

Center for Active Design Appoints Managing Director and Bolsters ESG Expertise with New Board



The Center for Active Design (CfAD) announced the promotion of Sara Karerat to Managing Director and appointments of Ari Frankel and Fulya Kocak to its Board of Directors. This expanded leadership within the organization will help advance CfAD's mission to drive the healthy building movement forward and quantify ESG performance from a people-perspective.

With healthy buildings shown to earn up to 7.7% higher rents than nearby uncertified peers, the CfAD-operated Fitwel healthy building certification is dedicated to providing the real estate industry with a viable entity-wide approach to consistently track and integrate material people-centric metrics into ESG strategy.

Originally created by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and U.S. General Services Administration (GSA), Fitwel is the leading healthy building certification used by top real estate companies across the globe to ensure their assets are designed and operated to positively impact the health, productivity, and satisfaction of residents, employees, and tenants. The Fitwel Standard translates the global public health evidence base into practical, implementable design and operational strategies to be used at the building level, community level, and at scale.

"Over the past several years, ESG has evolved from an emerging trend into a core component of real estate business practices that create and protect value, but metrics supporting the Social pillar remain unsettled," says Sara Karerat, Managing Director of the Center for Active Design. "The expertise of our new board members will help guide our efforts as we continue to leverage Fitwel to fill existing gaps and increase awareness of public health as a value creator for stakeholders across the real estate sector and buildings of all types worldwide."

Sara Karerat has worked at CfAD for six years, previously serving as the Director of Applied Research, where she grew the Applied Research Team, expanded the organizational understanding of ESG, and contributed to the development of new Fitwel product offerings. In addition, Karerat has authored several publications on the intersection of health and the built environment, including *Healthcare: A Cure for Housing* and a series titled *Research to Action: Building Health for All® in the Face of COVID-19*. She holds a Master of Public Health from Columbia University with a certificate in Health Promotion Research and Practice.

Joanna Frank, President and CEO of the Center for Active Design, adds, "I am excited for this next chapter at CfAD, which represents a continued commitment to translating public health evidence into actionable solutions and a strengthened awareness of the importance of data and evaluation."

Ari Frankel currently serves as a Principal on the Sustainable Investing Team at KKR, where he drives decarbonization and other key aspects of KKR's sustainable investing work across its Americas Private Equity business and related investment strategies. Prior to KKR, Frankel was head of ESG at Solebury Trout, and previously worked at Alexandria Real Estate Equities, where he chaired the NAREIT sustainability committee, and was a founding member of the [Fitwel Leadership Advisory Board](#).

Fulya Kocak, CEO & Founder of Fulya Kocak LLC, is a pioneer of the green building and ESG movement, with over two decades as a change agent and subject matter expert in the real estate, design, and construction industries. Previously, Kocak served as head of ESG for [Nareit](#), where she helped design and shape ESG and sustainability initiatives for the U.S. real estate industry. Kocak has previously collaborated with the Center for Active Design and Fitwel to provide guidance on how to further connect health in the built environment within existing ESG frameworks.

The two new Board members join an existing Board that includes prominent members across real estate, public health, sustainability, urban planning, and [more](#).

"CfAD and Fitwel have played critical roles in building and growing the awareness, value, and adoption of healthy building strategies over the past decade," explains Ari Frankel. "This work and the implementation of intentional building design, construction and operational measures has become increasingly important for post-pandemic workplace strategies."

Fulya Kocak comments, "I am thrilled to join the Center for Active Design and contribute to driving the healthy building movement and ESG benchmarking in social impact. I am fully committed to advancing our mission, creating buildings and communities that prioritize the health and happiness of occupants while also integrating ESG principles. Together, we can make a significant impact in creating sustainable, prosperous, and thriving spaces that benefit people and the planet as a whole."

Through these exciting new appointments, the Center for Active Design and Fitwel will continue to pave the way for the healthy building movement and ESG benchmarking. Fitwel's "[Guide to Measuring 'S'](#)" outlines five key areas and metrics that for the first time quantify the "S" in ESG for the real estate industry. Additionally, their Fitwel-GRESB Crosswalk identifies Fitwel strategies with the industry-leading ESG framework GRESB Real Estate Assessment.

Source: [CfAD](#)

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