



**YKK**

sustainability

journal





# **a little book about creating big change**

What does a little zipper have to do with saving our great, big planet? The answer is, a lot. As one of the world's largest zipper manufacturers, YKK is protecting our environment, by ramping up sustainability efforts across the entire company, benefiting employees, communities and the thousands of apparel companies that use YKK® fastening products.

From offering products made with recycled ocean bound plastic to achieving net-zero emissions by 2050 to supporting local schools, YKK believes that from small parts come big benefits. As you flip through this journal, enjoy these stories of hope and celebrate the positive change we can create together.



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# by 2050, our loftiest business goal is to hit zero

YKK sustainability vision 2050 is under way, creating a brighter future for nature and humanity. With our planet in peril, it's a welcomed light of hope.

## how?

The vision aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to zero by switching to renewable power, converting to 100% sustainable materials, as well as reducing water and chemical use.

YKK's leadership team, as well as employee input from all global regions, crafted the vision, encouraging teamwork and ownership for all.

## why?

With a global footprint in over 70 countries and regions, YKK realizes it can make a positive impact for future generations. It will require incredible dedication by employees and partners working together with innovation and a healthy supply of heart and soul.

It's an extraordinary vision for sustainability with compassion and concern for all people.

**"The natural environment is our most precious stakeholder."**

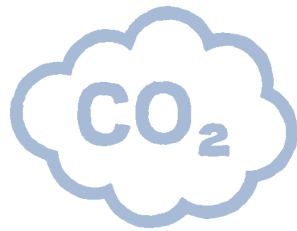
— Hiroaki Otani, President,  
YKK Corporation

environment • community • product

# **sustainability vision 2050**

YKK's action plan for a sustainable future





**climate change**

carbon neutral by 2050

**material resources**

100% sustainable textile  
materials by 2030



**water resources**

reduce water use & increase  
wastewater recycling

**chemical management**

reduce chemical usage by  
new production methods



**respect people**

ensure safe fair workplaces  
throughout our supply chain

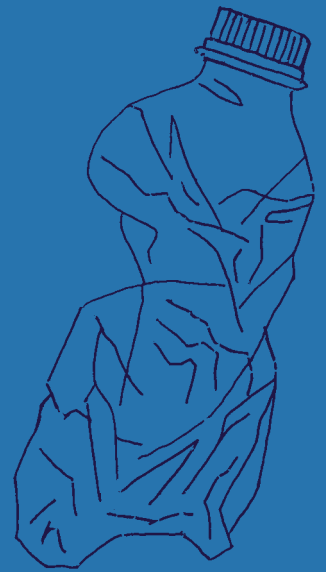
Sustainability and innovation are interlinked.  
YKK is focused on minimizing environmental impact  
with innovative ideas in design and manufacturing.  
It's the right thing to do for the planet.



"It's wonderful to  
work with YKK.  
They asked us to be  
partners with them  
on climate change."

- Cara Chacon, Patagonia,  
VP Social & Environmental Responsibility

# to lower carbon emissions, we all need to step up



## how?

YKK's NATULON® product line is an example of that essential relationship, moving away from petroleum-based materials in the manufacturing process. Both the zipper chain and the tape are made from recycled, plastic bottles.

So far, more than 1,000 tons of plastic waste have been recycled to create the zippers.

Using less petroleum and more recycled plastics helps reduce greenhouse gas emissions and mitigates climate change.

Great partnerships are essential to achieving a global solution. YKK is committed to the goals of the Paris Agreement, and as a signatory to the Fashion Industry Charter for Climate Action, YKK works with all stakeholders to achieve climate neutrality.

## why?

YKK sustainability vision 2050 is a company-wide initiative to move toward "a brighter future for nature and humanity." When you think of how many of these little zippers are out there, innovative design and manufacturing can create a big difference for the health of the planet.



to invent the ECO-DYE® technology, the first ever waterless dyeing technology for zippers, a team of innovators partnered with engineers, professors and their own curiosity.

## how?

Creating something that had never been done before required over 10 years of relentless experiments and aligned partnerships. The result is ECO-DYE®, an innovative dyeing technology that uses carbon dioxide to reduce water usage in the zipper's dyeing process to zero.

The ECO-DYE® technology applies supercritical carbon dioxide instead of water to dye zippers. The ECO-DYE® technology achieves the same high-quality look as conventionally-dyed YKK® zippers and the process does not require drying, which also saves energy and reduces greenhouse gas emissions.

## why?

Water conservation is essential for human life. Currently, 1 in 3 people lack access to clean water. YKK understands the scale and urgency of the problem. As a solution, the ECO-DYE® technology reduces water usage and our carbon footprint gets smaller. It's born from a drive to help humanity by protecting life's most precious resource: water.



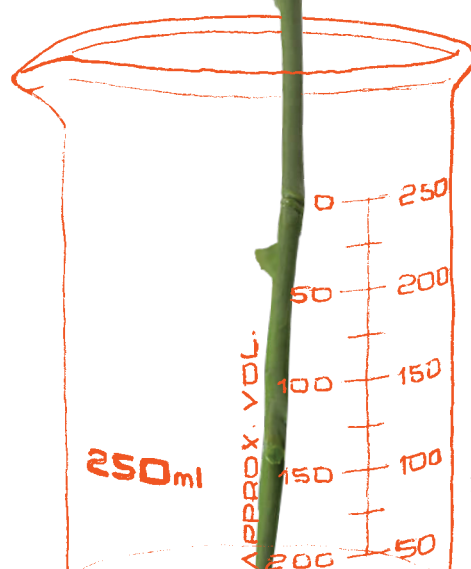
**"We decided to do something revolutionary."**

– Takashi Saito, Sr. Engineer  
YKK Corporation

**an innovation over  
10 years in the  
making with  
water-saving  
benefits that  
last forever**



ROSE CREATED WITH ZIPPERS COLORED WITH  
WATERLESS ECO-DYE® TECHNOLOGY



**make  
products  
that last,  
invest in  
community,  
protect  
the planet.  
repeat.**



TADAO YOSHIDA, YKK FOUNDER



YKK FOUNDER TADAO YOSHIDA  
WITH PRESIDENT JIMMY CARTER  
IN GEORGIA



Since Tadao Yoshida founded YKK in 1934, the company has been guided by the belief that the health of business and society are connected. These days, with a planet in peril, YKK is leaning into the urgency of the moment, elevating sustainability efforts through innovation, while ensuring that producing high quality products goes hand-in-hand with taking care of people and the world we live in.

## how?

YKK's ethos is grounded in fairness. It began with a mission to make things that last coupled with a concern for people and the larger society. Today, YKK's focus on sustainability in both manufacturing and product development is aimed at reducing greenhouse gasses emissions to zero by 2050.

YKK's ethos of fairness extends to human rights, diversity, ethical labor practices and community involvement because it supports the founder's vision and it's the right thing to do.

## why?


If business thrives as it ensures a healthier planet, it helps society and elevates everyone's quality of life. Today, in over 70 countries and regions, one philosophy guides the company and illuminates a way forward to ensure the people and the planet prosper.

# cycle of goodness®

The Cycle of Goodness® philosophy, articulated by YKK's founder Tadao Yoshida, is grounded in the notion that business belongs to society.

When the benefits are shared, the value of the company's existence will be enjoyed by all.

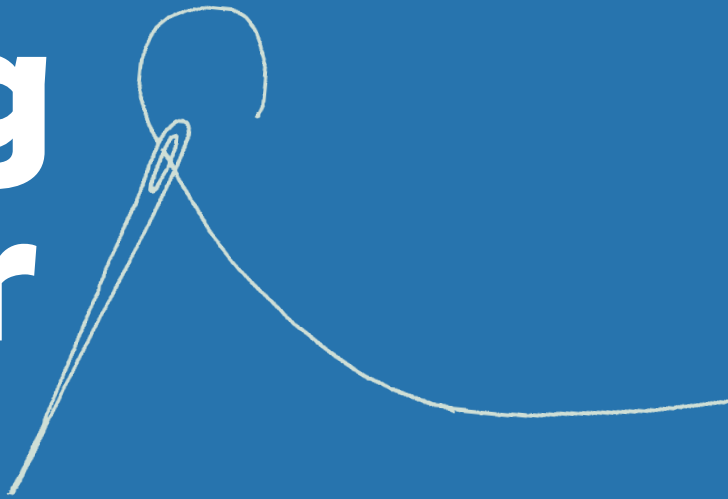




**“no one  
prosperes  
without  
rendering  
benefit  
to others”**



teaching  
more than  
sewing.  
stitching  
together  
dreams.



2018 GRADUATES YKK SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING

At YKK's Social Development and Vocational Center in India, young women learn more than stitching, embroidery, computer skills and English. They are empowered to pursue their dreams and help their community thrive.

## how?

The school, located on the site of YKK's manufacturing facility in Bawal, invites 10-15 students from nearby villages to attend the one-year training course. They are provided with uniforms, meals and study materials. What they gain throughout their study is priceless.

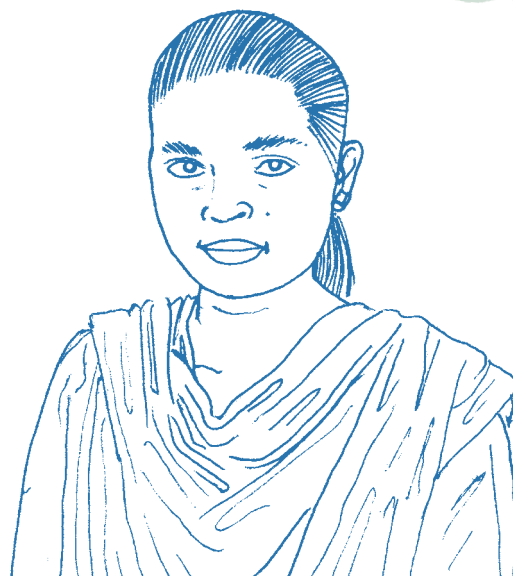
"I gained many friends. Meeting them and interacting with them has enhanced my confidence level," said Smun, a recent graduate.

Upon graduation, students receive something even more valuable than a diploma: a sewing machine.

## why?

YKK created the school to contribute to a sustainable society by giving back to the community. Students discover ways to support their families while pursuing new careers.

Some start their own stitching business, others work in computers, or aspire to create their own apparel brand. All graduates have an opportunity to gain independence and a greater world view.



**"Coming to the school has made me more confident in becoming independent and achieving my dreams."**

- Puja, recent graduate

# to help a community YKK went to school



## how?

YKK El Salvador recently completed an amazing project supporting the community there. The elementary school, located near the YKK facility, was at risk from gang activity. YKK designed and constructed a protective wall, keeping kids safe, allowing them to feel protected and play safely outside.

## why?

YKK is committed to being a reliable community partner. For the school in El Salvador, that means providing support on a consistent basis, like computer equipment, property repairs and supporting music classes for the kids.

The project is one example of YKK reaching out to support the local community. It's the belief that a manufacturer must be balanced by making society a better








**“What we’re building  
is the possibility to  
make a difference.”**

– Marco Baratta, Human Resources Manager,  
YKK El Salvador



A person wearing a blue and black jacket stands on a rocky beach, looking out at the ocean. The scene is captured at sunset or sunrise, with a warm, orange glow on the horizon. The water is calm, reflecting the light from the sky. The rocks are dark and jagged, scattered across the foreground and middle ground. The overall mood is contemplative and serene.

As the threat to our oceans increases, YKK is harvesting plastics from beaches and waterways, recycling PET bottles to create high quality products. **This isn't a trend.** It's a belief that the changes we make today are only as meaningful as the impact we create for generations tomorrow.

# the ocean gives us life. let's return the favor.

## how?

YKK's legacy of environmental protection became formalized in 1994 when the "YKK Environmental Pledge" was established to help elevate conservation standards across the company.

Today, YKK is pushing technology while pulling together sustainability partnerships. YKK employees in Sri Lanka are working with the community to collect PET bottles, which will be used to help create NATULON® Ocean Sourced™ zippers.

## why?

The YKK Group has deemed "harmony with the environment" as the highest priority of its business activities. The benefits are clear. Cleaner oceans and beaches, as well as the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, leads to a healthier planet and a better quality of life for all people.

It's natural for YKK to care for our beautiful oceans and ensure a healthy environment. The oceans cover 71% of our planet and give us life. It's time that we all give the effort to clean them up.



# conclusion

The seeds of sustainability were planted in 1934 when YKK first pledged to craft high quality, durable products. Today, YKK's commitment to sustainability is comprehensive, with a lens aimed at achieving a carbon neutral footprint as the touchstone of the YKK sustainability vision 2050. This long term plan comes with a sense of urgency to create solutions today.

YKK's approach to sustainability is holistic. That means not just creating greener products and manufacturing processes, but also building sustainable relationships by ensuring fairness in our communities and for our employees, while promoting equality for all.

When it comes to sustainability, there really is no conclusion. Through collaboration and partnership, we can do amazing things. We are on this journey together, to better connect, protect the planet and care for each other.





KIDS FOOTBALL CLINIC - SUPPORTING THE HEALTH OF UNDERPRIVILEGED CHILDREN THROUGH SPORTS



YKK PARTNERS WITH UBUNTU LIFE TO PROVIDE SUSTAINABLE EMPLOYMENT FOR THEIR COMMUNITY



**working  
together  
with our  
most  
partner:  
the planet.**



## photography

Covers – Chema-Photo on Unsplash

p2 – Dave Hoefler on Unsplash

p6-7 – Chuttersnap on Unsplash

p10 – Getty Images

p13 – YKK

p14 – YKK

p18 – YKK

p21 – YKK

p22 – Getty Images

p24 – Brian Yurasits on Unsplash (Bottles)

p26 – Joshua Earle on Unsplash

## printed on

cover:

Neenah Classic Crest 80 Cover

Recycled 100 Bright White, Eggshell

body:

Neenah Classic Crest 80 Text

Recycled 100 Bright White, Eggshell

This paper contains 100% post-consumer fiber, is manufactured entirely with certified renewable energy, and processed using chlorine-free practices. This paper is also Green Seal® and Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified ensuring responsible forest management.



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Since the company's founding in Tokyo in 1934, YKK has continuously set industry standards for quality, service, value, and innovation in the production of zippers, plastic hardware, hook and loop fasteners, webbing tapes, and snap and buttons. With integrated production and supply systems in 72 countries and regions around the world, YKK is positioned to meet the needs of the textile and sewing product industries as they

increasingly diversify and require shorter product cycles. Guided by the CYCLE OF GOODNESS® philosophy – no one prospers without rendering benefit to others – YKK aims to contribute to a sustainable society through its products and manufacturing operations and constantly seeks new ways to serve the changing needs of its customers while at the same time investing in its employees and giving back to its communities.





to be continued