

UN Global Compact
Communication on Engagement

KEA'S SUSTAINABILITY REPORT 2022-2023





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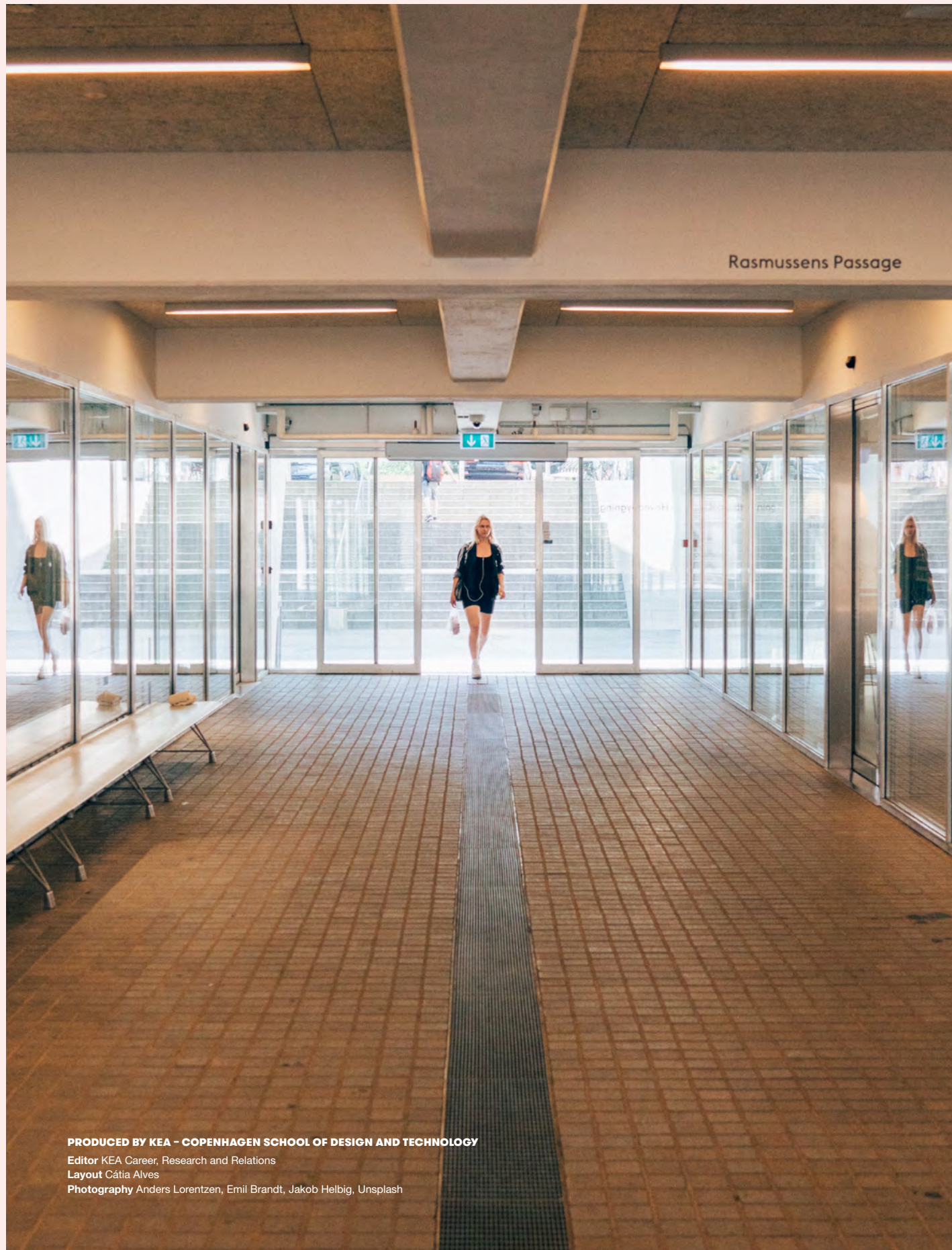
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Rasmussens Passage

Welcome readers

The following report reaffirms KEA – Copenhagen School of Design and Technology's support to the UN Global Compact's ten principles, which are divided into four themes: human rights, labour rights, environment, and anti-corruption.

Within the last two years, KEA has been working purposefully to maintain, improve, and develop our sustainability practices based on the UN Global Compact's ten principles. When speaking of sustainability, KEA does not just refer to environmental sustainability. Social sustainability is just as important a focus in our strategy, Driven by Action. That is why the ten principles align with KEA's vision to impact the market by educating students to become the sustainability workforce of the future.

This report presents the latest advancements in KEA's sustainability efforts and outlines the main directions we aim to develop for the future. Readers will be presented with a range of different initiatives that have taken place across KEA's organisation in the period 2022-2023.

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Editor KEA Career, Research and Relations

Layout Cátia Alves

Photography Anders Lorentzen, Emil Brandt, Jakob Helbig, Unsplash

Letter of Continued Support of the UN Global Compact

"As I read through the many stories in this report, it is clear how dedicated both our staff and students are to improving the conditions of our community and to contributing to the global agenda for a more sustainable planet."



We strive to equip our students with the tools and mindset needed to address the complex challenges of tomorrow. By fostering a collaborative and inclusive learning environment, we ensure that our students are prepared to make a meaningful impact both during their studies and as they transition into the workforce. Diversity and respect for labour rights are central to those efforts, as we believe that promoting equal opportunities and safe working conditions is fundamental to achieving long-term sustainability and well-being.

Our commitment to sustainability is also reflected in our daily operations. By integrating environmentally-conscious practices into our campus management and administrative processes, we actively work to reduce our carbon footprint and to promote responsible resource use across all levels of the institution.

We are proud of what we accomplish at KEA, and our commitment to the UN Global Compact sustainability principles helps us evolve and inspires us to keep developing our ambitions and activities within our sphere of influence.

I look forward to following our continued journey towards a more sustainable practice here at KEA. I hope that you will find inspiration and new insights in this report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Steen Enemark Kildesgaard'. The signature is stylized and cursive.

Steen Enemark Kildesgaard
Rector at KEA

Introduction to the report

Since 2014, KEA has published the UN Global Compact report biennially, reflecting our commitment to the ten principles of the UN Global Compact. This fifth report is inspired by our 2021-2025 strategy, Driven by Action, which emphasizes three themes: diversity, sustainability in education and research, and sustainability in operations. The structure of this report mirrors KEA's strategy and is divided into three main sections, each reflecting our alignment with the ten principles of the UN Global Compact.

“This fifth report is inspired by our 2021-2025 strategy, Driven by Action, which emphasizes three themes: diversity, sustainability in education and research, and sustainability in operations.”

The first section addresses our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion within the student environment and regarding how we collaborate with businesses. We strive to attract and retain a variety of students, recognising the value of diverse perspectives and backgrounds. Further, this section outlines our initiatives to support sustainable awareness both in our startup environment and when students first transition into the job market.

The second section highlights KEA's awareness of environmental and sustainability impacts in our educational programs and research initiatives. KEA's institutional mindset aligns with our strategy of contributing to sustainability efforts and the green transition, broadly speaking, as well as the principles concerning the environment in the UN Global Compact. We prepare students to meet industry demands concerning sustainable action by exposing them to case-based projects, internships, and knowledge based on up-to-date research.

The third section focuses on our internal sustainability practices as we strive to become a more sustainable organisation. We describe how our Facility Manage-



ment team, procurement practices, and policies align with environmental sustainability principles. This section demonstrates our commitment to environmental responsibility and ethical operations.

This report showcases KEA's ongoing journey towards integrating the ten principles of the UN Global Compact into our strategic vision and operations. By aligning our educational programs, organisational practices, and community engagement efforts with our overall strategy, we aim to transform the UN Global Compact principles into impactful actions in our practice. Moreover, KEA is committed to fostering an innovative, inclusive, and sustainable environment, preparing our students to meet future challenges with creativity and responsibility, thereby contributing positively to the global community.



The Ten UN Global Compact Principles

KEA's engagement with the ten principles means operating in ways that meet fundamental responsibilities in the areas of human rights, labour, environment, and anti-corruption.

By incorporating the Ten Principles of the UN Global Compact into our strategies, policies, and procedures — and by establishing a culture of integrity — KEA is not only upholding our basic responsibilities on engagement but also setting the stage for long-term success.

The Ten Principles of the United Nations Global Compact derive from:

- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- The International Labour Organization's Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work
- The Rio Declaration on Environments and Development
- The United Nations Convention Against Corruption

When reviewing the report, readers will notice that we address principles 2-9. As a Danish educational institution, KEA adheres to principles 1 and 10, which are not explicitly mentioned in the examples, as they are inherently part of our operations as a public Danish institution.

10 PRINCIPLES

HUMAN RIGHTS

#1

KEA will support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights

#2

KEA will make sure that we are not complicit in human rights abuse

LABOUR

#3

KEA will uphold the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining

#4

KEA will uphold the elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labour

#5

KEA will uphold the effective abolition of child labour

#6

KEA will uphold the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation

ENVIRONMENT

#7

KEA will support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges

#8

KEA will undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility

#9

KEA will encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies

ANTI-CORRUPTION

#10

KEA will work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery





CHAPTER 1

Diversity

KEA is dedicated to fostering diversity in student admissions. By attracting students from various backgrounds, KEA aims to contribute to the diversity of industries' future workforce. At KEA, diversity is a part of our strategy and centres on three sub-goals:

- To create active and experimental learning spaces where students can engage with the latest technologies and address real-life challenges.
- To build supportive environments that attract, challenge, and provide opportunities for a diverse range of students.
- To stimulate entrepreneurship, innovation, and product development among our students.

This section highlights three stories demonstrating how KEA's commitment translates into real-world experiences. The stories exemplify how KEA provides resources to help students understand their rights, how the KEA Startup Hub aims to teach students about integrating ethical considerations when building new businesses, and how the Architectural Technology & Construction Management programme facilitates discussions on how to solve issues in the construction industry related to work culture and diversity in hiring.

Empowering Entrepreneurs: A Culture of Diversity and Collaboration

KEA Startup Hub is a dynamic environment where diversity and inclusion are core values. The hub brings together students from a wide range of educational and cultural backgrounds, offering them the tools and guidance to develop their business ideas in a supportive, collaborative setting. By fostering an inclusive culture that prioritizes respect, openness, and mutual learning, KEA ensures that all students, regardless of gender, ethnicity, or background, can thrive as entrepreneurs. This commitment to diversity is not just a value but a key driver of innovation and growth within the hub.

At KEA Startup Hub, students develop their own projects as well as engage with a thriving start-up ecosystem both inside and outside of KEA. They participate in workshops on entrepreneurship and personalized coaching as well as pitch sessions where ideas are regularly presented to advisors and peers.

“To cultivate a positive and inclusive environment, KEA has implemented a code of conduct that all new start-ups must adhere to upon joining the community.”

Additionally, KEA has created a programme where students as part of their education can do a fulltime internship at their own business for a semester. Representing more than 20 distinct educational backgrounds,

and with start-ups ranging from early-stage ventures to more established businesses, the hub embraces a wide variety of students and businesses. To cultivate a positive and inclusive environment, KEA has implemented a code of conduct that all new start-ups must adhere to upon joining the community:

- 1. Integrity and Security:** Members are encouraged to share their experiences and ideas freely without fear of competition or idea theft. They view each other as peers and sparring partners rather than competitors.
- 2. Diversity and Respectful Communication:** The hub values diversity and mutual respect. Everyone is treated as an equal regardless of race, religion, gender, or sexual orientation. Committing to and maintaining a respectful rapport with other members is essential to creating a supportive community where vulnerability is welcomed.

This code of conduct emphasizes integrity, security, diversity, and respect, ensuring a safe and collaborative space where members can exchange ideas and grow without fear of discrimination or conflict. By doing so, the hub ensures that students not only develop successful businesses but also contribute positively to a more equitable and innovative start-up ecosystem.

KEA's commitment to creating a supportive space for all allows the future entrepreneurs to thrive and bring fresh perspectives to their industries, driving meaningful change both locally and globally.

PRINCIPLES

#2

KEA will make sure that we are not complicit in human rights abuse

#6

KEA will uphold the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation



Preparing Students for the Job Market through KEA Career Days



At KEA, we prioritise preparing our students for a successful transition into the workforce. To support this mission, we organise Career Days multiple times a year, providing students with the opportunity to engage directly with companies, explore internships and job opportunities as well as to connect with relevant unions and unemployment insurance funds. These collaborations are vital, offering additional resources to help students and graduates effectively navigate the job market and secure their first professional position.

Career Days are hosted at the KEA campus, where students can meet and interact with companies to explore potential career paths. At each event, participating companies have their own stall, facilitating engagement with

students, and most companies bring KEA alumni to represent them. By bringing businesses directly to KEA, the event enhances accessibility for students, particularly those who are unsure of how to begin their career journeys. In 2023, more than 100 companies participated, and almost 1000 students attended the event. Career Days are held multiple times a year, encouraging both current students and alumni, who have completed their studies at KEA and are seeking new job opportunities, to participate.

KEA's Career Days provides students with valuable insights into various career paths. Participating companies are required to present at least one active job offer (full-time, part-time, or internship) to be eligible for par-

ticipation. All of KEA's educational programs are represented across a diverse array of industries.

Since its inception in 2018, KEA Career Days has garnered significant industry interest, resulting in some companies being waitlisted. The event serves two primary purposes: first, to help students discover relevant job opportunities, and, second, to ensure students are introduced to unions and unemployment insurance resources, equipping them with knowledge about their labour rights. Companies, as well as labour unions, are invited to participate free of charge, as KEA prides itself on providing equal opportunities for stakeholders.

“By bringing businesses directly to KEA, the event enhances accessibility for students, particularly those who are unsure of how to begin their career journeys.”

KEA plays a crucial role in educating students about the benefits of labour union membership. By inviting labour unions to participate in Career Days, we provide students with firsthand access to information about the support and resources unions offer. These organisations advocate for workers' rights, provide guidance on employment contracts, and assist with issues such as workplace disputes, salary negotiations, and job security.

During Career Days, labour union representatives engage directly with students, explaining the advantages of membership, including access to professional development resources, networking opportunities, and legal assistance. This exposure helps demystify unions and highlights their role as essential partners in navigating the complexities of the labour market.

Moreover, KEA ensures that students understand the long-term benefits of union membership such as collective bargaining power and enhanced job security. By fostering these connections, we empower students to make informed decisions about their professional futures and encourage them to consider unions as valuable allies in their career journeys.

As an educational institution, KEA takes great responsibility not only in preparing students to succeed within their fields of study but also in helping them navigate the rules and rights associated with employment in the Danish labour market. By inviting labour unions and unemployment funds to Career Day, KEA raises students' awareness of their rights and the resources available to assist them with contract issues and other challenges they may encounter in their initial employment.



PRINCIPLES

#3

KEA will uphold the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining

#4

KEA will uphold the elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labour

#6

KEA will uphold the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation

Fostering Inclusive Leadership in the Construction Industry

At KEA, we are committed to staying closely aligned with the realities of the industries we educate for, and the construction sector is no exception. One of the significant trends observed in this field, as well as in our intake for the Architectural Technology & Construction Management programme, is the urgent need for greater diversity and inclusion in construction. Recognising our responsibility to shape the workforce of tomorrow, KEA has taken proactive steps to integrate diversity into the curriculum for future construction managers.

The construction industry continues to face challenges concerning recruitment; particularly, the industry struggles to attract women and to create inclusive environments for all employees. At KEA, we understand that education plays a crucial role in shifting industry practices, and this is reflected in our teaching. For example, in the Construction Management programme, a dedicated module on Diversity Management has been introduced, aimed at equipping students with the skills and awareness necessary to lead diverse teams and promote inclusive workplace cultures.



Data from the sector highlights the ongoing effort to recruit women. Our students, many of whom come from practical construction backgrounds, often share stories of leaving the industry due to hostile or unwelcoming environments. These students return to KEA, aiming to become managers who can influence the workplace in a more positive direction.

“By embedding diversity into the learning process, KEA ensures that its graduates are well-prepared to address the cultural challenges present in the industry.”

By embedding diversity into the learning process, KEA ensures that its graduates are well-prepared to address the cultural challenges present in the industry. The Diversity Management module covers essential topics like micro-aggressions, acknowledging employees in the workplace, and strategies to foster an environment where all employees, regardless of gender, faith, cultural background, or abilities, feel valued and respected.

By taking these steps, KEA not only is educating the next generation of construction managers but also is actively influencing industry practice. Through a continuous dialogue with the business world, we stay informed about evolving needs and challenges. Doing so allows us to adjust our educational approach and, in turn, contribute to a more diverse and sustainable future.

PRINCIPLES

#6

KEA will uphold the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation





CHAPTER 2

Sustainability at the Core of Education and Research

KEA's commitment to sustainability and the green transition is at the core of our educational and research efforts. In working strategically with these topics, we focus on two key sub-goals:

- Enhancing sustainability across all KEA programmes and teaching.
- Increasing the focus on sustainability, technology, and business in KEA's research projects.

This section highlights activities across KEA's four programme areas and our research initiatives, showcasing selected examples of how we incorporate sustainability into the classroom and beyond. By integrating sustainability in education and research, KEA aims to prepare students to develop and implement a sustainable approach in their future careers. Furthermore, this section presents five stories showcasing sustainability initiatives, from innovative classroom projects to collaborative industry research.

Global Collaboration and Sustainability at KEA's Annual Charrette



Each year, KEA hosts a Charrette workshop, uniting students from partner institutions worldwide to collaborate on sustainability projects. A Charrette “is an intensive, multi-disciplinary workshop with the aim of developing a design or vision for a project or planning activity”¹. The 2023 Charrette centred on the concept of urban mining - the practice of recycling materials from urban environments to support a circular economy. Urban mining projects offer innovative solutions to waste management and resource scarcity in our cities.

Urban mining is particularly relevant today, as traditional, linear economic models are proving unsustainable. By transforming waste materials into valuable resources, urban mining not only addresses the environmental

challenges of material disposal but also creates economic opportunities. However, implementing urban mining initiatives requires systemic changes to how industries view and handle materials, making it a fitting theme for the 2023 Charrette.

The structure of the Charrette was designed as an intensive Design Sprint, a methodology that emphasises rapid ideation, prototyping, and testing of ideas within a compressed timeframe. Over the course of one week, students from different nationalities and disciplines were organised into teams, each assigned to a specific area of Copenhagen. Their objective was to identify and propose viable urban mining solutions that could be carried out within their designated neighbourhoods.

This hands-on approach encouraged creativity and collaboration, allowing students to engage with real-world sustainability challenges.

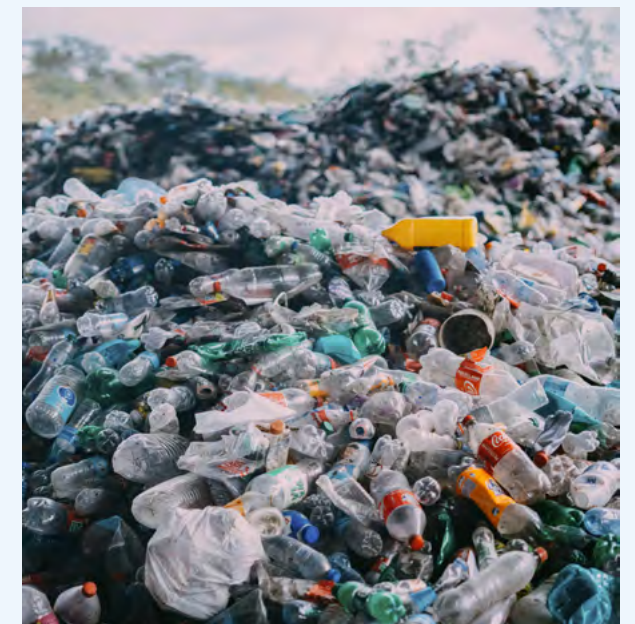
During the week, students undertook a series of activities. Initially, they conducted field research in their assigned areas, identifying materials typically considered waste and exploring how these “anthropogenic resources” could be repurposed. They engaged with local businesses and residents to gather insights on their needs and perspectives, fostering community involvement in the urban mining process.

“Overall, the annual Charrette not only allowed students to explore new approaches to sustainability but also equipped them with practical skills in relation to interdisciplinary collaboration, intercultural communication, design thinking, and problem-solving.”

Each team utilised circular economy principles such as reuse, repair, refurbish, and recycle to develop their solutions. They brainstormed ideas, collaborated with industry professionals for guidance, and iterated on their concepts to refine their proposals. By the end of the week, students were tasked with creating prototypes of their urban mining solutions, which they presented to a panel of judges comprised of educators and sustainability experts. The week culminated in a showcase of innovative ideas, demonstrating the potential for urban mining to transform local waste into valuable resources.

The Charrette provided invaluable insights into the complexities of urban mining and the challenges associated with resource recovery in urban settings. Participants recognised the necessity of economic incentives and regulatory support to facilitate the transition toward sustainable practices in the industry.

Overall, the annual Charrette not only allowed students to explore new approaches to sustainability but also equipped them with practical skills in relation to interdisciplinary collaboration, intercultural communication, design thinking, and problem-solving. As the world increasingly turns to innovative solutions for sustainability, KEA's focus on urban mining and the Design Sprint methodology ensures that students are well-prepared to contribute to a more sustainable future.



PRINCIPLES

#7

KEA will support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges

#8

KEA will undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility

Extending Uniform Lifespan through Systematic Care and Repair

At KEA we aim to incorporate sustainability throughout the organisation, both in our educational programmes and in our research activities. In collaboration with a major Danish amusement park, KEA's Sustainable Fashion Tech programme worked to extend the lifespan of work uniforms by addressing repairability, recycling challenges, and developing a systematic approach to avoid clothing waste.

KEA is part of the innovation network called Lifestyle and Design Cluster under the Ministry of Higher Education and Science, an organisation dedicated to promoting green and circular transitions within the lifestyle industry. KEA's participation centres on collaborating with network partners on sustainability projects. Partners include both private companies and knowledge institutions. The “uniform” project is an excellent example

of how we teach sustainability in hands-on case collaboration with businesses. The project highlights how small changes in uniform management can significantly reduce companies' environmental impact.

Students from KEA's Sustainable Fashion Tech programme were invited to investigate recycling options for the amusement park. Students had to either break down the uniforms into fibres or repurpose them, and they were given access to the park's old uniforms, thereby gaining insight into the company's operations. For instance, they learned that the different staff wear unique types of uniforms, which makes the transformation towards sustainable garments complex. Additionally, most of the garments were not beyond use—many only required minor repairs, such as replacing zippers or stitching up seams. Employees were individually re-

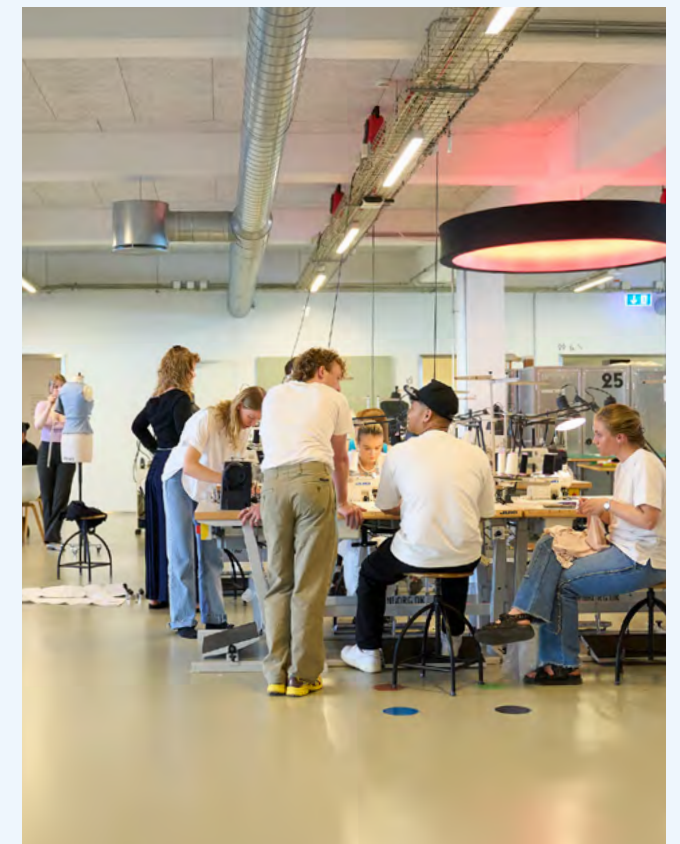


sponsible for maintaining and cleaning their uniforms, and the absence of a standardised quality control resulted in inconsistencies regarding garment appearance and lifespan. These insights indicated a so-called Kleenex culture and mindset, where uniforms were bought and disposed of on an ongoing basis without much reflection.

“The project is an example of how KEA engages in private-public partnerships, creating value for all stakeholders involved, promoting greater environmental responsibilities, and developing new sustainable business practices.”

The initial study revealed challenges regarding fibre-to-fibre recycling and further complications on the public exposure of the company logo when repurposing the uniforms outside of the company. Therefore, the KEA students proposed a new project scope reframing the initial challenge: Instead of recycling uniforms, the amusement park was to extend the lifespan of the uniforms. As a result, the students suggested four solutions for the park to prolong the lifespan of their uniforms:

- A systemic approach to repairing uniforms
- Improved care and washing instructions to prolong the lifespan of the uniforms
- Data collection and mapping of clothes repair and discarded clothes
- A mindset change in the company regarding criteria for uniform disposal



The project provided the company with useful knowledge, and the students gained hands-on experience with a real-life business challenge. The project is an example of how KEA engages in private-public partnerships, creating value for all stakeholders involved, promoting greater environmental responsibilities, and developing new sustainable business practices.

PRINCIPLES

#7

KEA will support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges

#8

KEA will undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility

Hackathon on Sustainable Solutions

At KEA, industry professionals are invited to share real-world problems they face, inspiring students to work in groups to develop innovative solutions during a three-day hackathon. A hackathon is an immersive event where students collaborate to address a sustainability challenge deriving from local representatives (business or government). On the final day, the students' proposals are presented to a panel of faculty members and peers, who collectively choose the best project. However, the true value of the hackathon lies in the knowledge-sharing and meaningful discussions that occur throughout the process.

The hackathon was organised in collaboration with professionals from architecture firms and local municipal representatives, who played a vital role in guiding the students. At the start of the event, the professionals shared their insights on design, materials, installation, renovation, and dismantling of building structures. This exchange of ideas provided the students with valuable context and inspiration for the task ahead.

The task was to create sustainable interior partitions. A partition is a type of interior wall used to divide spaces, particularly in office environments. These partitions can be permanent or mobile, and, unlike exterior building elements that are exposed to different weather conditions, partitions are located indoors and therefore require different considerations in terms of sustainability. The challenge for the students was to design partitions using recyclable materials, ensuring that the walls could be dismantled and reused in an environmentally-friendly way.

The final projects were evaluated based on three key criteria: the work process, innovative construction meth-

ods, and sustainability parameters. The winning team stood out by selecting unconventional materials, thoroughly researching their potential, and integrating them into a novel context. Collaborating with professionals not only benefited the students by providing hands-on experience with real industry challenges but also reinforced the value of sustainability within the construction industry.

“Hackathons serve as a platform to explore environmentally-friendly solutions, aligning with the organisation’s broader sustainability goals.”

KEA played a crucial role in the creation of the hackathon, recognising the need to foster innovation through collaboration between students and industry professionals. By facilitating such events, KEA works not only to support the educational growth of students but also to strengthen its commitment to sustainable business practices. Hackathons serve as a platform to explore environmentally-friendly solutions, aligning with the organisation’s broader sustainability goals. Through this initiative, KEA actively promotes the development of greener construction methods and materials, ensuring that the next generation of professionals is equipped to meet the sustainability demands of the industry. Collaborating with industry is a key component in KEA’s strategy to integrate sustainability into every aspect of its operations, from education to practical business solutions.



PRINCIPLES

#7

KEA will support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges

#8

KEA will undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility

The Web-design Paradox of Sustainability and Consumer Engagement

At KEA, we are committed to preparing our students to tackle future challenges with creativity and responsibility. We achieve this by aligning our educational practices and research activities with the latest trends and challenges in the industries that hire our graduates. One significant area of focus at KEA is reducing the use of energy-intensive elements, such as images and videos on websites, due to their negative impact on CO₂ emissions.

Creating websites that are both sustainable and engaging is a fundamental paradox in the field of digital design. All types of businesses rely on dynamic content to captivate consumers and drive sales, but this often comes at an environmental cost. A sustainable website that limits animations and high-resolution images to reduce energy consumption may result in a less visually stimulating experience, potentially leading to lower sales compared to a more resource-intensive site. It is this paradox and challenge that senior lecturers at KEA have set out to explore focusing on sustainable web design and how students can navigate these contradictions once they enter the workforce. By embedding sustainability into their design processes, KEA is equipping students with the tools to make informed, responsible choices in their future careers.

In the project, senior lecturers collaborated with an industry partner with the aim to investigate and implement sustainable design practices in the digital realm.

The project was structured into two key phases. The first phase focused on influencing design practices early in the project development stage, making the often-intangible environmental impact of digital products more visible and measurable. This included activities such as researching academic texts on sustainable web design, developing a digital tool designed to measure the carbon footprint of websites, and embedding sustainability in the curriculum. By engaging with such activities, KEA ensures that students not only are aware of the challenges related to digital spaces and sustainability but also are equipped to address them from the very beginning of their careers.

The second phase of the project involved critical reflection on the insights gained from the first phase. Through this process, five actionable insights were collected:

1. Early integration of sustainability in projects was identified as crucial to ensuring meaningful environmental impact.
2. Collaboration across the digital design industry is essential for driving systemic change toward sustainable practices.
3. Educating customers on the importance of sustainable web practices plays a significant role in shaping project outcomes.

PRINCIPLES

#7

KEA will support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges

#8

KEA will undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility

#9

KEA will encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies



4. Careful application of safeguards is necessary to balance sustainability goals with other project requirements.
5. Critical evaluation of data tracking practices is important to minimise resource overuse.

This research project demonstrates KEA's commitment to fostering a proactive approach to sustainability, one that spans educational programmes, professional practice, and industry collaboration. By engaging in ongoing research and incorporating sustainability into teaching practices, KEA aims to contribute meaningfully to the global effort to reduce the digital sector's environmental

“By embedding sustainability into their design processes, KEA is equipping students with the tools to make informed, responsible choices in their future careers.”

footprint. At the same time, KEA's close ties to the industry ensure that our students are prepared and ready to meet the practical challenges of working in a sector where environmental considerations are becoming ever more important.

A Holistic Approach to Business Planning

At KEA we aim to stimulate entrepreneurship, innovation, and product development through a creative and experimental start-up environment. Students across disciplines are encouraged to test out their ideas and explore their potential as business owners in KEA's Startup Hub.

The KEA Startup Hub guides students on how to develop a business that can integrate sustainability theories and practices — not only within the company but also throughout the entire value chain. Once students are working on developing their businesses, they begin to face ethical dilemmas such as production conditions, terms of employment, and tax evasion.

“Through personalised coaching, workshops, and real-world experiences, the KEA Startup Hub prepares students to navigate the complexities of sustainable business development.”

For example, two students starting jewellery and clothing companies considered establishing production lines outside of the EU and therefore needed to investigate how things were manufactured there. KEA offered the two students a fieldtrip to inspect some potential factories to collaborate with in South-East Asia. Upon returning, they presented their observations and findings

to their fellow start-up entrepreneurs at the Hub. The fieldtrip resulted in several students deciding not to produce outside of the EU, as they could not sufficiently control the production methods and workforce conditions. Today, most student entrepreneurs choose a production partner within the EU. That way they can stay in close contact with the production site and ensure that their partners adhere to agreed-upon standards relating to human rights and common EU legislation concerning manufacturing and labour laws. Additionally, production partners within the EU tend to possess extensive knowledge about sustainable materials and production processes, thus aligning with KEA's sustainability values.

At KEA, our primary role is to help students navigate unforeseen challenges and to build a strong, sustainable foundation that will adhere to future EU laws and regulations, customer demands, and daily business management processes. KEA achieves that by fostering a learning environment centred on shared values, encouraging dialogue and promoting awareness of the different working conditions both within and outside the EU.

Through personalised coaching, workshops, and real-world experiences, the KEA Startup Hub prepares students to navigate the complexities of sustainable business development. The goal is to equip future business leaders with the tools to uphold human rights, comply with labour laws, and adopt sustainable production practices, ultimately creating businesses that are both socially responsible and resilient to future regulatory demands.

PRINCIPLES

#2

KEA will make sure that we are not complicit in human rights abuse

#4

KEA will uphold the elimination of all forms of forced compulsory labour

#5

KEA will uphold the effective abolition of child labour

#8

KEA will undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility

#9

KEA will encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies





CHAPTER 3

Sustainability in KEA's Operations

KEA's commitment to operational excellence is intertwined with our sustainability goals and adherence to the ten principles of the UN Global Compact. This section focuses on KEA's aim to become a more sustainable organisation. To achieve this, KEA has divided its efforts into two sub-goals:

1. Integrating sustainability as a foundational principle throughout student projects and everyday practices.
2. Improving our operational processes on a continual basis.

Sustainability at KEA is both a mindset and a practice. In this period of reporting, KEA has actively developed and implemented new sustainable actions in daily operations across our five campuses. This section will present three stories on projects regarding in-house operational efforts in our transition towards a more sustainable and attractive educational institution and workplace.

At KEA, we aim to ensure that our operations not only support but also actively enhance our educational responsibilities, as well as our ongoing commitment to align with the principles of the UN Global Compact.

Sustainability Efforts at KEA

At KEA, sustainability is not just a goal but a guiding principle integrated into daily practices and long-term planning. Through innovative solutions, from reducing delivery emissions to minimising waste, KEA is always seeking ways of decreasing its environmental footprint.

One of the sustainability initiatives at the KEA campuses centres on reducing waste, particularly in relation to paper tissues. Paper tissues, often used for hand drying, are not made from recycled materials but from newly produced wood pulp. In collaboration with the company Textilia, KEA explored how to lower waste by replacing paper tissues with reusable fabric alternatives. The collaboration resulted in a pilot project introducing small terry cloth towels at the Lygten campus.

The new fabric towels were made from repurposed hospital bed linens, with larger dimensions and reinforced edges to prevent fraying, enhancing durability and usability.

The evaluation of the pilot project showed that users appreciated the softer fabric and noted that previously paper towels had frequently been used in excess. While the introduction of fabric towels has been well-received, challenges remain, particularly during large events such as Friday bars, where demand for towels can exceed supply. However, this was also an issue with paper tissues, albeit with the difference that paper waste would often litter the area in question — an issue avoided with fabric towels. Later, the initiative was implemented at the other four KEA campuses.

In 2023, KEA recorded a reduction of 4 tons in CO₂ emissions because of the towel intervention, as well as other initiatives, and continues to drive sustainability forward. The current focus is to maintain a strong commitment to environmental responsibility and KEA aims to implement other operational sustainability initiatives in the future.

“In 2023, KEA recorded a reduction of 4 tons in CO₂ emissions because of the towel intervention, as well as other initiatives, and continues to drive sustainability forward.”



PRINCIPLES

#7

KEA will support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges





KEA's Energy Efficiency and Sustainability Initiatives

KEA has long been committed to enhancing energy efficiency and sustainability. As part of ongoing efforts, KEA undertook a major initiative to install solar panels and invest in sustainable energy solutions. This project was bolstered by a collaboration with students from the Business Economics & IT programme, which significantly accelerated the development process.

After careful evaluation, it was determined that the rear building of the Lygten campus was the most suitable location for the solar panel installation. Despite the front building having higher electricity consumption, the rear building's newly-renovated roof was better equipped to support the solar panels because the ventilation system at the front building posed structural challenges.

Prior to the installation, extensive research was conducted to ensure that both the solar panels and batteries were sustainably produced and delivered. One of the criteria was that the production should be kept local; another was that the products used should have a low CO₂ impact. The chosen solar panels run on flow battery power. This power source emerged as the optimal choice due to its use of vanadium, which is a byproduct of the iron industry that is extracted without environmental harm and does not emit heat or toxic vapours. Additionally, vanadium's production in Denmark minimises transportation-related emissions.

A key challenge with solar energy is managing excess electricity production, as it can be costly to sell surplus

energy during peak sunlight hours when the power grid is heavily taxed. To address this, an advanced algorithm has been implemented to optimise battery charging, storing electricity when it is inexpensive and utilising it during peak periods. The system prioritises direct use of solar energy to maximise sustainability benefits.

“Prior to the installation, extensive research was conducted to ensure that both the solar panels and batteries were sustainably produced and delivered.”

Excess electricity produced during low-consumption periods (during the month of July and exam periods, for example) presents challenges for utilisation. To tackle these challenges, KEA involved students from the Business Economics & IT programme in analysing energy consumption data and developing business cases for future operations. Moving forward, KEA is exploring the installation of electric-vehicle charging stations, which could both utilise and potentially generate revenue from surplus electricity — marking the next phase in KEA's commitment to sustainability. The installed solar panels now produce approximately 80,000 kWh annually, contributing to around 20% of the school's total electricity consumption.

PRINCIPLES

#7

KEA will support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges

#8

KEA will undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility

#9

KEA will encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies

Empowering Change Through Conscious Purchasing Decisions

KEA has embraced sustainable purchasing practices by prioritising Fairtrade and Swan-labelled products in its procurement strategy. Committed to sustainability, KEA is making responsible purchasing decisions that reflect ethical values and environmental responsibility. This commitment ensures that producers receive fair compensation, supporting ethical production practices that align with KEA's broader mission of sustainability.

At KEA, all coffee, cocoa, sugar, cups, and stirrers are sourced from Fairtrade-certified suppliers. Fairtrade is an ethical certification system that promotes equitable trading conditions for farmers and workers in developing countries. It aims to create a global trading system by ensuring that producers receive fair compensation for their goods. Products bearing the Fairtrade label guarantee that farmers are paid a minimum price that covers the cost of sustainable production, in addition to a premium that can be invested in community development projects such as education, healthcare, and environmental sustainability. By choosing Fairtrade products, KEA supports ethical labour practices as well as empowerment of marginalised producers, fostering long-term partnerships based on respect and transparency.

In addition to Fairtrade products, KEA has integrated another certification system, the Swan label, in our operations, especially concerning cleaning supplies and paper products. The Swan label, officially known as the Nordic Swan Ecolabel, is a trusted environmental certification in the Nordic countries that signifies a brand's commitment to sustainability and reduced environmen-

tal impact. Established in 1989, the Swan label evaluates products based on their entire lifecycle, from raw material extraction to production, usage, and disposal. This comprehensive approach ensures that products meet stringent criteria concerning energy consumption, waste management, and the use of harmful substances. Products bearing the Swan label must adhere to strict environmental standards, making them a reliable choice for KEA in prioritising eco-friendly options.

Both the Fairtrade and the Swan label are recognised for their rigorous environmental standards and offer a credible assurance of quality and sustainability. Transitioning to new, certified-sustainable products required initial investments to KEA's operations, such as installing new soap-dispensers. Changing suppliers to certified companies not only has a positive sustainability effect but also a positive financial effect as well. Daily operating expenses at all KEA campuses have decreased by 25-30%. By adopting Fairtrade-products, KEA indirectly ensures that supplier profits return directly to the producers, fostering a more equitable global trade system. Furthermore, using Swan-labelled products guarantees that campus supplies are eco-friendly and free of chemicals, contributing to a healthier campus environment.

This approach not only enhances the quality of everyday items but also reinforces KEA's commitment to ethical practices and to maintaining an environmental profile. By prioritising Fairtrade and Swan-labelled products, KEA is taking meaningful steps towards sustainability and social responsibility.

PRINCIPLES

#4

KEA will uphold the elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labour

#5

KEA will uphold the effective abolition of child labour

#7

KEA will support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges

#8

KEA will undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility

#9

KEA will encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies



Afterword

As we conclude this report of our commitment to the UN Global Compact principles, it should be clear that, for KEA, sustainability is not merely an objective; it is woven into the fabric of our institution, guiding our strategic goals and daily practices.

The stories shared in this report highlight our dedication to integrating sustainability into the entire learning experience, empowering students to become responsible future leaders and innovators in their chosen careers. From the annual Charrette focusing in 2023 on urban mining to our initiatives in sustainable fashion, hackathons addressing real-world challenges to projects promoting conscious purchasing and producing uniforms in a circular manner, KEA exemplifies a holistic approach to sustainability.

In our operational practices, we recognise that sustainability must also manifest in how we function as an organisation. Initiatives such as transitioning to reusable fabric towels, installing solar panels, and prioritising certified products showcase the proactive steps we have taken towards minimising our environmental footprint. These efforts not only contribute to reducing CO₂ emissions but also set a benchmark for ethical procurement and resource management within educational institutions.

KEA's journey towards sustainability is an ongoing endeavour that requires continual reflection, adaptation, and collaboration. By fostering partnerships with industry professionals and engaging students in meaningful projects, we are not only enhancing our educational offerings but also contributing to the broader sustainability goals set forth by the UN Global Compact.

As we look towards the future, KEA remains deeply committed to sustainability—ensuring that every student, employee, and partner is equipped to contribute to a more sustainable world. Together, we will continue to push the boundaries of innovation, responsibility, and excellence in education, research and operational practices, paving the way for a greener and more equitable future.



**Knowledge is not enough.
You need skills.**