

Sustainability Report 2020



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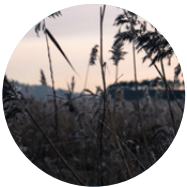
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Covid-19

The past year has been a seismic one for the whole world as the Covid-19 pandemic hit. It has brought great loss to many people and changed the way we do virtually everything. Things we previously took for granted suddenly became impossible, and at times even dangerous. The situation has had impact on most businesses, and the AW Group is no exception. As a result, the introduction to this year's sustainability report is a short summary of what Covid-19 has meant for the AW Group. We hope that it will help you when reading the rest of the report.



Adapting to the market situation

At the beginning of 2020 it was business as usual and everything was going according to plan, but when Covid-19 hit in March it came as something of a surprise. Our industry is generally among the first to experience an economic downturn and it quickly became clear that this was not the kind of regular drop in the market that we had experienced before – this was something else entirely. Expert predictions and our own KPIs indicated a 25–30% drop in revenue. How the future would unfold, how long the situation would last and how much worse it would get were all very uncertain. We had to plan for the worst and adjust our organization to the new market situation. Our goal was to minimize the negative effect on our main stakeholders, such as internal employees, clients, consultants and shareholders, balancing financial sustainability with social responsibility.

Parting with talented co-workers

Large parts of our workforce were included in local short-term labor programs during the spring of 2020. But this was not enough, and eventually we had to begin the hard and painful work of reorganizing and making redundancies which in the end resulted in parting with 254 of our co-workers. To support co-workers that had to leave due to the recession, a comprehensive program of supports was put in place to help them find new opportunities, and by year end 89 percent of those who needed to leave us now had found a new occupation. As the market recovered quicker than expected, we are glad to have welcomed several of these colleagues back to us.

We have worked hard to protect our consultants by ensuring that as few assignments as possible have been terminated. We have taken part in various government support packages for short-term work allowances and in some cases even revised our business agreements and given temporary discounts to our clients. In 2020 we contracted 7408 consultants to various assignments, and despite our efforts, we had to part from 236 consultants with permanent contract as their assignments were terminated.

Ensuring a safe work environment

Within two weeks of the coronavirus outbreak, we had switched to fully remote working in all parts of the AW Group. We quickly began planning for a safe return to our offices for the co-workers that needed it. The project was named Safe back to work and aimed at ensuring a safe both physical and psychosocial work environment for our employees and at the same time prevent the spread of Covid-19.

Evolving from a crisis

During 2020 we have gone from business as usual to business unusual, to changing mode, and finally to come-back mode during the fall. Now, in the beginning of 2021 we have recovered, and this crisis has left us more resilient for the future. With a new organization in place, we are more efficient today than we were at the beginning of 2020, and during the year we have presented a number of new business models and entered new business areas. The adaptation of digital technologies has had a positive effect both on our environment, our efficiency and on our quality of life. Less time spent travelling and commuting has meant more time for other things in life while reducing our collective emissions. We have initiated the important task of Reinventing Best place to work securing our employer brand and our employee engagement, both now and in the future.

The Covid-19 pandemic is not over, but we enter 2021 stronger and more experienced. We know that we can handle the challenges and we know that we will endure.

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Introduction

It all started with three friends in Sweden and their idea to match students with companies in need of part-time staff. More than twenty years later, the AW Group consists of several companies working in six different countries and as we grow, our responsibility and ability to do good in the world grows as well. We want to be a company that has a positive impact and that contributes toward building a better society, and that is summed up in our promise to our employees, or clients and everyone around us – we make people grow.

We are AW Group

Our brands share a common history and a joint future. We share the same vision, we are driven by the same core values, and we always help each other move forward. We are AW Group.

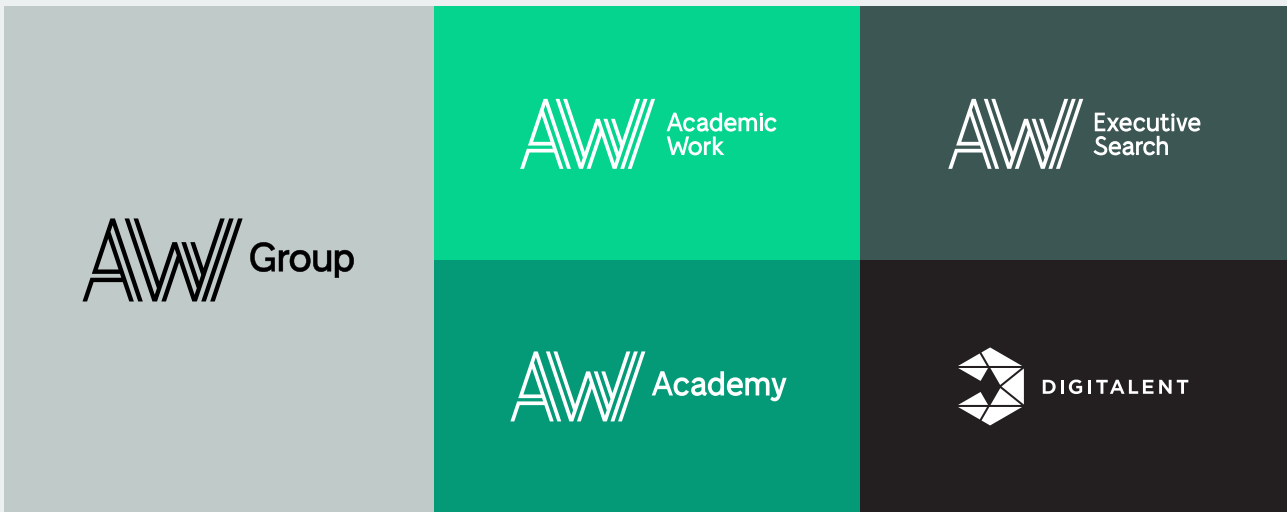
We believe in the potential for brilliance that resides in all human being and that they are eager to grow. This belief has guided us from the start, and we attribute much of our success to it. Understanding and rewarding ambition are also central to our corporate philosophy. By surrounding ourselves with ambitious people, we have gone from a small start-up to an international business family. We build our businesses on great people and our success is purely the result of attracting the right candidates, co-workers, and consultants. We believe that we can help businesses to develop and grow by helping people develop and grow themselves. That is why our mission is: *we make people grow.*

The beginning of the journey

In 1998, three friends in Sweden had an idea to connect their job-seeking schoolmates with companies in need of part-time staff, and Academic Work was born. The company was founded on the conviction that people can grow – at work and in life. It is our reason for being, and this belief is as central today as it was when the company was started in 1998.

More than 20 years later, what has changed is our scope as a business and our capacity to contribute to society. Today, we have a much larger scope and capacity as a business and contributor to society. AW Group is now present in six markets: Sweden, Finland, Norway, Denmark, Germany and Switzerland. What was once a single brand has evolved into a one-stop-shop ecosystem of partner companies called AW Group, consisting of four different brands: Academic Work, Digitalent, AW Academy and AW Executive Search.





Together, we combine our shared expertise in developing people and businesses through building skills, processes, technology and data to deliver our clients' talent needs across several areas: young professionals, experienced professionals, life-long learning, technology solutions and HR services.

Our companies

Academic Work – Our staffing and recruitment specialists of young professionals.

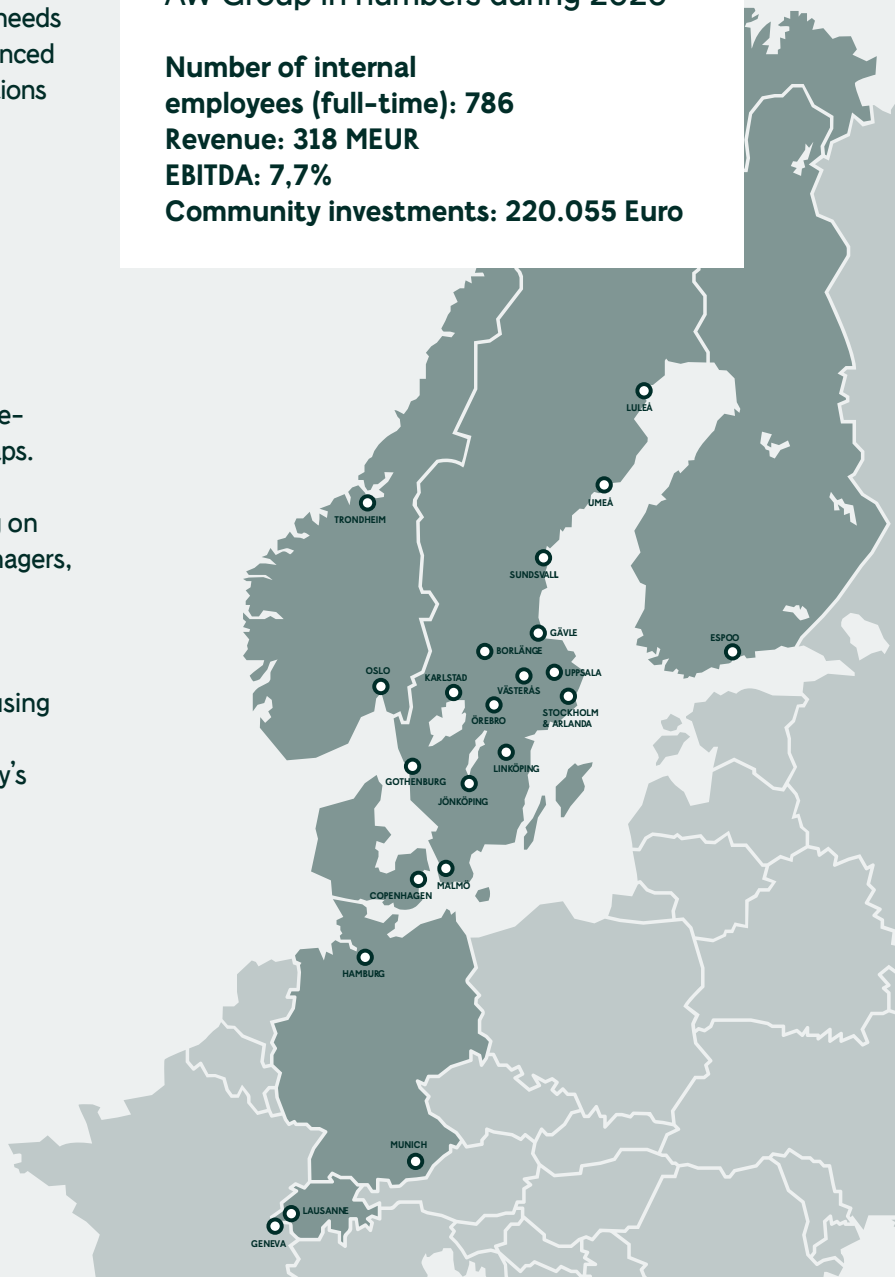
AW Academy – Our next-generation school that challenges the education industry by offering time-efficient and qualitative trainings to close skills gaps.

AW Executive Search – Our company focusing on recruiting experienced and skilled executive managers, on a permanent or interim basis, in the middle-management segment.

Digitalent – A new breed of IT consultancy focusing on meeting clients' combined needs for talent growth, senior expertise and leadership in today's world of digital disruption.

AW Group in numbers during 2020

Number of internal employees (full-time): 786
Revenue: 318 MEUR
EBITDA: 7,7%
Community investments: 220.055 Euro



A word from our CEO

Looking back over the most challenging year we have experienced as a company. I cannot help but be impressed by all the great people working within our organization. Faced with a situation never before seen in our lifetime, we have learned so much from this experience.

We have countless examples of how we have turned obstacles into opportunities, and the digitalization of our work methods has accelerated to the extent that we will never go back to working as we did before the pandemic hit. And even though it has been a bumpy road, we have for sure come out from this as a better company in so many ways.

In the spring, we knew very little about what we could expect from the rest of the year and the predictions were not looking bright. It was clear that in many parts of our organization we were too large for the market demand. Like many other companies in our industry, we were forced to make the difficult decision to let go of co-workers. We are very grateful for the support that governments made available to companies to be able to secure jobs for many employees. After the summer, we started to see signs of a slowly-recovering market, and this turnaround came sooner than expected.

We launched an outplacement program called *exAW Support Program*, which was an effort to ease the situation for our colleagues in their search for a new job. I am very happy that 89 percent today have a new occupation, and that we have been able to welcome several of these colleagues back. The Covid-19 pandemic greatly affected our lives in many aspects and our working lives in particular. How and where we do our jobs and how we interact with each other while doing them have all changed – flexible, remote and digital work is here to stay enabling a better work-life balance.



We had to embrace a situation we have never experienced before. Succeeding in this new world of work requires new ways of thinking. We are currently working with a project to reinvent the *Best place to work* to ensure that we live up to new demands and digital ways of working. We have acquired new skills in digital meetings and new behaviors which will lead to less travelling.

The biggest challenges we face on this earth require global collaboration to find solutions. It was impressive to see scientists, companies and governments coming together to produce and deliver vaccines with a speed that no one thought possible just a few months prior. It shows that if we put our minds to it, we can find solutions to the sustainability challenges we are facing – and that gives me hope for the future.

Johan Skarborg
CEO of AW Group

About this report

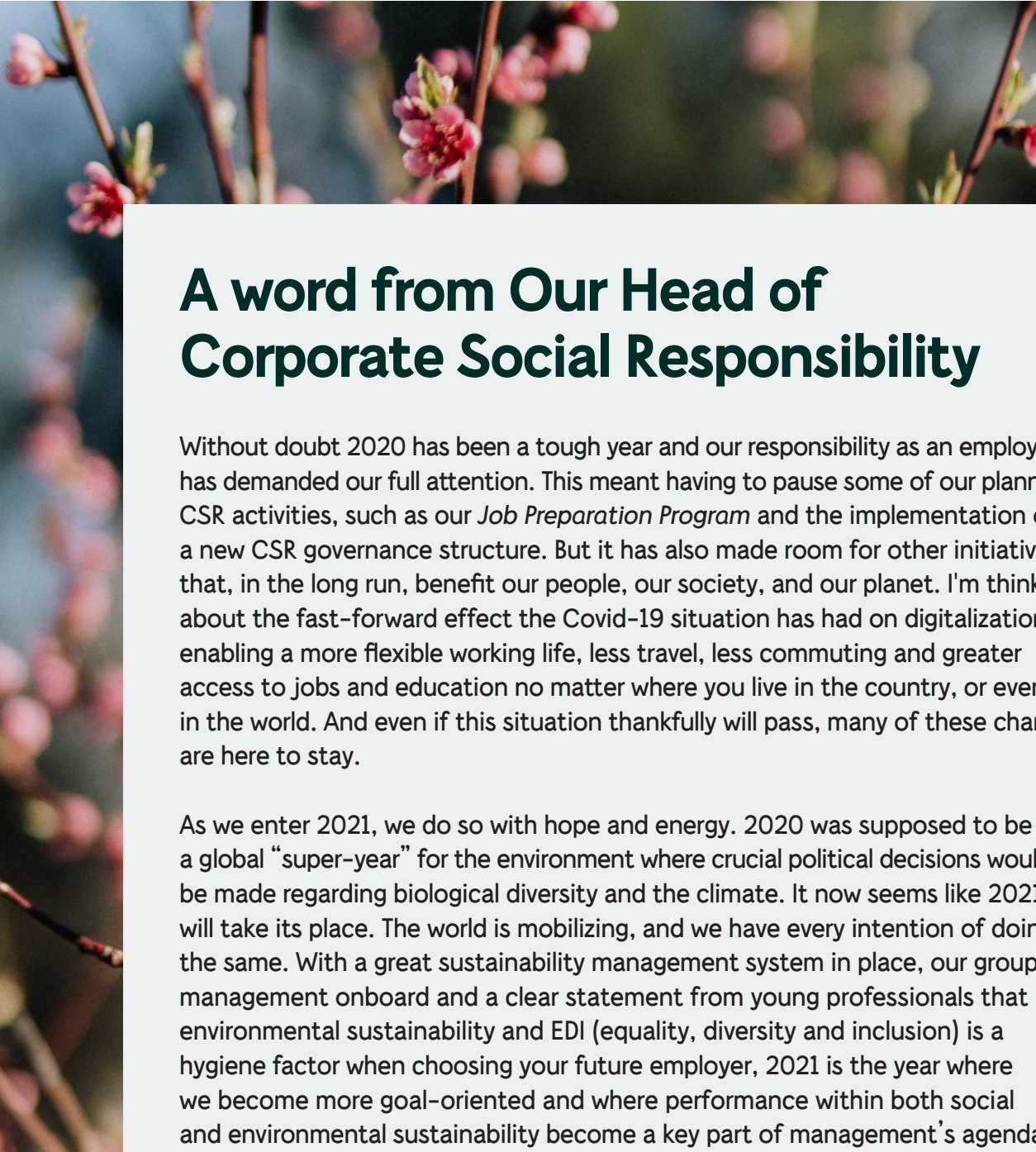
Covering the entire AW Group and intended for all our stakeholders, the purpose of this report is to communicate our sustainability work from a social, environmental, and financial perspective. We also share our view on human rights and how we contribute to the UN Global Sustainability Goals.

The GRI (Global Reporting Initiative) is an independent, international organization that has produced a set of standards on sustainability reporting. These standards are focused on how companies communicate their impact on sustainability issues with regard to stakeholders and what they deem important. This report is inspired by the GRI Standards' Core option but has not been certified by an external body.

Our agenda for sustainability is derived from a continuous dialogue with our various stakeholders. We have used those discussions to assess topics within the GRI sustainability framework that best apply to AW Group.

As we are constantly working to extend and develop our data set, the scope of the numbers presented in this report will vary. For us, this report is a chance to summarize our yearly performance in terms of sustainability and to discover gaps that need our attention. The reporting period stretches from January 1st–December 31st, 2020.





A word from Our Head of Corporate Social Responsibility

Without doubt 2020 has been a tough year and our responsibility as an employer has demanded our full attention. This meant having to pause some of our planned CSR activities, such as our *Job Preparation Program* and the implementation of a new CSR governance structure. But it has also made room for other initiatives that, in the long run, benefit our people, our society, and our planet. I'm thinking about the fast-forward effect the Covid-19 situation has had on digitalization, enabling a more flexible working life, less travel, less commuting and greater access to jobs and education no matter where you live in the country, or even in the world. And even if this situation thankfully will pass, many of these changes are here to stay.

As we enter 2021, we do so with hope and energy. 2020 was supposed to be a global “super-year” for the environment where crucial political decisions would be made regarding biological diversity and the climate. It now seems like 2021 will take its place. The world is mobilizing, and we have every intention of doing the same. With a great sustainability management system in place, our group management onboard and a clear statement from young professionals that environmental sustainability and EDI (equality, diversity and inclusion) is a hygiene factor when choosing your future employer, 2021 is the year where we become more goal-oriented and where performance within both social and environmental sustainability become a key part of management’s agenda.



Lina Tunek
Head of Corporate Social Responsibility, AW Group

Respecting human rights

Recognizing our responsibility to respect and defend human rights in all aspects of our business is an intrinsic part of the AW Group's culture. As a powerful company in our sector, and thus an important leader, we want to set high standards for ourselves and others.

Everything we do within the AW Group is guided by our core values: share energy, beat yesterday, and show heart. These values are the essence of who we are and what we do. They also guide us in how we manage change, share best practices, and show respect for one another and the people around us. These core values are integrated into our code of conduct, which applies to all our co-workers and consultants, as well as our suppliers.

Our code of conduct integrates the United Nations' Global Compact Principles and ILO's fundamental conventions of human rights at work: freedom of association and effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining, the elimination of forced or compulsory labor, the abolition of child labor, and the elimination of discrimination in respect to employment and occupation.



ILO's fundamental conventions
of human rights



AW Group & The Global Sustainability Goals

In 2015, world leaders agreed to take action towards 17 sustainable development goals in order to put the world on a better path by 2030. These goals aim to fight poverty and inequality and to address the urgency of climate change. Guided by these goals, it's now up to everyone – governments, businesses, and world citizens – to reach this achievement.

AW Group fully supports each of the 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) set by the United Nations. Even though these goals are all intertwined and dependent on each other, we have chosen to focus on the five highlighted goals below. It is within those goals that we can have the greatest impact, since they are most closely connected to our business, our know-how and in the interests of our stakeholders.



4. Quality Education

- Zambia – *Community Education Program, The Kubala Girls Sponsorship Program and Skills and Tertiary Training*
- Building skills and competence by AW Academy
- Climate investment: conserving Khasi Hills rain forest



5. Gender Equality

- Gender equality in managerial positions
- Zambia – *Community Education Program, The Kubala Girls Sponsorship Program and Skills and Tertiary Training*
- Climate investment: conserving Khasi Hills rainforest



8. Decent work & economic growth

- Innovation and technology
- Zambia – *Community Education Program, The Kubala Girls Sponsorship Program and Skills and Tertiary Training*
- Respecting human rights
- Contributing to a sustainable and dynamic labor market



12. Responsible consumption & production

- Sustainable sourcing
- Energy consumption and emissions



13. Climate action

- Climate investment: conserving Khasi Hills rainforest
- Planet

Stakeholder dialogue

The AW Group has many mechanisms to communicate with our different stakeholders, both from an internal and external perspective. We use a variety of surveys, meeting structures and processes to gain a broader understanding of the experiences and perspectives of our main stakeholders. The input we get from these groups gives us valuable information and ensures that we set the right targets for our work.

STAKEHOLDER	TYPE OF DIALOUGE/CHANNEL
Clients	SKI (Svenskt Kvalitets Index), F2F client meetings, client experience survey (CX-Survey), monthly NPS survey
Consultants	Yearly satisfaction survey, monthly NPS survey, F2F consultant meetings
Candidates – Young Professionals	YPAI (Young Professional Attraction Index), NPS survey
Internal employees	Weekly office vibe, monthly 1:1 meeting, yearly performance review
Shareholders	Annual general meeting, quarterly shareholder update
Suppliers	Supplier assessment/supplier evaluation
NGO	Quarterly financial and narrative reports, yearly budget process, visits on sight, follow-up meetings

Summary 2020

71% of our total spend
is from sustainable suppliers

16.067

Young professionals got the chance to influence tomorrow's workplaces in the Nordic countries, Germany and Switzerland through YPAI



In 2020 we were
an official support
partner of Helsinki
Pride



We are changing
our cars into
electrical
hybrid cars



We speeded up
digitalization, a great
development for both
people & planet

8,7
Great!

Our employees feel they
have a great relationship
with their manager
– Benchmark 8,2

We created new careers for

408

people through AW Academy

We donated 1% of our net profit

to community investments in social projects



SKI, Academic Work
Sweden

**Most satisfied
clients 10 years
in a row!**

*We made our first climate
investment as compensation
for emissions caused by our
business: € 22.543*

The Covid-19 travel restrictions and remote work
has resulted in a **72% decrease CO² emissions**
related to company travel & company cars and
a **36% decrease in energy consumption**



7.483

Number of jobs we've created for young professionals in 2020 through Academic Work

72 in client NPS

2

People & Society

Our aim is a better world where people feel needed, have equal opportunities and live in a society where they can prosper, and social sustainability is about our impact and contribution to that world. We believe in growth and development of both people and societies and are committed to providing opportunities for that. We contribute to a sustainable and dynamic labor market characterized by equality, diversity and inclusion, creating the best place to work and engaging in both our own communities as well as others around the globe. We want to contribute to strong societies and inspire others to do the same.



Best place to work

The AW Group is driven by a shared purpose: to build businesses on great people and to make people grow. Creating and developing a strong, positive corporate culture is one of our central long-term ambitions. This is how we become the best place to work*.

Engaged co-workers

Engaged co-workers are our most important asset and they are at the heart of our strategy. We believe engaged co-workers contribute to a positive culture, which in turn facilitates better collaborations and creates a better workplace for everyone. We define engagement as the emotional commitment an employee has to the organization and its goals. Having a sense of purpose and a desire to meaningfully contribute to the organization is the key to creating high levels of engagement.

I want to build a company where everyone feels they wouldn't want to work anywhere else.



Johan Skarborg
CEO of AW Group

We are data-driven

Employee engagement is so important to us that we measure it every week. Using an external survey tool, we send our co-workers a weekly pulse survey and collect their honest feedback. This allows us to act on issues quickly and to measure trends over time. These instant updates allow an agile approach to employee engagement, and they make our actions relevant and timely.

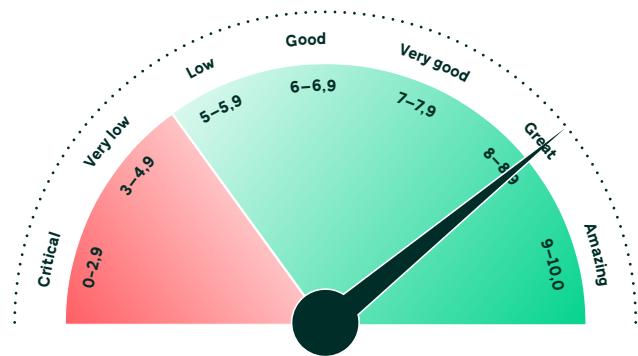
Our tool provides us with an Overall Engagement Score that is a weighted average score of 10 key metrics over 90 days. All the entities within the AW Group can be compared with each other and an external benchmark on both the overall score and various sub-metrics. This enables us to identify challenges as well as best practices to share with each other.

* This section of the report refers to internal employees only.

Coming out of 2020 and reflecting over what happened, I am very proud about how we managed everything during the crisis, especially with regard to the turbulent situation for our co-workers. We are still in a pandemic, but we continue to overcome barriers and challenges together every day. We are truly reinventing ourselves as a company and finding new ways to live our culture. Everyone is contributing in a fantastic way!



Per Wennberg
Group People & Performance Director, AW Group



Overall Engagement 8,1 – Great

Benchmark 7,6

Internal employees (full-time)
in numbers: (31st of Dec 2020)

Number of full-time employees: 786
Number of new hires: 116
Employee turnover: 58%

GRI 401 – 1 New employees and employee turnover

Average age of employees: 31 years
Median age of employees: 30 years

GRI 405 – 1 Diversity of governance bodies and employees

* The high employee turnover is a result of the layoffs that we have had to make due to the recession.



Employee engagement during Covid-19

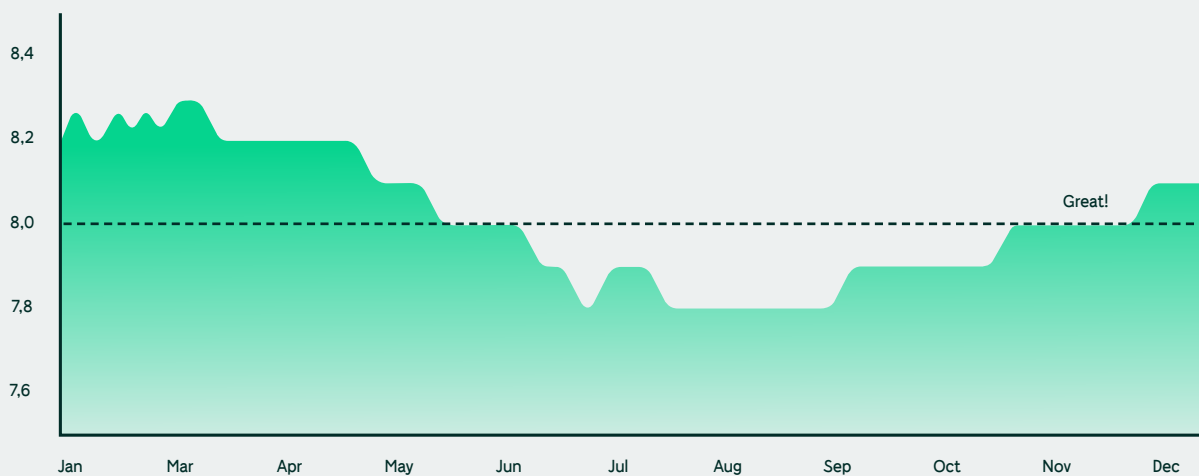
Since AW started using this tool in 2016 we've had a score of at least 8.0 with peaks of 8.6. Looking back at the circumstances and effects of Covid-19, we see the overall engagement score has been affected. A declining trend started in April as short-term work as well as organizational down-sizing was communicated to several parts of the organization. The trend started to turn upwards again in September and the year has ended in the same level as it started. These live updates on the organization's engagement and direct feedback from co-workers have been an essential support for our management teams as they have switched to a more remote way of leading their teams.

30 min/day

To give us all more energy and strengthen our well-being in the dark season, in times of social distancing and remote work we implemented a temporary benefit* of 30 minutes of wellness every day.



Employee engagement trend during 2020



* The benefit is active until we start working from the office again and includes all our Swedish co-workers.



Relationship with manager

Benchmark 8,2



First class leadership

One of the keys to encouraging employee engagement is first-class leadership. We define first-class leadership as the ability to achieve results by balancing clarity and energy. It's also about understanding and managing behaviors and situations with strong communication. Leadership development and management succession planning is crucial for future success. We need managers with the ability to set ambitious goals, recognize potential and motivate team members. They also must improve our everyday performance and be supportive of future career choices. We believe in the abilities of every individual, which is why we give our new co-workers big responsibilities early on. Many of our co-workers become managers for the first time while working with us. This means we need to thoroughly support and train our managers, ensuring they have the tools they need to succeed.

We aim to recruit the majority of our managers internally. In this way, we show our employees that we care about their professional development. This helps to build a culture of trust, which in turn increases engagement and encourages employees to remain with our company. We work actively on succession planning to ensure we have a strong manager pipeline that supports our growth.

In 2020 we made all e-learning on leadership accessible for all co-workers. We have also updated all leadership development training and plans for a roll-out in 2021, adapted to a digitalized concept.

Career, growth & development

We recruit and develop employees who want to contribute to the future of the AW Group by constantly challenging them and our existing structures. Having committed co-workers is crucial to operating an effective organization. All AW Group companies must be companies where people can grow, develop and build successful careers.

Learning and development

To support our co-worker's development, we provide them with learning and development customized for the role they are in. The learning methods include digital learning activities, peer-to-peer learning and on-site training. Development opportunities are accessible to our co-workers based on their individual preferences and needs, which gives them the power to pursue their own development. By providing our co-workers with tools to support self-development, they can customize their growth to drive towards professional and personal goals. This gives our co-workers the chance to either deepen their knowledge and skills in existing roles, or to prepare themselves for future career preferences.

In 2020 we opened up our learning library to all co-workers, enabling them to access all training modules and develop within the fields and competencies desired. We also identified an increasing need for self-leadership in the new world of work, and we will intensify development of such training in 2021.

Number of digital courses

694 2020

565 2019

320 2018

The total number of digital courses increased from 320 in 2018 to 565 in 2019. Digital programs and courses are now accessible for all co-workers to develop their knowledge and skills within topics ranging from communication and leadership to self-development and project management.

GRI 404 – 2 Programs for upgrading employee skills and transition assistance programs



Internal career opportunities

We expect our co-workers to play an active role in their own development. To encourage co-workers to take control of their AW Group journey, we use our intranet *Home* to visualize the career opportunities we offer. This is communicated through our career pages, article posts, and inspiring stories about co-workers who have taken different career paths and grown through them.

AW Group's international presence enables employees to go abroad and carry their competencies, cultures, and best practices across borders. That is the reason we have a Global Mobility Program which is our way of supporting mobility, exploration, and exchange of knowledge within AW Group. The program consists of a global mobility policy, guidelines, and a support function to facilitate international assignments.

Highlighting career opportunities has not been a top priority during 2020. When Covid-19 struck at the beginning of the year, we shifted our focus from growth to adapting the organization to the changing market.

Number of hours spent on learning

10.939 hours

The total number of hours spent by employees in online training.

As a result, most of our internal recruitments were put on hold, with reduced career opportunities as a result. However, as we leave 2020 and enter 2021 in a positive trend there are new and exciting career opportunities opening up for our co-workers.

Fair & proper employment conditions

For us, fair and proper employment conditions are fundamental in achieving business results. We follow legislation governing the labor market in the countries where we operate. That means we are compliant with legislation regarding employee protection, working conditions and compensation regulations.

Staffing industry-specific legislation are the Agency Workers Directive and the principle of equal treatment which has been implemented in the countries where we operate in through local legislation. Compliance with the directive ensures that employed consultants in staffing companies have the same elementary employment and working conditions as if the consultant were employed directly by the client. We follow the local legislation in all our markets, either through collective bargaining agreements or internal processes and audits to secure compliance.

We offer market-oriented salaries and make provisions and offsets for pensions and annual leave according to collective bargaining agreements or local legislation.

During the spring as necessary actions in regard to Covid-19, parts of our workforce were included in local short-term labour programs. We have fulfilled and complied with the requirements for receiving the support. Total amount received: **€ 7 182 431**

Pension contributions

Indicator	2018	2019	2020
% of salary contributed	7,1%	7,2%	7,5%

GRI 201 – 3 Defined benefit plan obligations and other retirement plans





A safe return to work

During 2020 we met a new challenge – how do we create a safe and secure work environment in our offices during a pandemic? As a result of the Covid-19 outbreak in March, all employees began working from home and we started planning for a safe return to our offices, both for our employees and the societies in which they live. The project was named *Safe back to work* and became a part of everyday life during the rest of 2020 as we navigated through the new normal.

The *Safe back to work* concept

As an employer, we have a responsibility for both the physical and psychosocial work environment. Our intention has always been that our offices should be open for the employees that wanted or needed to work from the office when local restrictions allow. The *Safe back to work* concept is based on the WHO's information about how the spread of infection takes place and is a part of our vision to be the *Best place to work*.

A shared responsibility

As employers, we must do everything we can to ensure a safe workplace, and for us to succeed our employees must also take their individual responsibility – this is a message that we have worked actively to communicate continuously in various forums.



6 areas of interventions

In order to avoid spread of infection to the most we divided the *Safe back to work* concept into the following 6 areas of interventions:

1. Separation of space and time

Working in shifts, separated seating, and a limited number of people in meeting rooms.

2. Hygiene and cleaning

Increased cleaning of premises, hygiene zones, plexiglass shielding in receptions, face masks.

3. Personal health measures

Transportation to work, staying home when having symptoms, testing.

4. Policies and behaviors

Updated co-worker policies, risk assessment processes, safe at work in a cultural context.

5. Co-worker communication and training

E-learning and printed and digital media.

6. Management Communication

Clear connection to culture in all communication, clarity in decisions, consensus in the management team, and taking our safety worries and those of co-workers seriously.

How did it go?

In addition to working actively with the *Safe back to work* concept, we have also continuously listened to the authorities' recommendations and, not least, the feedback of our co-workers. Although a clear majority have been happy to work in the office, it has been just as crucial for us to show consideration for those who have not shared that experience. Therefore, we have also continuously communicated that it is just as okay to work from home for those who prefer it.

Returning to the offices was not an individual event in 2020. Instead, we see that it will continue to be relevant, with both work from home and a safe way to work in the offices for a good part of 2021, and perhaps even longer. Therefore, *Safe back to work* is now going from being a project to becoming a more lasting approach, which we will continue to call *Safe at work*.



I understand what is expected of me in line with the *Safe back to work* concept.



ExAW



During this year AW Group has been forced to make the difficult decision to adjust the size of our organization. This situation was solely a result of the sudden drop in market demand caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

We build our businesses on great people and we were deeply affected by these circumstances, not only at a financial level, but also on an emotional level. The people that had to leave us were not just appreciated colleagues – they were also our friends and that is why *exAW Support Program* was initiated.

The aim of the program was to support our former colleagues in their efforts to find new jobs. We believe that the most valuable asset we can share with our former co-workers is our large network of clients, suppliers and co-workers. Through the *exAW Support Program* we activated our organization and provided assistance through our large contact network.

The *exAW Support Program* was built by two parts, *exAW Talent Directory* and *exAW Talent Support*.

- ***exAW Talent Directory*** is our way of sharing our large network. It is a platform where all *exAW* co-workers, who accepted to be part of it, were presented, making it easy for organizations and people in our network to access and share the profiles.
- ***exAW Talent Support*** is our outplacement program through which we actively tried to match our former co-workers with clients inside our network. The support also included easy-to-use templates, offer to perform and get feedback on psychometric tests and access to inspirational and educational how-to films.

In addition to *exAW Support Program*, we encouraged and engaged the entire organization to do what they could by utilizing their own networks and social platforms. This resulted in a large amount of profile sharing, recommendations, kudos and endorsements.

Closing out the year, we are happy to see that **89 percent of those who needed to leave us now have a new occupation**, and we are glad to have welcomed several of these colleagues back to us.

The exAW gave me opportunities to talk about my future and what I can do better for job interviews. My AW Matcher, Kathinka, was a great support in this and gave me the option to discuss ideas and thoughts regarding what jobs and opportunities I could expand to apply for. I am certain that Kathinka was one of the reasons I managed to get a job during the pandemic.

Former AW co-worker



Re-inventing *Best place to work*

We strive to be the best place to work and aiming for this position requires constant development. However, the Covid-19 pandemic greatly affected our lives in many aspects and our working lives in particular.

How we do our job, where we do it and how we interact with each other while doing it – all this has been challenged during 2020. The Covid-19 crisis has already written itself into the history books as a defining event of our time and there is a common understanding that this new world is here to stay. Succeeding in this new world and with these new ways of working requires a new way of thinking.

Reinvention

Considering everything that has happened in 2020, we felt the situation called for a more intense and innovative set-up to guide us on our way to creating the *Best place to work*. We have chosen to call our work of understanding, evaluating, and adapting to this new normal *Reinventing Best place to work*. This project aims to renew Academic Work from

the perspectives of flexibility, culture and equality/diversity/inclusion (EDI) and it will cover both engagement and performance management, among several other aspects. It is first and foremost an action within Academic Work, but will in time extend and expand into all parts of the AW Group.

Meeting the future

This project's different initiatives will all result in changes that will affect AW Group as a workplace at different levels. Policies and guidelines that impact our daily work, leadership development, training, utilization of systems, and employer branding are examples of areas that we expect to be subject to reinvention. We will evolve as an employer and meet the future with an even stronger and more attractive offer for both current and future employees.

Reinventing

Best place to work

Contributing to a sustainable dynamic labor market

Our mission statement is *we make people grow*, and creating jobs, developing people and building careers is our core business. We believe that ambition and potential are often preferable to experience, and this approach enables new talent to enter the labor market. We know that these assets can take the AW Group far as a company while strengthening both our consultants and clients.

Supporting young professionals & job creation

Ever since the foundation of Academic Work, our first company, in 1998, our target group has been young professionals. Young professionals can be students or recent graduates in search of their first real job, or those seeking their second or third job with an ideal client. We see it as our mission to help companies and organizations realize the positive impact that young professionals can have on their businesses and development. What they might lack in formal experience, they make up for in cutting-edge knowledge and ambition. This makes them a crucial investment for any employer. We help our clients understand the limitations of young professionals, but more importantly, to see their potential for growth.

The labor market is hard to enter for people with limited experience, and youth unemployment is still a big problem in Europe. Many have trouble getting a job after graduation, as a majority of organizations try to replace employees with candidates who possess the same level of experience. We promote a more dynamic approach to the labor market, where new competencies and jobs can be created in an efficient way to fill both current and future competency gaps, in sync with future retirements waves.

Growth by learning

Learning is fundamental in our fast-changing world, but if we're not careful it can be both inefficient and costly. AW Academy is on a mission to make adult education more agile. Our courses and trainings are the perfect match for curious, ambitious and hardworking individuals who want to either change their career or boost their skillset effectively with a hands-on, work-life driven approach.

We are the education partner in a world where skills, needs and environments change rapidly and the ability to learn is key. We contribute to a more sustainable and dynamic labor market by offering efficient, highly qualitative ways, for both individuals and organizations, to meet new needs of competence.



To grow you need to develop, and to develop you need to stay learning! This goes for both people and businesses.



Rebecca Stenström
Head of Learning Development, AW Academy

Building digital strength for future growth

The comprehensive digitalization taking place globally has led to a labor market that is largely dependent on IT as the strongest driver of growth for businesses. The continued growth of the digital sector is however threatened by a lack of expertise. Today, there is a shortage of both newly graduates and more senior people with the skills the labor market demands. Our IT consultancy company Digitalent offers a combination of junior developers from Academic Work (trained in AW Academy) and highly-experienced IT consultants and leaders with expertise in digital development and agile work methods. With access to both of these groups from Digitalent and Academic Work, our clients can run advanced technical projects and ensure their long-term competence supply at the same time.

Measuring effect and results

NPS (Net Promoter Score) is an internationally-established metric used to assess the loyalty of a firm's customers. Every month, we send a short survey to a chosen group of clients that we have recently done business with. NPS evaluates loyalty through one simple question: *How likely are you to recommend the companies within AW Group to a friend or a colleague?* The main purpose of this survey is to get a sense of our client's satisfaction in working with us and whether we need to take any immediate actions based on the results.

NPS result client loyalty

Year	2017	2018	2019	2020
Academic Work	66	69	71	72
AW Academy*	–	–	100	94
Digitalent	–	–	58	58

NPS result consultant loyalty

Year	2017	2018	2019	2020
Academic Work	52	53	51	47
AW Academy	–	–	71	55**
Digitalent	–	–	–	–

* Academic Work is the client

** Due to the effect of Covid-19 on the market, there were some participants that we were unable to offer employment after graduation, leading to a decrease in consultant loyalty.



SKI, Academic Work Sweden

Most satisfied clients 10 years in a row!

Number of people we helped to new jobs through Academic Work:

2020

7.408

2019

10.335

2018

11.976

GRI 203 – 2 Significant indirect economic impact



Taking responsibility during the pandemic



When the pandemic struck, we quickly informed both our clients and consultants about restrictions and recommendations from the authorities and how we together with our clients, who we share the work environment responsibility with, would ensure a safe work environment for our consultants.

We followed a strict process including risk assessment, actions and follow-up. In addition, we have also provided clients who needed extra support with a program for digital/remote onboarding – making it possible for our consultants to keep working as usual despite the effects of the pandemic. We have worked hard to protect our consultants by ensuring that as few assignments as possible have been terminated because of the sudden drop in market demand caused by the pandemic.

We have taken part in the government support packages for short-term work allowances and in some cases even revised our business agreements and given temporary discounts to our clients. We are convinced that these two initiatives have made it possible for more consultants to stay at their assignments, as well as being extended on their assignment, thus avoiding unemployment.

Despite these efforts **we have had to part from 236 consultants during 2020** as their assignments were terminated because of the financial downturn caused by the pandemic.



Building skills & competence

There is a big need for certain skills in the labor market, especially within IT and technology. That is why we founded AW Academy, which offers accelerated learning programs with the intention of building the skills that those industries need while boosting the careers of truly ambitious people.

In less than five years one-third of all our job competences will be outdated. On top of that, unemployment is expected to increase due to the fact that candidates don't fit the competences that employers seek. In less than four years 75% of all workforce will be represented by millennials and Gen Z. The time for investing in yourself as an individual and in employees as an employer is now. The need for upskilling and reskilling increases at a rapid pace, and all of us need to take responsibility to keep up in the learning revolution.

AW Academy is an initiative to fill this skills shortage. We tailor intensive training for industries where the lack of qualified candidates is growing in areas such as IT, technology and finance. We have developed our own pedagogic platform, *The AW Academy Way*, that ensures that we reach the learning outcomes in the most efficient way, and at the same time teach the participants the important skill of learning how to learn for the future. AW Academy is now operating in four of our markets: Sweden, Finland, Germany and Norway.

Software development and IT in general have become such a central topic in our society that I no longer wanted to just watch and stare from the outside, but take action myself. The training at AW Academy is very intense and challenges you every day in many ways. But really learning something new every day is a lot of fun and keeps your motivation high!

Maik-Manuel Melcher

Participant, Cppgemini DevOps, AW Academy Germany



Challenging times fuels development

Challenging times generate new business models, and in times of crisis people and organizations reflect on how prepared they are for the future. Within that question they often find that their skill set is what will generate future growth. By adding new business models to new target groups, we have defined new, more sustainable ways to support organizations and people in shifting competences to meet future needs. Competence development is a sustainable action for the resource management of organizations, as well as for the individual, to make sure they stay attractive in the new labor market.

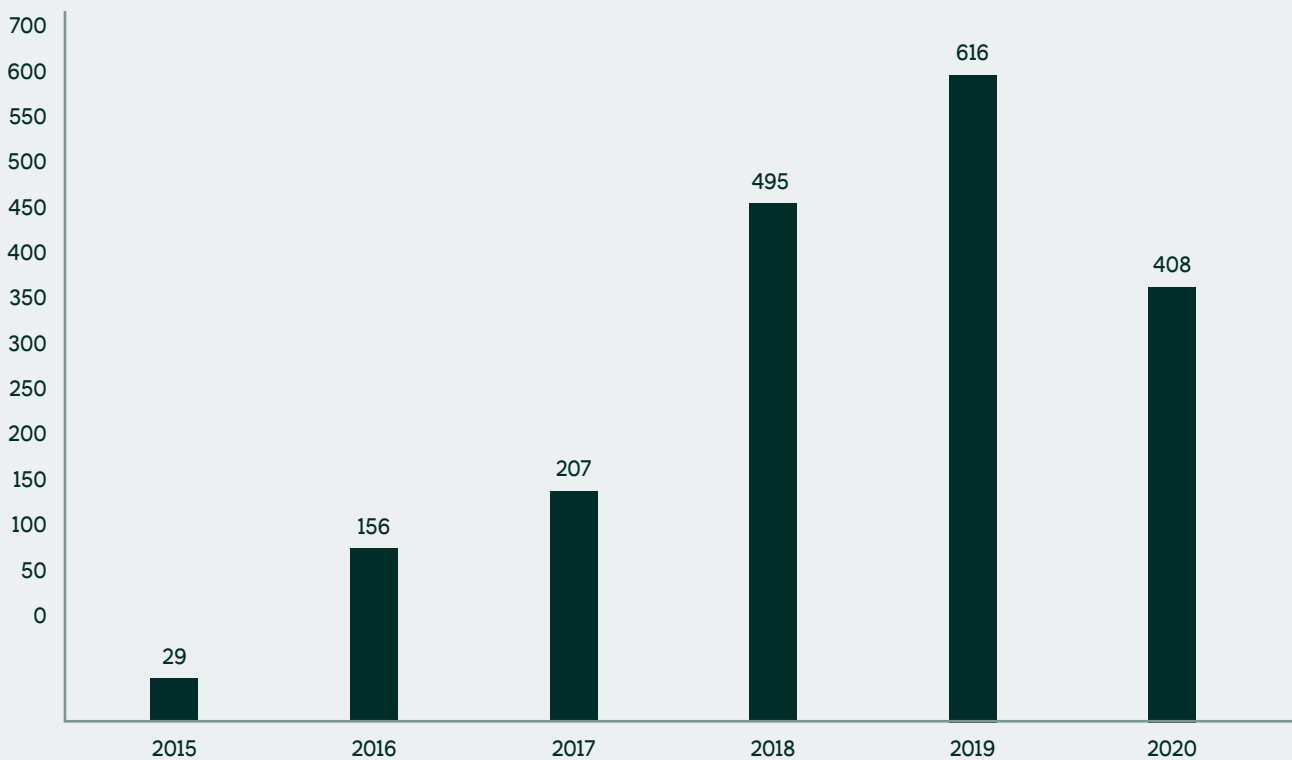
2020 has been a tough year, but also the most innovative year for AW Academy. We have developed new models of training programs for new target groups and thereby widened our exclusive, high-quality learning model to more people. We have reskilled employees at different companies around Europe, launching international online coding boot-camps for private consumers and initiated upskilling programs for both consumers and companies. When unemployment hits, education is needed. It is clear that what we offer contributes to both society and individuals, and that makes us very proud.

It goes without saying that the year of 2020 has been both challenging and interesting, we have found our inspiration in the need of competence, and with that we too have grown.



Sissel Gade
Head of Operations, AW Academy

Graduated consultants AW Academy Group 2015–2020



Young Professional Attraction Index (YPAI)

To create jobs, economic growth and wellbeing in society, we need dynamic workplaces where tomorrow's workforce, young professionals, thrive and develop. Through our annual YPAI survey we give young professionals a voice and the possibility to influence future workplaces and job design.

Employers throughout Europe are experiencing major challenges in attracting and developing the skills they need, not least within the target group of young professionals. This often leads to mismatches on the labor market and hinders the ability of organizations to grow.

In 2015 we decided to complement our own long experience of attracting young professionals with additional insights and independent data. We started a collaboration with Kantar Sifo which led to the annual survey that we call YPAI (Young Professional Attraction Index). YPAI is conducted to help employers understand what tomorrow's workforce value most when choosing their next employer, but also to give young professionals themselves a voice and influence in creating tomorrow's work and workplaces.

With the insights from YPAI, we can contribute with a deeper understanding of how employers throughout the Nordic region, Germany and Switzerland can succeed in attracting, recruiting and developing the employees with the skills they need. This will not only contribute to the organizations' development and growth, but also create more jobs and contribute to the development of the society.

16.067 young professionals in the Nordic countries, Germany and Switzerland got the chance to influence tomorrow's workplaces through YPAI 2020. Young professionals place high demands on factors such as gender equality, diversity, and sustainability. By giving young professionals a voice and influence we contribute to a more sustainable and equal society.

With the insights from YPAI, we can give employers concrete recommendations and advice on what they need to do to make the target group feel engaged and stay long-term within the organization.



Julia Granström
Additional Services Specialist, Academic Work



YPAI

Young Professional
Attraction Index

*By making my voice heard,
I want to help employers
understand that they need
to invest in things such
as sustainability, gender
equality and flexibility.*

Young Professional about YPAI





Diversity & equal opportunity

We know that diversity enriches our businesses and provides better opportunities for development. We believe that differences among people create a dynamic work climate that nurtures new ideas and perspectives on how we do things.

Against discrimination and toward diversity

We work to prevent and reduce discrimination within the AW Group. We aim to create and maintain a work environment in which everyone feels accepted, regardless of their ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion or age. As an equal opportunities employer, we do not discriminate on any grounds. We work to ensure that every employee has the same opportunities to develop and get training, career development, and promotions. This approach defines our business and is integrated into our core values, which naturally encourage tolerance and diversity.

Our recruitment method

In our recruitment processes, we look at favorable behaviors desired within the organization, because that is what predicting future job performance really comes down to. Over 100 years of research in the field of recruitment psychology agrees with us. This is why we use the best recruitment method on the market to assess behaviors – the behavioral descriptive interview technique. This recruitment method is intended to be more fair than other recruitment processes by clearly highlighting the competencies required for a given

position. The assessment of competencies provides a more objective view, so the recruiter has little discretion to favor one candidate over another, subsequently reducing bias. We also have the option of adding screening tests in the first steps of our recruitment process, which help us select the right candidates without knowing anything about their backgrounds.

Minimizing bias

AW Academy has taken this competency-based recruitment method even further. The recruitment processes start with anonymous tests. There are no requirements for prior education nor work experience, which makes the use of resumés obsolete. Instead, before the recruitment process begins, we do a thorough work analysis and create a requirement profile, focusing on what type of behaviors, personality, mental ability, and motivation is needed for the position.

In 2020 we had one instance of discrimination being notified in Sweden. Zero incidents were notified to the Swedish Equality Ombudsman. There were zero cases of discrimination for our other markets within AW Group.

GRI 406 – 1 Incidents of discrimination and corrective actions taken

During the process, we match these criteria to our candidates' assessments in the tests and interviews. This way, the risk of discrimination is drastically reduced and has already led to increased cognitive diversity amongst candidates and graduated consultants.



Ethnic diversity – Swedish employees with foreign background

As an indicator of ethnic diversity, we have asked the Central Bureau of Statistics in Sweden for statistics about foreign background among our Swedish employees. As we see equality, diversity and inclusion as a crucial part of staying innovative and becoming the best place to work, increased diversity among our internal employees is included in the reinvention of *Best place to work* in 2021.

Share of employees with foreign background*	2015	2017	2020
Swedish population	22,1%	24,1%	25,5% (2019**)
Consultants Academic Work Sweden & AW Academy	26,9%	30,3%	32,5%
Internal employees AW Group Sweden	9,7%	10,7%	12,9%

GRI 405-1 Diversity of governance bodies and employees

* SCB's definition of another cultural background than Swedish is; foreign-born or Swedish-born with two foreign-born parents.

** Statistics for 2020 is not available yet.



Academic Work Sweden is connected to Almega's service of faster handling of work permits, which helps both the candidate hired by Academic Work as a consultant and the client with a faster recruitment process.



Capgemini & AW Academy Germany

During the Summer of 2020 AW Academy Germany partnered with our client Capgemini, who's a leader in digital transformation and focused on diversity, inclusion, digital inclusion and environmental sustainability. To drive positive change in the world, they are offering "Digital Academies" where AW Academy got the opportunity to attract, recruit and educate 17 participants. The participants may be in one way or another exposed to unconscious disadvantages on the labor market due to their background. The target group contains older people, mothers who want to return to work after a long period, IT career-changers, people with physical disabilities, people with unrecognized foreign university degrees, and migrants. All participants completed the training successfully, and the majority of them are now working as DevOps consultants with the client.

*Digitalization will not work without diversity.
In our society, there are highly valuable
talents lying dormant, unfortunately far too
often unrecognized, which are all too often
not perceived due to traditional patterns.*

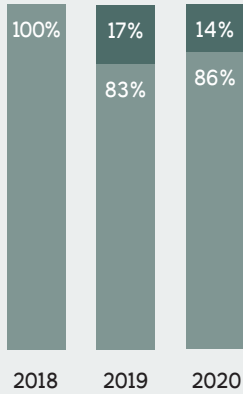


Philipp Leipold
Managing Director, AW Academy Germany

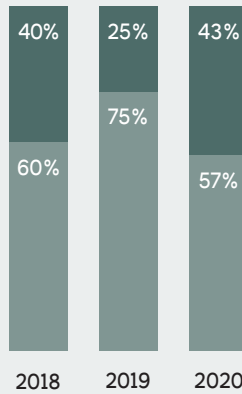
Gender equality in managerial positions

For AW Group, our gender equality goal means a 40%/60% gender distribution at all levels in our organization.

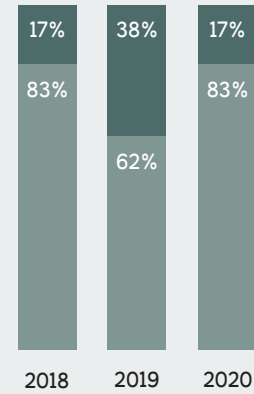
● Men ● Women



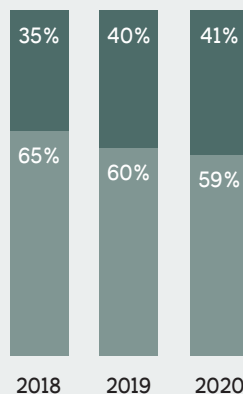
Board



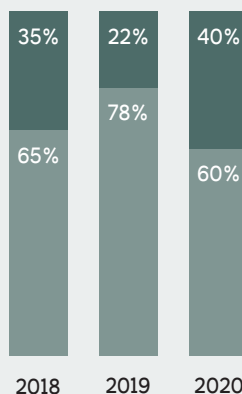
Group Management



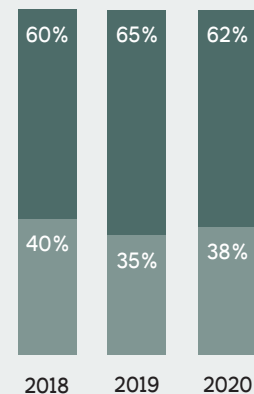
Managing Directors



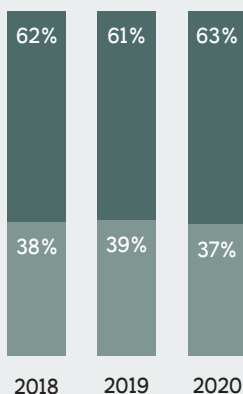
Management



Branch Managers



All Managers



All

Gender equality

We know from external research and our own experience that diversity is proven to advance innovation, performance and employee engagement. We strive to be an organization with equal gender representation at all levels of the company. We have set our gender equality goal to a 40–60% interval of spread between men and women. What we see is that the prevalence of women at AW Group is not reflected in the representation of women among the senior management positions. We want to address this imbalance and continue working toward a more gender-equal workplace at all levels.

In 2020 we have initiated training for management in EDI (Equality, Diversity, Inclusion) and we have started to broaden the perspective from quantitative gender equality to address qualitative gender equality as well as diversity and inclusion.

During 2021 we will continue training initiatives for all management teams as well as managers and co-workers in all markets of the company. During 2021 EDI will be part of the reinvention of *Best place to work* project, as we see this as a crucial part of staying innovative and becoming the best place to work.



Equality survey at Digitalent

Diversity and inclusion continue to be prioritized matters for Digitalent. In 2019, they launched an internal gender equality survey to find out how their employees perceive equality in the company. In 2020, they did their third survey on the subject. It showed that 96% feel that men and women have equal opportunity to make their voices heard in the company, and 96% believe that Digitalent offers equal pay and career development opportunities. The survey also showed that 50% of respondents believe women take more responsibility for "hidden tasks" like organizing and maintenance at the office, an issue they intend to shine a light on and address going forward.

Strengthening livelihood – engagement in Zambia

Education remains an inaccessible human right for millions of children around the world. Every year since 2004, we donate one percent of our net profit to education-related projects in Zambia. We call it the *One Percent Movement*.

When it comes to steering life in a positive direction, some events are more important than others. We know that education is such an event – it is the foundation for people to develop and grow. It strengthens the prospect of earning a living and getting out of poverty. Education is so important in today's society that it is declared a human right, yet still there are millions of children around the world don't attend school. Many of these children live in Zambia.

Most of our donations go to Response Network, an NGO which focuses on helping the local population in Zambia. The organization is regulated by established processes for annual budgeting, reporting, and follow-up, as well as an annual external audit. Response Network manages all its projects on-site, and there are three main ongoing projects, all focusing on giving children and youth access to education.

GRI 201 – 1 Direct economic value generated and distributed

€ **220.055**

Community investment during 2020

Since 2004, AW Group has supported the building of 57 schools, 95 classrooms, and 24 teachers' houses.

These schools provide education for almost 11.000 children daily. In 2020 we continued our focus on extending the existing schools reassuring a high quality education rather than building new schools.

Community Education Program

The Community Education Program takes place in the rural areas of Livingstone where there is no electricity, no public transportation, and no functioning infrastructure. Most of the people living in these areas are self-sufficient farmers and are very poor. The program is based on a self-help philosophy and provides community education and workshops that empower people to understand their rights and how to solve many of their problems without depending on donations. Our support focuses on giving children access to basic schooling through helping their communities understand the importance of education. When a community has gotten enough information and know-how from Response Network, and when locals are ready to start the project, they are provided with the materials to build a school and teachers' house in the village.



Covid-19 effect in Zambia and the AW Group financed projects

The spread of Covid-19 has luckily remained moderate in Zambia throughout 2020. However, due to closed borders and limited trade the Zambian economy has been left in a very bad shape and the state is now close to bankruptcy. The weak economy will affect expenditure on social services and consequently negatively affect the already struggling vulnerable middle and working-class and making things much worse for the poor. Luckily, the character of Response Network's work and its remote locations has allowed Response Network to continue their important work with no considerable effect on the planned outcome.

Donations and foreign aid are more needed than ever before to assist Government service and the social sector.



Mutukwa Matenganya
Country Director, Response Network

**One person
can change
the world.**



**Schoolgirls
can change
the world.**

**Support
Kubala Girls.**

Images from our internal communication campaign
about Kubala Girls.



Kubala (Reading) Girls Sponsorship Program

Zambia is a peaceful but very poor country. It is heavily affected by climate change and without a functioning welfare system, problems with infrastructure and corruption it can be a hard country live in, especially if you are poor, and even harder if you are also an orphan. Due to the HIV and AIDS pandemic there are still many orphaned children in Zambia. These children almost never get the possibility to get an education since the extended family, in which they often live, cannot afford to pay an extra school fee or the school uniform. Orphan girls have even slimmer chances to get an education since their school attendance, in general, has a lower priority compared to the education of boys.

The *Kubala Girls Sponsorship Program* is run by Response Network and financed by AW Group employees through monthly or once-off donations. The design of the program is simple – it puts young vulnerable children through primary and secondary school by paying for school fees, uniforms, shoes, socks and other materials that you need to be allowed to attend school. The Response Network identifies children with a need for sponsorship through contacts with schools, social services and families.

Christmas gift

As a result of Covid-19, food security and hygiene has become a problem for many of the households where the children in the *Kubala Girls Sponsorship Program* live. A Christmas gift containing food and sanitary products was therefore given to all those households. Hopefully this gift alleviated some of the pressure and allowed some peace for these families over the holidays.

One person can change the world

In December 2020 we launched an internal communication campaign with the single purpose of inspiring more AW Group employees to engage in the *Kubala girls Sponsorship Program*. The campaign is based on the power of education and how young girls, if given the opportunity to go to school, actually can change the world.

There is greatness in all the Kubala Girls' determination, discipline and desire for education and change. It is just as great as the stories that sometimes become world famous.

Indicator	2018	2019	2020
Number of employee sponsors for the Kubala Girls Program	215	224	175*
Number of children within the Kubala Girls Program	576	611	611

* The drop in sponsors is due to the uncertainty that Covid-19 resulted in and that many colleagues had to leave us during 2020.

Skills Training and Tertiary Training

The desired goal for the girls in this sponsorship program is for them to earn their own living by finding employment or starting their own small businesses. In order to achieve this, they will need to continue their educational journey into university, college or training that can provide them with specific skills. Since 2017, we have started sponsoring *Skills Training* and *Tertiary Training* for some of the girls within the sponsorship program and for selected people in the villages. The *Skills Training* can include catering, tailoring, electrical skills, or plumbing. *Tertiary Training* could be as nurses or teachers.

Indicator	2018	2019	2020
Number of former Kubala Girls in Skills Training	25	21	0*
Number of Community members in Skills Training	8	10	0*
Number of Kubala Girls in Tertiary Training (3-year diploma)	4	5	0*

* In discussion with Response Network we chose not to enter any new participants into either Skills Training or Tertiary Training during 2020. The program needed development in order to generate better results, leading to a larger share of the girls getting a job or starting their own business after finishing their training. Response Network has now made necessary changes in the program and budget has been granted for 2021.

GRI 203 – 2 Significant indirect economic impact





Florence's story

Now 22 years old, Florence Sakufiwa is the second-born in a family of three. She was supported in secondary school by Academic Work and obtained a certificate in tailoring in 2019 at Youth Community Training Centre. With her skill and a starter kit consisting of a sewing machine, Florence is now independent with a stable source of income.

I lost my father at the age of 13. My mother works as a housekeeper at one of the lodges in Livingstone where she gets a salary that only pays the rent and a few home essentials. After my father's death we changed from having three meals to two meals a day and when things get so tough, we used to survive on only one meal a day. I was enrolled under Academic Work's support while in secondary school – an opportunity I never thought I would get in life, as I only saw myself going up to grade 9 because that is what my mother could afford. In 2019 I was supported to study any skill of my choice at Youth Community Training Centre, I chose tailoring and was given a sewing machine after completing my course. I started making different garments from home and later found a place at the market. My family now has three meals a day and I am now helping my mother to build a house so that we can have a house of our own with my family. This help has switched my life from an ordinary community girl to a family bread-winner.

People & society positive initiatives during 2020



Official support partner to Helsinki Pride

At AW Group, we support the human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) persons. The LGBTI community has made great strides in advancing their legal rights in some countries, while those rights remain unfortunately limited in others. In 2020 we were an official support partner of Helsinki Pride. We firmly support the important right of everyone being and loving whomever they want.

This year, through our own actions, we intend to raise awareness of the job candidates' rights and the impact of unconscious prejudices on recruitment decisions. No one should be discriminated against in the recruitment process, and that is not a matter of opinion.

Laura Christie, Managing Director, Academic Work Finland



Homework assistance for children

We believe equal opportunity and quality education is a human right. We also believe that small actions can have a big impact. In cooperation with a small volunteer organization called International Acquaintances (Internationella Bekantskaper), Academic Work Sweden joined a homework assistance initiative five years ago. It takes place in Rinkeby, a suburb of Stockholm where many immigrants live. Once a week, several volunteers from AW Group's offices in Stockholm visit a school in Rinkeby to assist with children's homework and give them a chance to practice their Swedish. This activity was both initiated and remains managed by our co-workers. The initiative was cancelled during spring 2020 due to Covid-19 restrictions. But as the fall semester came, it started again, this time in digital form.



Developing the Kubala Girls Sponsoring Program

The *Kubala Girls Sponsoring Program* is financed by AW Group employees and the contribution helps young vulnerable children in Zambia through school by paying for school-fees and other material they need to be allowed in school. Previously, we offered all our employees the chance to contribute by donating one percent of their net salary every month. We believe that different people want to contribute in different ways. One percent can seem a bit too much for someone with other commitments, and too little for someone that only wants to contribute to one cause. In 2020 we developed the way that you can contribute and today you can either become a monthly donor with an amount of your own choice or with one percent, but you can also make once-off donations in an easy way.



Christmas donations

Academic Work Norway made Christmas donations for two different organizations – Hospital Clowns (Sykehusklovnene) and Migrant Aid (Flyktninghjelpen). Research shows that laughter and joy reduce pain, strengthen the immune system and reduce stress. For a child to meet with the hospital clowns gives joy and laughter, it helps sick children to manage their treatment and to regain their strength.

More than 79.5 million people are fleeing war and persecution today, and every second refugee is a child. In 2020 Academic Work Norway made a Christmas donation to NRC (Norwegian Refugee Council). NRC is present for displaced people in over 30 countries around the world and their aid offers immediate relief such as food, clean water, shelter, legal aid and education.



Supporting the fight of Covid-19

In challenging times it is important for everyone to take responsibility. During this year AW Academy has helped our partner Werlabs with online introductions for almost 100 new co-workers that have played an important part in the Covid-19 testing that Werlabs has offered people in several cities in Sweden during the year. Because of the risk of spreading Covid-19, getting to and from work became a challenge for many people working at hospitals. Academic Work Finland lent company pool cars to healthcare staff in the Helsinki area, making it possible to get to work in an efficient way without the risk of spreading the Covid-19.

Planet

3

Planet

The planet is our home. We all have a responsibility to preserve it for future generations. Climate change is no longer a distant threat but a harsh reality, and we need to act now to curb its most disastrous impacts. Governments, companies, organizations, you, I and everyone. We need to act, and the AW Group is committed to do so. Our environmental work is driven by a sense of urgency and a strong will to create a reality where people and planet coexist in a sustainable way for everyone.

Our focus areas

Our ultimate environmental goal is to become a climate-positive business. To reach that goal, we are taking both strategic and operative actions within three focus areas:



Energy Consumption & Emissions

Finding energy-efficient solutions, reducing our carbon dioxide emissions connected to travel & transportation.



Responsible Consumption & Sustainable Sourcing

Recycling and minimizing our waste, consuming planet-positive food, zero vision for paper consumption and profile products, making sustainable purchases and making mapping emissions caused by our supply chain a priority.



Awareness, Behavior & Decisions

Building awareness and educating our stakeholders through engaging and informative communication. Steering behavior through policy-making, nudging, challenging and changing behavioral norms. Making environmental sustainability a natural part of decision-making at all levels within the AW Group.

We comply with all current environmental laws and standards, but our goal is to exceed them. Academic Work Sweden is certified according to ISO 14001, which helps us continuously improve our sustainability work and encourages our other companies and markets to reduce our environmental impact.

2020's YPAI survey confirmed that environmental sustainability was one of the top 10 most important

areas when young professionals are choosing an employer. Young professionals are one of our most important stakeholders – they are the candidate base for internal positions within the AW Group, consultants in Academic Work and students in our accelerated learning programs in AW Academy. This made environmental sustainability more business-critical than ever, and we are glad to be on track in our ambitions and actions within this area.



Covid-19 restrictions have forced digitalization and made us trust and value our digital channels both when it comes to quality and efficiency. That change is long-term and very positive for both people and the planet.



Lina Tunek
Head of Corporate Social Responsibility at AW Group

Energy consumption, and emissions*

CO² emissions from company cars, company travel, and energy consumption together make up about 96% of our currently known emissions and are therefore great metrics for performance within environmental sustainability.

CO² emissions from company cars

In order to minimize emissions caused by company cars, two parallel actions are taken. The first is to offer alternative ways to travel, such as bicycles, electric scooters and public transportation cards, and to motivate our employees to use those more. However, using cars for transport is a necessity for many of our employees and therefore the other action is to electrify our car fleet step by step, thereby making it more energy-efficient.

The Covid-19 travel restrictions and remote work have resulted in a 72% decrease in emissions related to company travel and company cars, and a 35% decrease in energy consumption.

CO² emissions from company travel

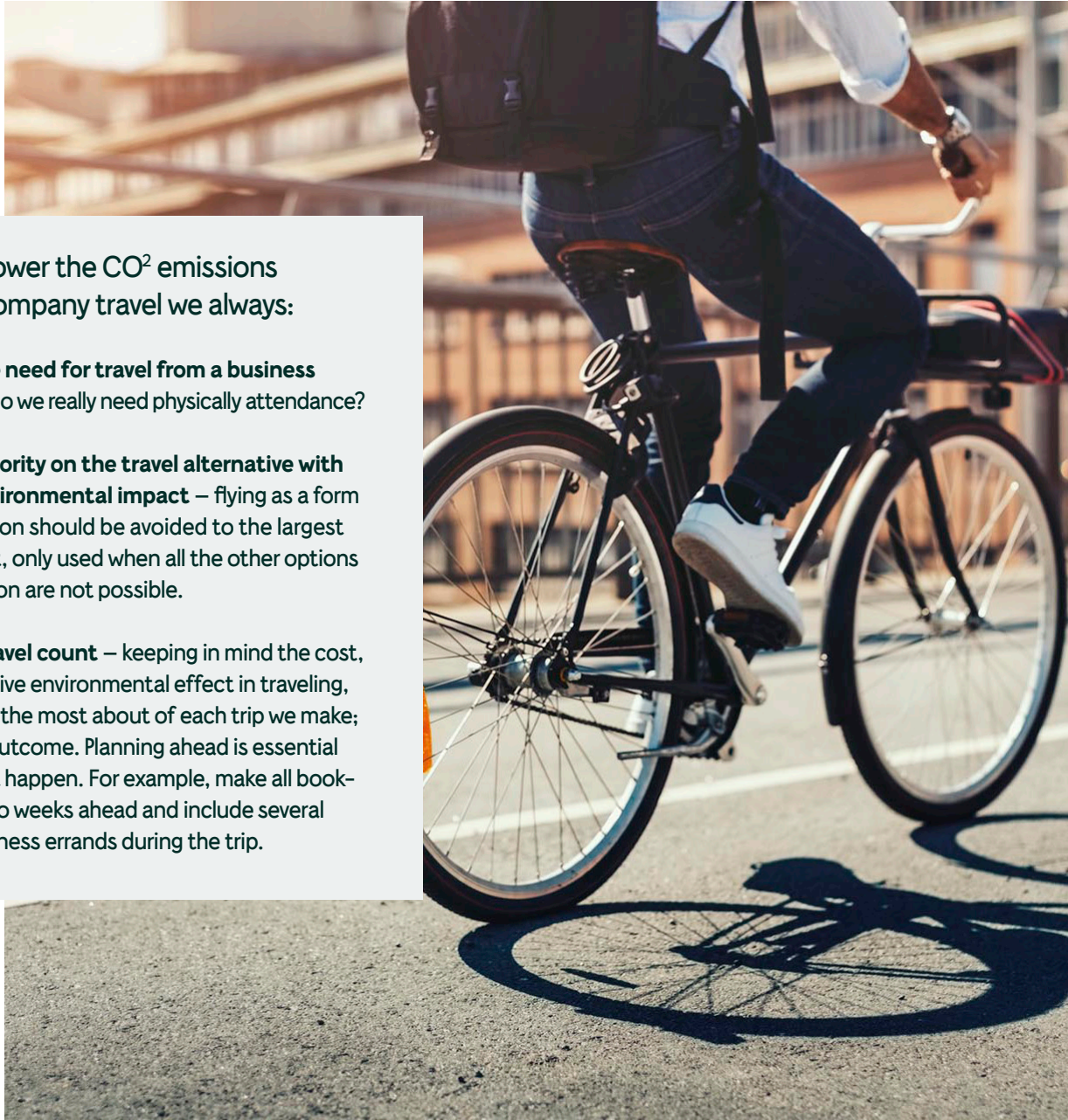
A large part of our known CO² emissions are caused by air travel, making this a key component when lowering our environmental footprint. Since 2018 we have used a travel agent for all our company travel (airplane, train, and hotel) and thereby gained a deeper understanding of our travel habits and making it possible to work goal-oriented and identifying focus areas.

CO ² from company cars**	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total ton CO ²	303,2	358,7	369,8	115,2
Ton CO ² /employee	0,483	0,311	0,337	0,146

GRI 305 – 1 Direct (scope 1) GHG emissions

* Since we started our sustainability reporting in 2017 we have had paper consumption as an indicator for sustainability performance. This year we have chosen to exclude it from the report since it constitutes less than one percent of our total emissions, making it irrelevant when measuring our sustainability performance.

** The numbers exclude Academic Work Switzerland who have a different transportation solution for cars that we lack the data for.



In order to lower the CO² emissions related to company travel we always:

1. Evaluate the need for travel from a business perspective – do we really need physically attendance?

2. Put a top priority on the travel alternative with the lowest environmental impact – flying as a form of transportation should be avoided to the largest possible extent, only used when all the other options of transportation are not possible.

3. Make the travel count – keeping in mind the cost, time and negative environmental effect in traveling, we want to get the most about of each trip we make; maximize the outcome. Planning ahead is essential for making that happen. For example, make all bookings at least two weeks ahead and include several meetings/business errands during the trip.

CO ² from company travel	2017*	2018*	2019	2020
Total ton CO ²	N/A	N/A	1246,8	140,6
Ton CO ² /employee	N/A	N/A	1,076	0,179

GRI 305 – 1 Direct (scope 1) GHG emissions

* We only have data from 2019 and onwards as we implemented a travel agent, before that we lacked reliable data.

Energy consumption

Energy consumption related to our premises is the largest source of our known CO² emissions, making it our top priority. We strive to reduce the energy (kilowatts) needed to run our business by implementing energy-efficient technology and routines. The energy we still need shall always be from 100% renewable energy.

We strive to only use energy from renewable sources at all offices within AW Group. In some office buildings, the choice of energy supplier is made by the landlord. In these cases, we try to urge the landlord to pursue renewable energy options.

Electricity	2018	2019	2020
Total kw	673 218	1 421 062	917 714
Kw/Employee	553,9	1 228	1 166

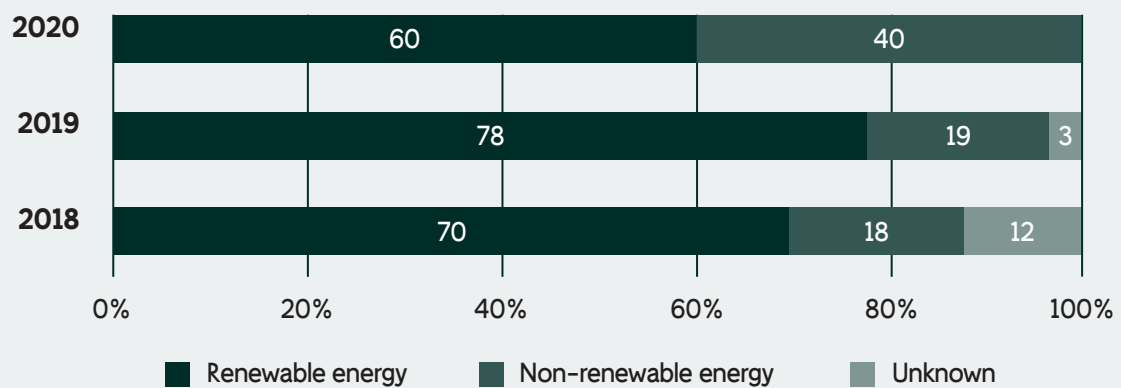
GRI 302 – 1 Energy consumption within the organization



In the end of 2021, all Stockholm-based entities of the AW Group are gathered in the same building – LifeCity. The building is certified Broom Excellent and we hope that this merger will lower our energy consumption related to facilities in Stockholm by 60%.

Image: Gatun Arkitekter

Share of green energy



Sustainable sourcing

Our goal is to buy all our products and services from suppliers that meet our sustainability requirements. We evaluate all suppliers on several different criteria such as their product/service/solution, quality, price, service level and support, terms and conditions, as well as from a sustainability perspective.

We assess all new suppliers on their environmental management and quality management work and require all suppliers to comply with our supplier code of conduct. Based on this assessment, the suppliers are either categorized as approved, or in need of improvement from a sustainability perspective, or simply not approved. In order to reach our overall sustainable sourcing goal, we strive to increase the share of total spend from sustainable suppliers.

Supplier assessment	2018	2019	2020
Share of total spend from all sustainable suppliers	51%	57%	71%
Number of new sustainable supplier assessments	48	106	112
Total number of sustainable supplier assessments	118	224	336

GRI 308 – 1 New suppliers that were screened using environmental criteria

Data collection and carbon offsetting

Our ultimate environmental goal is to become a climate-positive business. To reach that goal carbon offsetting will always play a part. By offsetting carbon, we take direct responsibility for the emissions that are difficult to access, while work is underway to reduce climate impact.

Together with a certified external partner within climate compensation, we compensate for our currently known negative environmental impact. We work actively to broaden this knowledge and gain a deeper understanding of our true impact and compensate accordingly.

Our known CO² emission during 2019 was 1897 tons. The 2020 emissions are being compensated in Q1, 2021, through a certified project we have yet to select. This choice will be presented in next year's sustainability report.

Getting a complete data set for our environmental footprint is hard work and the work itself won't reduce our emissions. Therefore, we aim at extending our data bit by bit, and in parallel focus on activities that will reduce our negative impact on the environment today.

Climate investment as compensation for emissions caused by our business: **22 543 Euro**

Included in the calculation*

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Travel by air, train and bus | <input type="checkbox"/> Employees commuting |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pool cars and private company cars | <input type="checkbox"/> Consultant commuting |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transportation of goods | <input type="checkbox"/> Our waste |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Paper and other office supplies | <input type="checkbox"/> Emissions connected to our supply chain |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Servers and cloud services | <input type="checkbox"/> Parts of our purchases |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Food consumption at our offices | <input type="checkbox"/> Food consumption during events, conferences and meetings |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Electricity | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Heating | |

* The right column is not included in the calculations because we today lack the ability to measure them. We aim at extending our data bit by bit and in our next climate calculation we know that both employees commuting and food consumption during events, conferences and meetings will be included.

We believe that taking responsibility for the planet is a part of running a business today, whether we are in an economic boom or recession. Just as we need to pay salaries as compensation for the job our employees do, we need to compensate for the negative impact we have on the environment. Carbon offsetting is a part of who we are from now on.



Johan Skarborg
CEO of AW Group

Climate investment: Conserving the Khasi Hills rain forest

High up in the mountains in the eastern Himalayas lies the Indian state of Meghalaya. Despite deeply rooted traditions and respect for nature, the forest has long been threatened by mining, forest fires, increased fuel use, and unsustainable farming practices. By buying carbon offsets from Khasi Hills, we are helping to preserve the ancient Himalayan rainforests, while at the same time supporting local entrepreneurship and improving the living conditions for the people that live in the area. The project is a Plan Vivo Certified Project.

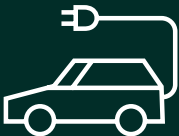


Planet positive initiatives during 2020



AW Building (Life City) – nominated for the Swedish Green Building Award

At the end of 2021, all Stockholm-based entities within the AW Group will be gathered in the same building – Life City. The building is certified BREEM Excellent and became runner up in the category BREEAM Building of the Year during the Sweden Green Building Awards 2019. We are very proud of this nomination and the level of ambition the AW Group, together with the landlord Atrium Ljungberg, have when it comes to sustainability.



Electrification of our car fleet

We continue our work with electrifying our car fleet throughout the organization. During 2020 there was a positive development in both Sweden and Norway. However, big changes are expected in 2021. If everything goes according to plan 60 percent of Swedish pool cars and 90 percent of Norway's car fleet will be either electric hybrids or fully-electric cars. That means that the vast majority of all cars within AW Group will be electric hybrids or fully electric.



New Sustainability Management System

A great system support is key to collecting, compiling, analyzing and visualizing sustainability performance and actions, and therefore also key to a goal-oriented approach and to creating results. At the end of 2020 we entered an agreement with a provider of a sustainability management system. It will enable us to be more exact in our goal-setting, extending our data and ensuring that we focus our actions on the areas that generates the best results.



Digitalization

We know that digitalization is a powerful tool when it comes to minimizing negative environmental impact. Before Covid-19, we thought that we needed more advanced technology to become more digital and that our culture – our key to success – only manifested itself when we meet physically. As the restrictions to prevent the spread of Covid-19 forced the world to go digital, it gave us the push we needed to embrace digitalization and flexible work. It became clear that we have all the technology we need and made us trust and value our digital channels both when it comes to quality and efficiency.



Minimal paper consumption

We can now establish that paper consumption constitutes less than one percent of our total known emissions. This is the result of years of systematic work mainly from our finance, marketing and operations departments that we are very proud of.

4

Ethical & Sustainable Business

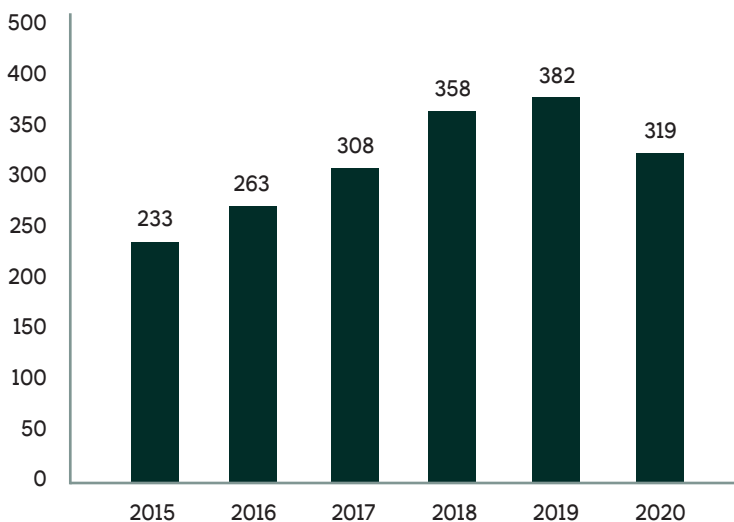
Growing our business profitably has been our focus from the beginning in 1998. Being a financially healthy company allows us to build a great place to work, make investments that help us remain our clients' first choice, and ensure our relevance in the future. Strong finances offer our employees stability and growth, allowing us to create more jobs and help more people develop their careers. We can also provide the best offers to our clients, helping them prosper through innovation and increased potential. Ultimately, as AW Group grows, our contribution to individuals, society, and the planet grows with it. And even though we focus on growth, we never compromise on our ethics.

Sustainable growth

The year 2020 has been a challenge, not only for the AW Group and our industry but for the whole world. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, we experienced a decrease in demand in all our markets which has had an impact on revenue and the number of employees. We have taken the necessary measures to adapt the business to the changing market conditions and to secure the future of the company. As a privately-owned company we have a long-term perspective in everything we do, and we want to build a financially solid company to support future growth and the profit is therefore reinvested into the company.

During 2020, we have proven to ourselves and the world around us that we have a strong fighting spirit and a strong culture, which have helped us deal with the challenges posed by the pandemic. We feel very proud of how our co-workers have handled this turbulent year and we believe, more than ever, that the key to our success is our co-workers and our corporate culture.

Revenue in MEuro

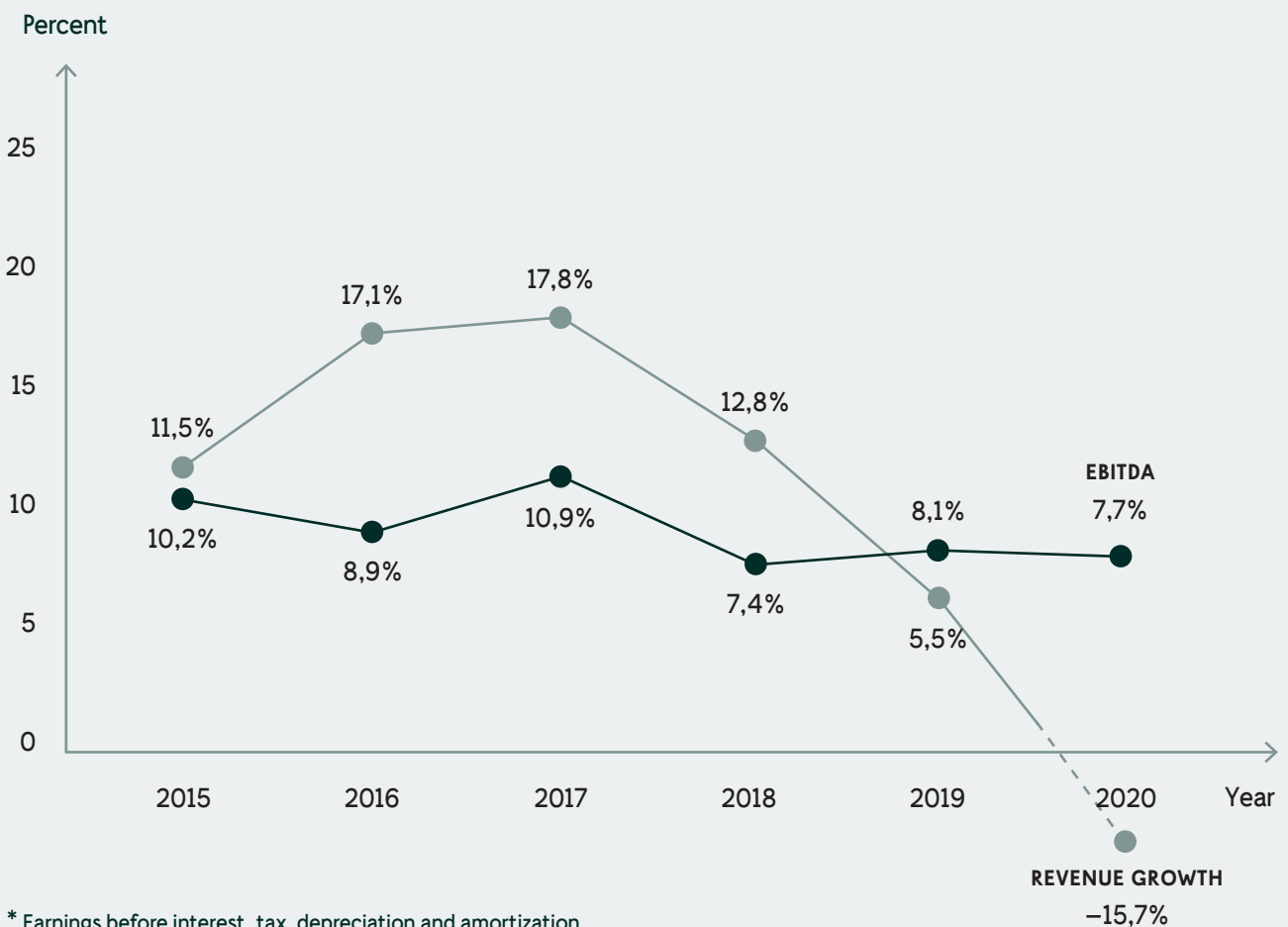


GRI 201 – 1 Direct economic value generated and distributed

The revenue growth graph shows the effect of the Covid-19 pandemic, revenue dropped by 15,7% compared to 2019. The historical revenue figures have been updated with the annual average exchange rate for euro (Swedish Riksbank) which has had an impact on some of the historical figures compared to last year's report. The fluctuation of the euro exchange rate has an impact on revenue growth when we convert from SEK into euro since 60% of total revenue comes from SEK.

EBITDA* was 7,7% in 2020 which is a decline of 5,5 percentage compared to last year. Average EBITDA% for the last five years has been 8,6%.

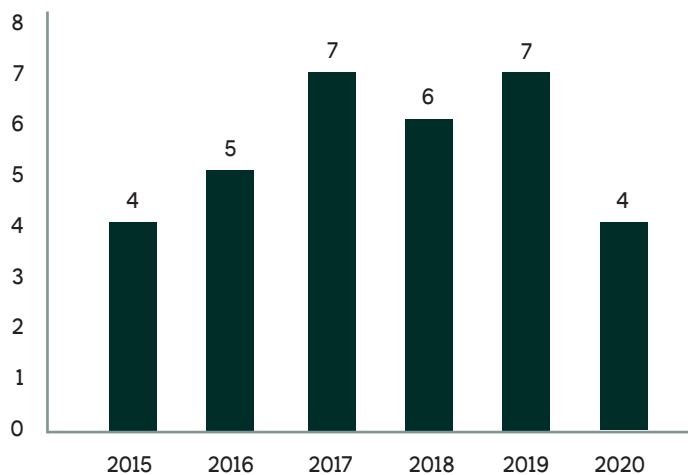
Revenue growth and EBITDA AW Group 2015–2020



Contribution through tax payments

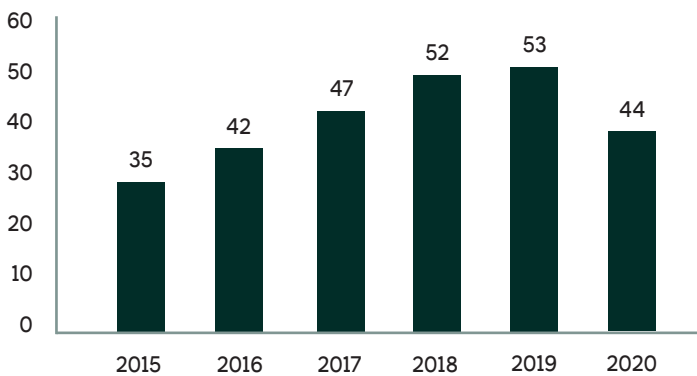
It is important for us to make a positive contribution to the societies in which we operate, and the tax we pay is a significant part of our wider economic and social impact. High profits mean high tax contributions that benefit a wide range of investments in our society.

Corporate income tax in MEuro



GRI 201 – 1 Direct economic value generated and distributed

Social security contribution in MEuro



GRI 201 – 1 Direct economic value generated and distributed

In addition to the above, we paid large VAT amounts on behalf of governments.

Ethical business & anti-corruption

We value strong business ethics and want to collaborate with people who share our convictions. To us, ethical business is the foundation of sustainable business growth.

Our anti-corruption policy

There are a number of formal rules that provide a framework for conducting ethical business. To make sure we operate within this framework, we have implemented an anti-corruption policy that states that our employees may not offer, give, request or accept bribes. We expect that our partners and their representatives act according to the same principles for ethical business practices.

As a result of an analysis done in 2019 we decided to change some internal procedures, especially in relation to the way we work with creating awareness around our anti-corruption policy. We decided on improvements regarding the reporting of misconduct and we also decided to implement a training program regarding our anti-corruption policy during 2020. Due to Covid-19 and its effects on our business we decided to postpone those planned actions to 2021.

Whistleblowing process

During 2021, new legislation for protecting whistleblowers will come into force in all EU member states, as a result of the EU Whistleblower Protection Directive from 2019. The rules will impose new obligations on entities in the public and private sector, with the purpose of ensuring that individuals who seek to expose wrongdoing will be protected and will not need to fear retaliation. To ensure compliance with the new national legislation and to further protect whistleblowers in all parts of our business, AW Group will revise and update its process for whistleblowing, including how to notify about potential wrongdoings, how such notifications shall be assessed, and how identified wrongdoings shall be handled. The work to review and adjust the whistleblower process was initiated at the end of 2020 and is planned to be completed during Q3 2021.

GRI 205 – 1 Operations assessed for risks related to corruption.



Innovation & technology

Our contemporary society is eager to explore innovative development in every aspect of life – and so are we. We do so not only to meet external expectations but also because it is in our DNA to find new, clever ways to help people grow, both within our company and beyond.

Innovation is needed at all levels

We want to be a company where all employees challenge the current way of working, striking a balance between executing our best practices and questioning whether there are new, smart ways to improve them. With a “beat yesterday” attitude, we have the ambition to become a market leader in innovation. This goal makes us challenge ourselves, our methods, and our digital tools continuously. We do this by asking what our clients, consultants and

candidates want, but also by examining what the market offers and what the latest scientific findings are telling us. We believe the key to fostering innovation is to keep experimenting and exploring new ways to stay relevant to our clients. Since 2016, when we began to invest in start-ups, we evaluate and test new ideas continuously. We also try to collect all the great ideas we can from within the organization that add more value for our clients, as a part of our pursuit to become every client’s first choice.

Our strategy

To be truly innovative, we have an outspoken “fail fast” strategy that allows ideas to promptly get tested in real life. We move forward quickly while focusing on reducing risk and testing as many new ideas as we can. Whether the arena is software development, AI engines, external relations or new business models, we are constantly challenging our established models and processes to generate innovation. In 2019, the AW Group invested in developing this strategy further and augmented our competence with external expertise. We have advanced our strategic objectives and will unlock new business opportunities by merging our well-established know-how in European staffing, recruiting, and accelerated learning with first-class technology and data-driven insights.

Technology investments for the future

During 2020, we continued to invest in innovation and technology to meet our goals in a multitude of areas. We aim to build a future-proof solution that will enable our co-workers even further by having a flexible

and solid support system in place. In addition to making us a more compelling company to work at, this technology will also reduce our environmental footprint by enabling remote collaboration and minimizing the need for travel. Last but certainly not least, the technology we are now putting in place will allow us to leverage data in a way that will increase the value we bring to clients, candidates, and consultants by meeting their needs in an even more timely manner. GDPR, information security, and immutability lie at the very center of all our tech investments. During 2020 we also made extraordinary leaps regarding remote work and digitalization, obviously driven by the pandemic, but made successful thanks to our cultural and technological abilities. We consider relationships to be at the core of our business, and we have now tested and proven that we can use digital tools to not only maintain but also to develop and strengthen them further, regardless of the stakeholders being internal or external.

The mix of deep, genuine culture and true innovative force at AW Group is impressive and contributes strongly to our unique competitive edge.



Jenny Smids
Group Strategy Director, AW Group

Potential risks

Human rights

Potential risks concerning human rights

- Discrimination, internally or externally, within the recruitment process.
- Third-party suppliers not living up to our code of conduct or fair and proper employment conditions.

Actions

- A robust recruitment process designed to eliminate the risk of bias and unfair decisions.
- Training and customized activities for better leadership and support through different learning methods.
- Our suppliers must sign our code of conduct.

People & Society

Potential risks concerning consultants

- Life as a consultant can be uncertain when it comes to the duration, location and type of work.
- AW Group is accountable for the consultants working at our clients.

Actions

- Transparent conditions in the consultant recruitment process.
- A well-defined process to review the consultant's experience of the workplace environment before, during, and after an assignment.
- Continuous meetings and dialogue.

Potential risks concerning internal employees

- We are a results-driven organization. Setting high goals has built our success and is an intrinsic part of our culture. This approach can create stress and psychosocial challenges.
- It can be hard to ask for support within a performance culture.

Actions

- Foster strong, positive relationships between managers and employees.
- Recurring meetings where this issue and existing support is discussed.
- Weekly employee feedback surveys.

Potential risks concerning society

- Our donations could potentially help finance other parties, projects or individuals than intended.
- That Response Network is violating basic human rights, without our knowledge.

Actions

- Recurring meetings with people accountable within Response Network.
- An established follow-up structure for the projects we finance.
- A well-defined budget is implemented on a yearly basis.
- A yearly financial review made from an external part with the purpose of detecting corruption or other financial irregularities.
- Every year AW Group co-workers travel to Zambia in order to follow up the projects personally on site.

Planet

Potential risks concerning the planet

- Our presence can potentially have a negative impact on the communities, cities, and countries we operate in.

Actions

- A new governance model and set of guiding principles have been established within AW Group.
- We compensate CO² emissions that currently cannot be avoided.

Ethical & Sustainable business

Potential risks concerning ethical business

- Incorrect financial data, either unintentional or caused by fraud.
- Co-workers could, with or without intention, use their position in a way that interferes with our beliefs and anti-corruption policy.

Actions

- Employees working within our finance department need to pass an internal e-course, "Finance Code of Conduct," on a yearly basis.
- A documented anti-corruption policy is included in the onboarding program for all co-workers within AW Group.
- Anti-corruption is further highlighted in an e-learning course.

Thank you for reading!

Read more about AW Group at aw.com

