

# Quality of life in the built environment



# Buildings

Denmark has a population of almost 6 million people. About 1,400 cities and more than 4 million buildings form the setting for our everyday lives. This is where we live, work, go to school, meet with friends, do sports, go to the cinema, and transport ourselves around. This is where we live our lives.

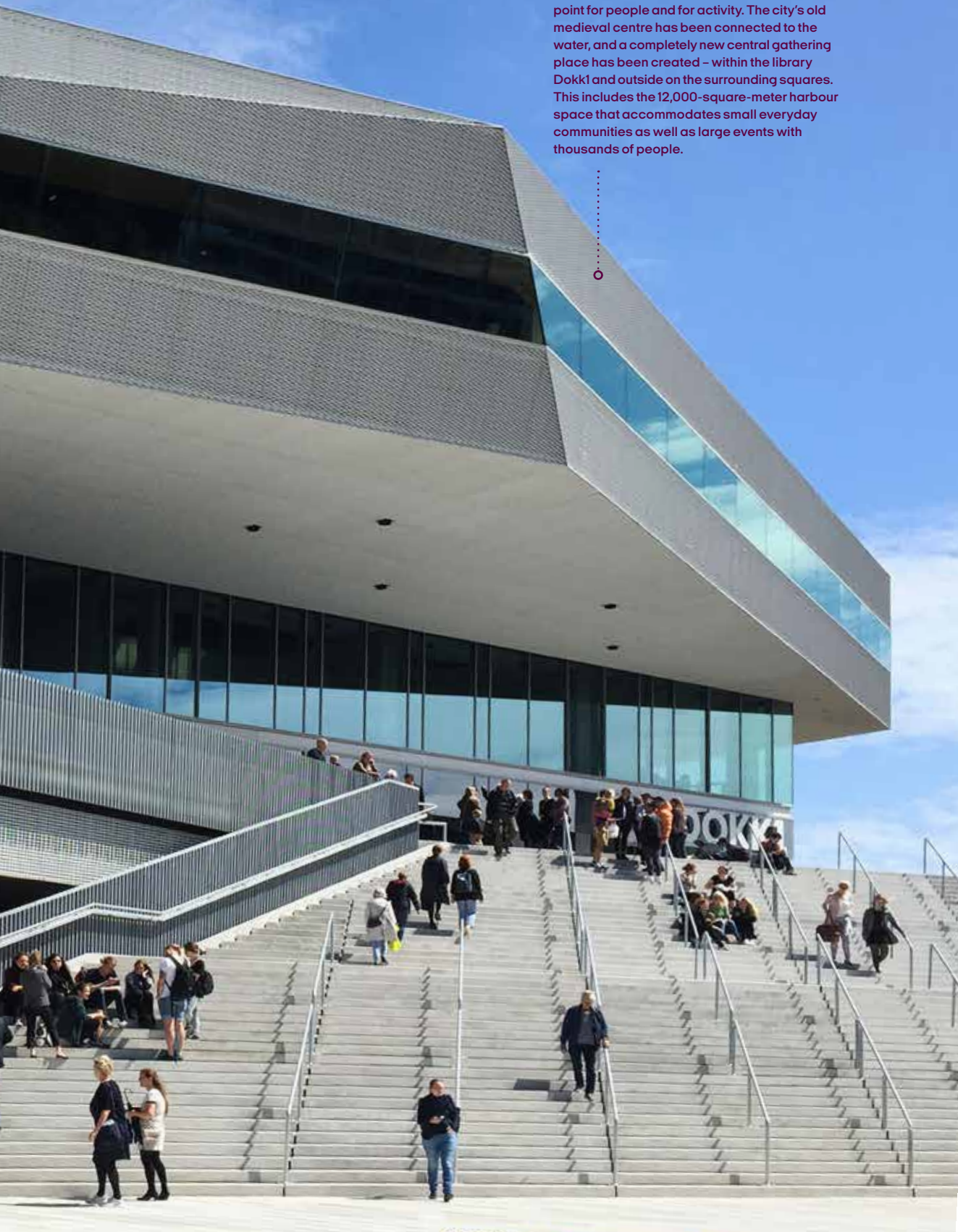
And this is where Realdania is working to make a difference. By supporting small and large projects throughout the country, we continuously contribute to improve the setting for everyday life in Denmark.

**Our goal is to improve the quality of life in the built environment.**

# People

# Cities

**The harbour in Aarhus.** The old industrial harbour has been transformed into a meeting point for people and for activity. The city's old medieval centre has been connected to the water, and a completely new central gathering place has been created – within the library Dokk1 and outside on the surrounding squares. This includes the 12,000-square-meter harbour space that accommodates small everyday communities as well as large events with thousands of people.



# We are for everyone

Realdania is a fully self-endowed philanthropic association with about 155,000 members. We work for the common good to benefit everyone in Denmark by supporting projects all over the country. The money that we grant to projects comes from the return on our investments.

Realdania's field of work is the built environment. This includes both big cities, towns, and villages as well as urban spaces, parks, new buildings, and historic buildings. It also includes the many activities and processes that relate to the built environment, such as construction, architecture, restoration, urban development, and spatial planning – in rural areas and in cities.

We know that physical environments are of major importance to people's lives. They influence our everyday lives, our health, and our relationships with each other.

We want to help create settings which in a number of different areas affect people's lives in a positive way.

We believe we make a bigger difference when we work in collaboration with others, and this is why partnerships are such an important part of our way of working.

Since 2000 Realdania has supported more than 3,675 projects all over Denmark.



# Together, we can achieve more

Collaboration is a central part of Realdania's way of working with philanthropy. We believe that partnerships with the right actors relevant to a particular issue provide the best, most anchored, and most efficient solutions – whether it is in small local projects, in larger efforts, or, especially, when we work to solve some of the complex challenges facing society.

Our partners include the national government, municipalities, foundations, associations, private businesses, researchers, and dedicated individuals or groups at local level. As a philanthropic association we believe strongly in our role as convener for all the relevant actors around any project we are involved in.

We also consider it an important task to share the knowledge and experience gained through our work. Accordingly, it is an important part of our strategy to share knowledge both in professional and non-professional circles – for example to our members and to the general public. We believe that this helps to increase the impact of our philanthropic efforts, because in this way, each effort can inspire and benefit others.

We work ambitiously to reach our goals, and we want our partners and the outside world to experience us as competent, trustworthy, respectful, and accommodating. In our philanthropic work, we aim to create



**When solutions and knowledge spread like ripples in the water, the effect is greater than that of the individual effort.**

**Jesper Nygård**  
CEO



positive development and change through innovation, collaboration, and the necessary risk tolerance. It is important to us that our efforts are rooted in the places and the everyday life where we wish to create value. We ensure this through networks, mutual inspiration, and co-creation with the many stakeholders throughout the country that we work with on a daily basis.

**Social responsibility**

Realdania take responsibility for a positive and sustainable development of society – both in our philanthropic work, in our investment activities, and in our work as a whole. If we are to create a more sustainable world, we all have to take responsibility and work together.

Realdania's work is inspired by the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals and the 10 Global Compact principles, which we committed to when joining as a civil society actor in 2011. The principles are based on internationally recognised conventions on, among other things, human rights, labour rights, the environment, and anti-corruption.

We work with social responsibility in our core activities, because we believe that this increases their overall effect – both when we work philanthropically, when we invest, when we act as developer, and in our daily operations.



**Local cultural history, gastronomy, and nature go hand in hand at Camønoen – a 175 kilometre trail around the island of Møn. Existing paths and routes have been improved, and a number of shelters and 'Camøno crosses' have been built where people can meet.**

# 3

Realdania's  
**three overall goals**



## **We are here for present and future generations**

It is our ambition to make a difference for people – now and in the future. We apply a long-term perspective, when we invest our capital, in the work of the association, and in our philanthropic efforts. This means that we aim to keep our equity stable, and that we have a long-term investment horizon. It also means that in our philanthropic work, we enter into long-term projects and difficult agendas. And as an association, we work to maintain a large number of members who are interested in the work that we do.

## **We promote sustainable development**

We want to contribute to sustainable development throughout Denmark. We take a broad view of sustainability and consider both economic, social, environmental, and cultural aspects. In this way, we aim to support positive development in large and small cities and towns across the country, to create sustainable solutions in the field of construction, and to support dedicated civil society actors and new physical environments for community development.

## **We promote new knowledge and innovation**

We want the knowledge and solutions that arise from our philanthropic efforts to be of benefit to anyone interested. For that reason, we are constantly working to develop and disseminate knowledge about cities, housing, new construction, and the built heritage, among other things. And we fund research and innovation projects within the built environment. If our knowledge and solutions spread like ripples in the water, the effect can reach beyond the scope of the specific, isolated effort.

**sØnæs in Viborg** is an example of climate adaptation which also creates new, recreational opportunities. Where there was once a playing field, there is now a water landscape and a city park with places to sit and possibilities for activities. The risk of flood in the area has been minimised, and, at the same time, the many visitors can experience first-hand the handling and cleaning of the rainwater. We call it climate adaptation with double value.



**The overall goal of Realdania's philanthropic work is to increase the quality of life and improve the settings of everyday life in Denmark.**

**We aim** to make a difference throughout the whole country with our philanthropic, non-profit contribution to society. We work with a variety of types of projects and tools – depending on the task and the challenge.

**Sometimes we initiate** large-scale efforts in specific areas. At other times, large or small projects may be initiated by dedicated locals and communities.

**Realdania contributes** with financial support for both small local projects, often carried out by dedicated individuals or groups at local level, and for larger physical projects of local, regional, or national importance. We also seek to enter into major efforts to help solve difficult challenges in society in which the built environment plays a role.

**We make use of a wide range** of tools in our philanthropic work. Sometimes, we receive an application and support a specific project. At other times, we launch a nationwide campaign in which municipalities can seek funding for a particular type of action – whether it is to improve the indoor climate in schools or to strengthen the larger towns in rural areas. In the case of difficult societal challenges – such as those in socially disadvantaged neighbourhoods – we often enter into long-term strategic partnerships with others to address them.

6

goals

**All of our efforts** must support our philanthropic strategy and one or more of its six goals. There must also be a clear philanthropic task – a problem that neither the private market nor the public sector on their own is handling.

projects

3,675

# Our 6 philanthropic goals

## Quality of life and the built environment

Realdania supports large and small initiatives across the country. Common to them all is that they support our six philanthropic goals and our overall mission to improve the quality of life through the built environment.

We strive to solve societal challenges in which the built environment plays an important role for the quality of life.

In these pages, you can read descriptions of the philanthropic goals. In the circles, you can see some of the larger initiatives we have initiated, and above them, in the pictures, you can see some examples of specific projects.

## UN Sustainable Development Goals

The six goals reflect both global, national, and local challenges in which the built environment has an impact on the quality of life. Denmark shares a number of challenges with countries around the world, such as climate change, urbanisation, and the need to create more sustainable construction and more sustainable development for large and small cities.

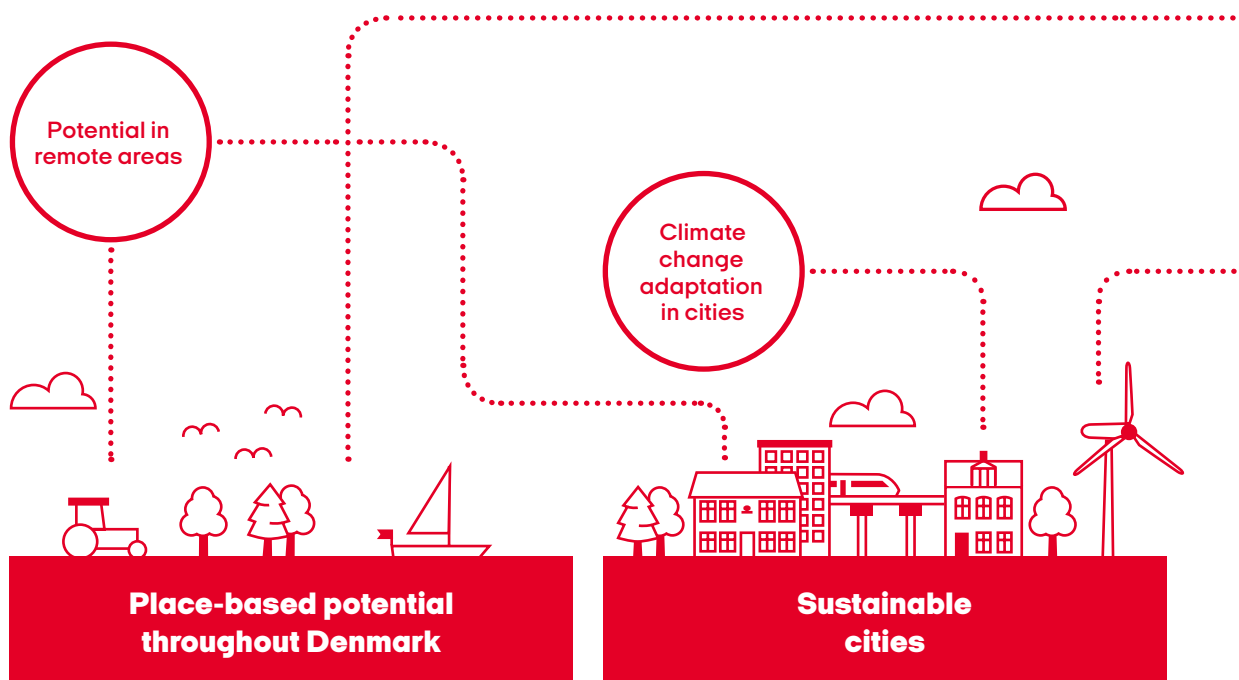
For this reason, it is important that Danish efforts contribute to the global goals set by the UN. We work to ensure this by bringing sustainable Danish solutions to the international community and also by taking inspiration and good solutions back home that can contribute to a better quality of life in Denmark.





^ **More and better options** in socially disadvantaged residential areas. This is the goal of 'Cities in balance'. In collaboration with municipalities and housing organisations, we are developing comprehensive plans for three residential areas in different parts of Denmark.

< **The Wadden Sea Centre conveys** the unique and UNESCO-protected nature and wildlife to people of all ages. The modern building with straw covering both the facades and the roof seems almost to grow directly out of the ground – as part of nature itself.

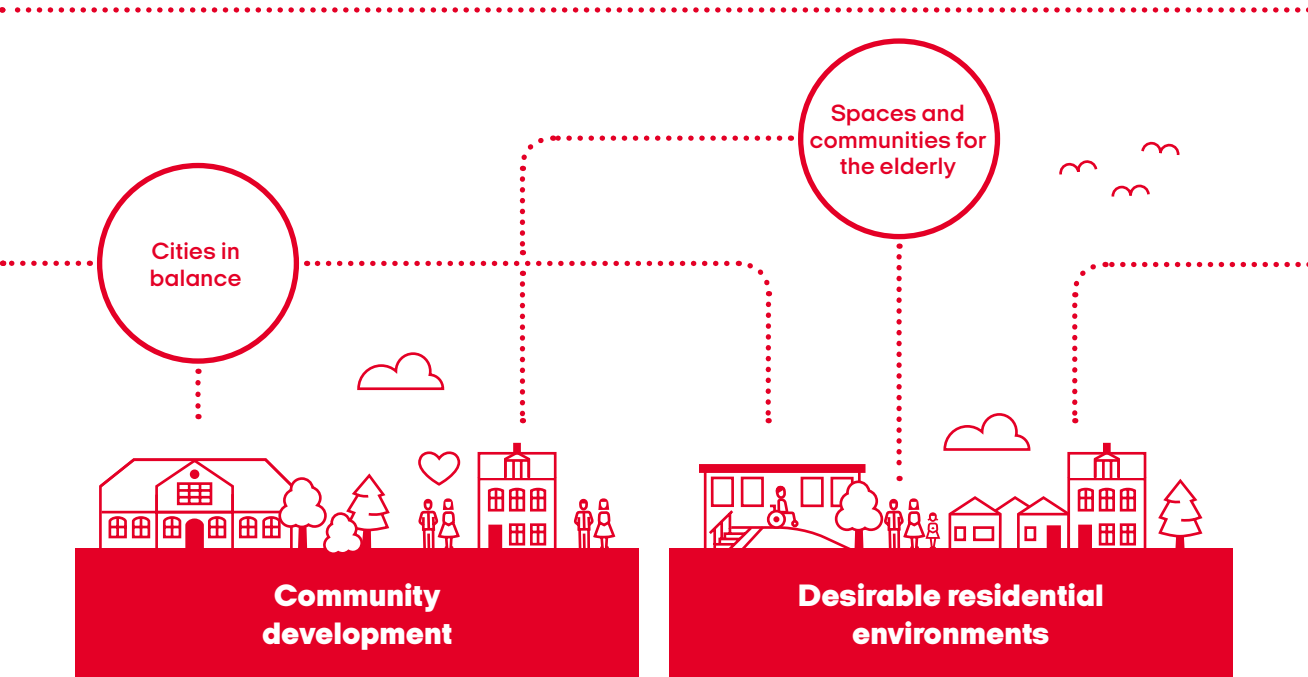


Realdania aim to help make it attractive to live in, work in, and visit areas outside the largest towns and cities. Therefore, Realdania works to adapt, enhance, and renew areas challenged by societal development by harnessing local, place-based potential.

Realdania aim to contribute to developing more sustainable cities that support people's lives and well-being.

> In rural areas throughout the country, **Realdania** contributes to the development of village clusters and to creating strong central towns with a lot of life and activity.

✓ The former **Freight Railway in Aarhus** has been transformed from a traffic hub into a gathering place for cultural and leisure activities – and a home for the development of the performing arts, visual arts, and literature. In this way, the old building with historical roots in the industrial society has gained new life.



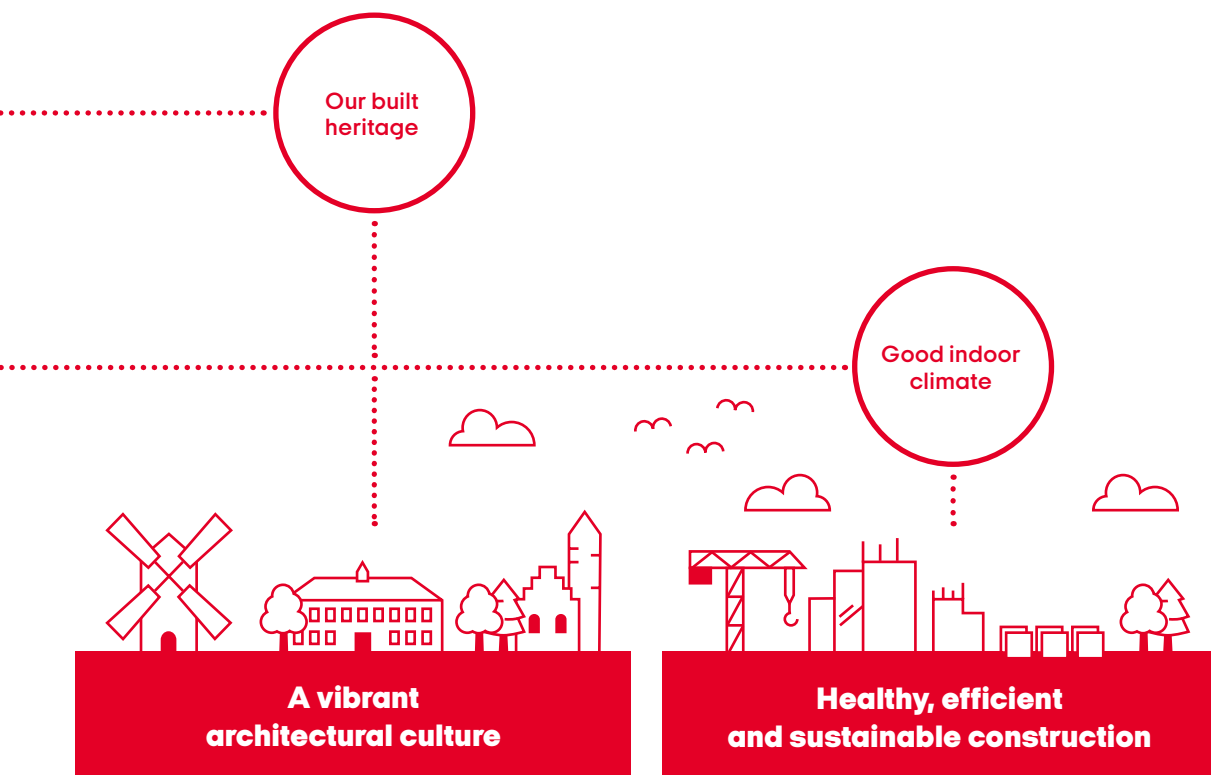
Realdania aim to strengthen the physical environments and meeting places that foster social relationships and inclusive and equal communities.

Realdania aim to improve housing and residential environments by developing existing and new ways of living, improving physical conditions, and communicating knowledge about housing.



^ **Kulturtårnet, the copper tower on Knippelsbro** in Copenhagen, used to be a coffee room for the bridge attendants. Today, it is a small, intimate cultural centre created by young volunteers that offers radio cinema, conversations, exhibitions, and pop-up restaurants.

> **Elderly people living in senior cohousing** experience higher quality of life and stronger neighbour relations. Realdania's initiative 'Spaces and communities for the elderly' aims to kickstart the construction of new senior cohousing – in collaboration with private pension funds and social housing organisations.



Realdania aim to contribute to a more vibrant architectural culture by providing good examples within architecture, preservation, and development of the built heritage, as well as applicable knowledge about building culture.

Realdania aim to develop, demonstrate, and communicate innovative solutions within construction in order to create a more efficient construction industry with a focus on added value, as well as more sustainable and healthier buildings to support our everyday lives.

**Realdania has two subsidiaries**, Realdania By & Byg and Bolius, both of which contribute to realising Realdania's purpose.

**Realdania By & Byg** develops innovative buildings, areas, and neighbourhoods and preserves historic buildings in a sustainable way. The company works on the basis of Realdania's philanthropic strategy through philanthropic investment and ownership. This might be through ownership of a collection of historic buildings that represent the development of Danish building culture through more than 500 years, and which are rented to private individuals and businesses. Or it might be through construction of innovative buildings to inspire home-owners or climate solutions to protect from rise in sea level to inspire Danish municipalities.

**Bolius offers** homeowners and residents independent knowledge, guidance, and inspiration for their homes on bolius.dk, in the magazine Bolius, and on social media. The goal is to help residents and owners achieve better solutions and higher quality in their homes, increasing their quality of life. Bolius also helps to disseminate the knowledge and solutions that emerge in the many initiatives and projects in which Realdania is involved.





**Superkilen is an inclusive and imaginative urban space** that links together the different parts of the neighbourhood around Mimersgade in Nørrebro in Copenhagen. The area is fitted with street furniture from around 60 different countries reflecting the many nationalities that live in the area around Superkilen. Superkilen and The Red Square have become vibrant meeting places in the city with many activities such as street basket, play, flea markets, and street theatre.

# Globally speaking

Many of the major issues that we face today are global in nature and cannot be solved at a national level but require international collaboration. This is why – while Realdania mostly supports projects in Denmark – we also work with international partners and organisations on initiatives that have a positive impact for Denmark on a greater scale.

## C40 Cities

The fight against climate change requires urgent action, and we believe that cities are some of our best change agents. This is why we have entered into partnership with C40 – a global network of mayors from the world's leading cities working together to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase cities' resistance to climate change.

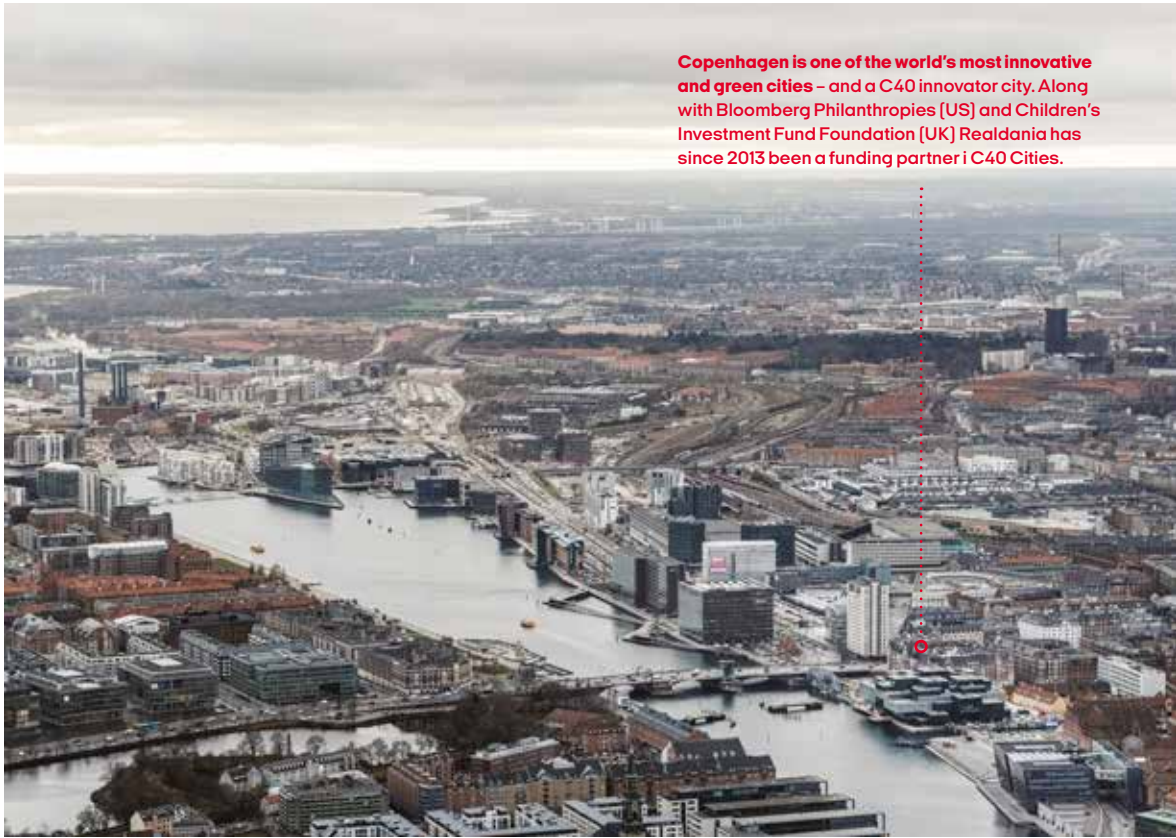
C40 is created by cities for cities to share experiences and good practice on climate action across national borders. Although Copenhagen is one of the smallest cities in the network, the Danish capital still plays a key role as one of the world's most innovative and green cities. Copenhagen is a C40 innovation city and houses a C40-office, which is part of BLOXHUB – an innovation hub for sustainable urbanisation which Realdania have established in cooperation with the Ministry for Industry, Business and Financial Affairs and the City of Copenhagen. BLOXHUB is placed in the building BLOX – owned by Realdania.

## City Solutions Platform

Together with the danish national cleantech cluster organisation CLEAN the city network C40 has developed the City Solutions Platform to help foster innovative and effective public-private collaboration. The platform is a safe space for cities to collaborate and co-create with the private sector and academia to identify new climate solutions at an early stage.

When working together, the public and private sectors can drive the necessary innovation and financing for achieving the international goals set out in the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals. Public-private collaboration can increase climate action by directing private sector knowledge, skills, resources, experience, and in some cases funding to key climate challenges within cities.





**Copenhagen is one of the world's most innovative and green cities – and a C40 innovator city. Along with Bloomberg Philanthropies (US) and Children's Investment Fund Foundation (UK) Realdania has since 2013 been a funding partner i C40 Cities.**

### UN Global Compact

The United Nations Global Compact is the world's largest voluntary corporate responsibility initiative. It is a call to companies to align their strategies and operations with universal principles on human rights, labour, the environment, and anti-corruption, and to work to advance societal goals.

Realdania has entered into a partnership with the UN Global Compact to support greater inclusion of philanthropic organisations in the global sustainable development agenda. The partnership looks to develop frameworks for increasing cross-sector collaboration between businesses, multilateral organisations, and philanthropy.

### UN Global Compact – Cities Programme

The Cities Programme is the urban arm of the United Nations Global Compact and addresses complex global challenges at the local level. The Cities Programme is working to achieve fair, inclusive, sustainable, and resilient cities and societies.

The UN Global Compact established the Cities Programme in 2003 to give cities a framework to advance the Ten Principles of the UN Global Compact. The programme is based on a simple but effective model of collaboration between government, business, and civil society called the Melbourne Model.

# We are an association

Realdania is an association with a representative member democracy. This gives us a particular responsibility and provides a strong foundation for our work.

The member democracy is an important part of Realdania's foundation and history. Realdania's members elect the members of the board of representatives – the association's supreme authority.

The board of representatives approves among other things the articles of the association and the annual accounts. They elect the board of directors, which in turn appoints the executive management. The board of representatives verifies that the board of directors and the executive management comply with legislation and work in accordance with Realdania's articles of association, goals, and strategies.

Realdania has about 155,000 members. Everyone who owns real estate in Denmark can join for free. This also applies to legal persons such as companies, social housing associations, or cooperative housing associations.

All members can stay informed about Realdania's work through the newsletter and at the association's election meetings and events.

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**The member democracy and the meetings with our members are central to Realdania. This is an important part of our foundation and our history.**

**Michael Brockenhuus-Schack**  
Chairman of the board of directors



**Hasle Harbour** on the island of Bornholm was a significant fishing port during the golden age of fishing in the Baltic Sea. After the collapse of the fishing industry in the 1980s, however, the port was left largely unused. Today it's an urban space connecting existing activities and creating room for new ones – such as a harbour bath with a sauna.



# 2.5 billion EUR

Since 2000, Realdania has supported philanthropic projects with a total of EUR 2.5 billion on the basis of the return on our non-philanthropic investments. During the same periode the association has paid **EUR 0.6 billion in taxes.**

# A long-term investment strategy

Realdania's philanthropic activities is funded by the non-philanthropic investments. We strive to protect and maintain our equity in order to benefit current and future generations.

The return on our non-philanthropic investments creates the basis for the philanthropic efforts, for our association and member activities, and for the daily operations of Realdania.

We invest our assets with the goal of maximising returns in the long term within the risk limits. This requires fully developed risk management processes and detailed contingency plans.

The goal is to keep Realdania's grants at a stable level – in any financial market environment – enabling us to continue to contribute to the development of our

society through our philanthropic work within the built environment.

Our non-philanthropic investments are based on solid investment processes and thorough analyses. We have a clear structure for decision making in which the strategic, tactical, and operational level are divided between the board of directors, the executive management, and the investment team.

We are a responsible investor and have implemented responsible investment policies which is based on international conventions and legislation

# A story about helping

The association Realdania has its roots in mortgage lending. The foundation has been built over more than 150 years by Danish home owners and companies, based on real estate financing.



## 1795

The Copenhagen Fire of 1795 broke out on 5 June and was not put out until two days later. Half of the city was destroyed by the flames.

## 1851

The first actual mortgage credit institutions emerged, and the loan type came to play a major role for the financing of real estate in Denmark.

## 1797

Mortgage credit emerged in 1797 as a type of loan that could bring people back on their feet after the fire. It started with a group of Copenhageners founding the predecessor of the mortgage credit associations that gave rise to Realdania.



## 1959

The modernist building that the association Realdania occupies today was completed. It was designed by the architects Christian, Erik, and Aage Holst.



## 1970

Kreditforeningen Danmark was formed by the merger of four mortgage credit associations. The merger was a result of a new mortgage credit law which gave both the institutions and borrowers a number of new opportunities.



## 2000

RealDanmark, the association behind Kreditforeningen Danmark, sold its mortgage and banking activities to Danske Bank. It was decided that the association's remaining capital of DKK 10.5 billion should be used for non-profit purposes within the built environment. The association continued – only now with a wholly philanthropic purpose and with the name Realdania.

## 2019

Since 2000 Realdania has supported more than 3,675 projects across Denmark, distributed more than EUR 2.5 billion and paid EUR 0.6 billion in taxes. Per 31 December 2018, Realdania's investment assets amounted to EUR 2.9 billion.



### Realdania 2019

#### Photos

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# for quality of life for now for the future



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## Cover photo

BLOX is urban development both indoors and outdoors. The building and the surrounding spaces and bridges finish the loop of the recently developed inner harbour in Copenhagen. And inside of the building, behind the green glass facade, is the home of the Danish Architecture Center (DAC) and BLOXHUB – the innovation hub for companies and researchers working to develop sustainable urban solutions. **BLOX is Denmark's world of architecture, design and new ideas.**

