



## People

# Developing people, supporting communities

It is Smurfit Kappa's ambition to be recognised as a great place to work and an employer of choice for top talent. We understand that our success is driven by our highly valued and motivated teams across the world.

### In this section our priorities are:

#### People values



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As a business, we strive to create a diverse workplace where everyone has a real sense of belonging and can be their authentic self at work every day. With a workforce of approximately 47,000 people, fostering diversity, inclusion and equality is important to us. We truly value our diverse mix of people, who bring so much to our organisation.

#### Target achieved:

## 25.1%

of management positions held by women at the end of 2023

#### People strategy



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It has always been the ambition of Smurfit Kappa to be recognised as a globally admired company, a great place to work and an employer of choice for top talent. These ambitions are not just based on our business growth, but also on our understanding that our success is driven by our highly valued and motivated teams across the world.

## 22

hours of career development for each of the permanent members of our workforce

#### Health, safety and wellbeing



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As an industrial business operating in 36 countries with around 47,000 employees, we are responsible for the health, safety and wellbeing of a large number of people. At Smurfit Kappa, we believe that this extends from work to home. We engage our employees with policies and procedures to deliver, innovate and produce in a safe environment.

## 48%

reduction in TRIR since 2018

#### Communities



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We constantly strive to be recognised as a 'good corporate citizen' in the communities in which we are privileged to operate around the world. We actively try to make positive and lasting changes in these communities through activities which include donations to support social, environmental and community initiatives.

#### Target achieved:

## €25.6 million

donated to social, environmental and community initiatives (2020-2023)



People continued



People

Key Principles

**Employees who find meaning at work are happier, more productive, and more engaged. People who believe their job has meaning and a broader purpose are likely to be more committed, relish taking on a challenge, and collaborate effectively. We aim to create meaningful work with a broader purpose, while ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of our people at work, as well as on their journey to and from the workplace.**

This is why Smurfit Kappa strives to constantly evolve and improve its HR Strategy and why our HR pillars: People Development & Talent Management; Employee Experience & Internal Communications; Inclusion, Diversity and Equality; and Reward and Recognition have been developed. These are underpinned by our HR Foundations, which enable us to bring this strategy to life. They include Health, Safety & Wellbeing commitments; our legal framework, Code of Conduct and SpeakUp ethics service; commitments to employee relations and the evolution of our HR Information System.

External to our business in the locations in which we operate, we strive to support the local communities where we are located by supporting projects aligned to the principles of our Smurfit Kappa Foundation ('the Foundation'). The vision for our Foundation is to positively impact the lives of underprivileged people by supporting sustainable projects that positively influence their lives through health and nutrition, education and basic care, thus helping to reduce the inequalities that exist.

Our culture and our values – Loyalty, Integrity Respect and Safety at work – have ensured that we continue to be successful.

Smurfit Kappa unites approximately 47,000 people around the world. We are a truly diverse organisation, spread across 355 sites in 36 countries, speaking over 20 different languages, across four generations. Our primary objective for all our colleagues is to provide a great place to work.

This involves creating opportunities for work that is productive and delivers a fair income; provides security in the workplace and social protection for families; offers better prospects for personal development and social integration; allows freedom for people to express their concerns; empowers people to organise and participate in the decisions that affect their lives; and ensures equal opportunity for all. Our materiality assessment outlines that the core areas for us are being a responsible employer; human rights, such as inclusion and diversity in the workplace; health, safety and wellbeing; and community involvement. Although we made progress in these three areas, we strive to do more.

During 2023, we delivered on many of the initiatives we had been planning as part of our evolved HR strategy. Our agility and flexibility as an organisation together with our talented and committed people have made it possible for us to bring several new programmes to fruition.

During 2023, to fully support our people we considered the various social, economic, and global issues which affect them both inside and outside the organisation. This helps us to build a more holistic approach to our HR programmes and consider the wider needs of our employees and their communities.

In addition to the direct involvement of our operations in our local communities, the Group also provides all the funding to the Smurfit Kappa Foundation, a registered charity in Ireland, which focuses on delivering a positive impact on the lives of underprivileged people in our communities. Since being formed in 2011, the Foundation has supported a total of 260 projects with a social investment of over €15 million in 30 countries.



## Risks and Opportunities

The Group conducted a double materiality assessment during 2023 (see pages 22-25 of this report) which confirmed that there are four key material topics for the Group related to our people:

- being a responsible employer that continues to attract and retain talent and maintain diversity
- ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of our employees, contractors, subcontractors and people visiting our sites
- further focusing on human rights through the Group's value chains
- maintaining standards of community involvement and positive impact

The stakeholder interviews for the materiality assessment show that Smurfit Kappa demonstrates commitment to being a responsible employer and fostering a positive work environment. However, the stakeholders pay attention to the challenges the industry sector has in retaining and attracting talent that is also a challenge to Smurfit Kappa.

Given the mechanical nature of the operations leading to higher related risks, stakeholders positioned this risk high for the Group. However, stakeholders also recognised the value the Company puts on its employees as its key assets and saw this as an opportunity.

The material topic of human rights is an increasing global issue, and as a Group that operates in diverse regions, Smurfit Kappa needs to continue to constantly review, update and strengthen its human rights policies and standards. Human rights is a topic where the Company is not only ensuring that its policies are fit for purpose, but that they are also understood across the business.

Community involvement is a material topic for the company, not only to support the continued operations of the business but also to attract talent. The positive work that Smurfit Kappa does in its communities through its Foundation and community projects in the areas in which we operate has been specifically noted by the stakeholders through the assessment.

## Attracting and Retaining a Diverse Pool of Talent

One of the important areas of focus for Smurfit Kappa is attracting and retaining the talent we need for internal succession planning and leadership continuity. Today's workforce expects choice, purpose, agility and flexibility. Smurfit Kappa like many other organisations has adapted well to employee expectations as we continue to focus on sourcing and developing talent through re-skilling, upskilling, recruitment and engagement. We are focused on attracting the right people for our organisation and are investing in retaining and motivating our teams.

Our talent agenda ensures we have the right people, in the right places and at the right stages of development, to fill key positions as they arise. We aim to attract talented people and help all our employees grow their careers and deliver on their potential. Developing the organisation's culture of talent management is vital to our success; it supports high performance and safeguards the values underpinning our organisation.



### Case study

## Global ID&E Education and Awareness

Our ID&E strategy continues to evolve for our organisation and our people, supporting our strong and ambitious commitment to ID&E.



Aligned to our clear strategy, sponsored by our senior leadership team and endorsed by the voice of our colleagues we have developed plans to advance our ID&E journey in four key areas. The focus for one of these areas is an ID&E Education and Awareness programme of events.

We have partnered with Social Talent, the world's leading ID&E e-learning platform, as they share our vision of enabling people and teams with skills and training to hire, onboard, engage, develop, and retain great talent. We are creating customised learning paths for teams who will hear powerful stories from leading industry experts, who will share practical tips, advice, and strategies to drive change and shape diversity focused mindsets.

In our pilot phase we have opened the platform to 250 learners, who have taken over 400 courses on topics such as inclusive language, allyship, ID&E 101 and how bias manifests to support their education and awareness. We will also launch specific paths to support building capability for inclusive recruitment, which is also one of our priorities.

This partnership allows colleagues to access learning at their own pace, which we follow with facilitated live discussions to embed the learning and grow ID&E awareness with individuals and teams across the organisation. In future phases we will scale the roll out of this learning across the management and supervisory roles in Smurfit Kappa and extend it further where possible.

**Everyone**  
for Inclusion, Diversity and Equality

## People continued

To attract the best and most diverse talent available, we continuously improve our recruitment processes, while also introducing a more flexible approach to working arrangements, where possible, to provide a better work life balance.

We believe that local hires are imperative for our success, so our succession planning has been designed to take this into account. We have development programmes where high potential employees are given the opportunity to spend one to two years in different teams to encourage cross-team working and gain additional experience.

Following our last MyVoice survey in 2021, we analysed over 40,000 employee comments. This helped us evolve our HR strategy for the past two years and provided direction for the areas our people wanted us to focus on, including focusing on providing a digital workplace with multi-lingual communications. The need to modernise and simplify our HR systems was also a key message.

As part of our commitment to improving Inclusion, Diversity and Equality within Smurfit Kappa, we are striving to create a diverse workplace and ensure that female gender representation across the Group reaches above 30% over time. We successfully met our Better Planet 2050 target of having 25% of our management positions held by women. This was delivered at the end of 2023, with women holding over 25% of these roles.

In 2023, we further evolved our EveryOne council structure to ensure regional and local accountability. This allowed us to embed new ways of working into the organisation where local and regional accountability is increased.

We have continued to build on our fair and competitive Rewards and Recognition philosophy to attract and retain our key talent, and to motivate employees at every level of the organisation to achieve the Group's strategic objectives. Our commitment to gender pay equality is continuing, and we publish a Gender Pay Gap Report for Ireland.

### Health and Safety Culture

Health and safety is a core value for us. At Smurfit Kappa we operate large machinery, with complex logistics and regular shift work. Our Safety For Life Programme continues to develop across our operations and we believe that operating safely is non-negotiable, no task is so important that it cannot be done safely, this is how we want our employees, contractors and subcontractors to approach their job, each and every day.

The safety and wellbeing of our teams across the world is at the core of how Smurfit Kappa operates. It is part of our culture and we strive to ensure that every day, each of our Smurfit Kappa employees return home safely to their families.

Our health and safety culture is founded on authenticity, empowerment and accountability, with our attention focused around our Safety for Life 'six high-risk areas': working at heights; management of contractors; people and vehicles; warehouses and backyards; contact with moving machines; and energy isolation.

We continually strive to improve our approach to health and safety, and are firmly of the belief that 'what gets measured gets done'. Therefore, we took the opportunity to have our annual Health and Safety survey included and integrated into MyVoice, our global employee engagement survey in 2021.

Equally, we recognise that it is not just about counting incidents. Increasingly our focus is on the actions we know will reduce the numbers of injuries; for example, having safety conversations, recognising strong safety performance and further controlling potential risks within our operations.

During 2023, we finalised the roll-out of a new Health and Safety Management system across all Smurfit Kappa sites, making incident reporting easier and simpler; allowing better access to our data so we can continue to manage, as well as address and learn from, any health and safety incidents that occur. The tool has increased visibility and continues to promote a safety culture across the organisation.

We improved our TRIR by 48% from our baseline of 2018. To continue to deliver progressive performance, we launched a five-year strategy in 2022. The strategy is a balanced plan that builds on previous behavioural initiatives, focuses on high risks and delivers a wider wellbeing programme.

### Good Corporate Citizen

Our values of loyalty, integrity, respect and safety at work combine to create a safe and inclusive culture, with equal opportunities for all and where inclusion and adherence to human rights are a priority. We take our responsibilities to society seriously, and believe that through good corporate citizenship and giving back to our local communities, we can help others build a platform that transforms lives, unlocks opportunities and promotes fairness for everyone.

# 25.1%

of management positions held by women at the end of 2023

# 48%

reduction in TRIR since 2018

Smurfit Kappa has a Code of Conduct policy that describes its rules and principles and is based on compliance with the law, ethical behaviour (including its SpeakUp policy), and a commitment to quality and service. The Code applies to the Board of Directors, officers and Group employees worldwide. Additionally, individuals, entities, agents or anyone acting on SKG's behalf are expected to comply with this policy. Being a responsible employer reduces the risk of potential human rights violations. By providing a safe, inclusive work environment for our relevant stakeholders can be an opportunity to attract talent to the Company.

In addition to the direct involvement of our operations in their local communities, the Group also provides 100% of the funding to the Smurfit Kappa Foundation, ('the Foundation'), a registered charity in Ireland, which focuses on delivering a positive impact on the lives of underprivileged people in the communities where we operate. During 2023, the Group participated in 192 community projects and donated €7.2 million in charitable donations, €2.8 million of which was to the Foundation.

Transparency and accountability are key areas of being a good corporate citizen. During 2023, the Group conducted a human rights assessment, focusing on a review of its policies and reporting, and highlighting a need for the development of new policies in some instances or refining existing policies. The assessment also highlighted a need to align our policies with best practice frameworks when gaps were identified and will support the company's preparation for the EU Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive ('CSDDD').

Every year, Smurfit Kappa publishes an Open Community booklet presenting some of the projects we have supported during the year in our communities. This booklet can be found at [www.smurfitkappa.com](http://www.smurfitkappa.com).



### Case study

## Ireland Smurfit Kappa announces women in STEM fellowship at University College Dublin

The fellowship is part of Smurfit Kappa's global EveryOne inclusion, diversity, and equality initiative.

Smurfit Kappa has formally announced the Smurfit Kappa Newman Fellowship – Women in STEM, a philanthropic partnership with UCD.

This will be a long-term international piece of research funded by Smurfit Kappa investigating the experiences of women working in science and engineering roles. The results will provide an opportunity to challenge how women are viewed in engineering and science-based roles as a career, and to improve the working experiences of women in engineering and industrial type sectors.

Commenting on the official launch of the Fellowship, Professor Aoife Ahern, Dean of Engineering and College Principal for the College of Engineering and Architecture, said: "Increasing the representation of women in engineering is an important aim, and we have had some success at encouraging more women to study engineering, with intake now standing at approximately 30% of our classes in UCD. However, we also need to look at how women can be retained in the profession, and to examine what needs to be done to encourage women to be leaders in engineering – in business, the public sector and academia. Engineers play an important role in solving the most pressing needs of the world – for example in designing solutions for climate change and the energy crisis, or provision of more sustainable infrastructure. If women do not enter into engineering and stay in the engineering profession, they are in danger of being left out of those solutions."

Smurfit Kappa has a proud and established tradition of supporting social, environmental and community initiatives in the countries where it operates. The creation of the Smurfit Kappa Newman Fellowship forms part of the Company's commitment to build a sustainable and inclusive future for everyone.

Also commenting, Sharon Whitehead, Vice President of HR at Smurfit Kappa, said: "We are delighted to formally announce the launch of the Smurfit Kappa Newman Fellowship. At Smurfit Kappa, we are strongly committed to inclusion, diversity and equality and we are particularly passionate about this area of research.

"As a large multinational employer, we know how important it is to have a gender balanced and diverse workplace that offers equal opportunity for career progression."

Ken Bowles, Group Chief Financial Officer and Executive Sponsor of the Gender Community at Smurfit Kappa, added: "This year's International Women's Day theme of 'equity' really struck a chord with us and is something that we have been seeking to embed in our ongoing inclusion, diversity and equality journey."

"Our Gender Community is striving to provide the most level playing field and opportunities for all genders through providing the tools, infrastructure and programmes to equip them to flourish."

The UCD Newman Fellowship Programme, established in 1989, provides financial support for a period of two years, allowing the fellow the freedom to pursue their particular area of research. Projects range across all academic areas and almost 250 fellowships have been awarded since the programme's inception.

The successful candidate will work under the supervision and mentorship of Professor Ahern. Interested candidates who hold a doctoral degree in Social Science or Engineering, and those with a particular expertise on the role of gender in engineering, science and technology are invited to apply.

People continued

Responding to our Stakeholders

	What We Believe	What Our Stakeholders Expect of Us	Our Commitments
People Values	<p>As a business, we strive to create a diverse workplace where everyone has a real sense of belonging and can be their authentic self at work every day.</p> <p>With a workforce of approximately 47,000 people, fostering diversity, inclusion and equality is important to us.</p> <p>We truly value our diverse mix of people, who bring so much to our organisation.</p>	<p>Our stakeholders expect us to be a unifying force for our approximately 47,000 people across the world. To respect their human rights and those of anyone who comes into contact with our organisation, while providing a fair working environment where everyone feels included and respected.</p>	<p><b>Commitment #1:</b> By 2024, to have 25% female representation in management positions across the Group.</p> <p><b>Commitment #2:</b> Provide a Speak Up service where our employees and all stakeholders can report wrongdoing or possible wrongdoing in full confidence, while ensuring all allegations are fully investigated and actioned accordingly, in a timely and professional manner.</p>
People Strategy	<p>It has always been the ambition of Smurfit Kappa to be recognised as a globally admired company, a great place to work and an employer of choice for top talent. These ambitions are not just based on our business growth, but also on our understanding that our success is driven by our highly valued and motivated team across the world.</p> <p>Our employees are the very centre of our business.</p>	<p>Our stakeholders expect us to be a best practice organisation in the context of our day-to-day interactions with our employees. We are expected to deliver on our promise to be a great place to work, by delivering top level Training and Development, and Rewards and Recognition programmes.</p> <p>We are also expected to be inclusive to all employees.</p>	<p><b>Commitment #1:</b> We are committed to delivering at least a 3% improvement every two years in employee engagement until 2025 (MyVoice surveys as reference).</p> <p><b>Commitment #2:</b> 100% implementation of all Learning and Development programmes within our global Smurfit Kappa Academy.</p>
Health, Safety and Wellbeing	<p>As an industrial business operating in 36 countries with approximately 47,000 employees, we are responsible for the health, safety and wellbeing of a large number of people. At Smurfit Kappa, we believe that this extends from work to home.</p> <p>We engage our employees with policies and procedures to deliver, innovate and produce in a safe environment.</p>	<p>Our stakeholders expect us to provide a safe and healthy working environment, and to promote a health and safety culture that encompasses all who work with us, whether it is directly or indirectly.</p>	<p><b>Commitment #1:</b> Reduce TRIR by at least 5% annually.</p> <p><b>Commitment #2:</b> Maintain a productive and safe workplace by minimising the risk of accidents, injury and exposure to health hazards for every employee and all subcontractors, aiming for a zero accident working environment.</p>
Communities	<p>We see ourselves as a 'good corporate citizen' in the communities in which we're privileged to operate around the world, and we actively try to make positive and lasting changes.</p> <p>By supporting local education, we can strengthen communities by creating opportunities for income generation, collaboration and participation. This can in turn also provide a talent pool for our future workforce.</p>	<p>Our impact should not only be on the people we work with. Our responsibilities extend beyond, to supporting local economies and livelihoods, especially in remote areas with limited opportunities for work, where we are a significant employer.</p>	<p><b>Commitment #1:</b> Our employee volunteering programmes will support paid time off for employees to participate in chosen community activities.</p> <p><b>Commitment #2:</b> Between 2020 and 2025, we will donate €24 million to support social, environmental and community initiatives (20% more than the previous five years).</p>

Status key:

● On track to achieve target

● Improvement needed

● Significant improvement needed

**Progress Made in 2023**

**Status**

**Delivering for SDGs**

**Scope**

**Progress made:**

In 2023, we achieved our target with 25.1% of management positions held by women.



**Progress made:**

108 were identified and fully investigated, with 14 of them substantiated or partially substantiated.



[Read more on pages 74-75](#)

As a good corporate citizen, we play our part in society by creating decent work for our approximately 47,000-strong team. We are committed to delivering gender equality, reducing social inequality and ensuring our employees have fair pay and freedom of association.

Smurfit Kappa contributes to the realisation of the following SDGs and targets:

5.1, 5.2, 5.5, 5.B and 5.C  
8.5, 8.7, 8.8 and 8.B  
10.2



— All Smurfit Kappa operations

**Progress made:**

We achieved an improvement of 13 percentage points between the 2017 and 2021 MyVoice employee engagement surveys.



**Progress made:**

In 2023, all Smurfit Kappa Academy training programmes took place.



[Read more on pages 76-83](#)

As a responsible employer, we are ensuring a working culture in which every member of our approximately 47,000-strong team feels engaged, appreciated as they are and has a sense of belonging. We help our employees to grow their careers, deliver on their potential, while rewarding them fairly for their contributions.

Smurfit Kappa contributes to the realisation of the following SDGs and targets:

8.5, 8.7, 8.8 and 8.B  
10.2



— All Smurfit Kappa operations

**Progress made:**

We had a 3.9% increase in 2023



**Progress made:**

In 2023, we had 279 lost time accidents (277 in 2022).



[Read more on pages 84-87](#)

The safety and wellbeing of everybody on our sites is part of our organisational values. Our focus also extends to workplace wellbeing and work-life balance.

Smurfit Kappa's approach to safety and wellbeing has a direct impact on the following SDG and targets:

3.3, 3.4, 3.5 and 3.9



— All Smurfit Kappa operations

**Progress made:**

Multiple local projects took place during 2023.



**Progress made:**

We invested €7.2 million in social projects in 2023. From 2020-2023, we have donated €25.6 million.



[Read more on pages 88-93](#)

As a good corporate citizen, we play our part in society by creating decent work and delivering economic growth in the communities where we are located. We are committed to delivering gender equality and reducing social inequality.

Smurfit Kappa's approach to communities has a direct impact on the following SDG and targets:

8.5  
10.2



Empowering people in our communities to improve their lives, and where the cycle of poverty, hardship and dependence is an issue we aim to help end this. Applies to the local communities or regions where we are present.

People continued

# People values

We are committed to ensuring our employees have a positive work experience in accordance with our values. We recognise that good social citizenship, shown in our interactions with employees, business partners and host communities, is essential to creating a sustainable future.



Highlights in 2023

**25.1%**

of management positions held by women at the end of 2023

**Zero**

material issues reported

**First**

Group level Human Rights assessment



Delivering for our SDGs

<p><b>5</b> GENDER EQUALITY</p>	<p><b>8</b> DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH</p>	<p><b>10</b> REDUCED INEQUALITIES</p>
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Smurfit Kappa fosters meritocracy and respect, in a safe and open work environment. In keeping with the UN's Declaration of Human Rights, and the Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work developed by the International Labour Organization ('ILO') principles and the OECD Guidelines for multinational enterprises, the following principles and conditions are maintained in every country in which we have a presence. The Group is committed to monitor its compliance with the UN Global Compact (see the report on page 141 of this report). Our policy is to select the best person for a position, and where possible hire locally, which means that, by far the greater proportion of senior operational positions across the organisation are held by local managers.

Smurfit Kappa unites approximately 47,000 people around the world. The majority of our workforce are permanent employees directly employed by Smurfit Kappa, with almost 2,000 contracted staff. We are a truly diverse organisation, spread across 355 sites in 36 countries, speaking over 20 different languages, across four generations. Over 95% of our employees are operationally focused, operating machinery, working to deliver within complex logistic frameworks and with regular shift work.

**Respect**

We value the contribution our employees make to our business. Smurfit Kappa is committed to providing a working environment that is safe, respects individuality, is non-discriminatory, appoints and promotes people on suitability, rewards fairly, encourages personal and professional development, and has effective mechanisms of communication in place.

Smurfit Kappa operates in countries where the indigenous people have rights to their land and culture. For us, this applies to our forestry operations in Colombia. Our respect for indigenous people's rights has been covered in the FSC certified sustainable forest management processes and more on this can be read on pages 53-55. To learn more of the activities and engagement with our communities, please read Our Open Community booklet at [smurfitkappa.com/sustainability](http://smurfitkappa.com/sustainability).

**No Discrimination**

Smurfit Kappa prohibits discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, faith, gender, sexual orientation or gender identity, marital or civil partnership status, parental or caring responsibilities, race (colour, ethnic or national origin, nationality), political opinion, social origin or other legally protected status in the countries in which we conduct business. This commitment extends to our own employees and on-site contractors, through external suppliers and other business partners and to communities near our operations. As part of our Inclusion, Diversity and Equality ('ID&E') programme our sites focus on vulnerable groups such as migrants and female workers. Our ID&E programme has been further described on page 78 of this report.

**Working Fairly**

We prohibit child labour. We will not employ anyone under minimum school-leaving age or minimum employment age in any country, and no violations of this were identified in 2023. We do not tolerate forced labour or physical abuse, from ourselves or from our suppliers, contractors, subcontractors and others with whom we do business. In 2023, 54 of our operations were subjected to SEDEX Members Ethical Trade Audits, of which 42 were first-time audits.

Smurfit Kappa is subject to the provisions of the UK Modern Slavery Act. Our principles and policies with respect to our employees and suppliers were updated in 2018 to ensure compliance. See also further details in our Annual Report 2023 on page 66.

Furthermore, we have implemented Group-wide self-assessments in each of our FSC certified sites looking into the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. The assessments are being completed by the local operations themselves and were audited as part of the FSC CoC audits.

**Compliant Acquisition Practices**

In all of our acquisition processes, due diligence involves examination of the target organisation's policies and practices on human rights, anti-corruption and anti-bribery. We examine their compliance with local, national and international laws, and the day-to-day application of these laws.

If any serious non-compliance to these policies and practices arises, the acquisition will be reconsidered.

### Freedom of Association and Collective Representation

We support all our employees' right to join trade unions, and for representatives to negotiate on their behalf. If freedom of association and collective bargaining are restricted, or employees do not want trade union membership, we work with them to establish mutually acceptable means of representation.

We ensure employee representatives do not suffer any disadvantage or discrimination because of their role. In 2023, we did not have any confirmed cases, where either the association or bargaining rights of any individual or group of employees had been denied. Collective agreements, currently applicable in approximately 90% of the Group's sites and covering 74% of our employees, are the result of either local or national negotiations in the countries concerned.

In many countries, Smurfit Kappa conducts formal employee consultations with local Works Councils ('WCs'). Read more about these councils in our Annual Report 2023 on page 64. Formal employee consultations include topics on working conditions such as health and safety, minimum notice periods, and benefits not included in basic employment agreements.

### Ensuring Ethical Behaviour

Every year, certain managers and all market-facing employees in the business are required to formally confirm adherence to the Group Competition Law Compliance Policy. In addition, these approximately 6,000 employees must complete an e-learning module about competition law compliance. The Legal team also runs a number of other seminars and ad-hoc presentations.

Smurfit Kappa Code of Conduct sets the principles for all our employees, contractors and sub-contractors on ethical behaviour in the workplace. Our Whistleblower Policy and supporting SpeakUp service guarantee a confidential process for raising issues or matters that align with the three underlying principles of Smurfit Kappa's Code of Conduct: Compliance with the law, ethical behaviour and a commitment to quality and service.

To ensure every employee understands their responsibilities and expected conduct as responsible corporate citizens, we offer an online e-learning programme to support the Code of Conduct and SpeakUp service. Every Smurfit Kappa location has the Code of Conduct accessible for anyone working in our premises or visiting our sites.

We offer multiple avenues to our stakeholders to confidentially express their concerns. The most important of these are: direct access to the line manager or HR partner, mail boxes available at site where employees can leave their messages and the SpeakUp service. The SpeakUp service,

provided by an independent third party company, allows all stakeholders to easily and confidentially report any issue or instance of wrongdoing, with the service available 24/7/365, guaranteeing user confidentiality and/or anonymity, as well as assurance of non-retaliation. The SpeakUp service is available through our website.

Our objective is to ensure that in every site, each of our employees is aware of our Code of Conduct and SpeakUp service in order to encourage transparency and to promote a transparent and trustworthy workplace. Cases reported through the SpeakUp service are hosted on a fully secured and GDPR compliant platform. Each case that is reported through the service is automatically assigned and dispatched by the system to local HR, based on the location of the reporter. Every case reported is carefully processed and analysed against a set of basic criteria, that help us determine if corrective action is required to mitigate further risks.

There are eight categories of general issue types covered in the Speak Up service, they are: Fraud, Bribery & Corruption; Competition & Anti-Trust; HR Grievance, ID&E Equal Opportunities, Harassment-free workplace, Freedom of association; Health & Safety, Security & Environment; Suppliers & Business Partners; Community engagement; Conflicts of interest; and Protecting Smurfit Kappa's assets. In addition, items can also be reported under Enquiry or Other. In 2023, a total of 108 cases were reported via our Speak Up service. There were 14 substantiated cases, of which six were from the category HR Grievance, ID&E Equal Opportunities, Harassment-free workplace and four were from Fraud, Bribery & Corruption and the balance were in Health and Safety and Other. All reported cases were fully investigated and resulted in 43 corrective actions or improvements to address substantiated cases. All substantiated cases were evaluated using our formal materiality assessment and it was determined that there were no material cases in 2023.



#### Case study

### Global RISE – Female Development Programme

New to the SK Academy suite of programmes in 2022 was SK RISE.

It set out to uniquely support the development of our female employees; to help enhance their belief in their own abilities and give them the skills to manage challenges commonly faced in the workplace.

A unique element of this programme amongst our suite of SK Academy programmes is that access to the programme is by self-nomination and is therefore open to all female employees, regardless of their function, position, or location who want to build and grow their careers in Smurfit Kappa.

In 2023, we were pleased to further increase access to SK RISE by developing and running the programme in Spanish, the very first SK Academy non-English programme, thereby offering increased access to Group programmes for those who speak Spanish. Since its launch we have had a large number of our female employees putting themselves forward to participate in the programme and have seen exceptional results.

In 2024, we will grow the programme further by increasing the number of attendees at each programme and we plan to add another 100 participants to our alumni this year.



The final word from a RISE participant:



**I feel ready to be a support for my teams, ready to be direct and clear in my way of communication, ready to empower myself and those around me. I am actually not much different. I'm just a better version of myself.**

**Vanessa Flores**  
Health and Safety Manager, Smurfit Kappa Mexico

People continued

# People strategy

We strongly believe that everyone has talent and needs to find the right place in the organisation where they can reach their full potential. The main focus of our HR strategy is to ensure we have programmes in place to help our employees realise their potential and grow both personally and professionally during their time in Smurfit Kappa.



Highlights in 2023

**33.3%**

Group Executive Committee positions held by women

**22 hours**

training hours per person on average in 2023

**25.1%**

of management positions held by women at the end of 2023



Delivering for our SDGs

**8** DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

**10** REDUCED INEQUALITIES

Our strategy aims to help us attract, retain, reward and unlock people’s talent and potential – developing our people to grow our business. It is specifically focused on:

1. Understanding the organisational needs and the business strategy
2. Identifying the HR strategy and people priorities required to realise our business ambitions
3. Providing a road map to ensure we have succession plans in place, with people at the right career stage and in the right place, to fill leadership gaps and have the right talent to drive forward successfully
4. Ensuring HR services and capabilities are in place for the current and future needs of the business

Our people strategy has four key pillars:

- Employee Experience and Internal Communications;
- Inclusion, Diversity and Equality;
- People Development and Talent Management; and
- Rewards and Recognition.

**The Foundations of our HR Strategy**

These pillars are underpinned by the foundations of our HR strategy. This includes our safety and wellbeing commitments, the legal framework that supports our business, our Code of Conduct incorporating our SpeakUp ethics service, our commitment to employee relations, and the provision of a state-of-the-art HR Information System, as we continue our commitment to professionalise and digitise our HR processes across the organisation.

We focus on these foundations to ensure the health and wellbeing of our people, the reliability of our information, the integrity of our organisation and to ensure we communicate with all our colleagues in a consistent and timely manner. These provide us with an approach and way of working, behind which the entire HR organisation is aligned. For example, at Smurfit Kappa, every relevant meeting begins with a discussion on health and safety.

**Our HR Strategy**



**People Development and Talent Management**

**Our Ambition:**

To help our people grow their careers and deliver on their potential, so we can realise our ambition for them and the organisation as we move forward.

**Employee Experience and Internal Communications**

We want to stay connected to our people to ensure they feel safe, supported and part of a strong global Smurfit Kappa community. We also aim to ensure all communications are delivered with a clear voice, at every level of our organisation, while providing the opportunity for open two-way dialogue and employee feedback.

How an employee feels about their time and experience in Smurfit Kappa is extremely important to our organisation. We believe it affects our success and drives our ability to attract, retain, and motivate our people, while ensuring their career in Smurfit Kappa is both enjoyable and successful.



### Employee Experience and Internal Communications

**Our Ambition:**

To create a continuous two-way dialogue, to ensure our people understand our strategy and the role they play in its delivery and to inspire them to perform at their best every day.

We are a diverse team in the context of background and life experience, but also in terms of longevity of service. We are proud that many employees choose to stay with us for most, if not all, of their careers. Over 45% of our workforce have a tenure exceeding 11 years, which provides a great mix of experience across our workforce.

Our ambition is to create a continuous two-way dialogue to ensure our people understand our strategy and the role they play in its delivery and to inspire our people to perform at their best every day. It is our belief that the people who commit to the organisation, along with everyone who joins us on their career journey, deserve a working life full of moments that matter, from the day they are hired, to the time they leave the organisation or when they choose to retire.



### Inclusion, Diversity and Equality

**Our Ambition:**

To create an inclusive workplace where everyone has a real sense of belonging and can be their authentic selves at work every day.

**Progress in 2023**

We continued to develop our employee engagement in 2023. This included the progress of our digital workplace strategy along with our internal communications channels and approach.

This has provided greater opportunities for engagement with colleagues across the organisation. The refresh of our Internal Communications channels including the launch of a pilot of our new digital employee App (MySK), in January 2024 has led to more seamless employee communications.

Our intranet has been re-designed making it more accessible and user-friendly, while Smurfit Kappa TV now has global, regional, and multi-lingual channels available. This has resulted in recent campaigns such as H&S and



### Rewards and Recognition

**Our Ambition:**

To attract, retain and recognise our employees, through competitive work practices. Making sure that people are not just appropriately rewarded from a monetary perspective, but also see their achievements recognised and valued in the workplace.

ID&E cascading seamlessly through the organisation.

Additionally, the introduction and piloting of three key HR processes; MyRewards, MyPerformance and MyTalent in MyHub, our new HR information system, has effectively kick-started our objectives to professionalise, modernise and simplify all our HR systems for a greater employee experience.

Providing opportunities for colleagues to give us direct feedback remains a priority for the organisation. During the year, two of our key countries in Europe – Italy and the UK, conducted pulse surveys across their entire workforces. The results of these surveys are currently being analysed and will be used to help shape the people programmes in both countries going forward.

## People continued

Communicating with our employees in their different languages has become the norm rather than the exception, and ensures that all key business initiatives are communicated across every level of the organisation. This results in both office and site-based staff being informed of all key activities.

All of this work has allowed us to embed and move forward with our HR strategy over the past year and allowed us to deliver in the areas our people wanted us to focus on, including focusing on providing a digital workplace with multi-lingual communications. Modernising and simplifying our HR systems was also a key message.

### Inclusion, Diversity and Equality

Our ambition is to create an inclusive workplace where each one of us feels included, supported and respected in our daily work. We truly value the diversity of our employees who bring so much to our organisation in terms of culture, perspective, leadership and innovative thinking.

Embracing and celebrating differences is a core component of EveryOne, our Inclusion, Diversity and Equality (ID&E) programme. We foster an inclusive culture, where all employees can thrive and contribute to our success.

### Progress in 2023

We have continued to evolve our EveryOne programme work during 2023. Our five communities have continued to work with our people to evolve our understanding and support of diverse communities of people across Smurfit Kappa. These communities are Disability, Family & Age, Gender, LGBTQ+ & Allies and Origin, Race & Ethnicity.

In 2023 we further evolved our EveryOne council structure to ensure regional and local accountability. This allowed us to embed new ways of working into the organisation where local and regional accountability is increased. At Group level we are now focused on moving forward on four priorities.

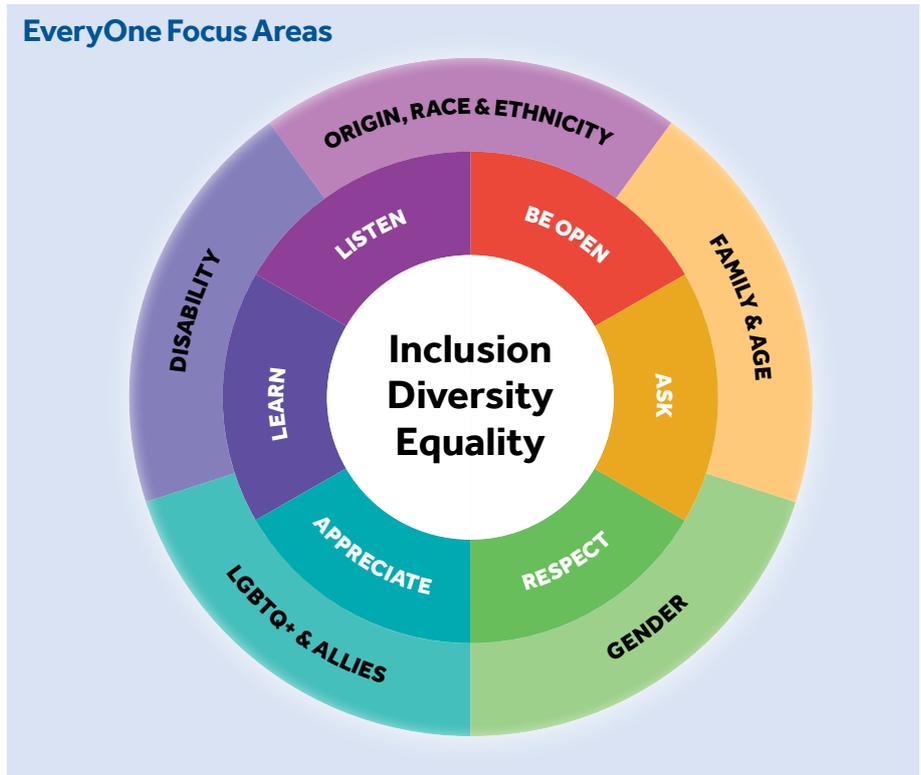
These priorities were formed based on feedback received in our EveryOne Discovery survey, a voluntary survey in 2022, which attracted almost 8,000 respondents and delivered over 9,000 employee comments.

Based on the feedback received, we have created a three-year roadmap to continue to advance our ID&E journey. We now have four key priorities areas:

1. ID&E education and awareness programme of events;
2. Inclusive infrastructure;
3. Inclusive recruitment;
4. Smart Working – the future of work.

We have continued to work across these projects in 2023. We have made strong progress particularly in ID&E education and awareness, where we have partnered with 'Social Talent', an

### EveryOne Focus Areas



industry leading ID&E training platform, to help educate our people. ID&E modules have now been built into all our SK Academy Programmes and will be further rolled out across the business.

We are also finalising details of our Inclusive Infrastructure project, this will allow for our sites to apply for CapEx for ID&E projects from a budget set aside for this sole purpose.

During the year, we came together to celebrate a series of Inclusion, Diversity and Equality events, including International Women's Day (March), Pride (June), World Mental Health Day (October), International Men's Day (November) and International Day of Persons with Disabilities (December).

Celebrating these events helps us raise awareness of our equality programmes, while educating and inspiring everyone to focus and participate in our wider ID&E agenda. Each of these events were celebrated across the organisation with many local activities. During the year, we also continued our work with our strategic Inclusion, Diversity and Equality partners, including the Trinity Centre for People with Intellectual Disabilities, the 30% Club and Social Talent.

In terms of our commitment to Inclusion, Diversity and Equality we believe and support that diverse and inclusive teams work and perform better together. They excel at solving complex problems, innovate and make better decisions. We have worked hard in 2023 to accelerate the initiatives under our global

# 25.1%

of management positions held by women at the end of 2023

EveryOne programme, as well as progressing the diversity promises we made under our Better Planet 2050 commitments.

As part of our commitment to improving Inclusion, Diversity and Equality within Smurfit Kappa, we are striving to create a diverse workplace and ensure that female gender representation across the Group reaches above 30% over time. In 2023, this was just over 20%. We committed to Our Better Planet 2050 target of 25% of management positions held by women by 2024, this target has already been achieved.

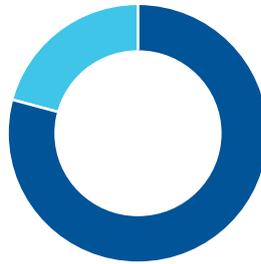
In terms of the gender diversity goals we set as part of our 'Better Planet 2050' commitments. Female employees currently represent slightly over 20% of our total workforce. The management positions held by women has increased to 25.1% as the end of 2023, achieving our target and the Executive Committee female representation has remained at 33.3% at the end of 2023. At Board level, female representation is now at 45%, demonstrating progress on our journey to achieve a better gender balance.

**Employee by Age Group (%)**



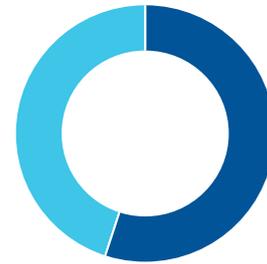
● <20 years	0.8%
● 21-30 years	16.2%
● 31-40 years	24.4%
● 41-50 years	26.2%
● 51-60 years	26.4%
● 60+ years	6.0%

**Total Employees by Gender (%)**



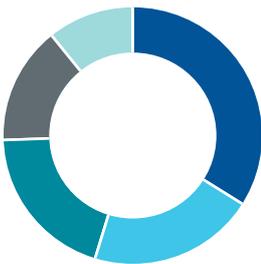
● Male	79.4%
● Female	20.6%

**Board of Directors (as at 31 December 2023) (%) (Gender split out of 11)**



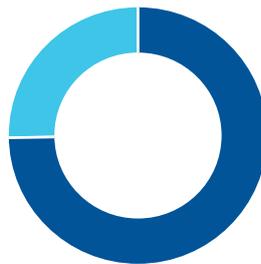
● Male	55%
● Female	45%

**Length of Service (%)**



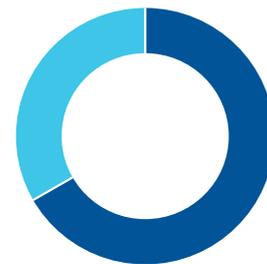
● <5 years	33.9%
● 5 to 10 years	21.0%
● 11 to 20 years	19.7%
● 21 to 30 years	14.7%
● +30 years	10.7%

**Management Positions Held by Gender (%)**



● Male	74.9%
● Female	25.1%

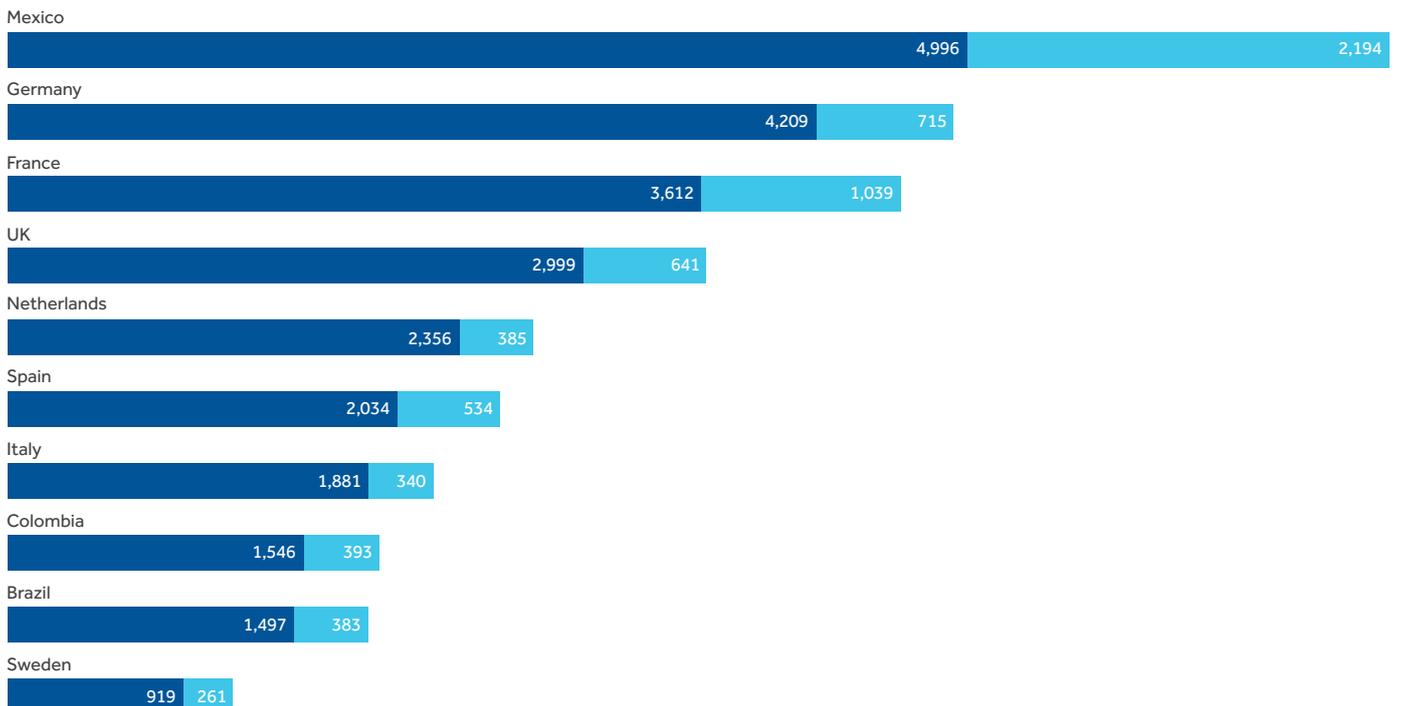
**Executive Committee (as at 31 December 2023) (%) (Gender split out of 12)**



● Male	66.7%
● Female	33.3%

**Top 10 Countries, Total Employees by Gender**

● Male ● Female



## People continued

### People Development and Talent Management

Further supporting and developing the culture and practice of talent management in the organisation is core to our success and we recognise that this is what will guarantee high performance and the continuation of the values and culture which underpin our organisation. Additionally, focusing on talent by having the right succession plans in place will ensure we can continue to fill key operational and strategic positions. This will help us deliver the right people, with the right skill set, for our various roles as they arise.

This approach to talent management has delivered many leaders for the organisation. Many colleagues have built and grown their careers over many years, with an average tenure of 17 years among this leadership cohort. A significant number joined us straight from university and have built their careers through a mix of internal and external learning and development programmes, as well as real-life and on-the-job training.

We believe it is part of our role to ensure that no matter who joins our organisation, at whatever stage in their career, our learning and development programmes will equip employees with skills and experiences that will be relevant long into the future. This focus on training is supported by ongoing performance dialogue and 360 degree feedback for our senior teams. These are all aimed at supporting their work and personal lives, both within and outside of Smurfit Kappa.

#### Progress 2023

Our talent agenda continues to focus on ensuring we have the right people in the right places and at the right stages of their careers to fill critical positions as they become available.

Our talent cycle integrates talent identification, succession planning and talent development to ensure we invest in our people and support them to achieve their career ambitions. We are pleased to see several successful moves of internal talent into key vacancies in the last year.

Of our top 2,000 employees consisting of site ExComms and above, 76% had a “My Performance and Career Conversation” in 2023. 27.3% of this cohort were female.

This year, our talent planning cycle took place for the first time using our new global HR information system, MyHub, which streamlined our process, enabling quality performance and career conversations. It also facilitated the focus on maturing the process of talent identification, assessment and succession planning across all clusters and countries.

Our Smurfit Kappa Academy continues to offer development opportunities to our existing and future leaders, through Talent Acceleration and Leadership Development programmes. This year saw two new Open Leadership programme cohorts of SK leaders start their first programme modules on campus in INSEAD, Fontainebleau, France. These participants will join our alumni of leaders who have already successfully completed the programme. We also launched our first non-English SK Academy programme, offering our SK RISE programme in Spanish.

This is a snapshot of the work that is done to support the development of our people. Many other training and development programmes focusing on technical skills, personal and leadership development take place at regional, country and site level. These programmes delivered an average of 22 hours of career development for each of the permanent members of our workforce in 2023, which is consistent with previous years.

Developing our people to support our business goals and to help them to achieve their ambitions is a continuing priority. Our hybrid approach to our Global Learning Academy has increased access to development opportunities for many more of our people. In addition to Smurfit Kappa’s in-house programmes and our long-term INSEAD partnership, this year we have successfully embedded two programmes to our suite of SK Academy programmes, SK RISE Programme, and the Harvard Business School’s ‘Advanced Management Programme.’ We have also introduced a new e-learning platform to support ID&E education and awareness, access to this platform is given to anyone who participates in any of our global programmes such as the General Manager Programme (‘GMP’) or the Advanced Manager Development (‘AMD’) programme.

### Rewards and Recognition

Our ambition is to attract, retain and recognise our employees through competitive working practices, and making sure that people are not just appropriately rewarded from a monetary perspective, but also see their achievements recognised and valued in the workplace. Our Compensation Policy ensures that we pay above minimum wage in all our 36 countries, offering employee rewards that consider living wage metrics and benchmarks.

There are many ways in which we communicate to our employees that we respect and value them. For example, we have competitive wage structures aligned with market standards, multiple career advancement opportunities, a commitment to global mobility, easy to understand communication of rewards packages; as well as a policy of openly thanking our colleagues for going above and beyond what is expected.



**As an organisation, we are committed to gender pay equality and we continue to proactively monitor the pay of male and female colleagues in similar roles, to ensure it is comparable.**

**Sharon Whitehead**  
Group Vice President, Human Resources,  
Smurfit Kappa



### Case study

## Ireland Trinity Centre for People with Intellectual Disabilities (TCPID) – Timothy Dimka Scholarship

Over the last four years, Smurfit Kappa has developed an amazing partnership with TCPID, which has gone from strength-to-strength.

We have been privileged to witness the impact of the Certificate programme every year, as we welcome a student to work with us during their placement and during the 'SK Me @ My Best' programme, where over the course of four weeks we help students prepare for the world of work by honing their interview skills.

The standard of the students on the programme and their commitment to their own development has been, without exception, outstanding. Not only are these students forging their own path in life, they are also creating space for those who come after them, by demonstrating their abilities, and show-casing the value they add to any workplace.

Access to high quality education can be life changing and this year we were delighted to further our support for the programme by launching the TCPID Timothy Dimka Scholarship. This scholarship is dedicated to the memory of Timothy Dimka, a former TCPID student who tragically passed away in September 2021, just as he was about to embark on his second year in the TCPID programme.

The scholarship will support one student a year for the duration of their two-year experience with TCPID. This scholarship represents a meaningful way for us to extend our support to people with intellectual disabilities and provide them with the resources they need to pursue their educational and career goals.

## People continued

### Progress in 2023

In 2023, we continued to challenge ourselves to ensure the compensation benefits we offer at every level of our organisation in terms of our Rewards and Recognition packages are fair, competitive and compare favourably with the market.

It is also critical that our Rewards and Recognition programmes are aligned to ensure our people can see a clear link between their compensation package and their performance, particularly when they perform above and beyond what is expected. In setting our reward packages, Smurfit Kappa takes into consideration the employee's performance, external benchmark data for their role in companies of similar size and scope, while also ensuring internal equity within the Group.

We continued to digitalise our Rewards and Recognition processes, a project started in 2022. Our leaders completed all the necessary details for these processes in the new Human Resources Information System, MyHub. This pilot will provide the organisation with a scalable approach to the process, while maintaining confidentiality and confidence.

As an organisation, we are committed to gender pay equality and we continue to proactively monitor the pay of male and female colleagues in similar roles, to ensure it is comparable.

Under UK legislation, employers with more than 250 employees are required to publish key metrics on their gender pay gap, our business continues to show improvement on this key metric.

The Irish Gender Pay Gap Reporting guidelines came into effect from 31 May 2022 and applied to all Irish companies with over 250 employees.

While not a requirement for Smurfit Kappa, as none of our companies in Ireland have more than 250 employees, this year we will voluntarily report a mean Gender Pay Gap of -10.6% (in 2022 it was +1.6%) which means that the mean total pay of women is higher than the mean total pay of men by 10.6% in Smurfit Kappa Ireland.

To fully understand these numbers our full Gender Pay Gap Report for 2023 can be found on our website: [smurfitkappa.com](https://smurfitkappa.com).

The Group is also focused on ensuring that positive employee and trade/labour union relations are maintained to the highest of standards, to ensure fair and sustainable Collective Labour Agreements. We have continued to build on our fair and competitive Rewards & Recognition philosophy to attract and retain our key talent, and to motivate employees at every level of the organisation to achieve the Group's strategic objectives.

The objectives of our Rewards Policy are to:

1. Create a framework to enable the Group to attract and retain talented employees;
2. Motivate employees at every level of the organisation to achieve the Group's strategic objectives;
3. Provide competitive rewards and benefits that are clearly linked to performance;
4. Digitisation of our key processes.

### Fair Pay, Compensation and Benefits

We provide competitive rates of pay to ensure fair compensation benefits across all our locations. We apply the 'same job, same pay' principle, and do not gender-discriminate on salary, benefits or any other consideration.

Smurfit Kappa provides a range of employee benefits such as parental leave within local legislations and, depending on our countries, pensions and life insurance form an integral part of the remuneration packages.

In all of our countries we offer similar basic benefits to our employees, full-time, temporary and part-time. The benefits depend on the local social security systems and legislative requirements which vary between countries. Due to vesting periods, stock ownership benefits, where offered, are not applicable for temporary employees.



### Case study

## Global MyHub – Embracing a Digital HR Future

Started in 2022, our Group wide Human Resources Information System for Smurfit Kappa, called MyHub, has evolved throughout the course of 2023.

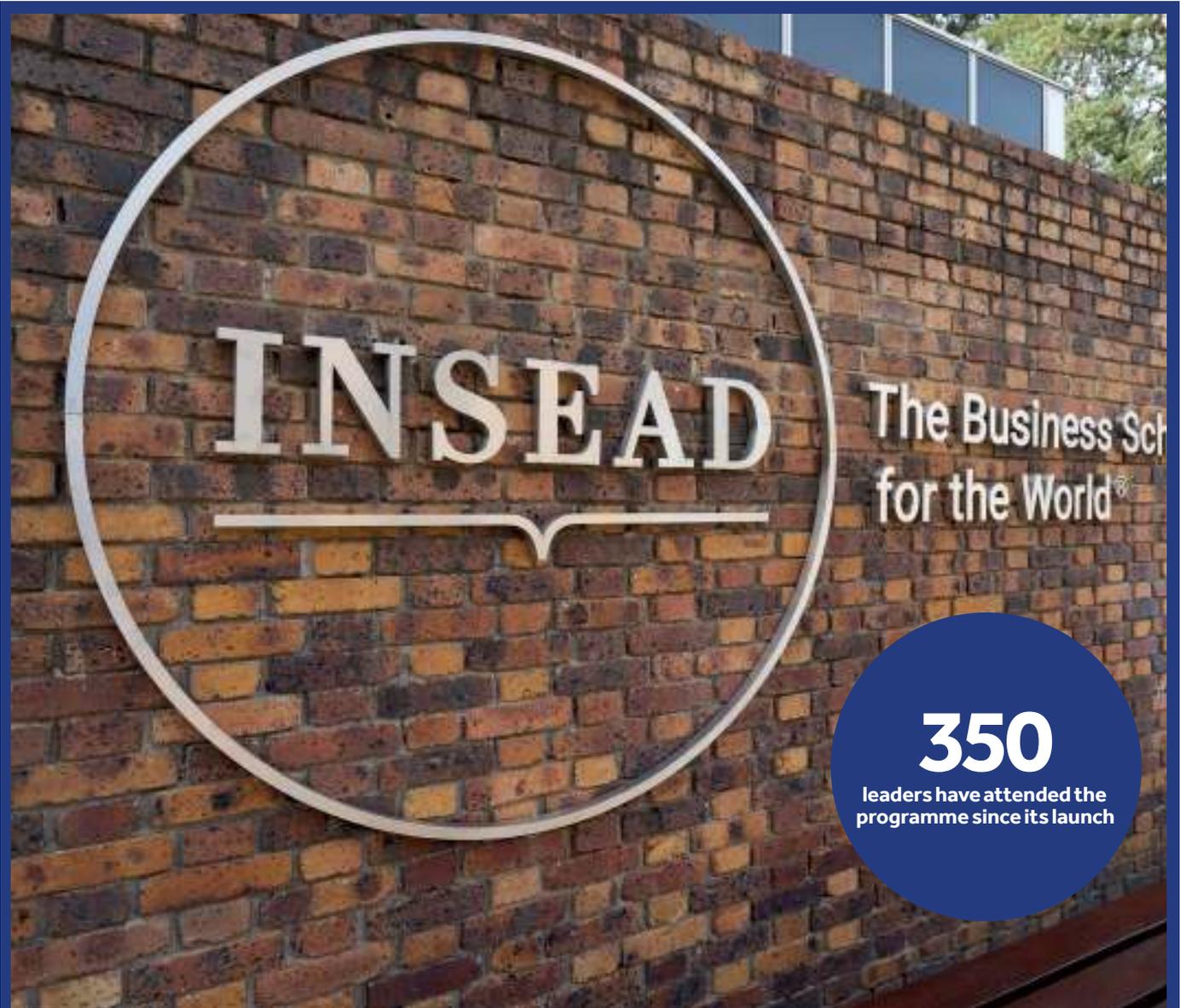


Three modules have been successfully piloted across the countries in which we operate: MyRewards for the online pay planning of our senior managers, MyPerformance for the performance reviews of approx. 2,000 employees and MyTalent for succession planning for our senior managers.

Our global objective was to enhance our overall employee experience, by empowering our managers to manage and plan for performance, talent, compensation, engagement, and learning. Over time our employees will also gain autonomy over their workplace experience, enabling them to grow in their careers no matter where they are in their journey, or career stage.

Thanks to this new platform, we can start to design standardised reports, dashboards and KPIs, enabling us to make data driven decisions in a more efficient way for the benefit of all stakeholders.

Our goal remains to deliver excellent HR services that drive the right behaviours in our business and deliver an excellent employee experience. This new platform will enhance the Group's ability to deliver on its people strategy.



### Case study

Global

## Open Leadership @INSEAD

The Smurfit Kappa Open Leadership programme joined the SK Academy portfolio in 2016.

The programme is run in partnership with INSEAD, one of the world's leading business schools, who designed a fully customised programme based on the Smurfit Kappa Open Leadership model.

The programme gives participants an opportunity to develop more breadth and depth in the way that they lead and behave in Smurfit Kappa. Since its launch, over 350 leaders have attended the programme, and the feedback has demonstrated the value of the programme to our people and to the business.

With 71 additional leaders starting their Open Leadership programme journey in 2023, our commitment to developing our leaders to make a difference remains steadfast.



**The Smurfit Kappa Open Leadership @ INSEAD programme was an inspirational experience for me. It helped me to develop tremendously as a leader and as a person while at the same time creating friendships with colleagues from all over the globe.**

**David Upton**  
VP Technical & Operational Excellence,  
Smurfit Kappa Europe

People continued

# Health, safety and wellbeing

Having products produced in a safe and healthy environment is important to all our stakeholders, especially our employees, their families and the communities where we operate. Therefore, the safety and wellbeing of our workforce is something we take very seriously.



Highlights in 2023

48%

TRIR reduction since 2018

PPI

award for Smurfit Kappa Tijuana

Wellbeing

award for our Lurgan plant for 'Best Wellbeing in the Workplace Strategy'



Delivering for our SDGs



The health, safety and wellbeing of our teams across the world is at the core of how Smurfit Kappa operates and also at the heart of our corporate social responsibility. It is part of our culture and cemented in our organisational values of: Loyalty, Integrity, Respect and Safety at work. Our vision is to ensure that every day, every Smurfit Kappa employee returns home safely to their families.

This concept applies equally not only to our own employees, but also to contractors, sub-contractors and other visitors to our sites. Operating a global, integrated business model means that we have a set of health and safety procedures and management systems, owned and managed by countries or clusters, spanning all of our operations from production sites to offices. The local health and safety teams ensure that we abide by local legislation, but also adhere to the Group Policies and audit protocols. Our health and safety protocols outline the procedures for identifying and assessing risks associated with health and safety hazards. Our Policy is available on our website at [www.smurfitkappa.com](http://www.smurfitkappa.com). Our sites increasingly obtain health and safety certificates (ISO 18001 or 45001) and the audit Policy requires an internal audit every two years. This audit protocol is designed to meet the needs of regulatory compliance and adherence to internal policies.

Our Safety for Life Initiative has identified six high-risk areas for which specific tools have been developed to promote strong risk-management and safe choices at work. These areas are: Energy Isolation; Management of Contractors; Contact with Moving Machines; People and Vehicle Interactions; Warehouse and Backyards; and Working at Heights.

**Focus on Behaviour**

Health, safety and wellbeing is a mindset, and our approach is to embed a safety-first approach deep in the Company culture to deliver on our aspiration to eliminate all serious incidents and accidents from our operations. We believe that strong health and safety is about individual and collective choices, responsibility and actions. Our Safety for Life Initiative does this through building an emotional link between the choices we make at work and how that affects the choices we are able to make in our personal lives. Similarly, we also support the choice of a healthy lifestyle, as that also impacts our employees' wellbeing at work and at home.

We also continued to deliver our core Safety and Wellbeing programmes including 'Safety for Leaders' across our operations. This programme helps build resilience, joined up thinking and good teamwork, at a time when it is really needed. In the Americas, we continued with our Safety Leadership Training and Coaching Programme for Senior Management which we plan to expand to more than 200 front line leaders across the Region in 2024.

The wellbeing of our employees is core to our agenda and our Employee Assistance Programme ('EAP') is designed to support on mental health as an important part of overall wellbeing. The EAP supports the management of stress, anxiety and depression, as well as providing support on physical, social, financial topics that form part of mental wellbeing. The EAP is available for all Smurfit Kappa employees regardless of whether the employee has been hired by Smurfit Kappa or an agency.

**Health and Safety Policy**

We continuously review and improve our Health and Safety practices and performance, to progress towards our vision. We know that doing to right things in the right way, with integrity and respect, is necessary to engage our employees and create a successful business based on trust. Smurfit Kappa has a structured approach to health and safety, through which we continually improve our safety performance.

It is our policy to:

- Promote a supportive culture focusing on openness, involvement and dignity in the workplace; we are all responsible for each other's health, safety and wellbeing;
- Provide constructive feedback to success and setbacks in equal measure. We care for our employees and expect them to care for each other, by speaking up when noticing anything they feel is unsafe or would harm anyone's health or wellbeing;
- Review workplace incidents so there is consistent reporting, investigation and, where appropriate, identification of improvement opportunities that strengthen our health and safety management systems and wellbeing and avoiding recurrence in incidents;

## Our Six High-risk Areas



**Our employees are our most precious asset. Their health and safety is of utmost importance. Everybody who comes to work in the morning healthy, should return home healthy and unharmed.**

Stakeholder response



### Case study

Ireland

## It's Time to Talk about wellbeing

Health, safety and wellbeing are all at the core of Smurfit Kappa Lurgan's approach to their employees. Since 2020, the corrugated plant has increased its focus on employee wellbeing, an important element of employee engagement and their health and safety.



The plant has a dedicated wellbeing committee and health champions who innovate and implement ideas to improve the wellbeing of their employees. The Lurgan plant offers to all its employees additional wellbeing benefits and has trained mental health and physical health first aiders throughout all shifts.

In 2023, the site introduced a new initiative to welcome new members to the team. It's Time to Talk is a monthly interview with a colleague on their life outside work. These interviews create a sense of knowing the colleague on a personal level and as importantly a sense of belonging.

The site has created a wellbeing room on-site that functions as a hub that is accessible for all employees to find materials on health and wellbeing, a mindfulness area, quiet zone, an inspirational corner, book swap and a community notice board. The room has been well received.

The efforts towards our employee wellbeing haven't gone unnoticed outside the Lurgan plant either. In 2023, the site was awarded the Best Wellbeing in the Workplace Strategy award at the Irish Workplace and Employment Awards.

## People continued

- Comply with all applicable legal requirements and implement good health, safety and wellbeing practice by effective deployment of our health and safety management systems;
- Ensure that all line managers foster a work environment where every member of the workforce, including contractors, understands their role in health, safety and wellbeing, and delivers on their individual responsibilities;
- Ensure that all operational managers take responsibility for health and safety implementation, communication and compliance;
- Foster a work environment where every member of the workforce understands their role in health and safety, and delivers on their individual responsibilities;
- Ensure that our employees, contractors and subcontractors are trained to work safely;
- Have processes in place to identify health, safety and wellbeing hazards so that risks are assessed and minimised, to prevent the occurrence of injury and ill health to our employees, contractors, subcontractors partners and visitors.

### Health and Safety Processes

Our health and safety systems are owned by the local sites but are audited to consistent policies across the Group, so that we work to the principles of our Group Health and Safety Policy, local legislation and local risk assessment. All sites have local health and safety support to guide the implementation of the Policies and systems. We have Health and Safety Committees at site, regional and Executive Committee levels.

Our Policy on Incident Investigation, Reporting and Communication supports understanding of the health and safety risks. In addition, we have a Policy on Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment, applicable to all sites. We also have an Energy Isolation Policy Lock out, Tag out, Try out (LOTOTO) applicable to all sites across the Group. All employees, contractors, subcontractors and visitors are encouraged to report any incidents, including near-misses, ensuring that we learn from our mistakes and repeat incidents are avoided.

Embedding health, safety and wellbeing thinking into the Company culture means that we have opportunities to listen and share new initiatives, alongside the existing strong safety agenda in all meetings. Supporting this focus on best practice development, brought about by consistent and Company-wide training programmes. Employees receive extensive health and safety training that adheres to both country legislation, and also the progressive ambitions of Smurfit Kappa. Significant behavioural-based safety training programmes are in place for all site-based levels of management. New employees, contractors, subcontractors as well as visitors get an induction to the site safety measures at the beginning of their tenure in any Smurfit Kappa site.

### Progress in 2023

Our TRIR increased by 3.9% in 2023 bringing the TRIR to 0.53 (2022: 0.51) but remaining below 0.55. The TRIR reduction to the end of 2023 compared to the 2018 baseline was a 48% total reduction, demonstrating the achievements in safety over that period. There were no fatalities in 2023.

To continue to deliver these and indeed even better numbers in the future, in 2022, we launched a five-year strategy to continue our positive trajectory. This is focused on four key areas:

1. Process and high risk management
2. Behavioural-based safety
3. Implementation of a Group-wide safety management tool
4. Health and wellbeing

In order to deliver against these key strategic areas in our plants and mills across the world, we have designed, built and started the implementation of our new health and safety management system. This is a tool to support supervisors, managers and our health and safety teams with their daily responsibilities. It makes it easy to track and report safety data, analyse trends and draw insights, meet compliance requirements and reduce administrative work. It will also help to increase visibility, drive down incident rates and continue to promote a safety culture across our organisation.

Additionally, we executed the following activities as part of our Annual Safety Improvement Plans to continue to drive awareness and keep attention on this key topic:

- On World Safety Day (28 April) we launched a campaign made more personable by using local cases and stories under the banner Safe decisions: “Don’t be left thinking ‘if only’”
- Through our free and confidential Global Employee Assistance Programme, we continued to provide support to our employees and their family members to cope with any work, life or health concerns. The service offers help to deal with any tough situation that our people and their families are not quite sure how to handle. It is easy-to-access and is available 24/7.



### Case study

## Mexico One book, hundred stories, global impact

SK Tijuana, 100 Stories on Safety, Winner at PPI Awards.



The idea behind the book was that when a colleague shares their safety-related story, it brings to life the dangers of workplace accidents and the potential to have a positive impact and change behaviour is much more likely.

The book is a collection of stories, written and told by members of all departments. Each of the stories has been told in the person’s own words, from their perspective, and is not only focused on the safety challenges of working alongside the machinery, but also includes safety in the office environment and even at home. Featuring illustrations by a local artist, the book has become popular in Smurfit Kappa North America, supporting the behavioural change in safety, and creating a feeling of togetherness and engagement at the SK Tijuana sites.

In 2023, the use of the Health and Safety focused book has been expanded further being distributed to hundreds of employees and stakeholders in Mexico and North America. The project has been very positively received and although it initially included only stories from the Tijuana corrugated plant employees, it is now branching out to include further Smurfit Kappa sites.

In early 2023, the 100 stories book was also recognised externally when it won at the prestigious Fastmarkets Forest Product PPI Awards in the Risk and Safety category.

- We continued with our Safety for Leaders programme.
- We further developed our health and safety processes with a particular focus on our Energy & Machinery Isolation Policy, under the theme ‘Lock Out, Tag Out, Try Out.’
- Our Health & Wellbeing agenda gathered further momentum with the implementation of our Health & Wellbeing Framework. This has been supported with regular activities such as ‘World Mental Health Day’.
- We annually celebrate our Excellence in Safety award where the best performing sites are rewarded with an award. In 2023 the sites were Lithopac in Europe and Bernal paper mill; Bento, Guadalaraja and Juarez corrugated plants; and Costa Rica folding plant in the Americas.
- Three sites were externally recognised for their safety performance.
- Three new Policies (Management of Change, Workplace Inspection and Confined Space Entry) were deployed through 2023.

**Total recordable injuries**

Group	2023	2022
Group	453	454

The Americas	2023	2022
The Americas	140	135

Europe	2023	2022
Europe	312	319

**TRIR**

Group	2023	2022
Group	0.53	0.51

The Americas	2023	2022
The Americas	0.36	0.33

Europe	2023	2022
Europe	0.68	0.68



**Case study**

**Austria  
Living our motto:  
Safety for Life**

Smurfit Kappa aims for an accident free work environment for all, and at Nettingsdorf paper mill in Austria, it is no different where we live the motto of ‘Safety for Life’.

The mill’s approach starts with high safety standards and ongoing employee training. At the mill the focus is in the involvement of all approximately 360 employees and the health and safety measures are made interesting and engaging through dedicated action days. This ensures the wellbeing and health of our employees at SK Nettingsdorf.

The processing and open internal communication of incidents that have occurred are important steps in creating awareness and changing behaviour which lead to prevention of accidents.

The results from living this motto speak for themselves: at the end of 2023, SK Nettingsdorf had achieved 659 days and 1 million hours TRI-free and their first full calendar year TRI-free.

The Austrian Association of Pulp and Paper Chemists and Technicians (‘ÖZEPA’) organises the Paper & Biorefinery Conference annually in Graz, where international experts from the wood, paper and pulp value chain meet. One of the highlights of the event is the presentation of the ÖZEPA Occupational Safety Award, which was proudly given to SK Nettingsdorf this year. This Award rewards accident-free work over a period of more than 365 days.



**The occupational safety award is a great appreciation of the high commitment of our employees in the area of occupational safety and motivates us to consistently continue our efforts.**

**Günter Hochrathner**  
CEO of SK Nettingsdorf

People continued

# Communities

We have always believed strongly in being part of the communities in which we are privileged to operate. Through our local operations, we actively support projects that help build a sustainable future for their communities.



Highlights in 2023

**€25.6 million**

in social investments 2020-2023, delivering our BP2050 target early

**192**

initiatives undertaken

**24**

countries with operations involved in their local communities



Delivering for our SDGs

**8** DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

**10** REDUCED INEQUALITIES

We remain deeply committed to our local communities and have always strongly believed in being part of, collaborating with, and giving back to the communities in which we are privileged to operate. We are proud of our many colleagues across the world who continued to donate their time, effort and expertise to making a positive and lasting impact on their local communities.

Through our operations, we actively support projects that help build a sustainable future for the communities in which we live and work. We engage with and support local economies and livelihoods by creating opportunities directly and indirectly for employment, investing in infrastructure, and contributing to community activities through our Open Community initiatives.

**Involved in Communities**

We always consider the concerns of the wider community at national and international level. Community involvement builds trust and serves as a link to the issues important to us. Local general managers are expected to represent the Group as part of the local community and play a positive part in its development.

Where relevant, we take part in local community engagement projects and impact assessments. Our operations play a role in education, and supporting locally vulnerable groups. As an example of the impact, effectiveness of our focus on employee health, safety and wellbeing, three of our sites received external recognition for their work. We feature the work by SK Nettingsdorf in Austria, SK Lurgan in Ireland and SK Tijuana in Mexico on pages 85-87 of this report.

In our philanthropic work, we focus on self-help initiatives, education and health programmes, and contribute through financial donations and volunteering by local employees. Examples of these can be found throughout the People Section of this report and in the 'Our Open Community' booklet, available at [www.smurfitkappa.com](http://www.smurfitkappa.com).

All our European sites and the majority of our sites in the Americas have performed an environmental impact assessment which is typically part of the local operational permit process. Each site has an official community-grievance process and we are committed to following these up. The main reasons for complaints are typically, noise and odour from our operations.

The circular economy has an impact on our communities as well. Smurfit Kappa participates widely in local circular projects. Some examples of these are:

- Delivering district heating from our paper mill to the residents of Piteå, Sweden, with a similar project under development in Nettingsdorf, Austria;
- Supporting municipality water treatment systems with our effluent, which has nutrients that help treat municipality waste water in Nettingsdorf, Austria, and Nervión, Spain;
- Treating municipality waste water in Morava, in the Czech Republic;
- Maintaining rural road structures at our Colombian Forestry Operations; and
- Collecting city-recovered paper in Malaga, Spain.

**6,800**

Smurfit Kappa employees have participated in community initiatives (approximately)



Case study

Czech Republic and Slovakia  
**Creative play with  
'Handy Hands'**

Our plants in the Czech Republic and Slovakia collectively support a project called 'Handy Hands' (Šikovné ručičky) which aims to inspire play and creativity with cardboard.

For each different season or holiday, our team of expert designers create different cardboard activities that children can colour, paint, build and play with. Our creations include cardboard houses, cars, bird feeders and decorations for Easter, Halloween, and Christmas. These are distributed across more than 180 organisations in the Czech Republic and Slovakia such as kindergartens, schools, libraries, and charities, reaching over 33,000 children each year.

One of the first creations was a cardboard car which was designed and produced by our Štúrovo plant. The cars were distributed in the summer across Slovakia and the Czech Republic to children who could sit inside and let their imagination take them wherever they wanted.

We also help educate the children on the importance of recycling, and we have provided local schools with paper-based recycling sorters, into which children can add their waste to be recycled into new products.

## People continued

### Smurfit Kappa Foundation

The Group also provides 100% of the funding to the Smurfit Kappa Foundation, ('the Foundation'), a registered charity in Ireland, which focuses on delivering a positive impact on the lives of underprivileged people in our communities. Since being formed in 2011, the Foundation has supported a total of 260 projects with a social investment of over €15 million in 30 countries.

### Our Open Community Progress in 2023

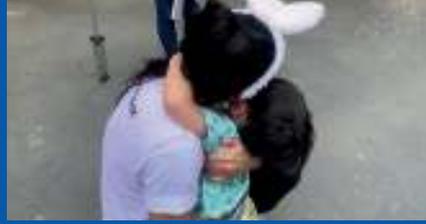
In 2023, including our Foundation and Open Community activities, Smurfit Kappa donated €7.2 million to supporting local communities.

Our target is to donate over €24 million to social, environmental and community activities between 2020 – 2025. This target was achieved in 2023 as we reached €25.6 million as a Group, including our Foundation. In addition, we support volunteering by our employees. Our Employee Volunteering Programmes will support paid time-off for employees to participate in chosen community activities.

In 2023, approximately 6,800 of our colleagues participated in 192 initiatives, across 24 countries and supporting 100,000 people including families and children. We have committed to continuing this work as part of our Better Planet 2050 targets.

We are proud of all our community activities and believe these are a demonstration not only of our organisational culture, but also of our essential and enduring purpose to create, protect and care.

### Our Open Communities Highlights in 2023



#### Benefiting individuals

**100,000+**

People benefited from the efforts made through these initiatives across a wide spectrum of our communities from school-going children to the elderly, and everyone in between.



#### Medical treatment and research

**13,260**

People were supported to get access to the medical treatment they needed. This included access to prosthetic limbs, cancer treatment and end of life care.



#### Support for the financially vulnerable

**7,550**

People in our communities were supported with essential food, hygiene and education packages. Others were provided with festive gifts and opportunities to socialise, helping everyone enjoy special moments and create meaningful memories throughout the year.



#### Supporting people with disabilities

**3,200+**

People with physical and/or learning disabilities were supported through inclusion programmes, educational opportunities and physical therapy. Funding was also provided to support the creation of brand new educational facilities.

### Our Open Community Initiatives (%)



● Empowering Communities	39.1%
● Encouraging Wellbeing	37.5%
● Inspiring our Future	17.2%
● Protecting our Planet	6.2%

**75**

Empowering Communities

**72**

Encouraging Wellbeing

**33**

Inspiring our Future

**12**

Protecting our Planet



### Case study

## Colombia Adriana Achinte advocates for girls in United Nations forum

It is hard to find anyone more inspiring than 16 year old Adriana Achinte from Chisquico village in southwest Colombia. Adriana is a student at Smurfit Kappa's Technical and Agricultural Forestry Institute ('ITAF').

To achieve her ambition of becoming a lawyer, Adriana is already working hard taking part in: debates; in research projects; in the 'Girls Leading Our World' initiative; and on the girls' football team.

In March 2023, on International Women's Day, Adriana represented Colombia on the 'Advocating for Girls Committee' which met virtually for discussions with United Nations representatives. Adriana was one of just ten girls and women selected worldwide to participate in the committee. Adriana prepared for months in advance and afterwards felt even more motivated to realise her dreams. She commented: "Participating in this committee has made me think about my future and has given me the passion and strength to fulfil it. I want to help improve the situation of women who live in vulnerable conditions, so I will become a lawyer and advocate for feminist causes."



# 20,000

pairs of shoes have been saved from landfill and delivered to South Africa to be worn by children there



### Case study

## Ireland In my shoes

When Irishman Ciaran McHugh visited Cape Town in South Africa, he noticed many children playing sports in bare feet and thought about all the shoes in his own home that were never worn.

Ciaran approached Smurfit Kappa in Dublin looking for support to donate and design boxes in collaboration with UPS, so that shoes could be delivered safely from Ireland to the children in Cape Town. The Smurfit Kappa team readily agreed and supplied secure and durable boxes.

Shoes were donated from all over Ireland and packed into the boxes with the help of volunteers, including colleagues from Smurfit Kappa. More than 20,000 pairs of shoes have been saved from landfill and delivered to South Africa to be worn by children there.

People continued

# The Smurfit Kappa Foundation

The Group provides the funding for the Smurfit Kappa Foundation, ('the Foundation'), a registered charity in Ireland, which focuses on delivering a positive impact on the lives of underprivileged people.

Since being formed in 2011, the Foundation has supported a total of 260 projects. The social investment of over €15 million in 30 countries has been delivered since 2012.

Our Smurfit Kappa Foundation and Open Community initiatives cover all aspects of our involvement with our communities worldwide.

Throughout 2023, the Foundation proudly supported more than 60 projects in 23 different countries, donating over €2.8 million to charitable causes dedicated to addressing the issues of inequality within our communities. We remained focused on enhancing the health and education of underprivileged people, with the goal of supporting the inclusion of everyone in society. Furthermore, we supported humanitarian relief by donating €200,000 towards the relief efforts in Morocco following the earthquake.

Across the year, we continued to focus on the purpose of the Foundation to financially support sustainable projects that positively impact the lives of underprivileged people in the areas of health and nutrition, education, and basic care, thus helping to reduce the inequalities that exist.

Using the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals as a guide, we focused on delivering impact for six SDGs: No Poverty, Zero Hunger, Good Health and Wellbeing, Quality Education, Gender Equality and Reduced Inequalities.

**92**  
basic care projects 2012-2023

**53**  
health and nutrition projects 2012-2023

**115**  
education projects 2012-2023

**260**  
projects across 30 countries 2012-2023

**€15 million**  
donated in 2012-2023

**Delivering for the UN SDGs**

In 2023, the Smurfit Kappa Foundation supported:



Case study

Sweden  
**Lust for Life Studio**



The Lust for Life audio studio has been created to enable young people in Piteå, Sweden to increase awareness about LGBTQI+ and mental health. The STOFF cultural association built the studio for podcasts and radio theatre with funding from the Smurfit Kappa Foundation and the support of Smurfit Kappa Piteå. The podcast and radio production started in Autumn 2023, giving young people the opportunity to make their voices heard about LGBTQI+, mental health, and other issues that affect their lives.

The project called 'Lust for Life Studio' focuses on children's and younger people's own stories, aiming to educate listeners on their issues and providing them with a channel to share the reality they face every day, thereby creating educational material for them, which has been created by their peers.



**Lust for Life Studio is making a fantastic contribution to the activities that are already taking place in Kulturstationen and is set to become one of the strongest parts of our offering, as we get the opportunity to reach a wider audience.**

**Ulrika Andersson**  
Project Manager at STOFF Kulturförening



## Case study

Colombia

## Fundación Ximena Rico



In the heart of an underprivileged area of Medellín, Colombia, the Protón programme, a lively initiative by the Ximena Rico Llano Foundation supported by the Smurfit Kappa Foundation, is making waves in the battle against educational inequality. Support by the Smurfit Kappa Foundation has allowed for the transformation of learning spaces, benefiting 80 children aged 5 to 12, and around 320 family members. These renovated spaces, known as the “fun laboratory”, foster playful learning experiences, transcending conventional academic norms.

The Protón programme is a beacon of hope for vulnerable communities, providing comprehensive care to children, and addressing issues from nutrition to psychosocial development. The programme not only helps to prevent school dropout but also tackles social challenges like drug addiction and domestic violence. The programme offers children a safe and modern physical space, equipping them with scientific, creative-emotional, nutritional, and sports tools that traditional education may overlook.

Luz María Mejía, Director of the Ximena Rico Llano Foundation, commented: “Thanks to the Smurfit Kappa Foundation, the children attending the Protón programme can look forward to a pleasant, modern, and spacious physical space, while acquiring different skills not provided by the education system.”



## Case study

Brazil

## Pirapetinga Child Care



Pirapetinga is a small city with approximately 10,000 inhabitants. Almost 10% of this population works directly for Smurfit Kappa, it is our largest operation in Brazil. In 2008 a childcare facility was established to provide a safe and nurturing environment for children.

After 15 years, the building needed a makeover to improve the ageing infrastructure and accommodate more students. This was made possible with the financial support of the Smurfit Kappa Foundation. The ambitious project scope included an improvement of the accessibility area, an enhancement of the playground area, kitchen renovation and expansion, building a canteen, the creation of a collaborative room, and replacement of the current roof with a metal one. The expansion aimed to double the student capacity, from 120 to 240 students serving all the Pirapetinga community.

The project’s architectural design was carefully curated to reflect the identity of Smurfit Kappa, with the incorporation of the brand’s secondary colour palette, creative imagery featuring boxes, and furniture with organic forms designed to be adaptable to various educational activities.

The Pirapetinga Child Care project stands as a testament to our commitment to our people and the broader community.



## Case study

Colombia

## Clean water and green energy in rural schools



The Smurfit Kappa Foundation is pleased to work in partnership with Tierra Grata in a shared commitment to sustainable development and the wellbeing of our local communities, addressing critical challenges and improving the quality of life for those most in need.

Through the Rural Schools project in Colombia, we have achieved a significant impact on the lives of over 420 children and young people across five schools. Today, these students benefit from an enhanced education, made possible by reliable access to electricity via high-quality renewable energy. In addition, their educational environment has undergone a significant transformation by providing them with safe sanitation and drinking water. This not only enhances their learning conditions but also positively influences their health and wellbeing. Along with these fundamental improvements, we have established inspirational reading spaces, nurturing a passion for learning and exploration in each child.

In August, Smurfit Kappa volunteers from the Barranquilla Corrugated Plant and Paper Mill joined the social organisation by giving their time to complete a variety of tasks at a school located in the local agricultural banana growing area, such as installing a solar panel, adapting a school library, and improving the appearance of the building, and they hosted a workshop for the children and the local community.