

HENNING **LARSEN** ARCHITECTS

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# UNITED NATIONS GLOBAL COMPACT COMMUNICATION ON PROGRESS DECEMBER 2014



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Henning Larsen Architects is an international architecture company. Our goal is to create vibrant, sustainable projects that reach beyond themselves and become of durable value to the user and to the society and culture into which they are built. The company has offices in Denmark, The Faroe Islands, Norway, Germany, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Hong Kong. Henning Larsen Architects employs 270 people (as of 1 December 2014) across the seven offices.

The projects are characterised by a high degree of social responsibility – not only in relation to materials and production but also as regards good, social spaces which encourage intimacy and community. We shape, challenge and change the physical environment with the overall objective of providing the user with a strong, visionary and thoroughly framed design adapted to the specific context.

Henning Larsen Architects attaches great importance to designing environmentally friendly and energy-efficient solutions. Our ideas are developed in close collaboration with the client, users and partners in order to achieve long-lasting buildings with strong life-cycle economies. This value-based approach is the key to our design of numerous building projects around the world – from complex masterplans to architectural landmarks.

***A diverse staff***

*The employees at Henning Larsen Architects are a diverse group. As of 1 December 2014, the staff represents 36 different nationalities of which 56 % are men and 44 % are women. To promote a better understanding across cultures, Henning Larsen Architects seeks to attract interns and employees from different countries.*

*To ensure knowledge- sharing and share work and cultural experiences, the international offices arrange exchange programs and study trips.*

*Left: Henning Larsen Architects' office in Hong Kong.*

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Henning Larsen Architects continues to support the United Nations Global Compact and encourages our network to participate and implement its principles.

Since we joined the United Nations Global Compact, we have put our efforts into promoting sustainability in the planning, design and operation of our building projects. This is within our sphere of influence. We engage in research projects with universities and partnerships with private and public stakeholders. New insight and results are actively communicated to a broad audience within the building sector – from apprentices to clients and lawmakers.

In our efforts to develop a global presence, Henning Larsen Architects opened a Hong Kong office in 2014. Across global markets, there is a growing demand for a responsible approach to architecture and sustainable buildings. Being present enables us to share know-how and solutions across offices and countries and apply them on projects globally. In the coming years, knowledge-sharing will be a priority, and we are developing our knowledge base through two ongoing research projects.

To promote a construction sector which understands how sustainability can create long-term societal and economic value, we continue to invest in research and development projects. Currently, we are involved in a three-year-long research project, 'Urban Environment: Development of comfort criteria for urban planning' in collaboration with the Technical University of Denmark.

The second research project is in collaboration with The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, School of Architecture, and was launched in December 2014. Over the next three years, this project will examine the significance of light—both natural and artificial—in learning environments. The primary focus will be to reach a better understanding of how light can contribute to better learning environments.

While maintaining our focus on sustainability, we are aware of other aspects in our global projects that can be challenging due to different ethical standards, cultural values, spiritual concepts or political systems. We work to develop a systematic approach to collecting knowledge of these aspects and continue to work globally with projects in countries where architecture can have a significant impact on the development of society.



Mette Kynne Frandsen  
CEO and Partner,  
Henning Larsen Architects

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Henning Larsen Architects joined the United Nations Global Compact in 2008, to be a part of the partnership between the UN and the international corporate world with the objective of promoting the social commitment of businesses. This report is our fifth Communication on Progress (CoP) in which we address and renew our commitment to all four areas of the Global Compact: Human Rights, Labour, Environment and Anti-Corruption.

Our Communication on Progress is uploaded to the website of the United Nations Global Compact and will also be available on our website, intranet and be an integral part of how we present our company internally and in the media. In this approach, we transparently communicate our ethical standards and values, and we hope that our efforts and results will be inspirational and raise awareness among employees, colleagues, partners and clients.

In architecture, the environment is the field where companies within the industry can make the greatest difference. Our projects reflect this premise; they are based on a holistic approach to sustainability and – to a high degree – on the knowledge built by Henning Larsen Architects and our collaboration partners.



**Promoting cross-cultural meetings**

*In 2014, Henning Larsen Architects contributed to the exhibition CONTEMPORARY ARAB at Louisiana Museum of Modern Art in Denmark. The exhibition focused on our work with the public realm in an Arab context. An installation by Henning Larsen Architects featured a spatial installation filtering the light in a play between light and shadow.*

*More information at  
[www.louisiana.dk](http://www.louisiana.dk)*

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**Charter for Social Responsibility in the Building Sector**

The Association for Social Responsibility in the Building Sector was founded in November 2014 by 42 Danish companies, including Henning Larsen Architects.

The initiative aims to develop and strengthen collaboration across the building sector to raise the standards for labour conditions, sustainability and stakeholder dialogue. The association is supported by the Realdania foundation.

The platform for the association is a charter comprising six principles:

- 1 – We will systematically assess to what extent the principles of the charter are followed on projects in which we are involved.
- 2 – We will assess our collaborators' and suppliers' work with social responsibility.
- 3 – We will enter into dialogue with collaborators and stakeholders.
- 4 – We aim for sustainable solutions.
- 5 – We have good conditions of employment and work.
- 6 – We demonstrate independent and anti-corrupt practice.

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**Principle 1**

Businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights.

**Principle 2**

Businesses should make sure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses.

**Our commitment**

Henning Larsen Architects supports the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the United Nations Millennium Development Goals.

**Actions taken**

Henning Larsen Architects complies with the provisions of national Danish legislation, which are aligned with international conventions on human rights.

In addition to our commitment to prevent a negative impact on human rights, we actively support and promote the enjoyment of human rights – by the projects in which we choose to engage, by the way we design projects and by our recruitment and employment policy, including internship programs.

A widespread issue when operating an international organisation in today's globalised economy, is the lack of legislation and cultural traditions that do not have the same standards as – or even contradict – Danish legislation. We strive to support the local improvement of human rights.

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### **Responsible design**

One of our main business activities is the design of cultural and educational buildings. By their very nature, these buildings are necessarily supportive of human rights and development. Our designs embody a high degree of social responsibility – not only in relation to sustainability, the selection of materials and production, but also as regards inclusive social spaces which encourage equality and community.

### **A frontrunner in the educational sector**

The new SDU, the University of Southern Denmark, in Kolding, Denmark, is characterised by its focus on quality in every detail – as regards design, technique and craft. Daylight, human scale and dynamic spaces are key elements in the building's design. It is an example of new thinking and contains a number of innovative solutions, e.g. an intelligent façade and temperature adjusting concrete.

The spatial organisation encourages knowledge-sharing and social interaction across the organisation. The atrium constitutes a large common and synergy-creating space which promotes formal and informal meetings. The building opens up towards the city and is designed as an integrated part of the surrounding society.



### ***Studying in open space***

*SDU, the University of Southern Denmark, in Kolding, Denmark, opened in September 2014. The new building supports different teaching and learning methods, new ways of teaching and is a flexible, open and state-of-the-art teaching environment.*

More information at  
[www.sdu.dk](http://www.sdu.dk) and  
[www.henninglarsen.com](http://www.henninglarsen.com)



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### **Multidisciplinary exchange programme**

In January and February 2014, Henning Larsen Architects hosted five Australian students as part of the exchange programme MADE (Multidisciplinary Australian Danish Exchange) by the Opera House in Sydney, Australia.

The students spent six weeks in Copenhagen, working on the interdisciplinary project "A Eurovision to last a century." The task was to identify and analyse the exact potential of hosting the Eurovision Song Contest in Copenhagen – and subsequently chart the specific development opportunities.

MADE is a cooperation between Sydney Opera House Trust and The Royal Danish Academy Schools of Architecture, Design and Conservation and in Denmark is funded by Bikubenfonden, Dreyers Fond and Det Obelske Familiefond. In Australia the programme is funded by Arup Pty Limited, Steensen Varming (Australia) Pty Limited and The NSW Architects Registration Board.



### **Cross-border ideas**

*As part of the MADE programme five Australian students interned at Henning Larsen Architects in 2014: Laura Craft, Robert Martin, Jennifer McMaster, Olivia Savio-Matev, and Matthew Wells.*

*More information at  
[www.sydneyoperahouse.com](http://www.sydneyoperahouse.com)*



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**Principle 3**

Businesses should uphold the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining.

**Principle 4**

Businesses should uphold the elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour.

**Principle 5**

Businesses should uphold the effective abolition of child labour.

**Principle 6**

Businesses should uphold the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.

**Our commitment**

Henning Larsen Architects supports the International Labour Organisation's Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and the United Nations Millennium Development Goals.

**Actions taken**

The Danish labour market is largely self-regulated by collective agreements concluded between trade unions and employers' organisations and, to a lesser degree, statutorily regulated by the state and EU bodies.

Henning Larsen Architects participates in, respects and supports this system through our membership in the Danish Association of Architectural Firms, which collaborates with The Danish Union of Salaried Architects and the Danish Architects' Association.

These organisations safeguard and balance individual and commercial interests as regards collective bargaining, legislation concerning salaried employees, labour market, industrial and educational policies etc. Through collaborative efforts, Henning Larsen Architects upholds the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining.

The international offices of Henning Larsen Architects are subsidiaries and comply with local legislation and collective agreements.

All employees are offered the opportunity for further training. This is a requirement according to the Danish collective agreement, but the staff outside Denmark are also offered further training.

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**Principle 7**

Businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges.

**Principle 8**

Businesses should undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility.

**Principle 9**

Businesses should encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies.

**Our commitment**

Henning Larsen Architects is committed to protecting the environment through adoption of voluntary charters as well as through sectoral and international initiatives, including Nordic Built and Concito, the green think-tank of Denmark.

**Actions taken**

Henning Larsen Architects supports scientific research. The environmental impact of existing building stock as well as that of new buildings must be reduced. Incorporating scientific knowledge on climate and energy into the design process adds a new quality to architectural design.

Cross-disciplinary collaborations within Henning Larsen Architects have dealt with both existing knowledge and new research – with the primary objective of promoting a holistic appreciation of the environmental and energy-related aspects of building. An important step has been taken in terms of bringing together professions that usually work separately.

Knowledge of and access to state-of-the-art knowledge and developments are decisive factors in relation to architecture. Therefore, Henning Larsen Architects takes part in building, collecting and sharing new knowledge about sustainability.

Henning Larsen Architects currently employs two industrial PhD students conducting their research within the office. In collaboration with the Technical University of Denmark, one PhD student conducts research on urban environments and the development of measurable and quantifiable comfort criteria for urban planning. In collaboration with The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts' School of Architecture, the other PhD student conducts research on improving learning environments through lighting.

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### **Life Cycle Assessment**

Henning Larsen Architects acted as knowledge partner on a new catalogue concerning the use of sustainable materials with a long lifespan. The catalogue was compiled by the Danish Building Research Institute and functions as a reference tool in the selection of building components.

One hundred of the most common composite materials used in both new construction and renovation was assessed according to its lifecycle.

Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) evaluates the products from cradle to grave: from the extraction of raw materials and natural resources, through the production and use of the product. This includes maintenance and reparations, and furthermore considers the final disposal and possible reuse of the discarded product.



### **Sustainable materials**

*The less strain on the environment, the longer the lifespan of construction materials, and the easier it is to reuse, the better the assessment of the material is in relation to sustainability.*

More information at  
[www.sbi.dk](http://www.sbi.dk)

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### **Sustainable, social housing**

Henning Larsen Architects is leading a team in the systematic analysing, evaluating and valuing of the well-known Danish residential area, the Bellahøj Houses, located just north of Copenhagen. With the project “Retelling Bellahøj,” the team is developing a vision for renovating and upgrading the residential complex.

The strategy considers all levels from the houses in general to the connection with the rest of the city, as well as the details on each building. Architectonically, the connection between the buildings as well as their individual characteristics will be recreated or enhanced, while maintaining the feeling of an integrated whole.

The team consists of Henning Larsen Architects, Erik Møller Arkitekter, GHB Landskabsarkitekter, Orbicon and Rekommanderet.



### **Retelling Bellahøj**

*The vision for the renovation of the Bellahøj Houses is not only to upgrade the buildings to healthy and low-energy housing but also to recreate Bellahøj as a residential area with a strong identity – a place where the residents feel proud to live and others dream of living.*

More information:  
[www.kab-bolig.dk](http://www.kab-bolig.dk) and  
[www.henninglarsen.com](http://www.henninglarsen.com)

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### Design with knowledge

Henning Larsen Architects has, in collaboration with a team consisting of Tredje Natur, MOE and Railway Procurement Agency, won Frederikssund municipality's architecture competition to design a regional train station and new quarter in the future town of Vinge in Denmark.

Detailed wind simulations of the platform have been conducted in order to ensure that the partially-open platform does not lead to extreme wind patterns. Wind analyses have been conducted on the landscape bridge and on the planned building volumes surrounding the station. These analyses have informed the refinement of the design and minimised the disturbance of strong winds.

The form will be constructed of in-situ concrete. Rain water is channeled by gutters which are integrated into the surface and will be collected in tanks at the edges of the building. This overall drainage strategy ensures a dry and anti-slip surface that does not compromise the aesthetics of the structure.

In addition, the long life-span of concrete will contribute to an economically sustainable city space for many years.



### Optimised microclimate

One of the intentions of the elliptical bowl-shaped design of the new regional train station in Vinge is to protect people on the platform by diverting the wind prevailing south-westerly across the building. The partially-covered platform offers commuters protection from sun, rain and snow.

More information:

[www.byenvinge.dk](http://www.byenvinge.dk),

[www.frederikssund.dk](http://www.frederikssund.dk) and

[www.henninglarsen.com](http://www.henninglarsen.com)

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### Distributing knowledge

Henning Larsen Architects is developing educational material about sustainability to be used in the building education curriculum of the Danish Technical Colleges. The material will focus on essential components of sustainability parameters such as daylight, materials, energy use and indoor climate—all crucial considerations in sustainable building.

Craftsmen are the direct and consulting link for private homeowners when they renovate or build new houses. That makes them a key information channel to increase knowledge about sustainable building among private homeowners.

In the first phase of the project's development, Henning Larsen Architects will identify needs, existing knowledge and knowledge gaps among teachers and students. Subsequently, the development of the educational material will be initiated, and scheduled for completion in 2015.

The project is supported by a grant from the Danish Homeowner's Association Investment Fund, GI.



More information:  
[www.gi.dk](http://www.gi.dk) and  
[www.byud.dk](http://www.byud.dk)

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**Principle 10**

Businesses should work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery.

**Our commitment**

Henning Larsen Architects supports The United Nations Convention Against Corruption. We fully comply with Danish and international legislation. A respectful and open relationship with our clients, employees and the societies in which we work is essential in all our projects.

**Actions taken**

We have not – directly or indirectly – been involved in any form of corruption.



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Henning Larsen Architects supports the Nordic Built Charter. The charter is an initiative aimed at accelerating the development of sustainable building concepts. The programme combines key Nordic strengths, provides attractive and effective arenas for collaboration and realises concrete projects that demonstrate world-class scalable solutions.

The ten principles of the Nordic Built Charter include a focus on aesthetically appealing design while maintaining the highest possible standards of sustainability, which is central to all Henning Larsen Architects projects.

Architect Louis Becker, Partner and Director at Henning Larsen Architects is one of the leaders from the Nordic building sector committed to implementing the ten principles in their strategies and work, and taking the necessary steps to deliver competitive solutions for sustainable construction.

**The ten principles:**

We will create a built environment that:

1. is made for people and promotes quality of life;
2. pushes the limits of sustainable performance, as a result of an innovative mind-set and high level of knowledge;
3. merges urban living with the qualities of nature;
4. achieves zero emissions over its life cycle;
5. is functional, smart and aesthetically appealing, building on the best of the Nordic design tradition;
6. is robust, durable, flexible and timeless - built to last;
7. utilises local resources and is adapted to local conditions;
8. is produced and maintained through partnerships founded on transparent collaboration across borders and disciplines;
9. employs concepts that are scalable and used globally;
10. profits people, business and the environment.



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