and social entrepreneurship projects and encouraging the active participation of all who collaborate on this joint project.

## Education for Citizenship

Education for citizenship is the key mission of the Vasco Vieira de Almeida Foundation, which seeks to develop and implement activities that promote the construction of a more informed, integrated and inclusive society and a heightened sense of civic responsibility, using education, knowledge and culture as vehicles to uphold human rights and the rule of law.

In pursuing its mission, the Vasco Vieira de Almeida Foundation guides its intervention through 8 strategic axes, which represent the different dimensions of citizenship: Justice, Education, Human Rights, Knowledge & Science, Culture, Civil Society, Digital Citizenship and Sustainability.



## Third Sector Capacity Building

We aim to be agents of change in the social economy through the capacity building of third sector entities. We see capacity building as initiatives that provide ongoing training to these organisations, promoting access to information, the dissemination of relevant knowledge and improved legal literacy.

This training not only empowers third sector entities by helping them understand and fulfil their legal obligations, but also equips them with additional and improved tools and resources to more effectively carry out their mission.

## Corporate Volunteering

Corporate volunteering is encouraged as a form of collectively exercising our citizenship, allowing all VdAs the chance to participate in the tackling of social and environmental challenges.

The Firm's corporate volunteering programme has aimed to be comprehensive and inclusive, by offering both lawyers and staff the opportunity to engage in varied volunteering activities. Most initiatives are organised in partnership with other entities that pursue a relevant social or environmental mission. For instance, VdA annually participates in GIRO, the biggest corporate volunteering initiative in Portugal, which is organised by GRACE and mobilises around 1000 volunteers from dozens of member companies.

## Environmental Sustainability

Environmental sustainability is not only one of the pillars of VdA's Corporate Social Responsibility Programme, but is also one of the strategic axes of the Vasco Vieira de Almeida Foundation.

We are thus committed to consistently promoting a shared awareness of the importance of adopting environmentally sustainable practices and reducing our carbon footprint, year by year. Environmental concerns are even integrated in our business strategy, with a view to eventually achieving carbon neutral status.

Because we are strong believers in network cooperation and in the importance of aligning our activity with the industry's best practices, VdA has been a member of BCSD Portugal since 2008 and, since 2012, of the Legal Sustainability Alliance, a movement of around 300 European law firms committed to working collaboratively to improve the environmental sustainability of their operations and activities.

## Internal drives

In the context of our Corporate Social Responsibility Programme, VdA and the Vasco Vieira de Almeida Foundation jointly organise internal charity drives to raise awareness about and funds for causes or events that call out to us and demand our action as citizens.

We believe that these initiatives not only promote a better understanding of critical social and environmental issues among our lawyers and staff, but also serve to highlight the important work carried out by our partners who are the beneficiaries of these drives.





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**2018:  
Main Highlights**



## The Vasco Vieira de Almeida Foundation as a corporate foundation: Challenges and opportunities for the sector

### Corporate Foundations: Agents of Change

Corporate foundations have greatly contributed to the development of Portugal's social economy by promoting innovative and impactful projects. Combining valuable corporate knowledge with the philanthropic approach inherent to any foundation, these institutions fulfil a duty of solidarity while simultaneously upholding and dignifying corporate citizenship.

Conscious of its responsibility to support inclusive growth and the development of the foundations sector in Portugal, the Vasco Vieira de Almeida Foundation collaborated with the Portuguese Foundations Centre, and with GRACE, in the organisation of the conference "Corporate Foundations: Agents of Change".

This event, which was organised in partnership in a bid to connect the corporate world and the foundations sector, aimed to place on the public agenda the increasingly strategic role played by corporate foundations, and to foster debate on issues relevant to this sector.



## VdA Got Social Talent: Promoting the Firm's involvement in the activities of the Vasco Vieira de Almeida Foundation, as a project that belongs to all

During 2018, the Vasco Vieira de Almeida Foundation implemented, in partnership with VdA, its "VdA Got Social Talent" initiative. This competition encourages lawyers and staff to propose projects related to the Foundation's mission and strategic axes, and capable of being internally developed by VdAs.

28 lawyers and staff embraced this challenge and the resulting teams presented 8 very distinct projects inspired by the Foundation's key axes of intervention, which were first evaluated by an expert jury and subsequently by VdA as a whole.

The jury's award went to the project "Não caias na rede!" ("Don't fall into the net(work)!"), designed to raise awareness among children and young teenagers of the potential risks, dangers and impacts of unsafe internet usage.

VdA lawyers and staff, selected the project "Encontro(s) com Impacto" ("Meetings with Impact"), which proposes the creation of a collaborative platform connecting companies and third sector entities to enable the sharing of resources and joint development of initiatives with a positive community impact.

An Honourable Mention went to the project "Capacitação de Voluntários – Missão Beira" ("Capacity Building of Volunteers – Beira Mission") aimed at supporting a volunteer programme based at an orphanage in the Mozambican city of Beira through the training of its volunteers, thus equipping them to be more effective on the ground.





## **Professor Francisco Vieira de Almeida Award: Promoting education and knowledge to build a more informed and inclusive society**

In the belief that the dissemination of knowledge and science plays an essential part in building a more open, participative and inclusive society, the Vasco Vieira de Almeida Foundation established the Professor Francisco Vieira de Almeida Award, in partnership with the Faculty of Arts of the University of Lisbon (FLUL), with the aim of fostering research and contributing to the advancement of knowledge.

This Award honours the memory and celebrates the life and work of Francisco Vieira de Almeida, university professor, philosopher and writer, by revealing new talents and scientific works in the fields of Humanities and Social Sciences.

The first edition of the Award runs until September 2020, with the winner being announced at the end of that year.





## VdA Legal Partners: Internationalisation of the CSR Programme

VdA and the Vasco Vieira de Almeida Foundation have sought to establish and strengthen partnerships with social and environmental initiatives achieving a significant impact in the jurisdictions that compose the VdA Legal Partners network, thus channelling the Firm's sense of responsibility towards all the communities in which it operates.





In 2018, we bolstered our partnership with the **Girl MOVE Academy**, a project that actively contributes to shaping a world where all women have access to opportunities to become leaders and agents of positive change. VdA participated in two of its three programmes:

**BELIEVE Programme**, through which VdA lawyers and staff raised enough money to fund 180 scholarships for socially vulnerable Mwarusi girls living in the north of Mozambique, therefore ensuring that they remain in school for another academic year;

**CHANGE Programme**, focused on leadership and social entrepreneurship, which has counted on our support from the very beginning. In 2018, VdA welcomed a young Mozambican woman, Alice Ambrucer, to carry out a life internship which we believe had as positive an impact on our lawyers and staff as it did on Alice herself, given the example of transformative leadership she left us with. Alice's testimonial fills us with pride.

Another relevant milestone in the internationalisation of our CSR activities was the establishment of a cooperation protocol with the **Gorongosa National Park** in Mozambique, in the context of which VdA and the Vasco Vieira de Almeida Foundation support (through VdA Legal Partners) the "Education of Vulnerable Children" project. In this first year of collaboration, local craftsmen made 100 desks and chairs which were distributed between two primary schools located inside the Park, benefiting around 1000 students from the local community. The initiative not only improved these children's learning conditions, but also helped raise their awareness of the importance of preserving Gorongosa's biodiversity, deftly interweaving social and environmental concerns.

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**I am Alice Ambrucer, a 21-year old Law graduate. I had the opportunity to carry out my Girl Move Academy – Mozambique life internship at VdA. Although I was working at a major law firm, I never felt I was just another person because VdA ensured that I was welcomed and integrated in a personalised and unique way, based on my career goals. I highlight and thank the vital role played by all those who acted as mentors. Their commitment and availability meant that I reaped the most and best experiences possible. I was also impressed by the Firm's capacity for sustainable management, which was evident in the infrastructure, architecture and functioning of its office. My passage through the Vasco Vieira de Almeida Foundation, the Pro Bono area and the Litigation & Arbitration practice equipped me with the knowledge, tools, network of contacts and best practices to create the difference I want to see in Mozambique and the world at large. I had the very best internship! Here I confirmed that in addition to VdA's professionalism, its attention to detail and people's needs, and active responsibility towards global problems, make it the great law firm it is.**

”

Alice Ambrucer  
Girl MOVE





## A Focus on Social Innovation

VdA and the Vasco Vieira de Almeida Foundation have sought to play an increasingly active role in the social innovation ecosystem, notably by investing in the community through new models of financing.

Teach for Portugal is a pioneering project in the field of education, developed under the aegis of the international organisation Teach for All, which successfully transforms the life path of children from disadvantaged backgrounds. This NGO operates by identifying and hiring recent graduates with strong leadership potential to act as mentors, in the classroom context, at schools in Portugal's most disadvantaged communities for a period of two years, with a view to improving the students' capacity for learning.

The Vasco Vieira de Almeida Foundation supports Teach for Portugal as a social investor, in the context of the Parcerias para o Impacto (Partnerships for Impact) tool of the European fund Portugal Social Innovation, while VdA provides it with comprehensive pro bono services.

VdA also backed the social innovation project ProChild Against Poverty and Social Exclusion in 2018. This Research & Innovation Centre aims to consolidate the efforts of universities and of several public and private partners to develop original solutions for problems related to child poverty and social exclusion, with a focus on the issues of health, development, education, protection and civic participation.

The Centre was classified as a "Collaborative Laboratory" (CoLAB) by the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT), which is a co-financing entity. To develop this CoLAB, an association gathering academic and other public and private partners (including the Vasco Vieira de Almeida Foundation) was established with VdA's pro bono legal assistance.



## Digital Citizenship: VdA collaborates with the World Wide Web Foundation

In a society profoundly shaped by technology and globalisation, VdA considers it vital to contribute to an enhanced collective awareness of the challenges that the digitalisation of our society and economy pose to the concept of citizenship as we now know it.

In view of this, in 2018 VdA began to collaborate with the World Wide Web Foundation – an organisation created by Tim Berners-Lee in the context of the “Contract for the Web” project – by providing it with pro bono services in the fields of telecommunications and technology, which we believe help democratise access to knowledge and the internet in developing countries and, consequently, contribute to promoting human rights and improved conditions in health, employment, education and citizenship.





## Environmental Sustainability

The environmental component of VdA's Corporate Social Responsibility Programme is developed through its Green Project, which annually promotes a set of internal measures targeting sustainable development, eco-efficiency and carbon footprint reduction.

Given that VdA's new office in Lisbon – where more than 90% of the Firm's lawyers and staff are based – integrates several measures designed to improve our environmental performance.

This change in headquarters allowed us to establish a new baseline in 2018 for the Green Project's performance indicators, to set more demanding reduced consumption targets, and to implement a more rational and sustainable use of resources.

In the external dimension, we highlight VdA's accession to The Porto Protocol, as a founding member of the project. This international initiative encourages all industries to work together towards a common goal: minimising the effects of climate change. VdA's contribution involves collecting and updating legislation considered most relevant, from a business perspective, on issues with an environmental impact.



## Investment in pro bono legal services: creation of the Social Economy practice area

VdA is a leading player in Portugal's third sector. We have reasons to believe that the specialised know-how we have developed, over the past 10 years, in pro bono legal assistance places us in a privileged position to advise not only non-profit organisations – notably, from the foundations sector – but also social entrepreneurs, the creators of innovative and impactful projects, as well as social investors/impact investors, which are increasingly emerging in Portugal.

It was in this context that, in 2018, VdA became the first Portuguese law firm to institute a Social Economy practice area, thus reinforcing our commitment to this crucial sector of the economy and actively participating in the profound change it is currently undergoing.

This initiative reflects VdA's decision to allocate more lawyers and resources to supporting socially relevant entities and projects, in a bid to improve the Firm's capacity of response in line with the third sector's increasingly sophisticated needs, while simultaneously bolstering its capacity to respond to the demands of other jurisdictions where VdA operates through VdA Legal Partners.



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## **Our partners' take on VdA's Pro Bono and CSR Programme**



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After 10 years of CSR activity, during which we established strong and enduring relationships with various partners, we thought it interesting to collect some testimonials and were very pleased with the immediate response from four of our close partners. The content of these testimonials, which fills us with pride and confidence in the future, allows us to believe that we are on the right path, while also reinforcing our conviction that, more important than what has already been achieved, is what remains to be done – and is within our reach.

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Joana  
Santiago

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**BIPP – Inclusion for Disability  
/ SEMEAR**

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**Give us a practical example of something that has changed at BIPP / SEMEAR after partnering with VdA.**

Many things!!! First and foremost, our excellent institutional relationship, which has been essential in establishing a series of activities and services that create value for both entities. BIPP relies on the legal support provided by VdA in several fields and, considering the Firm's credibility, we could not have asked for a better partner.

“VdA has gained the opportunity to, on the one hand, mobilise its lawyers and staff to participate in volunteering activities, thus advancing the company's corporate social responsibility policy, and, on the other, to raise awareness about inclusion.”

VdA's acquisition of products and services from Semear has also contributed significantly to our social and financial sustainability.

**What sustainable development goals (SDGs) do you think our partnership contributes to and in what (other) ways could this partnership with VdA and/or the Vasco Vieira de Almeida Foundation have greater impact in implementing these goals?**

It contributes to several goals, but notably SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities). I believe that the sale and purchase of services, as well as the provision of pro bono legal services, additionally contribute to SDG 4 (Quality Education) and 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) – goals that BIPP / SEMEAR also seeks to implement.

**Although recent, the partnership between VdA / the Vasco Vieira de Almeida Foundation and BIPP / SEMEAR is already very diversified, covering several axes of collaboration. If you had to choose an axis, which do you believe has had the greatest impact on the project thus far?**

It is very difficult to choose only one axis because all are essential and contribute greatly to our mission.





# João Pedro Tavares

## Junior Achievement Portugal (JAP)

**If you had to choose an object or animal to describe JAP and VdA's relationship over the last decade, what would it be and why?**

I would choose the butterfly. It is graceful and has a distinctive beauty. A butterfly has two wings, here representing our two organisations, which flutter in unison with a mirror effect. They complement each other and this allows the butterfly to fly. It lands here and there, in movement and harmony with the surrounding environment. It is fragile, but continues to fly and to leave its mark. Its beauty is not innate, but rather a reflection of the sun, a reflection of the exterior, of something that does not belong to it but imbues it with beauty. The beauty of our organisations is not within, it is expressed externally, in those we serve.

“And together we were called to serve our youth, to transform the future of our country. To be a sign of hope. Just like the butterfly. Who does not stop in their tracks, to observe and appreciate its beauty?...”

**Identify a measure, with an impact on the relationship between VdA and its pro bono partners, that you would implement if you were VdA's Managing Partner?**

I would develop the "VdA ecosystem" beyond what has already been done and done so well. Because VdA is essentially a school of leadership. Yes, it is a law firm, but this purpose is a means to a more important end, which is that of generating impact, of transforming society. It is incredible to observe VdA's culture, its dynamics and the quality of its people. Its example of responsible citizenship, equilibrium, respect for diversity, openness and collaboration. The multiplicity of forms in which younger and more experienced members interact, communicate and respect each other. The respect with which "business" is handled on par with that which is seemingly "secondary". Corporate social responsibility is at the centre of VdA's activity; it is integrated in the Firm's code of ethics and corporate culture, and is experienced in a genuine way. This very natural form of being and acting is truly inspiring and generates positive energy that should be shared with others. It should be made accessible and "democratised", beyond that considered "business" in the strict sense. That is why I would seek to further develop what I call the "VdA ecosystem". Like an Uber, which operates as an open platform accessed by many, or a Google, through which millions search. A platform of the future, no longer just a company. And many would participate in this process, as is already the case, but in a more comprehensive, visible and committed way. This also represents a way to challenge the future, particularly that of a law firm.

**Tell us a story about something relevant that has emerged from the partnership between VdA and JAP (the testimonial of a student and/or volunteer, synergies / "doors" that VdA opened for JAP, or any other stories)?**

I could tell many stories, but I'll follow on from my previous comments and begin by highlighting our *Braço Direito* ("right-hand man/woman") professional mentorship programme. VdA's volunteer mentors had a decisive impact on the young secondary students who wanted to become lawyers. The openness with which they were received (without securities or reservations) and were treated as equals had such an impact. Or the participation of VdA leaders on our governing bodies, with a special mention to Margarida Couto and Alexandra Resina, who gave us invaluable guidance as to how to evolve, in a consistent, principled and appropriate manner, at any given time. Who offered us their network of contacts to explore new opportunities. And even invited us to the launch of the VVA Foundation, to witness the path taken together.

“JAP was born in VdA; it was our first home. Our way of acting and functioning was shaped at VdA. Together, we continue forth on this journey.”





# Hugo Menino Aguiar

**SPEAK**

**How would you assess SPEAK's partnership with VdA over the last few years? What would you highlight as positive and negative? What has changed since the very start? What was the most relevant contribution to the project's success thus far?**

In every little victory, there is always someone who makes the difference and VdA has been vital to each success we have achieved. I remember when, in 2013, we requested VdA's help (once again). We wanted to clarify the appropriate legal framework for a funding programme we were collaborating on with some Portuguese foundations. At the time, our project was only active in Leiria, with 133 participants. Since then:

- The project has expanded to 13 cities;
- The SPEAK brand was born;
- A technology-based tool was created to support the entire project experience ([www.speak.social](http://www.speak.social));
- The project has been recognised by both national and European entities (e.g. in Portugal, it is now being used to help integrate refugees);
- Monetisation models have been developed to make the project sustainable;
- We introduced the "Take SPEAK to your city" programme, which allows members of our community to establish SPEAK where they believe it could be useful;
- More than 10,000 people have participated in SPEAK language groups, more than 20,000 exchange hours have taken place, and more than 400 events have been organised by the SPEAK community.

Throughout this journey, we have always done our best to innovate and to improve SPEAK's intervention model, with a view to scaling up our impact. This has implied changes at different levels, including in terms of financing models and organisational processes.

“ Our innovations raised several complex issues regarding the most appropriate legal structure, which we were only able to tackle and resolve thanks to VdA, which showed a constant concern for all our challenges (related to contracts, business model, governance model, legal entity, tax treatment, and other issues). ”

**If you were appointed CEO of the Vasco Vieira de Almeida Foundation, what would be your first decision with an impact on the future of social investment?**

The creation of a working group tasked with defining a system of tax incentives for high-impact investment, and which would include key stakeholders to increase the chances of buy-in by the Portuguese Government.

**Tell us about a SPEAK victory which VdA contributed to.**

One of our goals has always been to scale up impact and, to do this, we had to make SPEAK agile and easy to replicate.

“ VdA helped us design and structure a social franchising model, ensuring that it was equipped with the right legal framework. ”

This model has allowed people like Khuloud (from Syria), Valéria (from Mexico) or Chloé (from Belgium) to open their own SPEAK in other cities, both in Portugal and abroad. It permits the scaling of the project in a quick and consistent way, and we would not have been able to build this model without VdA's support.





# Alexandra Machado

## Girl MOVE Academy

**As to the added value of the Girl MOVE Academy's partnership with VdA, what would you highlight in terms of the impact this partnership has had so far?**

The Girl MOVE Academy is born from a dream: the dream of a world where all girls and women have the right to education and to actively participate in society. VdA has contributed to the realisation of this dream from the very beginning, by nurturing, innovating and bringing great value to all those who are part of our Life Movement, by inspiring others and by allowing us to reach further, year after year.

Everyone at Girl MOVE has a deep admiration for the VdA team with whom we have been working since the very first moment. We truly appreciate the dedication and enthusiasm with which you embrace challenges. We are inspired by this team and CHANGE MAKER organisation, which makes us BELIEVE that it is possible to LEAD CHANGE! We believe – and thank you for believing with us – that we are contributing to a better and fairer world.

**How would you like to see the partnership between the Girl MOVE Academy and VdA and/or the Vasco Vieira de Almeida Foundation evolve over the next 10 years?**

The results we have achieved so far in Mozambique encourage us and give us confidence in the Girl MOVE Academy's differential value, which is founded on a new educational model that promotes transformative leadership and unlocks talent through a cascading mentoring process that creates real impact. Our selection as an Ashoka Fellow reinforces the recognition of our work.

Nevertheless, we feel a huge sense of responsibility towards the future. How can we multiply this impact throughout a world that needs so much? We are relying on VdA and the VVA Foundation to help us with this mission. We want to see a sustainable Girl MOVE Academy in 2030. What talents can we empower? What world can we create? Our passion has no limits!



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## **Corporate Social Responsibility: our action plan for the next decade**



The first 10 years of VdA's Pro Bono and Corporate Social Responsibility Programme saw us take our first decisive steps in terms of CSR.

We have come a long way over this past decade, having paved a path that has taken us a great deal further than we could have anticipated.

We have led by example in the legal industry; we have established strategic partnerships with the main stakeholders in the social economy; we have strived to have a positive social impact on the community, while simultaneously working to reduce the environmental impact of our activity; we were called to lead the main CSR business organisation (GRACE) and we integrated the governing bodies of the largest environmental sustainability business organisation (BCSD Portugal); we were the first law firm in Portugal to establish a social economy practice; we set up a Foundation, providing it with the necessary means to carry out its mission of education for citizenship, with a special focus on promoting human rights and the rule of law; we have joined forces with those setting up home-grown innovation and social entrepreneurship projects, which are already so many and so promising, and which are leaving their footprint both nationally and internationally.

While recognising that all these projects contribute to a better world, we would like to highlight the first social innovation project supported by VdA and which we practically witnessed the birth of (almost 10 years ago): SPEAK. We are proud to have been partners, from the very start, of one of the few Portuguese projects to have participated in the first Web Summit held in Lisbon, to have been one of the winners of the 2018 edition of the Social Innovation Tournament, and to have recently been recognised by the Financial Times as one of the 100 most innovative tech projects in Europe, having had the honour of representing Portugal at the Chivas Ventures final.

We are also proud of having accompanied projects that, over the last decade, led to the Portuguese social entrepreneurs Miguel Neiva (Color Add), Hugo Menino Aguiar (Speak), António Bello (Just a Change) and Alexandra Machado (Girl Move) being accepted into the Ashoka network (the largest and most prestigious international network of social entrepreneurs) as Ashoka Fellows, following a demanding admission process.

It is inspiring and deeply gratifying to witness first-hand the power and multiplier effect of these projects, and to feel that VdA has contributed to their success through its Pro Bono and CSR programme.

However, it is not the past but the future that determines the present<sup>1</sup>

Indeed, the future has determined that, in addition to what we have already achieved, VdA's CSR programme and our engagement with the community is now being developed not only through a new practice area with more specialised resources – i.e. the Social Economy practice area – but also through the Vasco Vieira de Almeida Foundation. Although pursuing its mission of promoting education for citizenship in close alignment with the values and positioning of its founding entity (VdA), the Foundation enjoys an autonomy that enables it to elevate the Firm's corporate citizenship to a new level.

<sup>1</sup> Dora García (artist)



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It is against this background that we look towards the next 10 years with great confidence – but also with a great sense of responsibility!

The social sector now has new needs, and it is possible to anticipate increased social and environmental challenges whose global scale may represent an added difficulty in determining the answers and solutions of the future. Guiding ourselves by the value of innovation and relying, wherever possible, on the tools that technology provides, we will do our utmost to ensure that VdA's CSR programme is in constant renewal, always taking care to preserve its ability to respond to our partners' emerging needs, and that it successfully rises up to the societal challenges of the future.

Knowing that the future is inherently dynamic, bringing with it much uncertainty and little predictability, we promise to remain attentive and to do everything within our power to make a relevant contribution to society. We work every day to ensure that stakeholders continue to view us as a key partner and that the Social Economy sector renews its vote of confidence in VdA, always counting on us as their number one choice when seeking assistance to respond to the major challenges faced at any given moment.

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**6020 hours**  
Pro Bono Legal Services

**590 hours**  
Corporate Volunteering

**290 hours**  
Third Sector Capacity  
Building



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