

Slow Fashion: Tailoring a Strategic Approach towards Sustainability

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Abstract: This research explores one avenue for achieving sustainability within the fashion industry; which as it exists today is unsustainable. The Slow Fashion movement has an existing foundation in the larger fashion industry and is already making strides towards sustainability. The authors used this opportunity to examine a strategic approach, as its current approach is ad hoc. First, the authors assessed the Slow Fashion movement using the 5 level Framework for Strategic Sustainable Development. To analyze the Slow Fashion movement further, the concept of Leverage Points was used to provide a focused lens to assist the author's in navigating through the fashion industry's complex system. Findings were synthesized into thirty strategic recommendations that target various players in the Slow Fashion movement. Three key recommendations will provide the most leverage in strengthening the Slow Fashion movement: 1) Co-create Slow Fashion Principles to represent the values of the movement and a shared definition of sustainability 2) Establish an overarching global network and local chapters for the Slow Fashion movement 3) Harmonize global garment and textile labelling initiatives under a Slow Fashion label.

Keywords: Slow Fashion, Sustainable fashion, Strategic Sustainable Development, Slow Fashion Principles, Leverage Points, Slow Movements

Statement of Collaboration

This thesis is the result of an intense collaboration between Carlotta, Maureen and Crystal. Our professional backgrounds are very different, coming respectively from the worlds of fashion, sustainability and design. Each individual added depth and competence to the collective research. All team members joyfully dove into the project and undertook equal parts of the literature review, consistently supplying summaries to the rest of the team and encouraging discussions and ideas for further exploration.

Carlotta's previous experience in the fashion industry gave the team access to invaluable insight; she dug deeply into the details of our group discussions to offer her understanding of complex concepts, and challenged results and recommendations to ensure they were well thought out and understandable to our audience. Despite being the only non-native English speaker, she also took great pleasure in correcting grammar and spelling mistakes throughout the paper. Maureen's ability for designing surveys and organizing results naturally elected her for this role. Thanks to her research and writing skills she has also taken much responsibility in editing the paper and ensuring clear, comprehensive and applicable results. Crystal, the team's IT, design and organizational genius, took care of perfecting every image in the thesis, the documents sent to external advisors, and the website created for this occasion. She also led the way in effectively coordinating group meetings, agenda's and tasks.

The process of analyzing the results and elaborating the recommendations often involved creative and exhausting brainstorming, but it always led us to reach consensus and a deeper overall understanding of the subject area.

Overall, we recognize that writing a thesis in three is challenging but it has been a priceless and enriching experience; we feel especially grateful for the opportunity. We also hope that the collaboration that began during this program and consolidated in the thesis period will continue well beyond the end of this project.

Carlotta Cataldi
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Executive Summary

Background

Fashion is an innate part of individual expression and it is a cultural reflection of a point in time. Although fashion plays a central role in our society, today's industry— which is dominated by the globalized Fast Fashion industry – is contributing to the sustainability challenge.

The fashion industry has begun to tackle some of the challenges by implementing initiatives, however, the authors recognize that these actions are tied to a system rooted in rising consumerism, which is being confronted with population growth, diminishing natural resources and climate change. There has been an emergence of ethical, “eco” and sustainable fashion designers, brands and retailers. But overall, the consumer awareness of the impacts of the fashion industry is quite low and sustainable fashion is still a niche market (Defra 2008).

The Slow Fashion movement has been recognized as one avenue for achieving sustainability in the fashion industry. The slow approach encourages taking time to ensure responsible production; it adds value to the garment through quality design and encourages contemplating its connection with the environment and the garment maker (Fletcher 2007; Honoré 2004). It is unique in that it includes the consumer in the supply chain, as a co-producer, to foster personal connections and an overall awareness of the production process. Slow fashion is based on the Slow Food movement in particular and other slow movements in general. It is a new model that aims to assemble eco, ethical and sustainable fashion into one movement, in order to meet fundamental human needs, while allowing for the earth's natural regeneration to take place.

Purpose and Research Questions

This thesis is intended to inspire a broad audience in the fashion industry but it is specifically targeting Slow Fashion designers, brands, suppliers, buyers, manufacturers and retailers and co-producers. The overall research aim is to strengthen the Slow Fashion movement by providing strategic guidance on how it can move towards a sustainable vision, rooted in science. A primary research question has been developed and is supported by three secondary research questions:

How can a Strategic Sustainable Development (SSD) approach be used to strengthen Slow Fashion's strategic move towards sustainability?

- What does the FSSD reveal about the Slow Fashion industry and its move towards sustainability?
- How can Leverage Points be used to strengthen Slow Fashion's contribution to a sustainable society?
- Based on the above findings, what strategic recommendations can be made to the Slow Fashion industry?

Methods

The research methods utilized an interactive approach to assess the Slow Fashion movement. The authors drew on a conceptual framework based on Strategic Sustainable Development. The research was continually adapted throughout the process as new information, perspectives and insights surfaced. The conceptual framework included systems thinking, the Five Level Framework for Strategic Sustainable Development (System, Success, Strategic Guidelines, Actions, Tools), and key components of SSD, such as the four Sustainability Principles and 'backcasting' from future success (Holmberg *et al.* 2000).

The concept of Leverage Points, developed by scientist and system-thinker Donella Meadows, was also used to pin-point places to intervene in the Fashion industry, and society at large, to create a system change in favor of strengthening the Slow Fashion movement.

Research results were gathered in four phases. *Phase one* consisted of an assessment of Slow Fashion's move towards sustainability using the FSSD, where particular focus was placed on the 'System, Success, and Strategic Guidelines' levels. At the Actions and Tools level, the authors acknowledge that a variety of actions and tools, which are bringing the movement towards sustainability have already emerged. A literature review and evidence from an industry survey provided the authors with a solid understanding of the current state of the Slow Fashion movement in relation to these five levels.

Phase two reviewed each of the 12 Leverage Points that were currently being used to strengthen the Slow Fashion movement, and the potential barriers and gaps preventing the success of each Leverage Point. The references from the literature review in Phase one were used and filtered into the analysis of the Leverage Points. Additionally, the industry survey

was a key source of information. Expert interviews also provided valuable insight on a number of specific topic areas.

Phase three determined the strategic recommendations for players in the Slow Fashion movement. Using the findings discovered during the first two research phases, the authors conducted brainstorming sessions to develop recommendations that addressed both the Leverage Points and the FSSD.

Phase four was an extension of one of the key recommendations developed in phase three: to co-create Slow Fashion Principles. It was recognized that this phase needed to be initiated and the principles were unearthed from what is occurring within the Slow Fashion movement. To begin validating and co-creating the principles, an expert panel of people working in sustainable fashion, the slow movements and sustainability in general provided sound insight and feedback.

Results

Phase 1: FSSD. From our assessment using the FSSD, it is clear at the System level that the Slow Fashion players are aware of their connections with the natural environment and society – from the workers in the supply chain to the communities that they operate in. At the Success level, the movement does not have a common vision of future success, or a clear definition of sustainability. Therefore, at the Strategic Guidelines level, the Slow Fashion movement is not being strategic in its actions to achieve sustainability and is unable to backcast from success. At the Actions and Tools level, there are numerous sustainability initiatives occurring.

Phase 2: Leverage Points. At the higher Leverage Points, the Slow Fashion movement is creating buffers of more sustainable materials such as organic cotton, bamboo, hemp and flax. Also, all survey respondents were interested in sourcing more of these in the future, however they are generally more expensive. There is also a delay in increasing the supply of renewable fibres and developing natural dyes caused by technology and skill development barriers. Localized supply chains in addition to textile up-cycling, is supporting Slow Fashion material flows. But, it is still more cost-effective to source textiles from developing countries, and creating new supply chain structures is very challenging and time consuming.

A positive-reinforcing loop, triggered by increased media, marketing and awareness can be used to increase the demand for Slow Fashion. Information flows can be a very effective point of intervention, especially,

if new information is being delivered on sustainability and the benefits of Slow Fashion within the supply chain and to co-producers. But, there is a lack of clear information on the sustainability impacts of the supply chain, and it is difficult to compare the fibres and dyeing processes. Slow fashion designers/brands are communicating information to co-producers, but the overall awareness of Slow Fashion is still quite low and awareness campaigns are concentrated in only a few countries.

Overall, there are not enough rules to limit pollution in the fashion supply chain, and enforcement is low – resulting in lower retail prices for Fast Fashion. Slow fashion producers are going above and beyond environmental standards, thus their prices are not as competitive. As well, organic and Fair Trade certifications and labelling schemes are too expensive and time consuming for small brands, and moreover the awareness of these eco-labels between co-producers is quite low.

At the most influential Leverage Points, the Slow Fashion movement is beginning to self-organize from grassroots initiatives, and innovative, forward-thinking small brands, but it still needs strategic organization to succeed as an officially recognized movement. It relies on a diversity of materials, ideas, business models and each business surveyed had different goals and purposes; however, an overarching theme of willing to contribute to a more sustainable society emerged from survey's result.

Lastly, Slow Fashion presents an alternative paradigm to the current fashion model by establishing new mental models in society that satisfy fundamental human needs, instead of market wants, while allowing for the earth's natural regeneration to take place.

Phase 3: Strategic Recommendations. Based on the findings in Phase one and two, thirty short, medium and long-term strategic recommendations were created to strengthen the Slow Fashion movement and to move it towards sustainability. Each recommendation is targeted at a specific group of Slow Fashion players and taps into one, or a combination of Leverage Points. Of these, three key recommendations have been identified as bringing the most leverage the Slow Fashion movement: 1) Co-create a vision of success for the Slow Fashion movement 2) Establish an overarching Slow Fashion network 3) Harmonize global labelling initiatives under a Slow Fashion garment label.

Phase 4: Slow Fashion Principles. To initiate the first recommendation, ten principles for Slow Fashion have been discovered to begin this co-creation

process. They are intended to provide inspiration and guidance for Slow Fashion players and those wishing to join the movement to contribute to a sustainable society.

Discussion

The Slow Fashion Principles will be further co-created amongst those working directly in the industry. Although individual businesses hold unique goals, it is understood that the overall purpose of the Slow Fashion movement is to contribute to a sustainable society. By participating in the co-creation process, Slow Fashion players will connect to this greater purpose and to others that are working towards the same goal. As well, spreading the vision¹ is a strategic step towards creating a shared mental model and common definition of sustainability. The principles can be shared through existing online networks, community events and workshops.

The Slow Fashion movement is addressing the Leverage Points discussed above and using some of them very effectively, however, they may be doing so unknowingly. These strategic recommendations are offered to assist Slow Fashion players to tap into their full potential, and address barriers and gaps, to strengthen the overall movement. The three recommendations that will provide the most leverage will be challenging to achieve, however, it is recognized that they are the most strategic and will strengthen the movement considerably. Overall, these recommendations will require the utmost collaboration between individual designers and their supply chains, governments, certification bodies, NGOs and online hubs among others. Overall, the increased interconnectivity of the movement will allow for Slow Fashion to emerge as a vibrant, robust and truly sustainable fashion model for the future.

Conclusion

The existing Slow Fashion movement has initiatives popping up worldwide. If these initiatives merge together in a strategic way, as proposed in this thesis, Slow Fashion could be the sustainable fashion model that helps society move toward sustainability.

¹ The ten Slow Fashion Principles and the four Sustainability Principles

Glossary

Anthropogenic: Human induced.

Backcasting: ‘Planning from success’ by starting with the desired future and asking ourselves “what do we need to do to get from here to there?”

Balancing Feedback Loop: A stabilizing feedback loop, also known as a “negative feedback loop”. It balances the direction of system change.

Consumer: See co-producer.

Co-producer: An end-user in the supply chain. This term will be used instead of ‘consumer’ in this report, as it acknowledges that the end users are deeply involved in the production process; by including them in the supply chain, it also includes them in sharing responsibility and gives them access to transparent information.

Eco/sustainable/ethical fashion industry: Different terms for an industry that manufactures clothing using environmentally friendly processes (upcycling, recycling, local fabrics, locally production, natural fabrics and dyes, inspiration drawn from nature), organic textiles (i.e. hemp) and non-textile materials (i.e. bamboo or recycled plastic bottles).

Fashion industry: This industry includes farmers, clothing manufacturers and suppliers, buyers, retailers, consumers and co-producers. It encompasses all types of fashion production, from Fast to Slow Fashion.

Fast Fashion: Clothing industry focused on low cost mass-production. It is sold by retailers at very low prices and is based on the latest trends, which encourages consumers to purchase more than they need resulting in external environmental and social impacts.

Framework for Strategic Sustainable Development (FSSD): Refers to the five-level framework that has been adopted to plan strategically towards sustainability within the system “Society within the ecosphere”. The five levels are: System, Success, Strategic Guidelines, Actions and Tools.

Living Wage: Where the earnings from a standard working week are sufficient to meet the basic needs of workers and their dependence. This is typically higher than a set minimum wage (Baldwin and Williams 2008).

Multi-local: Where “global” is made up of a network of “local systems” of alternative initiatives with common characteristics. Whatever is locally available is used to best advantage and whatever cannot be produced locally is exchanged and shared, giving rise to a society and an economy that is at the same time both local and cosmopolitan (Slow + Design 2006).

Organic: Raw materials that have been grown without the use of pesticides and are certified by a third party. The term organic can be solely referred to the source of raw materials, not to the processes the fibre then undergoes.

Production: Includes the entire supply chain from farmer to co-producer.

Raw material: A natural, unprocessed material used in a manufacturing process.

Reflective Consumption: A term utilized in Slow Design that means reflecting about the utility of a product to ensure that the purchase is really needed.

Reinforcing Feedback Loop: An amplifying/enhancing feedback loop, also known as “positive feedback loop”. It reinforces the direction of system change. These are both vicious cycles and virtuous cycles.

Slow Fashion: A decelerated fashion movement. In this paper the term Slow Fashion represents a more compact and strategic model for the eco/sustainable/ethical fashion industry. Pivotal to the Slow Fashion movement is the co-participation of the consumer in the supply chain allowing people to satisfy their fundamental human needs while not contributing to the systematic degradation of the ecosphere.

Sustainability Principles: Refers to basic principles for socio-ecological sustainability to define the minimum requirements of a sustainable society.

System: A set of elements or parts that are organized and interconnected that produces a characteristic set of behaviours.

Systems Thinking: A scientific discipline which looks at the whole rather than analyzing the different parts of a system. It helps understand complex problems.

Vertically Integrated: Form of business organization where all stages of production of a good, from the acquisition of raw materials to the retailing of the final product, are controlled by one company.

Acronyms

CSR: Corporate Social Responsibility

DEFRA: UK Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

EJF: Environmental Justice Foundation

EFF: Ethical Fashion Foundation

ETI: Ethical Trading Initiative

EU: European Union

FSSD: Framework for Strategic Sustainable Development, also known as the TNS Framework for strategic planning towards sustainability.

GMO: Genetically Modified Organism

GOTS: Global Organic Textile Standard

IPCC: Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

NGO: Non-Governmental Organization

REACH: Registration, Evaluation, Authorization, and restriction of Chemical substances

SSD: Strategic Sustainable Development

TNS: The Natural Step, an international NGO of Swedish origin that developed and promotes the FSSD.

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1 Introduction

1.1 What is Fashion and why does it exist?

Individuals, especially when belonging to different cultural backgrounds, can interpret fashion very differently. In fact, as humans, we have a distinct need to dress ourselves; it is how our clothing reflects and communicates our individual views within society, linking us to time and space, that is the essence of fashion (Fletcher 2008). Fashion's role in society is so deeply rooted that its existence is likely to continue well into the future.

1.1.1 Fashion and Culture

Fashion is embedded in our system of communication; it is created with human intelligence, creativity, and our innate desire to express ourselves (Hethorn 2008) and transcend our body's limitations (Wilson 2003, pg 3). Clothing is the material item that gives fashion a visual context in society.

It is one of many cultural artefacts that tells a story of human development throughout history, and can offer a snapshot of society at a point in time, unfolding collective thoughts, styles, and memories, similar to art and photography (Wilson 2003).

During the past 200 years, sparked by the Industrial Revolution, and the introduction of mechanical innovations such as the mechanical weaving, the sewing machine and standardized sizes in clothing, producing and consuming fashion in a accelerated and accessible way has become progressively mainstream and has evolved into the fashion scenario we are witnessing today.

1.1.2 Fashion and Human Needs

The use and consumption of material goods, including fashion goods is correlated to the attempt of individuals to meet their human needs, which are an intrinsic part of human nature. The satisfying of these needs can help people to have emotionally rich, healthy lives (Max-Neef 1991).

Several researchers have proposed different classifications of human needs, but the theory of Chilean economist Manfred Max-Neef is, in the eyes of

the authors, the most comprehensive as it considers nine human needs organized in a non-hierarchical way (except for subsistence). These are the same for everyone, regardless of culture, religion or historical time (Max-Neef 1991).

| 9 Human Needs | | |
|---------------|------------|---------------|
| Subsistence | Protection | Participation |
| Idleness | Creation | Affection |
| Understanding | Identity | Freedom |

Table 1.1. 9 Basic Human Needs (Max-Neef 1991).

Each culture can satisfy their needs in different ways. Max-Neef calls these ‘satisfiers’. Fashion can act as a satisfier for the needs of subsistence and protection, which tend to require a minimum level of material throughput. It also acts as a satisfier for the needs of identity, creation and participation, which could theoretically be satisfied by participatory processes (personal, social and cultural) rather than by consumption of fashion goods (Jackson 1994), which will be explored later in this report.

As the way of meeting human needs is culturally determined, so is the utilization of fashion. Fashion can communicate a message of belonging or participation within society. For example, a letterman’s jacket displays an athlete’s identity and belonging to a certain group and policemen’ uniforms indicate they are trusted protectors of peace.

Fashion is able to satisfy some of our fundamental human needs. However, today’s more widespread fashion scenario is characterized by identical trends that dress co-producers all over the world, which automatically produces a homogeneous look that is unlikely to satisfy, for example, the needs of identity and creativity. Here, fashion would be intended to help people differentiate as individuals with a unique and original personal taste, but in reality this is not the case. Nevertheless, as today’s fashion is so affordable, it stands as the most popular option between co-producers.

1.2 Today’s Fashion Industry

Today's fashion industry can be primarily characterized by globalized, vertically integrated production, generally defined as Fast Fashion. The past ten years especially have witnessed an increasing supply of Fast Fashion with seasons changing every six weeks rather than releasing the traditional

two seasons per year. The fashion industry's complex supply chain relies on resource-intensive material inputs. Natural fibres are harvested across the globe while clothing and textile production are primarily located in Asia. Overall, the clothing and textile industry employs approximately 26 million people worldwide, contributes 7% to global exports and is worth over US\$ 1 trillion (Allwood *et al.* 2006, 2).

Although the fashion industry is a driver of global economic growth, it also significantly impacts the environment, society and cultures. Multinational retailers and brands have adopted practices based on trend-driven design, massive outsourcing to developing countries, and an inexpensive pricing policy, resulting in a dramatic decline of the price of clothing.

In 2005, the end of the **World Trade Organization's** Multi-Fibre Agreement resulted in the removal of textile trade quotas. This resulted in countries with low labour costs, specifically China, undergoing a surge in clothing and textile production (Ernest *et al.* 2005). Competition, lower labour and production costs combined with technological advances have led to a further reduction in retail prices and this has produced an even faster increase in consumers' demand.

In fact, consumers' attitude and behaviour are in tune with fast production. It is known that approximately 16% of consumers are heavily influenced by media and are likely to quickly adopt the latest fashion trends (Morgan and Birtwistle 2009). Then, further encouraged by low prices and strongly influenced by marketing campaigns that advertise continuously changing trends, consumers tend to speed up their consumption of fashion (Birtwistle and Moore 2006), and assume a pivotal role in the current development of the Fast Fashion industry.

As it is important for the research, the term 'co-producer', rather than consumer or end user will be used throughout the thesis to describe both the current fashion model's consumer and the Slow Fashion consumer.

What is a Co-Producer?

This term implies that the end user is a vital part of the movement. By supporting the Slow Fashion movement through their purchases, the co-producer takes on the responsibility of the environmental and social aspects of that purchase. The Slow Food movement first coined this term.

Figure 1.1. Co-producer definition

1.2.1 The Sustainability Impacts

It has been remarked above that the current consumptive behaviour of co-producers is causing a variety of ecological and social impacts. To understand the scope of the sustainability challenge that confronts today's fashion industry a brief overview of the sustainability impacts is presented for context. Using a life-cycle approach, from raw material extraction to clothing use and disposal, the specific impacts of the industry are described below.

Materials. Clothing is generally made from one or from a combination of the following materials:

- Natural fabrics such as cotton, wool, silk. These require large quantities of water and arable land. Cotton is grown in over 100 countries and uses approximately 76 million acres of land and 8000 litres of water to grow (Fletcher 2008, 7; Organic Exchange 2009). Pesticides are widely used in the growing of conventional cotton (approximately 80% of the cotton sold today) and they degrade farmers health, soil, water and biodiversity (Draper *et al.* 2007, 4);
- Man-made fabrics such as cellulose which is made from timber (i.e. viscose, lyocell, bamboo etc.);
- Synthetic fabrics that utilize oil to create polymers, such as polyester, acrylic, nylon etc. Their manufacturing is an energy-intensive process during which volatile organic compounds (VOC's), particulate matter and acid gases are released into the air and water (Claudio 2007, 450).

On a positive side, cotton, wool and synthetic fibre production provides significant employment and economic benefits to developing and developed countries. However, poor working conditions and low wages are often commonplace for growers (Claudio 2007).

Garment production. Raw materials are exported to developing countries where they are woven into fabrics, cut and assembled into garments. Chemicals used for bleaching, dyeing, printing or applying finishes to fabrics are potentially harmful to the health of workers; these processes are water and energy intensive and untreated waste effluents are often released from the factories (Claudio 2007).

Distribution. Transportation of textile materials and garments from the factories to the shop accounts only for a small portion of the energy in

comparison to the energy used during the use and disposal stages as transportation companies have become more efficient (Draper *et al.* 2007).

Retail. Retailers purchase garments either from known suppliers or through a third-party vendor. Some retailers apply environmental standards, however, when working through third parties retailers are often unaware of who their real suppliers are (Defra 2007).

The economic landscape of the clothing industry is highly competitive, resulting in retailers demanding low production costs from their suppliers. Consequently, garment workers are being paid low wages and are often subject to poor working conditions. For example, some Chinese garment workers are paid only 12-18 cents per hour (Claudio 2007). Clothing retailers and brands play a key role in ensuring the suppliers are treated fairly and adhere to environmental, health and safety regulations.

Use and Disposal. This use and care phase represents a large proportion of the life cycle impacts due to the amount of energy, detergents, petrochemical based solvents and water used. As the rate at which co-producers are purchasing has escalated and the lifespan of a garment has reduced dramatically, the amount of clothing being sent directly to landfills has drastically increased in recent years (Morgan and Birtwistle 2009).

1.2.2 The Sustainability Challenge

Due to increasing co-producers' demand, the fashion industry currently uses a constant throughput of natural resources and human capital to satisfy this demand. The overconsumption of the fashion industry contributes to the depletion of finite fossil fuels used for production and transportation (Allwood *et al.* 2006). Also, other natural resources like fresh water reservoirs are being increasingly exploited for cotton crop production (Draper *et al.* 2007). Additionally, the industry is introducing in a systematic way manmade compounds such as pesticides and synthetic fibres, increasing their persistent presence in the nature (Claudio 2007). As a result, natural resources are in jeopardy and forests and ecosystems are being damaged or destroyed for cotton production, leading to issues such as droughts, desertification and not least, climate change, that are affecting society at large (Holmberg *et al.* 2000). To visualize in a simple way the sustainability challenge of the fashion industry, the authors propose the use of the funnel metaphor that can demonstrate that if the consumption of the current fashion industry keeps increasing at the current rate the impacts on the social and ecological environment will also increase. This leads to a

progressively a limited space for the industry to handle these impacts in the future and resolve the issues humanity is facing today. This is symbolized by the converging walls of the funnel (see Figure 1.2).

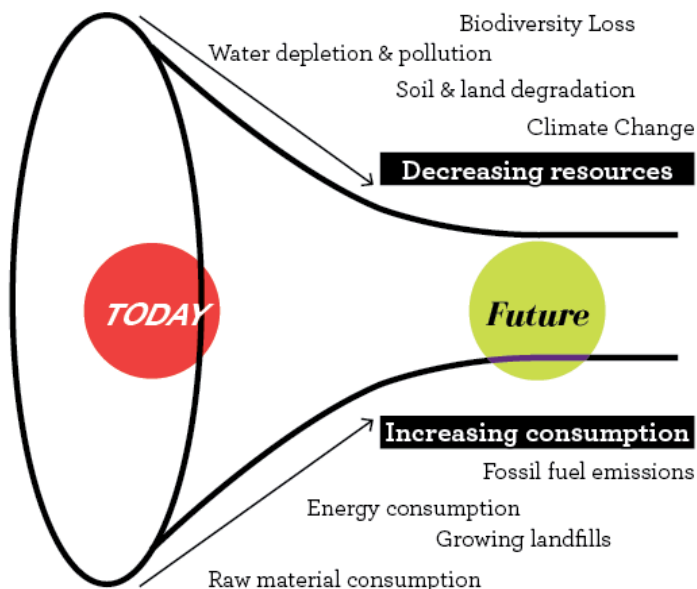


Figure 1.2. The Funnel Metaphor (Holmberg et al. 2000).

Using this metaphor we can draw the conclusion that if we do not want to ‘hit the narrowing walls of the funnel,’ we must re-design the current unsustainable practices in society, including the fashion industry. This change, if achieved, is likely to result in a gradual return to equilibrium, where societal behaviour is finally not in conflict with natural resources and the fashion industry can subsist without compromising the health of the earth and of people.

1.2.3 Sustainability Improvements to-date

Incremental sustainability improvements have been applied at all stages of the life cycle – from renewable and organic materials, more efficient textile and garment manufacturing to ethical labour standards and recycling initiatives. Examples include:

- High-impact fibres are being replaced with low-chemical, rapidly renewable, and low water/energy consuming fibres such as hemp, lyocell, wool, plant-based biodegradable PLA (Fletcher 2008, 4);
- During clothing and textile production, improved environmental regulations (EU IPCC legislation) have resulted in improvements for water and chemical use, air emissions and water effluents

- (European Commission 2009);
- The industry has adopted Environmental Management Systems and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives;
- Certification and labelling schemes have been developed for the processing of organic textiles such as the GOTS, and the Soil Association Textile standards (see appendix E);
- Many other organizations work towards ethical and social guidelines, as well as voluntary codes of conduct, for the fashion industry (see appendix A for a list);
- A number of brands incorporating sustainable design principles, and environmental and social criteria have cropped up, such as Patagonia's Common Threads recycling program (Patagonia 2010) and Nike's CSR reporting initiatives (Nike 2010);
- Increasing consumer awareness of environmental and social impacts of clothing purchases (Defra 2008; TNS Worldpanel 2008).

Overall, it is notable that the industry has taken considerable steps in order to move towards sustainability but the negative effects provoked by its business model still largely outweighs the positive actions that have been taken and call for improvements in the short term.

1.3 Slow Fashion: towards a Sustainable Fashion Industry

Consumerism is a symptom of our inherently fast-paced production cycle and revolves around paradigms that are embedded in today's society. Fast production and fast consumption inevitably lead to the systematic decrease of resources and increase of waste, thus stressing the capacity of the earth of regenerating itself at a natural pace. This is why the 'slow approach' intervenes as a revolutionary process in the contemporary world; in fact, it encourages taking time to ensure quality production, to give value to the product and contemplate the processes' connection with its environment (Honoré 2004). Slow Food stands at the forefront of the Slow movements: beginning in 1986 with Carlo Petrini's desire to preserve the cultural integrity of cuisine in local regions of Italy, Slow Food has now spread to over 132 countries, with more than 100,000 members worldwide (Slow Food International 2010). The birth of Slow Food was followed by the creation of other Slow movements (i.e. Slow Design, Slow Production, Slow Retail etc) which share the same goal of decelerating our current rate of production, consumption and growth while increasing peoples quality of life. The Slow Fashion movement shares many characteristics with the

Slow Food movement:

- Introduce the ‘consumer’ into the supply chain as ‘co-producer’;
- Increases the quality of life of all workers in the supply chain, guaranteeing their fundamental human rights;
- Meets in a more satisfactory way the fundamental human needs of co-producers; in the case of fashion, the needs of identity, creativity and participation, encouraging co-producers to consume less and act responsibly;
- Drastically reduces the amount of raw materials introduced in the supply chain, harnessing creativity to find strategic or service-based alternatives;
- Sources local materials and labour;
- Preserves and relearns traditional skills.

By using the concept of slow in the fashion industry it is possible to re-invigorate a healthy rhythm of production, meaning that the environment and people could healthily co-exist and the earth would have the time to regenerate during production cycles (Fletcher 2008). The term Slow Fashion was coined in 2007 by Dr. Kate Fletcher, who compared the eco/sustainable/ethical fashion industry to the Slow Food movement, highlighting the similarity in terms of processes and production (Fletcher 2007).

Slow Fashion is a new model of fashion entirely that focuses on its link with human needs, awareness and responsibility. Slow Fashion designs, produces, and consumes in a way that acknowledges its impacts on society and the environment (Fletcher 2008). Slow Fashion is emerging as a more sustainable alternative to the Fast Fashion industry although it is not yet officially recognized and established. Some key achievements of this movement are listed below:

- Several initiatives (see appendix A) and organizations supporting Slow Fashion have been recently founded such as the Centre for Sustainable Fashion (UK) that challenges the ‘status quo’ of the fashion industry through research, releasing reports and a Master’s program on ‘Fashion and the Environment’ created to empower young fashion designers.
- Recently launched online networks (see appendix B) are working to connect people and businesses that want to participate in creating a sustainable future for the fashion industry.
- Slow Fashion has industry members and researchers behind it who have written reports and books on Slow Fashion (Fletcher 2008).

- Fashion designers (see appendix C) worldwide are taking on a slow approach, sourcing ethical materials and labour, keeping materials out of landfill by reuse, and taking on projects to stimulate communities which all have a positive impact on people and the environment. Moreover, designers small and large work to create awareness among co-producers about the value of Slow Fashion.

1.4 Research Purpose

As stated, the foundations for the Slow Fashion movement already exist; nevertheless, people working today in the fashion industry still have a blurred idea of what eco, ethical and sustainable fashion actually mean (Friedman 2010) as there is no a clear definition of these terms when coupled with the term fashion.

The authors consider the Slow Fashion movement as the most viable alternative to move the fashion industry toward sustainability, as the players identified in the previous section are working towards enhancing the paradigm of ‘sustainable fashion’ as it exists today. Specifically, the authors intend to strengthen the movement by strategically connecting, under the umbrella of “Slow Fashion”, all those brands and initiatives (currently generally labelled as eco, ethical, green or sustainable) that are already united by values but yet lacking a common goal and a definition of sustainability that could function as a driver and could ensure the overall success of their actions. **Therefore, the purpose of this research is to strengthen the movement’s journey to sustainability by ensuring that its approach is strategic.**

1.5 Scope

This thesis is intended to inspire a broad audience in the fashion industry but it is specifically targeting the Slow Fashion movement consisting of designers, brands, suppliers, buyers, manufacturers, retailers and co-producers.

The specific goals and expected outcomes from this thesis are to:

- Determine how the Slow Fashion movement can be strengthened using an SSD approach and the Framework for Strategic Sustainable Development (FSSD);
- Identify the Leverage Points in the fashion industry and society as a

- whole that currently benefit the Slow Fashion movement;
- Determine the barriers and gaps that prevent the Slow Fashion movement from effectively utilizing the Leverage Points;
 - Provide strategic recommendations to move the Slow Fashion movement towards sustainability and increase its presence in the fashion market and society at large.

1.6 Research Questions

Primary Research Question: How can a Strategic Sustainable Development (SSD) approach be used to strengthen the Slow Fashion movement and ensure that it is moving strategically towards sustainability?

Secondary Research Questions:

RQ1: What does the FSSD reveal about the Slow Fashion movement and its move towards sustainability?

RQ2: How can Leverage Points be used to strengthen Slow Fashion's contribution to a sustainable society?

a) How is each Leverage Points being used by the movement?

b) What are the barriers or gaps preventing the success of each Leverage Point?

RQ3: Based on the above findings, what strategic recommendations can be made to players in the Slow Fashion movement?

1.7 Assumptions and Limitations

This thesis will not focus on the current unsustainable Fast Fashion industry. It is understood that the Fast Fashion model is central to the fashion industry's sustainability challenge. The research scope is focused solely on the Slow Fashion system due to its sustainability initiatives underway (see section 1.3). It will require the help of sustainability practitioners, frameworks and tools to allow its emergence and success over the long term. To-date Slow Fashion is a grassroots movement and has been written as such in publications, but there is no overarching organization of this movement that exists.

2 Methods

2.1 Research Design

Our research was guided by the methodology developed by Joseph Maxwell in the book, “Qualitative Research Design: An Interactive Approach” (2005). Unlike linear research methods that take a step-by-step approach, Maxwell’s “Interactive Model for Research Design” suggests continuous reflection on the research process and results. This thesis is a qualitative study, relying on information and data gathering from a wide range of methods (see section 2.3). This model allows for the synthesis of the data to feed back into the research process to be further assessed for validity. As more information is gathered and analyzed, this method has the flexibility to adapt the research design as well as the scope, purpose, research questions, conceptual framework, and methods as needed.

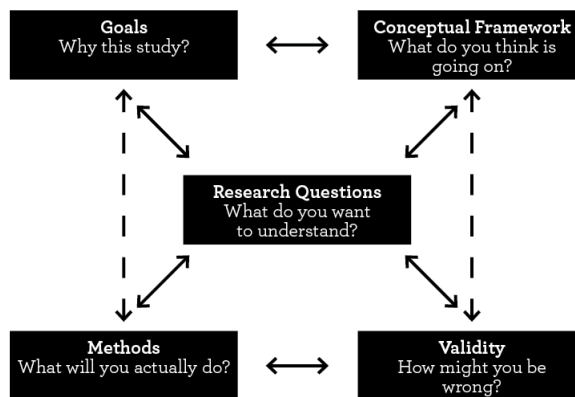


Figure 2.1. Interaction Model for Research Design (Maxwell 2005).

2.2 Conceptual Framework

The following concepts have informed the research teams mental model.

2.2.1 Framework for Strategic Sustainable Development (FSSD)

The Framework for Strategic Sustainable Development (FSSD) corresponds to the Generic 5 Level Framework, which can be applied as a planning tool in any system (Figure 2.2). Specifically, it is able to bring clarity and insight when planning towards sustainability. The key elements

are: 1) the establishment of some basic principles of sustainability rooted in science, that can provide a definition of “success” (see Success Level), and 2) the development of strategic guidelines that can help inform the choice of actions and tools (Waldron *et al.*, 2008).

System level. An overarching system perspective is used to understand the system we are working within at its most basic levels (Figure 3.1). Complexity within the system increases as more parts are revealed; an



Figure 2.2. Five Level Framework

understanding of these parts and their relationships is essential for a whole-systems perspective, to understand its complexity, connectedness, and to avoid reductionism. An understanding of the system is an essential base to understand what success is within that system. For the purpose of this thesis, the system is Slow Fashion as a subset of the larger fashion industry, which is a subset of society, which is a subset of the ecosphere. Each smaller part relies on the larger for existence; hence, everything relies on the ecosphere.

Success level. In order to plan strategically, one must know to what end one is planning towards. It seems that defining where an individual is going (having a vision) is a natural process, however in complex systems this step can be overlooked. Having a vision to plan towards, or as the FSSD says ‘a vision to backcast from’ ensures a step towards a strategic approach.

4 Sustainability Principles

In a sustainable society, nature is not subject to systematically increasing:

- ...concentrations of substances extracted from the Earth’s crust
- ...concentrations of substances produced by society
- ...degradation by physical means

& in that society

- ...people are not subject to conditions that systematically undermine their capacity to meet their needs

Figure 2.3. The Sustainability Principles

As the FSSD is a tool to plan strategically towards sustainability, it utilizes 4 Sustainability Principles (see figure 2.3) to ensure a future vision that is sustainable. The principles encourage creativity, as they are not

prescriptive and simply act as boundaries for a future vision to be designed within (Holmberg *et al.* 2000). These principles were designed to be necessary and sufficient to achieve sustainability, they are general so that they are widely applicable, they are concrete so as to inspire and guide actions and they are non-overlapping to enable a structured analysis of the issues (Holmberg *et al.* 2000). They have been reached through peer review and consensus between scientists worldwide. These principles define sustainability by setting restrictions upon the systematic undermining of our environmental and social fabric (Waldron *et al.* 2008).

Strategic Guidelines

In the FSSD, ‘backcasting’ is applied as the overarching strategic approach. Backcasting first envisions a desired future (the vision established at the Success level), and then plans how to get there from the current situation. In order to test if the planned actions are strategic in nature, we can use the Three Prioritization Questions: is it a step in the right direction with respect to the vision?; is the recommendation a ‘flexible platform’ for future improvement?; and, is the recommendation likely to produce a sufficient return on investment? The ABCD tool can be used to facilitate this process (described at the Tools Level).

Actions Level. At the Actions level we determine tangible actions that move us toward our vision.

Tools Level. At the Tools level we identify tools that can help to better understand the system, to facilitate the backcasting process (i.e. ABCD tool and others) and to support actions. The ABCD is an analytical tool that can be particularly useful in the decision making process and planning towards sustainability, and can be suitable for tackling problems in complex systems (i.e. an organization, society at large). In ‘Step A’ an awareness of entire system is established. ‘Step B’ determines the current reality, which is looked at through the lens of ‘success’ (the Sustainability Principles), to discover what exists unsustainably and needs to be addressed, and also those actions that are already working towards sustainability. In ‘Step C’ brainstorming takes place to determine ‘success’ and many possible creative actions that can help achieve success. ‘Step D’ prioritizes the measures generated in ‘Step C’ by utilizing three Prioritization Questions.

2.2.2 Leverage Points

In addition to the employment of the FSSD as a method to analyze the current system and develop recommendations for the future, the authors considered the potential of a concept developed by scientist Donella Meadows, who developed a set of 12 Leverage Points to intervene in complex systems (figure 2.4). Leverage Points are places within the system that can be utilized to generate system change in a strategic way (Meadows 1991). As the Slow Fashion movement is a complex system that is intrinsically connected to our society and the ecosphere, this concept acts as an organizing factor to the research and a lens to look through to help identify areas of potential power for system change. It identifies areas the Slow Fashion movement acts upon to contribute towards a sustainable society and those that have yet to be utilized.

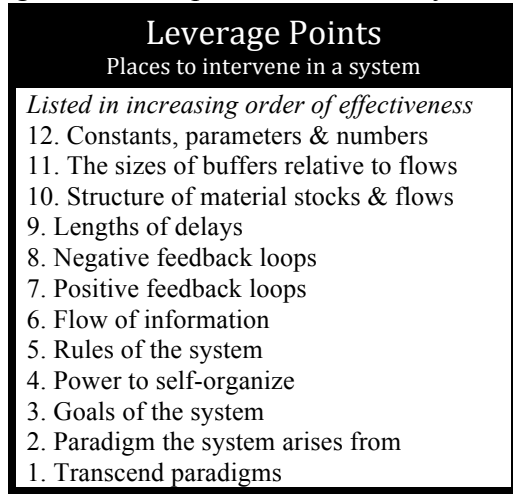


Figure 2.4. Leverage Points

2.3 Research Methods

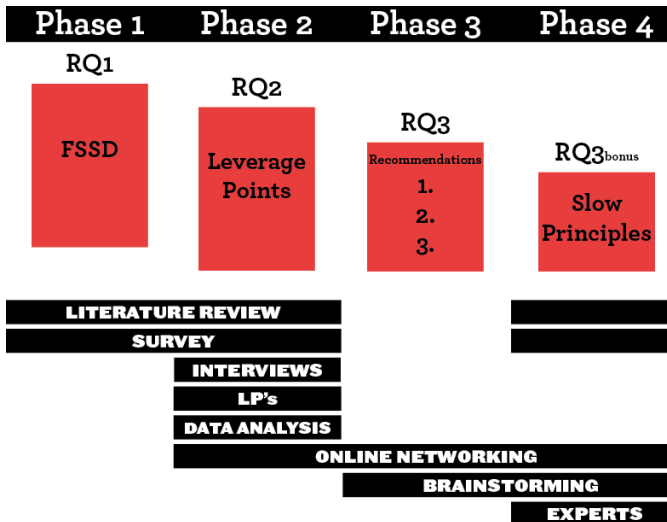


Figure 2.5. Phases and Methods

To discover the answer to three secondary research questions in a strategic manner, the research was prioritized into three phases. Each phase utilizes a different set of research methods to search and synthesize data to answer it.

2.3.1 Phase 1

To answer RQ 1: *What does the FSSD reveal about the Slow Fashion movement and its move towards sustainability?* Here, FSSD analysis and literature review were undertaken.

FSSD: A thorough review of the Slow Fashion movement through the lens of the FSSD was applied to determine how and if it is currently behaving strategically.

Literature review: This literature review helped to determine what the current reality of the Slow Fashion movement was in relation to the five levels of the FSSD. Information was collected and synthesized from academic journals, industry and consumer reports, books, websites, and magazine articles. The literature review focused on Internet-based search databases, including ELIN (accessed from the BTH Library website), LIBRIS (accessed from the BTH Library website) and Google (www.google.com). In addition, the authors searched the Journal of Cleaner Production and the Clothing and Textiles Research Journal, as well as the websites of Centre for Sustainable Fashion, the Ethical Fashion Forum, Eco Textile News, Ecouterre, Eco Fashion World and others.

Search words: Slow Fashion, Slow Food, sustainable fashion, ethical fashion, Leverage Points, Fair Trade, organic cotton, eco-labelling, textile regulations, Slow Design, eco-design, sustainable fibres, consumer behaviour, new technologies, Slow Fashion networks, human needs, community development, consumer behaviour, cradle to cradle, fashion and (fair wage, ethical work conditions, culture, heritage, skills, social equity, textiles). Supporting literature on Strategic Sustainable Development, Systems Thinking, FSSD, and Slow movements were utilized.

2.3.2 Phase 2

For an in depth review of RQ2: *How can Leverage Points be used to strengthen Slow Fashion's contribution to a sustainable society?* and its sub questions: a) How is each Leverage Point being used by the movement?, b) What are the barriers or gaps preventing the success of each Leverage Point?, many methods were utilized such as literature review,

survey, interviews, Leverage Points, data analysis and online networking.

Literature review: The sources from the literature review in Phase 1 were also used to analyze the Slow Fashion movement through the lens of ‘twelve points to intervene in a system’ developed by Donella Meadows. Our initial findings for Leverage Points were based on a research conducted by Dr. Kate Fletcher in the publication: “Sustainable Fashion and Textile: Design Journey’s” and from the “Lifetimes” project. Additionally, recent research reports from the Centre for Sustainable Fashion and Forum for the Future (Fashion Futures 2025 Project) provided a foundation to determine the Leverage Points that are being utilized and the Leverage Points that are underutilized. Industry and consumer reports, and retail/brand websites also provided information to fill in additional research gaps and to provide further information on Leverage Points.

Industry survey: An online industry survey was developed using Survey Monkey (an online survey tool) to deepen the knowledge on the Leverage Points being used by the fashion industry, beyond what was found in the literature review. An analysis of the survey results also provided a foundation for determining the strategic recommendations (RQ3).

To gain an industry-wide perspective of the survey topics, the survey was targeted at fashion designers, brands, buyers, manufacturers, retailers, and NGOs. A list of professionals in the Slow Fashion movement was generated based on an assessment of business operations and design processes from company websites and industry reports, the survey was then distributed via email to 120 professionals in the Slow Fashion movement, located across Europe, Canada, and the United States.

To expand the survey reach, it was also widely distributed through various online networks (such as THREADS Gazette, the Ethical Fashion Forum, the Centre for Sustainable Fashion blog, the thesis blog (www.slowfashionforward.tumblr.com), Twitter and Facebook). During March 28-April 12th, 2010, Forty-six people submitted the survey, and of this, thirty fully completed responses were received. For a summary of the survey results see appendix F.

Interviews: To expand on the topics covered in the industry survey and to gather more in depth knowledge into key issues, a number of industry professionals were contacted for telephone interviews. These interviews contributed a wealth of knowledge and brought forth the emergence of the

most effective Leverage Points that could be used to strengthen the Slow Fashion movement and contributed to the development of strategic recommendations (RQ3). The industry interviews were conducted during March –April 2010. For a list of interviewees see appendix D.

Leverage Points: The concept of Leverage Points was reviewed during the literature review for this phase. The 12 Leverage Points acted as a lens to organize and analyze the data collected in this phase.

Online Networking: Through our thesis blog, multiple people looking for information on the Slow Fashion movement contacted us and shared their thoughts and insights, which filtered into our research scope and provided validation. We were also able to share our survey through Twitter and by posting it to virtual networks as described above.

2.3.3 Phase 3

RQ3: Based on the above findings, what strategic recommendations can be made to the Slow Fashion movement?

Brainstorming: Our research team discussed our results through the lens of the FSSD, specifically the Strategic Guidelines level and its 3 Prioritization Questions to determine our final recommendations.

Online Networking: As discussed above, we received feedback on ideas posted on our blog: SlowFashionForward.tumblr.com. This feedback was from people conducting on-line research for information on Slow Fashion, and the interactions influenced the development of the recommendations.

2.3.4 Phase 4

To initiate the co-creation of Slow Fashion Principles

Literature review: Another literature review was undertaken to build on the research conducted under the ‘Success’ level of the FSSD. Here we begin to compile our findings of an initial ‘vision’ for the Slow Fashion movement. The principles of Slow Food, Slow Design, Slow Theory, Biomimicry and Permaculture, between others, were reviewed to contribute to the discovery of Slow Fashion Principles, in order to accompany RQ3.

Online Networking: Our first and second drafts of the Principles were posted to our blog and spread through twitter to generate feedback.

Brainstorming: Our own thoughts contributed to the development of the Principles, as we are co-producers, thus have a stake in the industry. We also infused our knowledge of systems thinking and complex systems into the development to ensure they were robust and in line with the sustainability principles in the ‘Success’ level of the FSSD.

Expert Panel: To validate the Slow Fashion Principles, a first draft was distributed via email to an expert panel for feedback. The experts were chosen based on their professional involvement with the Slow Movement, Sustainable Fashion, and Sustainability in general. These professionals were from a wide range of disciplines and included representatives from Slow Lab, Slow Planet, the World Institute of Slowness, Greener2Green (NGO), the Centre for Sustainable Fashion, The Natural Step Italy, along with sustainable fashion designers, and sustainability practitioners (see appendix A). Comments on the Slow Fashion Principles were received via email and telephone conversations over a two-week period, which were then synthesized into the final version presented in this thesis.

2.3.5 Networking

Thesis blog: This acted as informal communication between our advisors, expert panel, co-producers, and the general public for feedback. It was an experimental research method to establish trust with survey participants and interviewees, as they had unrestricted access to our thoughts on Slow Fashion topics, our recent discoveries, and research progress.

Online Networks: LinkedIn, Facebook, the Thread’s Gazette online newsletter, ecofashionworld.com, organiccotton.org, and ethicalfashionforum.com were used to distribute the Slow Fashion Principles and the industry survey. This generated dialogue and awareness with fashion experts, interested parties, fellow researchers, fellow students and co-producers that participate in these on-line communities.

Twitter: Relevant articles, blog updates, and the survey were shared via Twitter to help establish a relationship with the on-line fashion community.

Expert Review: The thesis was regularly submitted to Slow Fashion designers, retailers, design professionals and sustainability practitioners in order to receive qualitative insight and feedback that further enriched this thesis. Professionals working in fields outside of fashion were included maintain a whole system perspective (appendix D).

3 Results

The results of this research are discussed in the context of the secondary research questions. The results are presented under the four research phases, as outlined in the Methods section.

The FSSD has provided this research with a reliable structure to assess whether the Slow Fashion movement is moving toward sustainability in a strategic manner.

3.1 Phase 1: FSSD

System Level. At this level of the FSSD, we have taken a bird’s eye view to determine the structure of the Slow Fashion system, which is identified as the Slow Fashion movement existing within the larger fashion industry, within society, within the ecosphere (see figure 3.1). Understanding the system is a key to understanding the interconnectivity of the Slow Fashion movement’s success with both society and the ecosphere. The system sets boundaries for success, strategic recommendations, as well as specific actions and tools undertaken to achieve success. The Slow Fashion system includes designers, brands, suppliers, buyers, manufacturers, retailers and co-producers, and their collective interactions. However, these players may

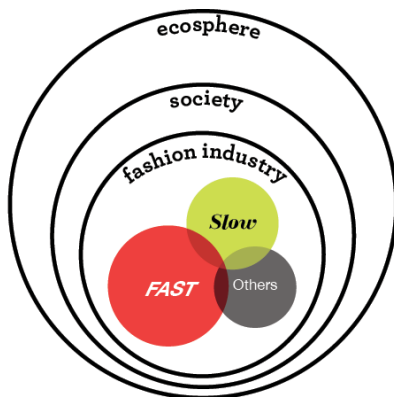


Figure 3.1. The system

not yet consider themselves part of the Slow Fashion movement *per se* and recognize their interconnectivity with others in the movement, because it is still considered a relatively new development and it is not widely known. For the purpose of this research, the Slow Fashion movement encompasses a number of business models and fashion industry terms, such as “sustainable new”, “eco-fashion”, “ethical” fashion, vintage and second-hand, and it gathers these models under one movement.

From our assessment of survey responses, most of the Slow Fashion players are aware of the ecological system boundaries that they operate within (see appendix F for the survey responses). Specifically, 73 % of the survey respondents acknowledged that they have a responsibility to practice

environmental stewardship by incorporating life-cycle thinking or eco-design principles when sourcing materials or designing garments. For example, making garments from materials that are in closed loop scenarios (Julia Roebuck); dye processes that use no water or chemicals (Orang Orang); and, using long-lasting fabrics that can be reused (Anonymous).

The Slow Fashion system is comprised of fashion designers that rely on raw fibres, such as organic cotton and other materials that are derived from the natural environment. Specifically, 60% of respondents are sourcing sustainable materials such as organic cotton, bamboo, hemp and a variety of others. According to the survey results, 25 out of 33 respondents make material sourcing decisions based on minimizing environmental impacts. This suggests that there is a strong understanding of the connection between the designer and the impacts he or she has on the environment.

Also, the movement recognizes its connectivity to the social system, its impacts on people in the supply chain and aims to make a positive contribution by paying living wages and supporting the communities that they work with. Fifteen of the survey respondents indicated that the retail price of their garments reflects the external social costs of producing the clothing by paying producers a living wage. For instance, **frei designs** of Chicago revealed that their prices reflect the higher price point of local production, living wage, and using organic cotton. This ensures they are positively supporting organic farmers/mills and local production. Three of the respondents also redistribute their profits into community development or local charities. **OrangOrang** donates 2 % of their profits to the Yayasan Kasih Peduli Anak (YKPA) orphanage in Bali (OrangOrang Project 2010). Seven survey respondents indicated that they have future plans for supporting communities or environmental organizations.

Sixteen Fashion designers also indicated that their primary business purpose was tied to social or environmental objectives demonstrating that they are aware of the larger ecological and social system they operate within. Here are some examples:

- To develop a sustainable lifestyle culture (Anonymous);
- To reduce textile waste by up cycling on a large scale and collaborating with larger companies to reduce their environmental impact (Anonymous);
- To empower women in rural villages and help keep children off the streets of Bali (Orang Orang);
- Support artisans by providing them with employment (blackfly).

Success Level. This level guided us to inquire if the movement has a clear vision of where they are going that is shared or widely used. Based on the literature review, industry survey and interviews, it was concluded that it does not. Rather, the Slow Fashion movement is fragmented; scattered initiatives and networks do exist throughout the movement, but they lack an overarching vision for the future as well as a common framework for addressing sustainability issues. We also considered if the movement has a common definition of sustainability. It was discovered in the survey that no two respondents provided the same definition of sustainability. However, fourteen respondents provided a definition of what sustainability means for their business and these definitions incorporated environmental and/or social objectives (see figure 3.2 for a sampling of definitions from the industry survey and appendix F for the full list).

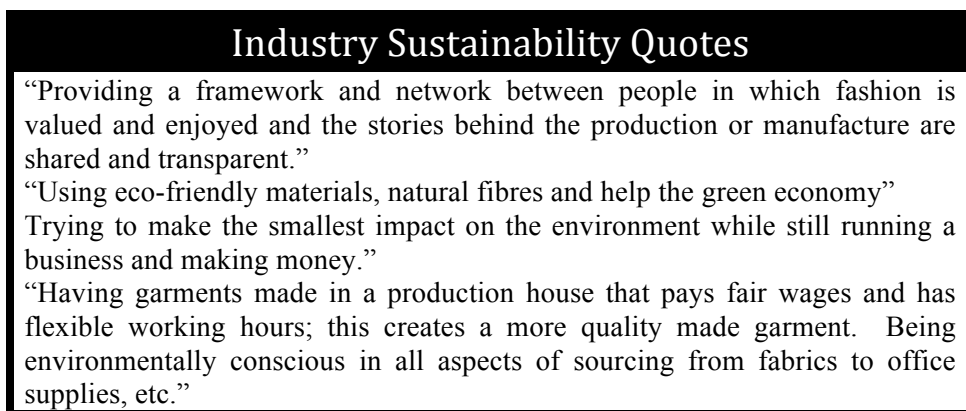


Figure 3.2. Sustainability Quotes (survey results).

Strategic Guidelines Level. With no shared vision of a sustainable future, the Slow Fashion movement is not able to ‘backcast’ from success (see section 2.2.1). Consequently, Slow Fashion players are not being strategic in their individual or collective actions. As well, there is no evidence that the movement is using a prioritized approach for determining strategic actions or a long-term strategy for attaining sustainability.

Actions level. The Action level describes what can be tangibly done by one organization or company in a way that supports an overall strategy to attain success (Robèrt, *et al.* 2002). Businesses and individual designers are already undertaking numerous sustainability actions (see section 1.3). Here are some examples of individual actions from the survey results:

- Remaking existing vintage garments into individual pieces (Anja Hynynen);

- Promoting organic fibers and vegetable dyes locally by educating the suppliers (Orang Orang);
- Offering lifetime repair or redesign assistance (chicadecanela);
- Engaging the garment wearer in issues around sustainable fashion (Julia Roebuck);
- Using biodegradable packaging (Anonymous);
- Offsetting carbon emissions by purchasing offsets which get invested into alternative energy projects (Anonymous).

Tools level. Designers and brands are using some sustainability tools in their business operations. As mentioned previously, life-cycle thinking and eco-design is being used as a tool by a number of designers in the movement (73 % of respondents). As well, eight of the survey respondents are using textile and garment labels such as Certified Organic Cotton, Fair Trade, OEKO TEX STANDARD 100, Made-By label, Organic Exchange and the Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS).

However at the *Actions* and *Tools level*, it is recognized that current initiatives are not necessarily strategic, based on the lack of the use of the Success and Strategic Guidelines level. As well, they are not currently constrained by the four sustainability principles (see section 2.2.1); therefore, they are not strategic in nature.

3.2 Phase 2: Leverage Points

Leverage Points have been utilized to guide our analysis through the Slow Fashion system and have assisted in pinpointing areas that can be addressed to determine if the Slow Fashion movement is being strategic. Here we discuss each of Donella Meadows' 12 Leverage Points in regards to RQ3: *How can Leverage Points be used to strengthen Slow Fashion's contribution to a sustainable society?* By analyzing the sub-questions: A) *How is each Leverage Point being used by the movement?* B) *What are the barriers or gaps preventing the success of each Leverage Point?*

3.2.1 12. Constants, parameters, and numbers

This Leverage Point focuses on how changing parameters and numbers in the system by using regulations such as standards, taxes and subsidies could support Slow Fashion's development. Although this is one of the easiest points of intervention, there is not much leverage in these types of standards to bring momentum to the Slow Fashion movement because they do not

impact producer or co-producer behavior or alter the structure of the larger fashion system. But according to Meadows, when the standard or efficiency improvement fuels a balancing or reinforcing loop or feeds into a lower point of intervention it can have more leverage (see Leverage Points 7 and 8) (Meadows 1991).

Efficiency standards for textile and garment manufacturing processes are quite widely used by the movement and not hard to achieve. As a result, water consumption is often being reduced and wastewater is being filtered from dyehouses (Fletcher 2008, 61). One barrier to using this leverage point effectively is that certifications, can be costly, making it often inaccessible to small producers/designers in Slow Fashion (five survey respondents indicated this).

3.2.2 11. Buffers: size of stabilizing stocks relative to their flows

Buffers have the ability to stabilize and protect a system from fluctuations, similar to how a lake holds water that goes in and out of it in a flow. Large stocks offer stability, however, the larger the stock the more difficult it is to change, leading to in-flexibility in the system. In this research garment inventories, conventional cotton and other materials are considered as stocks. Natural fabric dyes are also considered. We have found the following stabilizing stocks and flows in the Slow Fashion movement that are currently addressing or could be addressing sustainability initiatives. (Meadows 1991).

To decrease the stock of garments, many sustainable designers release only two collections per year or produce only to order, reducing overstock (60% of survey respondents). As Slow Fashion is designed to last many seasons (65% of survey respondents indicate 5 years or longer), excess inventory can be sold the following season (Hethorn 2008, 100). This reduces the material throughput in the system.

More sustainable materials such as organic cotton, bamboo, hemp, and flax are being used to address buffers and flows of conventional cotton (see appendix F Q2). Each new material stock can address the size of buffers and flows differently. Twenty-one of the survey respondents, for example, are using Certified Organic Cotton. Nevertheless, organic cotton and other more sustainable materials are expensive on the market because of their scarcity so it is difficult for small brands/designer to afford them.

All respondents were interested in sourcing more sustainable materials in the future but, apart from the cost factor, there are also other barriers that could take time to be overcome. For example, bamboo is a rapidly renewable crop and it can grow in a variety of climates and it needs less land to produce the same amount of, for example, cotton (Delano 2007). However, even this material, along with others, still has some environmental impacts during its processing, and this means that even if widely available and affordable, these materials would still not be completely sustainable. Some of these environmental impacts could be lessened if technology for processing would develop rapidly. Another example can be made for hemp: bans on hemp farming still limit cultivation in US and technology to process hemp is still under development (Ducas 2010). Such barriers need to be overcome but often they cannot be addressed directly by Slow Fashion players, being the problems concerning the also the larger fashion industry.

3.2.3 10. The structure of material stocks and flows

This Leverage Point refers to the structure of the material stocks and flows throughout the fashion industry, such as textiles and garments – from raw fibers to textile processing, and material selection through to garment design and end-use. The material flows from co-producers back into the fashion system for re-use, recycling and re-design are also considered as part of the Slow Fashion movement.

Seventeen survey respondents indicated that their fabric and textile sourcing decisions were based on it being locally accessible. Consequently, this may decrease the use of energy for transportation and the purchase supports local businesses and economic development. New supply chain structures have also emerged to support the model of localized production and globalized distribution using identical products produced within each territory (i.e. **Continental Clothing** in the UK).

Take back systems have been implemented by a few major brands (i.e. **Patagonia**) to achieve closed-loop garment production (Hethorn 2008, 121-122). But overall, brand take-back programs are in their infancy, as 93% of the survey respondents do not have this type of initiative in place.

Instead of up-cycling clothing for reuse, two survey respondents emphasized that they wanted the co-producer to keep their garments for many years, instead of taking them back through this type of program. One brand encourages a 'share policy' as their garments are designed as

heirloom pieces that they hope will be handed down and shared through the generations.

Smaller designers are up-cycling materials by remaking garments from reclaimed fabrics and used clothing found in one area/country (3 survey respondents; see figure 3.3) and then reselling them using existing retail structures (Davidson 2008). For example, Vancouver designer **Sans Soucie** uses recycled nylon hosiery to innovate new garments. Customers are offered a discount on a new purchase for returning older items for redesign and restyling. As well, 45 % of survey respondents are restyling or co-design any garments with their customers, adding to the localized supply chain structure.

Case Study: Remade in Leeds

Sixty-four designers, artisans, and volunteers have come together in Hyde Park, UK to use locally-sourced recycled clothing materials to innovate new garments. The final product is a playful 8-piece fashion collection, under the label 'Antiform', but the process generates a ripple of positive effects. Sewing, embroidery, and knitting skills are shared amongst the community and re-learned. Materials that would have ended up in landfills are reused and remade, and the local community and economy are supported. This project has taken three years to launch, but Lizzie Harrison hopes that one day the lessons she learned throughout the process can be shared with others and used as a model for sustainable, local fashion production.

Figure 3.3. Case Study: Remade in Leeds, (Harrison 2010).

For the most part, changing the physical structure of material flows is difficult and expensive, due to the complex nature of the fashion industry's supply chain. If new supply chain structures would be properly designed in the first place, it would allow for leverage in the Slow Fashion system (Meadows 1991).

In order to build localized supply chain structures that include fiber and textile production and up-cycling, a number of barriers and gaps need to be addressed:

- In most cases, it is still more cost-effective to source materials from developing countries. Nineteen designers surveyed in the UK, Canada and the United States stressed that sustainable fabrics and textiles were not available locally and that the capacity to produce them was limited. When available, six survey respondents indicated that they are expensive and five small designers could not meet the minimum order (Chenoweth 2010; survey results).

- It is very challenging to establish new, localized supply chain structures due to the time and energy required to build relationships with new suppliers and the limited availability in sustainable fibre choices (Kibbey 2010).
- Textile recycling “banks” and residential textile recycling programs are not widespread in most countries. Also, some implemented take back programs gather garments for distribution in developing countries such as Italian brand **Elena Mirò** (Elena Mirò 2010).
- Consumers tend to donate garments that are considered “high quality” (a brand name) to local charities. The rest of the unwanted clothing is destined to landfill (Morgan and Birtwistle 2009), down-cycled to other industries such as the furniture, automotive and buildings or resold on the market in developing countries (Defra 2008).
- For take-back programs, it was also mentioned that this type of program may be too forward thinking for co-producers and that there would need to be incentives, along with, a mechanism in the supply chain to facilitate this (Kibbey 2010). Also, four survey respondents were interested in starting this type of program in the future, but their operations are too small and they do not have a facility for storage.

3.2.4 9. Delays

Delays in a system are typical causes of oscillations when trying to adjust stocks and flows to a certain goal. When trying to adjust a stock, there is a delay in the real information available about that stock, and it is natural to overshoot or undershoot a system change to make the stock reach the desired level (Meadows 1991). Slow Fashion is addressing this quite strategically as it seems to have found short-term solutions to problems that cannot be directly solved by them.

One example is the scarcity in recycling mills present in most countries. This limits textile recycling, forcing brands to source new raw materials. Slow Fashion is being strategic here, as while waiting for these new facilities to be built, it is remaking clothing from reused materials (see Leverage Point 10). The brand **Goodone** in UK collaborates with textile recycling banks in the London area to rescue unwanted garments and remake them in new and one-of-a-kind garments while being supported by local authorities that see this initiative as a way to tackle waste problems

(Davidson 2008).

Another example is the delay of co-producers shifting purchases from Fast to Slow Fashion. This delay is mainly due to lack of awareness of the environmental and social impacts caused by Fast Fashion, poor availability of Slow Fashion in retail stores, and also for the gap in price difference, as Fast Fashion is very inexpensive. Slow Fashion brands are strategically addressing this by encouraging “reflective consumption”, 12 respondents are promoting the purchase of their high quality, functional designs and heirloom pieces thus adding extra value to the purchase (see also Leverage Point 7 & 2).

There is also a delay for establishing natural fabric dyes due to biological factors, technology, and skill development. Natural dyes can be sourced from plants that take various amount of time to mature (up to 20 years) thus create a delay in the amount of time that natural dyes can become ‘mainstream’ (Kolander 2007). There is a delay in natural dye technology available that hinders this market’s development. Ninety-seven per cent of survey respondents were interested in using natural dyes in the future. One designer interviewed considered them sometimes more difficult to handle, in terms of final product quality, than artificial dyes (Goldsmith 2010). Research and testing of natural dyes obtained by fruit and vegetables are being carried forward and promoted by the Permacouture Institute in California, US (Permacouture 2010). Overall, time, technology and human skills delays for producing and using natural dyes may represent a barrier for the industry.

The above mentioned strategies already in place are contributing to achieve some of Slow Fashion’s aims, which is to slow down the pace of consumption of textiles and manmade materials (i.e. dyes), reducing the amount of clothing sent to landfill and increasing environmentally friendly practices in the fashion industry.

3.2.5 8. Negative feedback loops

Negative feedback loops are used to balance the system within safe limits by reducing the output of the system (Haraldsson 2004, 11). Negative feedback loops need a goal, a monitoring device and a response mechanism to keep the system in balance. However, they are only effective if they are as strong as the impacts they are trying to keep in check (Meadows 1991). With the overall goal to reduce fashion production and consumption, Slow Fashion can balance larger Fast Fashion industry by decelerating

consumption. Slow Fashion contributes to this purpose by enacting a variety of business models and educational activities that could be able to influence and reduce the consumptive behavior in co-producers.

Another factor that could contribute to the reduction of garment production (supply) is the introduction of regulations (legislation, voluntary codes of conduct, pollution taxes) that could lead to increased production costs for manufacturers thus increasing prices also for end users thus reducing the demand and balancing the overall system. Also, future carbon taxes and take-back legislations that may emerge could financially impact businesses that rely on shipping for all of their operations, making the Slow Fashion business model more desirable.

Some barriers that limit the efficiency of the system's balance:

- Codes of conduct, such as the **Ethical Trading Initiative**, SA8000 or WRAP provide standards for a living wage. However, these standards are still voluntary and the living wage is discretionary from country to country (Allwood et al. 2006. 2). As a result, the price of Slow Fashion is still much higher and consumers opt to buy from inexpensive Fast Fashion retailers.
- Environmental regulations are not as strict for garment producers in developing countries. In many cases developing countries have become "pollution havens," to attract more direct foreign investment, that brought many corporations in the developed world to relocate pollution intensive production from countries with strict regulations to others where these are less rigid (Clark 2000).

3.2.6 7. Positive feedback loops

These are feedback loops within a system where actions are constantly reinforced. Positive loops drive the system behavior towards growth. In any system, there can be many of these self-reinforcing cycles. The larger fashion industry benefits from the presence of a negative feedback loop created by Slow Fashion (see Leverage Point 8) that slows down the growth of the entire system and acts as a stabilizer. Positive feedback loops, even in a system that needs to grow, like Slow Fashion, must be watched because they can easily become unstoppable and do more harm than good.

Slow Fashion requires more media coverage and brand marketing to help increase visibility, fuel awareness and demand for Slow Fashion garments. However, this positive feedback loop could constantly increase demand, and could neutralize the desired effect of slowing down total production. It

is recommended that the presence of consumer awareness campaigns (see appendix A) be in place to educate co-producers about the values of ‘reflective consumption’ to help keep Slow Fashion demand at a reasonable rate, rather than spiraling towards overconsumption.

To increase consumer demand for Slow Fashion. Media coverage triggers a positive reinforcing loop by increasing the visibility of Slow Fashion, which can be further stabilized by Slow Fashion education and awareness campaigns.

To increase production of Slow Fashion. An increase in demand for Slow Fashion from consumers, leads to an increasing the abundance of organic fabrics on the market, and growth of organic fibers market, which leads to an increased supply of Slow Fashion.

To reinforce a community-based Slow Fashion brand. Brands provide guaranteed, fair, employment to communities; leads to an increase of the local capacity for people to work; leads to more skill and knowledge sharing and community resiliency, leads to more traditional diversity in product offerings, leads to more profits being redistributed back into the local community and an increase in the local industry, the **OrangOrang Project** in Bali, Indonesia does just this. In this case it can be challenging to build trust in the community and cultural differences can make meeting Western garment production demands difficult (Charet and McGrew 2010).

“When you commit to doing a business like ours it is a necessity to emerge yourself with the people here. You can’t just be there, give training and support, you need to feel one with this new community of yours, in an anthropologist way” (Catherine Charet, OrangOrang Project).

3.2.7 6. The structure of information flows

The structure of information flows can be an effective Leverage Point in the Fashion System, if information is delivered where it was not before, causing people to change behaviour. However, to trigger action it is necessary to couple new information with resources and incentives to support the behaviour change (Meadows 2008). In the fashion industry, adding to or changing the flows of information between companies in a supply chain or between retailers, designers and consumers can create large changes for little effort (Fletcher 2008, 67). We will use two examples:

1. Flow of information within the Supply Chain. Industry supply chains are

becoming more transparent and players are engaging in dialogue to tackle complex sustainability challenges (Kibbey 2010). Eco-labelling schemes, and the recent creation of online hubs, magazines, tradeshow and summits are also contributing to these efforts (see appendix B). Dialogue between designers and suppliers for certification and education on organic fibres is also increasing. Government bodies, research centres, such as the Centre for Sustainable Fashion, and NGO are also releasing reports to spread sustainability awareness among stakeholders in the larger fashion industry (see appendix A).

However, there is a lack of consensus within the industry on the life cycle impacts of most textiles (Baldwin *et al.* 2009, 33). There is no widely-available scientific/third party study comparing fibers and processes, so it is not possible to say one fiber is superior to another (Gagnon 2007, 40). According to the survey, only 15% of respondents use an online or published resource to compare the environmental impacts of material selections.

For example, natural dyes are commonly perceived as inferior to synthetics, which causes natural dyes to be underutilized. However, if a professional natural dyer is knowledgeable and skillful, the quality can outlast many common synthetic dyes (Kolander 2010). There is currently one benchmark for natural dyes called Tyria. This type of certification can increase the use of natural dye techniques and reaffirm its quality product (Kolander 2007). Based on interviews and survey results, this benchmark is not widely used and needs to be further developed.

Also, there is no unique platform for the Slow Fashion movement to communicate and share information throughout the supply chain. Overall, only 37% of industry respondents collaborate with their suppliers on sustainability issues. One challenge faced in this process was revealed: “I find getting information from the mills very difficult. It may be because I am still a small operation.” (Green Bean Baby).

As well, current garment labelling schemes (i.e. Fair Trade, GOTS etc) can be costly and time intensive for gaining certification thus small brands are unable access them. Three respondents indicated that they were too expensive to gain certification. Also, eco-labels can be better marketed, so that people know what the certification means (Flora and Fauna). One respondent mentioned: “We could probably qualify for some of eco-labels

but haven't applied as they don't seem that relevant. We know everything we do is eco and ethical” (Anonymous).

In terms of education for the future generation of designers, courses on sustainable fashion are scarce in general, although many universities in UK have recently launched new specific programs around this topic (Baldwin 2008).

2. *Flow of information to co-producers.* There has been an increase in public awareness campaigns, resources, tradeshow open to the public and designer awards for sustainable fashion. However, the awareness campaigns and initiatives are occurring only in a few countries and there is insufficient media coverage on the benefits of Slow Fashion. Also, there are over 70 private labels used for ecological textile and garment production causing inconsistency and confusion for co-producers and within the industry (Staemanns 2009) (see appendix E). As well, an increase in sustainability information provided at point of sale could be encouraged and ‘choice architecture’ needs to be further developed and studied (Soderquist 2010).

Overall, 88% of industry respondents communicate sustainability information to co-producers through dialogue, company websites and garment labels. When communicating sustainability information to co-producers, the survey respondents indicated a number of challenges:

- People’s lack of understanding regarding the general environmental impact of the fashion industry;
- People don't feel it has anything to do with them/they can't change/they don't have enough money/don't want to be seen in the 'same' clothes all the time/they follow 'fashion' and want a different look every week to keep up with trends;
- Communicating is either made too easy with marketing "green wash" or too complicated with metrics and technical terms that the average consumer doesn't understand. The trick is finding a balance;
- I believe many consumers do not think about the origins of the products they consumer, I feel like we have lost touch with the process of creation, it is an important yet difficult task to try and educate people without being preachy or judgmental;
- Discussing the true price.

As well, the survey respondents provided insight into their successes:

- People are usually inspired to make a difference after our conversation;
- Showing people how to work with clothes is a great way to encourage them not to throw them away;
- It's vital to make it totally clear what the clothes are made from and how, having it on the garment labels is probably the most successful;
- We have been successful in encouraging and increasing awareness on sustainability as customers have purchased items from our ethical labels.

3.2.8 5. Rules: punishments, constraints, incentives

Rules of a system define its scope, boundaries and degrees of freedom. By changing these rules, the playing field that the system must act within can change. Some rules of the fashion system, such as regulatory punishments and incentives, are in favor of Slow Fashion. For example, the EU initiated a program in the 1990s that provides hemp farmers with subsidies to encourage hemp fiber production (Karus 2005). Also, government legislation has been enacted to extend the producer responsibility for environmental impacts. For example, the EU REACH legislation, regulates chemical use in the supply chain, which slightly levels the rules of the playing field for Slow Fashion producers (Fletcher 2008, 45). Forty-seven per cent of survey respondents indicated that their business or their suppliers are impacted by environmental or social regulations. For example:

- If we can meet standards and regulations they will benefit us and qualify us as an ethical business with publicity opportunities;
- More regulation and talk about the environment is good for our business. But the regulations are more like recommendations and are not enforced;
- There are no restrictions in Indonesia. This impacts us negatively because people locally and internationally neither expect nor demand the regulations;
- Impacted by tighter EPA restrictions because we use domestic companies.

As well, 53% of respondents will be impacted by future regulations (for example EU REACH, extended producer responsibility regulations, carbon taxes, environmental regulations). For example survey respondents revealed:

- Increased cost of production and sourcing;

- Hopefully carbon taxes will give us an advantage, as we are now so low on carbon usage throughout our production;
- I assume carbon tax will affect ocean-shipping costs; more regulation in China will make prices rise too, even in good factories;
- If future regulations cost money, we might not survive, as we are a small business on a tight budget.

Overall, many ‘rules’ in the fashion system are still hindering the development of Slow Fashion. These are:

Punishments. Overall, there are not enough punishments to limit pollution in the fashion supply chain. Effluents such as bleach water from dyeing cotton t-shirts, or chromium and other heavy metals from leather tanneries, are released in wastewater streams (Richards *et al.* 2007). In Slow Fashion, organic t-shirt printers, cellulosic manufacturers, and organic leather manufacturers, for example, ensure that clean water is discharged from their facilities. It is indicated that this takes time and money making it difficult for some companies to follow suit (Fox 2007). As it currently exists, Slow Fashion companies voluntarily internalize these externalities because it is the just thing to do. If all companies were required to do this with their environmental impacts many companies would change procedures drastically, giving the Slow Fashion movement a competitive advantage because they are already abiding by stricter standards.

Social and environmental regulations: Many multinational companies operate overseas due to inexpensive labor and relaxed environmental regulations. For example, DDT is still used in India to produce cotton and this impacts global estuaries and human health. Sally Fox of **Vreseis**, an organic cotton supplier, writes "If (US) laws required any imported textile to be grown and processed under US Textile Standards we would see immediate improvement" (Fox 2007). Legislation and regulations can act as a constraint, by removing incentives for overseas production. Moreover, environmental standards will improve environmental conditions in developing nations and provide a competitive advantage for Slow Fashion producers that already go above and beyond regulatory requirements.

Labelling schemes: Textile and garment labelling also provides a constraint for the industry by enforcing the use of some terms such as ‘organic’, however many industry buzzwords do not require certification ('ethical, eco, natural, sustainable') (Gagnon 2007). Also, one survey respondent indicated that labelling can often be mandated to the point of trivial

information at the cost of the business. Some labelling incentives work against Slow Fashion. In the case of bamboo, this can be either chemically or mechanically manipulated to extract the fiber. Chemical manipulation has many environmental impacts while mechanical manipulation is energy intensive and costs 5 times more, but is considered to be the more environmentally sound option. Both of these processes cause bamboo to be labeled 'man-made' and there is currently no organic labelling protocol specific to educate the industry and co-producers on bamboo's situation that would allow them to choose the more environmentally friendly process (this also feeds into Leverage Point 6, Flow of Information).

Bank loans: Rainfed cotton farmers have no legislative nets to be assured by if they have a dry season; growing rainfed organic cotton is seen as risky and these farmers get high interest rates on their loans, in effect they are being penalized for acting sustainably (Fox 2007). Most banks view conventional cotton farming as a secure form of raising a cotton crop. This is because their use of pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers typically secures a return on cotton crops year after year. However due to effects they have on soil degradation this will most likely not be the case going forward (Fox 2007).

Conventional Cotton Subsidies With the goal to create an equitable cotton market, nations like China and US have signed the Millennium Declaration (2000) and pledged to increase subsidies to growers in developing countries (Herfkens 2010). With the Millennium Declaration, subsidies for cotton have been increased in African countries, but they have not been reduced in other developed countries, leading to an excess of production on the market, and the fall of the price of cotton. To keep up with production, African countries have been forced to use unsustainable practices on their cotton plantations. The difficulty in selling even conventional cotton due to such high competition and low prices, results in a lower demand and slow increase in organic cotton production (Amponsah 2005).

3.2.9 4. The power to change or self-organize system structure

Self-organization or evolution in any system is a strong form of resilience. It involves changing other aspects of the system completely, such as new material structures, feedback loops and rules (Meadows 2008). Self-organization occurs internally through cooperation of all of system parts, for the greater functioning of the whole and it requires a diversity of

knowledge and choice. In the fashion industry, it involves “generating the biggest stock possible of sustainability related ideas, materials, behaviors and culture from which to seed the building of new, or more effective, versions of existing systems.” (Fletcher 2008, 71).

In the Fast Fashion industry, players’ work with standardized business models based on only a few abundant materials, centralized production and globalized distribution. This structure does not make Fast Fashion very suited for change because as discussed in other Leverage Points often the most established physical structure and the rules of the system are hard to modify. Instead, the Slow Fashion movement relies on a diversity of business models, and, as a result, it can become very resilient. For example:

- The idea of sustainable fashion is not new to the fashion industry. Only recently though, the movement is starting to self-organize and emerge from forward-thinking, innovative designers and brands, becoming more visible (see appendix C) especially in those countries where governments seem to take the sustainability challenge into greater consideration and spread awareness through co-producers accordingly (i.e. UK, Canada, Scandinavian countries);
- The Slow approach and Slow Movements in general are already trying to give rise to a vision of a “multi-local society” and a distributed economy (Slow + Design 2006);
- Countries where sustainable fashion is more common are developing online networks that aim to put the movement’s players in contact mainly on a national level (see appendix B);
- Recently formed research centres, universities and ethical entities are organizing regular events, such as meetings, workshops (**Social Alterations** 2010) summits, improving relationships in the supply chain and transparency with the co-producers (i.e. **Centre for Sustainable Fashion** and **Fashioning an Ethical Industry** in UK, **MADE By**, **Green2Greener** in Hong Kong and **Social Alterations** in the US).

There are also barriers and gaps preventing the self- organization of the Slow Fashion movement:

- The phenomenon of Slow Fashion is still circumscribed to the above-mentioned countries. Online networks/events (see appendix B) do not include all the relevant players in the supply chain, involving mainly academic researchers, designers and NGOs but fail to involve other players such as farmers and dyers. Still it can be

seen as a step in the right direction.

3.2.10 3. System goals

Defining or changing the overarching goals of the system, ultimately changes how the system makes decisions, acts and organizes itself. In fact, the goal sets the direction of the system, defining discrepancies that need action and indicating if the system is behaving in compliance or if it is failing the goals (Meadows 2008).

Overall, the goal of Slow Fashion is to meet fundamental human needs (see section 1.1.2) through fashion while lessening its impact on the environment. In contrast, the goal of Fast Fashion is to maximize profits. According to the survey's results, Slow Fashion brands have a wide variety of business goals, that involve directly or indirectly the desire to achieve either ecological or social sustainability or both (see responses in appendix F). Profit is also a goal that been mentioned by a survey respondent to guarantee the survival of the individual businesses within the movement.

This is exemplary of the diversity of goals within the Slow Fashion movement that are creative, unique and together they address an expansive area of needs that will help the movement move towards sustainability. This also leads to a more resilient movement, by having many groups working toward the same end: sustainability, from a multitude of angles.

However, as per the result of RQ1, the Slow Fashion movement does not have a shared definition of sustainability or shared vision of future success for the movement that can be interpreted as the goal or purpose of the system. Until the movement increases its interconnectivity it will be difficult to develop a shared vision.

3.2.11 2. The mindset the system arises from

Society's mindset is a deeper set of believes, deeply rooted in people, about how the world works (Meadows 2001). If the underlying values of Slow Fashion become the mindset of the system, then the system could arise or comply with the mindset. The mindset of an individual – a co-producer, a fashion producer, a designer - could change very rapidly, but changing the mindset of society at large is quite difficult and time consuming.

In 2000, Serbin noticed that people began to recognize hemp not as marijuana but as another textile fibre. This change in perception made a

huge difference in his business as a hemp trader. In 2006, hemp became 'popular' because its benefits became more widespread thus more accepted by the larger fashion community. He notices this change in perception as a huge shift for the industry in pursuing sustainability (Serbin 2007, 51). **The Uniform Project** is another example of creating a shift in the mindset of the system. Here, the founder uses her creativity to demonstrate to society that people could ideally survive with only four dresses in the wardrobe (The Uniform Project 2010).

Slow fashion acts to establish a new mindset by shifting co-producers attitude from being a passive consumer in society to playing an active, participatory role in the fashion production process as a co-producer. Here, the human experience is heightened by being more engaged in the creative process by co-creating with designers or by finding innovative ways to consume fashion. The Slow Fashion mindset is based on “reflective consumption”, while the Fast Fashion mindset is based on consumerism.

In western society especially, success is linked to the level of ownership and status achieved in a lifetime. Consuming and owning fashion goods that act as a status symbol, is one of the ‘rules’ to be considered successful and it is essentially an act of passive consumption that does not satisfy human needs. These established mental models within society are difficult to alter and this acts as a barrier to shifting towards the Slow Fashion mindset.

3.2.12 1. Transcending paradigms

A paradigm is a set of assumptions, concepts, values or practices that make up a way of viewing reality for a specific community that shares them. In all cases, this Leverage Point is the highest, as it means that no one is unattached to a paradigm, as there are no true paradigms consistent from community to community. If no paradigm is precisely accurate, then you can choose whichever one will help to achieve your purpose, or choose none at all and stay unattached to constantly develop.

3.3 Phase 3: Strategic recommendations

Based on the above findings, a number of short, medium and long-term² strategic recommendations have been generated to strengthen the Slow Fashion movement and to move it towards sustainability (see table 3.1). Each recommendation is targeted at a specific group of Slow Fashion players and taps into one or more Leverage Points. Of these, three key recommendations have been identified as bringing the most leverage the Slow Fashion movement: 1) Co-create a vision of success using Slow Fashion Principles 2) Establish an overarching Slow Fashion network 3) Harmonize global labelling initiatives under a Slow Fashion label. These three recommendations also demonstrate how the three Prioritization Questions can be used in practice for strategic planning (see section 3.3.4).

| Recommendation | Timeframe | Players | Leverage Point(s) |
|---|-------------------------|--|-------------------|
| Industry Collaboration & Communication | | | |
| Co-create Slow Fashion Principles | Short-term | Slow Fashion Producers | 2,3,4 |
| Establish a Slow Fashion Network | Short-term | Slow Fashion Producers | 4,6 |
| Create partnerships with fashion Colleges, Blekinge Institute of Technology (BTH), The Natural Step and the Real Change program to educate on the Sustainability Principles and Strategic Sustainable Development. | Short-term and on-going | BTH, The Natural Step & fashion design Colleges | 3,6 |
| Offer The Natural Step sustainability workshops for Slow fashion producers. Workshops can provide producers with a background on the core concepts of Strategic Sustainable Development and Sustainability. | Short-term and on-going | Slow Fashion producers, The Natural Step, sustainability practitioners | 3,6 |
| Create a social marketing campaign to inform co-producers on the benefits of the Slow Fashion movement to generate awareness, excitement and interest for sustainable fashion consumption, sewing & repair skills, clothes swapping, and responsible care and disposal. | Short-term | Sustainability practitioners | 2,3,6 |
| Increase personal communication between designers/retailers and co-producers to facilitate flow of information on the details on garment production and material sourcing. | Short-term and ongoing | Fashion designers, brands, retailers and co-producers | 6 |
| Create an online mapping tool connected to the | Short-term | Online | 4,6 |

² Short term is 1-3 years, medium term is 3-5 years and long-term is 5 years or longer

| | | | |
|---|--------------|--|---------|
| Slow Fashion network that displays Slow Fashion designers & retailers by City/Country for easy co-producer access. | and on-going | network, brands, retailers | |
| Increase educational programs among co-producers in regards to sustainable fashion consumption, sewing and repair skills, and the end of life of clothing and textiles. | Short-term | Schools, NGOs, fashion designers | 2,6 |
| Sourcing Materials & Textiles | | | |
| Provide bank loans for farmers of more sustainable fibres such as rainfed cotton, hemp, bamboo. | Short-term | Banking sector | 7,11 |
| Educate banks about the investment benefits vs. investment risks for rainfed cotton farming to increase support (Sanfilippo 2007). | Short-term | Sustainability practitioners, farmers | 7,11 |
| A commitment to buying an upcoming harvest of a rainfed cotton crop (at least 30% buy in but 60% is preferred); this could help facilitate access to credits and give financial institutions the insurance they need to grant less expensive loan to these farmers (Sanfilippo 2007). | Short-term | Brands, textile manufacturers | 7,11 |
| Local textile manufacturers should add small overruns to their production to give small designers the opportunity to grow their business to, in time, also be able to order an entire run, which in turn will boost production for the textile mills (Shiffrin, 2010). | Short-term | Textile mills, designers, brands | 7,10 |
| Create networks of collaborating designers/brands by region; with the idea that they could buy a minimum quantity of organic/fair-trade/dead-stock/or other new crops and textiles therefore allowing them to meet minimum orders and be able to support farmers growing new 'higher risk' materials (Shiffrin, 2010). | Short-term | Online textile/fibre platforms | 7,11 |
| Make dead stock and surplus fabrics/overruns from larger textile/garment manufacturers accessible to smaller designers. Get this connected to the market via a web database (Shiffrin, 2010). | Short-term | Textile & garment manufactures, small designers | 7,10,11 |
| Encourage collaboration between online marketplace databases such as www.pan-germany.net , www.source4style.com , www.organicexchange.org or elsewhere to make the comparing and buying of organic fabrics easier (Shiffrin, 2010). | Short-term | Online networks | 4,6 |
| Invest in R&D to start developing technologies to allow for treatment of new sustainable fibres such as hemp, nettle, bamboo and others. | Short-term | Research centres, Universities, National governments | 7,9,11 |
| Invest in recycling mills, implement residential textile recycling programs, and increase community "recycling banks" for textiles. | Short-term | Municipalities, NGOs, charities & textile brokers | 7,9,10 |
| Expand organic certification for bamboo to all countries globally to create awareness around the difference processes and impacts of the fiber (Delano 2007). | Medium-term | GOTS & other organic certification bodies | 6,5 |

| | | | |
|--|------------------------|--|--------|
| R & D for the natural dyeing process. | Medium-term | Research centres, Universities, National governments | 7,9,11 |
| Conduct market research to determine the viability of growing raw material (plants, trees) for natural dyes. | Medium-term | Governments, Universities, farmers | 7,9,11 |
| Garment Design | | | |
| Increased education for fashion designers on life-cycle garment design & sustainable design practices such as using recycled textiles, compostable fabrics and remaking existing garments. | Short-term and ongoing | Fashion Colleges, designers, sustainability practitioners | 2,6,7 |
| Brand & Retail | | | |
| Conduct market research on the viability of starting a take-back program for used garments. | Short-term | Brands & retailers | 8,10 |
| Collaborate with existing garment recycling initiatives to expand their use (i.e. ECO CIRCLE). | Short-term | Brands & retailers | 10 |
| Implement a “lifetime” policy for garments, by offering repair or restyling services for the garment, educating the co-producer on how to extend the life-span of the garments (handing down the garment to other co-producers), or through multi-functional design. | Short-term | Brands & retailers | 6,8 |
| Regulations, Codes of Conduct & Labelling | | | |
| To ensure a stable stock of recycled textiles, there could be legislation for all textile producers to support or have their own take-back program similar to the electronics industry. | Short-term | National governments, EU | 5,10 |
| Provide subsidies or tax credits to domestic textile producers (in Canada, US and European countries) to support a local textile industry. | Short-term | National governments | 5,10 |
| Improve social marketing of existing eco-labels such as GOTS, certified organic and Fair Trade so that co-producers are educated on the meaning of the labels. | Short-term | GOTS, certified organic and other eco-labelling schemes | 5,6 |
| Create a Slow Fashion Garment Label | Medium-term | Textile & garment labelling certification entities, Slow Fashion producers | 5,6 |
| Remove subsidies to conventional cotton production and provide subsidies and tax credits to local material producers of emerging sustainable materials. | Medium-term | National governments | 5 |
| Establish global environmental standards for garment & textile industry that can be monitored and enforced. | Long-term | National governments, UN | 5 |

Table 3.1. Recommendations.

3.3.1 Recommendation 1: Co-create Slow Fashion Principles

Slow Fashion Principles should be co-created from within the movement to provide inspiration and guidance to individual players. In order to become the predominant fashion model in a sustainable society, the movement can co-create Slow Fashion Principles to establish a shared mental model that represents collective goals and aspirations, and to provide a focal point for self-organization (Leverage Points 3 & 4).

Is it a step in the right direction? Yes. Slow Fashion Principles can represent shared values and a vision of success, provide guidance and form the basis for future actions. It will be understood that a ‘sustainable society’ is defined by the four Sustainability Principles (see section 4.3).

Is it a flexible platform? Yes. A shared mental model will create a common language for a strategic dialogue to take place. By co-creating the principles, they are meant to evolve over time with more participation and input. Individual designers/brands can further customize the Slow Fashion Principles for their business.

*Will it provide adequate ROI?*³ Yes. This can help the Slow Fashion movement be strategic in their actions, resulting in collective action and internal support, which will lead to more co-producers, a return on financial investment, and cost savings. By contributing to a sustainable society, the movement will also be encouraging a return on ecological investment by investing in and preserving natural capital such as water resources, agricultural land, and air.

3.3.2 Recommendation 2: Slow Fashion Network

This recommendation is intended for any player in the Slow Fashion movement that wishes to facilitate the growth of the movement. It is based on the analysis of the opportunities raised by Leverage Point 4 and Leverage Point 6, relative to the Flow of Information, in this case, within the supply chain.

³ Return on investment can be financial, political, social or environmental.

Focus on local relationships and global interconnectedness. To encourage the development of collaboration, and to spur the mobilization between the players of the existing Slow Fashion supply chain, the authors propose the creation of a unique, global organization under the name of Slow Fashion, whose term includes “eco”, “sustainable”, “green”, and “ethical” fashion.

The organization should act as an overarching global hub and it is encouraged to have the following functions:

- Represent the Slow Fashion movement worldwide;
- Educate and promote the Slow Fashion Principles;
- Create and manage a global online platform gathering all local chapters in the Slow Fashion movement, encouraging collaboration and transparency;
- Offer scientific information of best and most up-to-date sustainable practices in textile and garment production, in collaboration with well-established third party entities, universities and research centres.
- Organize annual events to encourage and consolidate personal relationships between the members of the organization and the general public;
- Promote Slow Fashion and ‘reflective consumption’ by different media to reinforce visibility and values;
- Promote a Slow Fashion label (see section 3.3.3); and,
- Create opportunities for members to meet locally and increase their collaboration.

Is it a step in the right direction? Yes. It works to build a stronger industry, facilitating collaboration, the sharing of information, transparency and improving producer relationships with regards to sustainability.

Is it a flexible platform? Yes. Becoming recognized worldwide, the Slow Fashion movement can increase visibility, spread the idea of sustainable development and the values of Slow Fashion within the larger fashion industry, thus influencing more people. This will result in an increased demand of Slow Fashion, leading to growth. Decentralized local hubs are a key aspect to ensure future flexibility as the movement grows.

Will it provide adequate ROI? Yes. Start-ups and small brands will be able to benefit from the visibility that the whole organization has on a global and local level. This includes having access to educational, research & consultancy services as well as media coverage, enhancing the

marketability of the whole industry.

3.3.3 Recommendation 3: Slow Fashion label

A garment-labelling scheme, unique to Slow Fashion should be developed to distinguish this movement within the larger fashion market and to add credibility to the movement. This labelling scheme would build off and incorporate current fibre and production process standards, such as organic cotton, Fair Trade and the Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS). The Slow Fashion label would be certified by an independent third-party, would be globally accessible, and easily recognized by co-producers. Moreover, it would need to be financially affordable for small brands and designers (i.e. fee structure would reflect company profits/market share). According to the survey, 98 % of respondents would support this type of initiative.

Is it a step in the right direction? Yes, this recommendation would build off of the previous two, as it would unify Slow Fashion under consistent standards and language. The label would gather together producers with shared values and a common vision of sustainability, thus further organizing and strengthening the movement. It would also create positive awareness with co-producers and increase global recognition and exposure, supporting further development.

Is it a flexible platform? Yes. It would begin to provide a common understanding of what ‘Slow Fashion’ consists of. One label, which adheres to the most up-to-date environmental and social standards along with the most relevant practices within the movement, will also evolve over time. Environmental and social standards and voluntary codes of conduct will change and adapt in the future, as more up to date scientific and social data is made available. The label would reflect these changes, and would also change over time.

Will it provide adequate ROI? Yes, it would increase visibility of smaller brands and designers that would be part of a network and could use shared communication channels, cutting down individual advertising costs. It would lead to a greater co-producer awareness of the industry and allow for a starting point to build more trusting and long-lasting relationships with co-producers. By identifying the label with a credible and globally recognized organization, co-producers will trust the label and will want to support designers and brands through purchases. Overall, it will help to secure profits to sustain Slow Fashion businesses over time.

3.4 Phase 4: Slow Fashion Principles

Based on recommendation 1 and the importance of a vision, the authors undertook research to discover and draft principles for the Slow Fashion movement (see section 3.3.1). These encompass the concepts of “Slow” and “Sustainability” in the context of fashion. They were uncovered through the literature review, survey and interviews. The authors felt strongly about what they discovered about the core purpose of the movement, so the findings were synthesized to form a first draft of ‘Slow Fashion Principles’. These principles are not meant to be a prescriptive solution but to encourage Slow Fashion player’s creativity and adaptation of them for their needs. The Principles are interconnected, work in unison and are meant to inspire and inform the movement towards a common purpose of ‘contributing to a sustainable society’.

1. Seeing the big picture Slow Fashion players recognize that they are all interconnected to the larger environmental and social system and make decisions accordingly. Slow Fashion encourages a systems thinking approach because it recognizes that the impacts of our collective choices can affect the environment and people. This response from our survey is typical of how the Slow Fashion mindset supports a Systems Thinking approach, “The money the garments make goes directly back into supporting the organic farmers/ mills/ local production- it is an ecosystem that supports ethical production from start to finish.” See section 3.1 for more examples of how Slow Fashion recognizes it’s interconnected to the larger system.

2. Slowing down consumption to allow earth’s natural regeneration. Kate Fletcher’s 2008 book, *Design Journeys*, describes how slowing down the use of raw materials by slowing down fashion production could allow the earth’s regenerative capabilities to take place. This will alleviate pressure on the earth’s natural production cycles so the Slow Fashion movement can be in a healthy rhythm with what the earth can naturally provide. As discovered in the survey, Slow Fashion players agree with Fletcher’s works and already address issues surrounding consumption: “I have been producing ‘slow’ clothes since the late nineties and I am not about to change that. I am passionate about making a change in our consumption habits and educating the public forum...” Also, **Make Do and Mend** is a movement that promotes making do with what you have rather than buying new to combat unnecessary overconsumption (MakeDoMend 2010).

Slow Lab, a prominent Slow movement organization, writes about how slowing the pace can foster reflective consumption, which could also result in decelerating global consumption (Fuad-Luke 2010). **Slow Food** has parallel goals, as it strives for organic and local production that celebrates what the land can provide rather than mass-produced foodstuffs we attempt to squeeze out of it (Slow Food International 2010).

3. Diversity - Strength, resilience and beauty lie in diversity. Biodiversity: Preserving and supporting the variety of life and of habitats on Earth is vital to human welfare, and its loss can lead to important economic, environmental and social consequences (OECD 2005). The earth, over millions of years, has given humankind abundance and diversity. Slow Fashion encourages the recognition of this abundance on earth that is a strong and resilient system offering solutions to the threats of climate change. Rain-fed cotton can help our water consumption exist within the earth's hydration cycles. Recycled fabrics can decelerate the consumption of raw materials provided by the earth. Hemp and bamboo can help limit natural resource consumption by producing more per SF, being less resource intensive and improving soil quality (Fletcher 2008, 25).

Business diversity: Slow Fashion wants “not one answer, but a mass of answers” to join together in answering the call for sustainability; second-hand, vintage, recycled, fashion leasing, independent designers, larger fashion houses and even your local knitting club, clothing swaps and swishing etc. are all recognized as models that contribute to the Slow Fashion movement (Fletcher 2008). Everyone in the movement is in this together and discovering creative new solutions is encouraged.

Cultural diversity: Slow Fashion encourages traditional methods of garment making, textile making and dyeing techniques. Keeping these methods alive gives creativity, vibrancy and meaning to what we wear, why we wear it, and how it was made. There is extensive knowledge throughout regions of the world on best utilization of local resources; this can be used today to address climate change concerns. Similarly, family traditions are important, as it encourages heirlooms and hand-me-downs pieces that span the generations and offer rewarding emotional experiences (Self Passage 2010).

4. Respecting People – Treating others as they would like to be treated. Slow Fashion players’ worldwide support and participate in campaigns that help to educate and inspire the fair treatment of people across borders. **The Asian Floor Wage Alliance** seeks fair compensation for all workers. From

the survey results: 3 support the **Ethical Trading Initiative**, 2 support the **Fair Wear Foundation**, 2 support the **Fair Labour Association**, and 2 support the **Business Social Compliance Initiative**. Many independent designers work with local communities to help the community become more resilient by giving them the learning curve to help them trade such as **OrangOrang** project, **Toms Shoe**, and **Banuk**.

5. Acknowledging human needs through co-creation. Slow Fashion encourages people to meet fundamental human needs by offering fashion with emotional significance. Human needs that can be met by fashion are creativity, identity, understanding and participation (see section 1.1.2).

Fashion allows people to communicate a message to the world, to be perceived in a certain way, to feel part of a social group and at the same time to be original, creative and free (Self Passage 2010). The Slow Fashion designer has the opportunity to create relationships with co-producers, telling the story behind a garment and inviting the customer to be part of the creative process. In this process, the co-producer and the designer lend each other help in satisfying their fundamental needs for participation and creativity (Self Passage 2010).

From our survey results, we have identified many Slow Fashion designers that co-create garments with their co-producers, in hopes to create long-lasting and personal garments. Here is a sampling of quotes.

“Most garments are a collaboration between me and the client.”

“I've had customers with old clothes that want re vamping, and we work together on the style and look they want to achieve. I've also made items from the collection out of their own donated items too.”

“We work with individuals to restyle their clothing to a specific theme. If they are willing to engage with the manufacture process then this can also be used, but normally they are happy to hand it over, give a specification and get back an altered garment.”

6. Building relationships to collaborate and co-create. Trusting and lasting relationships create a stronger movement.

In the supply chain: the **OrangOrang** project is an excellent example of a Slow Fashion business that builds strong relationships with a local community, while they are founded in Canada they work in Bali, Indonesia.

Here they work with the local community to re-learn traditional craftsmanship and natural dyes. When they make new relationships they make long-term commitments, and they also provide fair wages and training to workers. This happens through building trust with the community through dialogue and communication (Charet and McGrew 2010). The creation of new relationships leads to the possibility of finding more strategic solutions to shared problems (Slow + Design 2006).

Laura Chenoweth, a Canadian Slow Fashion designer has built a trusting relationship with her organic cotton supplier in India and has ensured a long-term commitment, in order to secure good pricing and consistent fabric supply. She also promotes her supplier by word-of-mouth to nurture this relationship (Chenoweth 2010).

Between producers and co-producers: As seen in Principle 5, many Slow Fashion designers co-create garments or educate co-producers about their businesses (such as what standards they follow and where materials come from), which creates trust within those relationships.

7. Resourcefulness – Relying on local resources and skills. Many Slow Fashion designers focus on using locally abundant materials when possible and try to support the development of local businesses and skills.

Local Labour: **frei designs** uses local labour found in her Chicago area to create her clothing lines. **Burdastyle** gives a new meaning to ‘local labour’ by sharing clothing patterns online you download and make at home.

Local Knowledge: Clothing swaps and knitting parties are happening all over the world, where neighbours encourage, develop and trade traditional skills. The **4H club** in the United States, along with Home Economics courses teaches younger generations sewing and repair skills (4H 2010). This simple understanding of how a garment is made creates awareness in regards to the time spent in making it and the ability needed in doing so. These two factors alone could represent a valid justification in the eyes of the customer for the premium price of the garment and an early start to valuing quality and craftsmanship. **Make Do Mend** supports human capital by encouraging skills development and educating co-producers to remake, repair and restyle garments so they will last longer.

Local Materials: Local materials is something the movement is interested in, but due to the fact that many designers practice in urban areas and far from where fibres grow, Slow Fashion players try to make the best

decisions when sourcing materials. Although, some groups do work with communities where fibre's for fashion items are grown and work to support these local communities and help them grow, for example Fair Trade organic cotton, and Slow Fashion designers would purchase this type of materials. **Pact**, an underwear brand, ensures that the organic cotton crop, its processing, spinning, knitting, weaving, dyeing, printing and sewing happen within the same 100 mile radius in Turkey, although it is sold online worldwide (Pact 2010).

Some schemes have emerged that are at the true essence of 'resourcefulness'. The **Sew-Op** is a non-profit organization that teaches local communities (in the developed world) how to be sustainable by using the resources available. **Sweat Shop** is a café in Paris with sewing machines for rent, making repairing a seam easy. And **Remade in Leeds** teaches locals sewing skills by making new clothes from castoffs.

8. Maintaining quality and beauty – Quality leads to longevity.

Encouraging classic design over today's trends will contribute to the longevity of garments, thus contributing to a sustainable society through decelerating consumption (Fletcher 2008). Through our survey we have found that Slow Fashion designers are ensuring the longevity of the clothing they produce:

“We strive for longevity by making the design of dresses quite classical. The fabrics we source and quality of stitching are the best we can access locally.”

“Not so trend oriented but more classic period pieces, big statement pieces that are timeless and well made and durable.

“Well made garments with good quality natural materials and traditional cuts ...something that you can wear now and in 10 years time.”

9. Profitability – Contributing to the economic strength of the industry.

Slow Fashion producers need to make profits, and increase their visibility in the market to stay in the game and be competitive. Slow Fashion prices are often higher due to the incorporation of sustainable natural resources, safe working conditions and fair wages. Slow Fashion acts as a steward by keeping its prices fair and reflecting the true materials and craftsmanship in each garment. We can see this type of thinking through responses gathered in our industry survey:

“Everything is made by me to keep cost down because you can't change the

world if it's not accessible.”

“The cost of the garments reflect the higher prices of local production (living wages) and the higher price point of purchasing organic cotton...”

Through our conversations and interviews, we recognize that price can undermine the competitiveness of this movement and it is a true concern.

10. Practicing Consciousness – Giving your heart and brain a chance.

Slow Fashion players make many decisions based on their personal passions, an awareness of their connection to others and the environment and their responsibility and willingness to act accordingly. It has been discovered that they genuinely care about satisfying human needs rather than simply the bottom line. Within the Slow Fashion movement, many people love what they do, and have a desire to make a difference in the world in a creative and innovative way. Generally, well-informed decisions, based on quality information, are made to ensure sustainability is considered and integrated. Throughout the research process, we have uncovered many thoughtful people and brands working towards a sustainable fashion industry and we wanted to applaud their efforts.

4 Discussion

Here we discuss the results of our research to answer our main question: How can a Strategic Sustainable Development approach be used to bring momentum to the Slow Fashion movement and ensure that it is moving towards sustainability?

As researchers, we wanted to come into the process acknowledging the progress the fashion industry has already made to move towards sustainability. Therefore, we decided to strengthen the Slow Fashion movement's existing endeavours and strategically empower its players rather than try to completely change the larger fashion industry as a whole, which is operating under business as usual.

We have started this research from the assumption that the Slow Fashion movement is not collectively recognized as such, either by the fashion industry or by society at large. Rather, it has begun to operate as a grassroots movement and is identifiable on a small scale with local designers and retailers. As the Slow Fashion movement does not yet officially exist as such, it has great potential for future development.

4.1 The goal of the Slow Fashion system

From the literature review and survey, we deduced that through the many ideals of Slow Fashion, its overarching **goal is to contribute to a sustainable society**; this is the unstated commonality that holds Slow Fashion together. Goals are the driving force of a system, responsible for inspiring, setting the direction, indicating compliance, and failure or success to the members that share a common understanding of it. This goal has the capacity to bind the people within the movement together by their common aspirations, providing focus and energy for continual learning (Senge 1990). Slow Fashion, if strengthened, will function as a balancing system, to slow down the effects of overconsumption thus contributing to the making of a more sustainable society. As the goal of the system determines the behaviour of all of its parts, there is a need to communicate and share a whole-system purpose throughout the system so that every action will work in concert towards the common goal (Meadows 2008, 141).

This goal is also very general, allowing people to meet it in a variety of ways and creative approaches. **It is equally important for this unique and innovative movement to have a shared goal where individuals can still keep their own personal purposes and business goals as they can only add vitality to the shared vision** (Senge 1990). Whether individuals in the movement are looking to ‘empower women in developing countries’, ‘to reduce textile waste’, ‘to make corporate social responsibility sexy’ or to ‘spread awareness about ethical fashion’ (from survey results), they can still keep these goals that are true to their business, as these are all ways in which they can contribute to the shaping of a sustainable society. One of the greatest strengths of the Slow Fashion movement lies in the diversity of business size and models that needs to be enhanced if society wants to address environmental and social problems in a creative way.

4.2 Co-creating a vision

The Slow Fashion Principles that were unearthed during this research could be used to encourage all levels of the supply chain – from individual designers, through to retailers and co-producers to make a positive contribution to a sustainable society. Slow Fashion Principles, similarly to Slow Food, Slow Design, and Permaculture principles, can represent a set of shared values amongst the movement. Ultimately, the Slow Fashion Principles would spark a dialogue around sustainability issues and will establish a collective purpose for the movement centred on satisfying fundamental human needs (see section 1.1.2) through fashion design, creation and use.

Through the FSSD assessment, it was determined that the movement lacks a common vision of success, which is essential for strategic planning in complex systems (see section 3.1). While this process needs to be initiated, ultimately a successful future vision needs to emerge internally from the movement and co-created amongst movement members in order for it to be effective.

As the Slow Fashion movement has not established a central network yet, and due to the short time frame for our research, this thesis did not have the opportunity to co-create a shared vision with the movement. Instead, values were discovered throughout the research period and these were discussed with an expert panel to further tap into the mental model of the movement rather than imposing new ideals. It is recognized that the principles will be

further developed and will need to be widely distributed amongst Slow Fashion designers, suppliers and retailers for them to be co-created.

During the co-creation process, Slow Fashion players will deepen their understanding of the definition of sustainability and their interconnections with others in the movement - supporting the System and Success level of the FSSD. The Slow Fashion Principles can be continually co-developed within the movement to create general acceptance and build enthusiasm around them. A common vision for the future is only strategic and valid if the entire community accepts it. Slow Fashion players' acceptance would lead to reinforcing the vision through creating clarity, commitment and creative tension around it.

Spreading a vision to create a shared meaning and purpose is the first strategic step for Slow Fashion to begin moving toward sustainability. Shared visions have a way of spreading through personal contact, linking communities together. While the Slow Fashion Principles could be shared on-line encouraging participation, it would be best for them to be discussed at informal fashion community events and gatherings, fostering sharing and dialogue around them. This setting allows people to get to the heart of their own purpose and establish a further connection to the larger movement, encouraging their peers along with them.

Visions can also fade if people become discouraged by the difficulties of bringing the vision into reality. This can also happen if people forget how they are connected to the larger system, forgetting that the collective response is key to contributing to goal.

4.3 Backcasting from Sustainability Principles

As more people become involved with co-creating the shared vision, the diversity of intentions can dissipate the focus and generate conflicts towards the common goal. This is a key reason why it is strategic to backcast from a vision that is constrained by the 4 Sustainability Principles.

In order to coordinate all of its sustainability efforts, and ensure that that all aspects of sustainability are being addressed backcasting from the general, non-overlapping, sustainability principles can lead to a more desirable future. Specifically, backcasting can be applied as a planning method to allow for step-by-step strategic actions to carry the movement forward into

a new, more sustainable future where new goals and new ways of doing business are realized (Holmberg *et al.* 2000).

As outlined in the Methods there are different ways of defining ‘success’ (see section 2.2.1): for one individual this could be done by envisioning a desired future scenario and then taking the most strategic steps in order to attain it. For a large group of individuals though this process can be more difficult to do collectively as each person has a personal vision of the future. To ease the ‘visioning’ process for large groups of individuals it is suggested to envision success made up by general and concrete principles that can be agreed upon by a large group. Each member of the group then is able to create a personal scenario within the constraints of these principles (Holmberg *et al.* 2006).

In the previous section, 10 Slow Fashion Principles are outlined, which are based on what is already occurring in the movement towards contributing to a sustainable society. These principles are not meant to be prescriptive, but work as an inspiring and empowering tool for current Slow Fashion players and new potential members. The Slow Fashion Principles then, in order to represent a sustainable vision for Slow Fashion, should be constrained by the 4 Sustainability Principles, found at the ‘Success’ level of the FSSD, as they are rooted in science. By utilizing the principles in this way, the Slow Fashion movement will be strategic in its contribution to a sustainable society.

The Sustainability Principles. The language of the Sustainability Principles is rather vague to ensure they are applicable to a wide variety of industries and businesses; below we have added language to provide the Slow Fashion movement with a deeper understanding of them.

The Slow Fashion movement will work to contribute to a sustainable society by ensuring that it will not subject nature to the **systematic** increase in:

...**Concentrations of substances extracted from the earth’s crust** - These are materials such as fossil fuels for energy production or heavy metals for dyeing fabric. Their accumulation in the ecosphere contributes to global scale issues such as climate change and air, water and soil pollution.

...**Concentrations of substances produced by society** - These are man-made materials such as synthetic fibres (polyester, nylon etc) or toxic chemicals used in textile processing and manufacturing and not kept in

cradle to cradle loops. At their end of life they do not fully decompose leading to an accumulation in the soil and landfills, leaching into waterways and compromising human, wildlife and overall ecological well-being.

...**Degradation of nature** - Many human activities undermines the health of the earth. They include relying on monoculture conventional cotton crops causing biodiversity loss, removing forests to harvest wool and agricultural crops for fibres, or polluting waterways with factory effluents.

and in this society...People are not subject to conditions that systematically undermine their ability to meet their needs - There are currently many issues in the fashion industry that do not support an equal quality of life for all workers in the supply chain by failing to address fair wages and work place health and safety issues properly. Also, by neglecting the above three principles, the industry is undermining the ability of future generations to meet their own needs as they will not have enough resources to sustain themselves.

Combined, these two sets of principles can be used to achieve sustainability, they are general so that they are widely applicable, and concrete so as to inspire and guide actions. The principles are meant to focus on what the movement can agree on as a goal, which is ‘contributing to a sustainable society’ rather than the smaller details of ‘how to do it’

4.4 Leverage Points

In this research we utilized the concept of Leverage Points to help us focus our attention on specific areas of the industry. This concept helped us remain focused rather than getting lost in the complex fashion system that is interconnected and vast. Although the term ‘leverage point’ is intuitive, the concept is complex. Donella Meadows herself declares that Leverage Points are easy to identify, but too often are used in a way which annul their strategic potential.

Through the use of this concept, we identified many Leverage Points working to help the Slow Fashion movement achieve a variety of goals. We have also identified barriers that are preventing the movement achieving their full potential. Each Leverage Point has provided us a snapshot of action helping to uncover a foundation from which to build recommendations; as now we are aware of where the movement is headed

and its purpose, we can ensure our recommendations are within the movement's desired direction as well as held steer it towards sustainability.

4.5 Moving the recommendations forward

We developed a list of 30 recommendations for players in the movement. The three Prioritization Questions (found at the Strategic Guidelines level of the FSSD) were used to determine if the recommendations were strategic or not (see section 3.3) and these questions allowed us to suggest strategic actions for players in the movement to take. Different players within the movement gave insight into what an individual within the system could actually 'do' to make these recommendations possible. Through interviews, it was acknowledged that one's actions are limited by the structure of the system currently in place, not by their desire or creativity, but by the reality of the system they work within. This viewpoint informed our research and our recommendations and also fell within Leverage Point 10.

As described in section 3.3, the three focus recommendations will require the utmost collaboration between a wide-array of stakeholders, from individual designers, global supply chain networks as well as cooperation between certification bodies and governments. As such, there are a number of challenges that need to be overcome to bring these recommendations to life.

First, co-creating the Slow Fashion Principles and educating Slow Fashion players about sustainability to create a shared mental will involve time, energy and patience to ensure that the Slow Fashion Principles are widely distributed and discussed. We have begun an initial dialogue around the Slow Fashion Principles with our expert panel and a hand-full of designers; however, we will be continuing this dialogue by engaging with more designers, along with NGOs and sustainable fashion networks to initiate this process. Due to time limitations, further engagement is beyond the scope of this thesis, however, we will continue to spread awareness of the Slow Fashion Principles and Strategic Sustainable Development well into the future.

Secondly, collaboration between existing sustainable fashion networks and local Slow Fashion initiatives will need to occur to determine what role the Slow Fashion network will play and what gap it will fill. As mentioned in section 1.3, there are already many sustainable fashion networks with the aim to provide a platform to share ideas and resources (see appendix B).

However, the Slow Fashion network will be specific to this movement and will focus on building local capacity and relationships, in addition to drawing on the existing resources provided by these global and national organizations.

Currently there is a strong Slow Fashion presence in the UK where many of the active players are located. The UK is leading the way as a hub for the Slow Fashion movement, however, there still is no official network to join local communities and knowledge throughout the world with the strategic direction of the Slow Food movement. Informal community networks are what give the Slow Food movement substance, strength, and shared meaning and its website acts as a hub for knowledge and information exchange.

By establishing a global network, Slow Fashion can become a competitive alternative to the current Fast Fashion industry and it will aim to promote an alternative model to help the movement collectively grow and become a contributor to a sustainable society.

Lastly, it has been recognized that a consistent, widely known, third-party verified labelling scheme should be developed for the benefit of the Slow Fashion movement. This recommendation addresses Leverage Point 6 by providing a point of reference to communicate sustainability information from producers to co-producers. It would increase visibility and awareness around the sustainability impacts of fashion and would also provide an easy reference for retailers to discuss the garment with co-producers. It also supports Leverage Point 5 by removing the constraints caused by inconsistent labelling and buzzwords across the industry and by providing an incentive to source more sustainable materials and support sustainable supply chains.

Most Slow Fashion producers are already sourcing certified organic textiles as well as other sustainable fibres, and are supporting fair wages and employment throughout the supply chain. In addition to this, some brands are going above and beyond most by supporting local economies and preserving local culture. By creating a one label that is comprehensive of ecological and social criteria, throughout the entire life cycle of the garment, it would allow for more consistency and provide an effective communication channel to co-producers.

This recommendation will also involve extensive collaboration between many stakeholders, specifically, existing labelling schemes, government

agencies, the media and most importantly, those directly working in the movement. The Slow Fashion label could build off of current labelling initiatives, such as GOTS and Fair Trade, however, the most crucial factor to its success is ensuring that it is affordable and accessible for the industry, and visible to co-producers. Most Slow Fashion players recognize the value that a Slow Fashion label will bring to their business. However, those that already believe that they are ‘doing the right thing’ without being certified may not see the benefit to their business beyond added co-producer exposure. It is assumed that a simple, unified label will be one of the most effective ways to communicate to co-producers that their purchase supports the all-encompassing definition of sustainability (throughout the entire supply chain). However, some fashion designers rely foremost on the garment design as the primary selling point and abide by sustainability criteria to satisfy their individual and business goals. Consequently, before this endeavour is undertaken, further research will need to be conducted, along with dialogue, to secure buy-in.

4.6 Limitations and Validity

Time and experience were the largest limitations of this research project. Our field research needed to be completed and analyzed within one month leaving limited time to assess our progress and re-work direction as needed. Our team had different levels of experience within the fashion industry giving us different views of the fashion world. This encouraged exploratory discussions on ‘what is fashion’. Each author of this report has a different personal meaning of fashion, which we believe is true to the essence of what fashion ‘is’. What we could all agree on, which is one thing we feel is present in the industry and can make the move toward sustainability stronger, is that fashion today contributes to un-sustainability and it needs a strategic approach to change this. Whether fashion exists in buying second hand clothing, repurposing what you have, or buying a luxury brand, it all needs to contribute to a sustainable society by being conceived, produced, consumed and ‘disposed’ of in a responsible and reflective manner. Our report was developed on the grounds of what we all agreed on, which is regardless of the definition of ‘fashion’, our human need to clothe and express ourselves must be met in a sustainable way; and we believe the Slow Fashion movement is answering this call.

Our method to discovering the industries’ progress on each Leverage Point was through our literature review, survey and interviews. Each of these presented a separate limitation. In the literature review we had come across

a large amount of documents that we could not review fully in the time allotted to complete the project. Materials chosen to review were the most up to date and relevant, and they answered a specific question pertaining to the research. Most of the contributors of the survey were from North America and Europe and the majority of participants were from the design and retail side of the industry rather than farmers, producers and manufacturers. A co-producer survey would have also been ideal, however with the time allowed we chose to focus on the back-end of the industry, as numerous consumer reports in our literature review provided us with sufficient information to complete this report. Our interviewees were also insightful but it is understood that each has a bias toward their area of expertise and we acknowledged that as we used the results from the interviews and survey's in the report.

4.7 Suggestions for further research

The authors have focused only on one side of the Slow Fashion movement, leaving out, for time constraints, the consumer/co-producer and its engagement. As well, the profitability and business case for designers to move towards sustainability; the economic challenges presented by transitioning to a Slow Fashion model; and, the specific developments for a new Slow Fashion label, were outside the scope of this research. For future research the following questions are suggested:

What is an effective strategy for communicating the benefits of Slow Fashion to shift individuals from a 'consumer' to a 'co-producer' mind set? As Leverage Point 2 suggests, changing a persons' mindset from a consumer to a co-producer can be challenging. At the 'system' level, the FSSD could be used for communicators to express the sustainability challenge and alter an individual's perception of their connection to the system (within society, within the biosphere) to spark behaviour change. The FSSD can also assist to structure the complexity and volume of information used in the coordination and development of strategic communications. Future research could investigate how potential partnerships (between non-profit, business, and education) could strengthen individual efforts to lead to broader behavior change with fashion consumers. This could compliment the REAL Change programme, providing opportunity for various groups to partner with universities and implement research findings into practice.

What is the business case for sustainability for small Slow Fashion designers? Currently, the Slow Fashion business model presents both opportunities and challenges for designers. As we move towards a future with increasing resource and population pressures, adopting a Slow Fashion model will become increasingly strategic and beneficial. Exploring how strategic sustainable development and its supporting tools can be used to build a convincing business case for fashion designers to adopt sustainability, and the Slow approach, by outlining its benefits and challenges, is another area for further research.

Using a strategic sustainable development approach, how can the transition from a fast to slow fashion industry be developed to ensure minimum impact of the developing world? The author's recognize that transitioning from a globalized fashion industry dominated by fast fashion to a new model aimed at slowing down fashion consumption and localizing production will have social consequences for the millions of garment workers in developing nations such as China and India (Allwood *et al.* 2006, 34). Studying the economic and social impacts of this transition is out of the scope of this thesis, however, this aspect could form the basis for future research. An emphasis could be placed on safeguarding garment employment in developing nations such that these workers are still able to meet their fundamental human needs.

How can a Slow Fashion label be strategically developed and marketed using existing textile and garment labelling schemes, certification bodies and other stakeholders? Through this research it is identified that labelling schemes to-date are difficult to sort through when at a retailer and making a purchase. If Slow Fashion could combine existing labelling schemes into a 'master label' that is marketed to co-producers and easily identifiable it would give them the proper information to make informed purchasing decisions based on the entire life-cycle impacts of that piece of clothing. We propose to combine existing labelling schemes because there are many good ones out there for specific elements of garment making. However, an SSD approach can be applied to ensure that a proposed combination of labelling schemes for the 'master label' is strategic in nature. The Real Change program is currently researching 'Sustainability Based Product Labelling and Procurement'. A partnership between the Slow Fashion movement and this initiative could help eco-fashion labelling move toward sustainability.

5 Conclusion

*"You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete."
Richard Buckminster Fuller*

The authors have shifted their attention from the predominating unsustainable Fashion Industry to a new model with a sustainable future: Slow Fashion. A number of initiatives have cropped up that, if strategically organized, may represent a concrete alternative to the mainstream fashion model. Brands and initiatives working with sustainability in mind, NGOs dedicated to safeguarding workers' rights or to spreading organic textiles, and even one-off creative projects, give life to this grassroots movement.

The analysis of the literature review and industry survey through the lens of the FSSD, indicates that the Slow Fashion movement exists and is quickly flourishing, but at the same time its initiatives are highly unorganized and scattered around the globe, concentrating in only a few countries. This knowledge indicates that the movement currently does not have a common vision for the future or a shared definition of sustainability. Therefore, it is unable to operate strategically using a backcasting strategy.

With the aid of the FSSD and a strategic tool to operate in complex systems called Leverage Points, many small points of intervention where a strategic move in the right direction could produce a big change in the whole system, were identified to strengthen the Slow Fashion movement and guide it towards future success.

Finally, a number of short, medium and long-term strategic recommendations directed to different players in the movement were suggested as first steps in creating a stronger Slow Fashion movement. Three recommendations were identified to bring the most leverage to the movement: co-creating a shared vision of success for the future, that includes sustainability (a first attempt was made by the authors who have unearthed 10 Principles for Slow Fashion); establish a global network that would represent the movement as a whole, hold the Slow Fashion Principles, and provide guidance for all members; and, create a unique Slow Fashion label that would unify the main eco-labels that currently exist but that are not being strategically utilized, to increase the overall visibility of the Slow Fashion movement.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Initiatives, NGO's and Education

| Name | Purpose | Location | Website |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------|--|
| Slow Fashion | Event | Australia | http://www.slowfashion.net.au/ |
| Ecotece | Education | Brazil | www.ecotece.org.br |
| Our Social Fabric | Textile Recycling | Canada | http://oursocialfabricvancouver.blogspot.com/ |
| Fashion Takes Action | Non-profit Organization | Canada | http://www.fashiontakesaction.com |
| Eco Fashion Week Vancouver | Event | Canada | http://www.vefw.com/ |
| Reuse | Network for Textile Recycling | EU | http://www.rreuse.org/t3/ |
| Ethical Fashion Show | Event | Europe | http://www.ethicalfashionshow.com/efs1/ |
| R2ITH | Research and Development | France | http://www.r2ith.org/ |
| Sweat Shop Paris | Education & Entertainment | France | www.sweatshopparis.com/newssweatshop.html |
| Greener2Green | NGO | Hong Kong | www.greener2green.com |
| Better Cotton Initiative | Initiative | International | www.bettercotton.org |
| Global Organic Cotton Community | Network | International | www.organiccotton.org |
| International Labour Organization | UN Agency | International | www.ilo.org |
| Organic & Fairtrade Competence Centre | Association | International | www.organicandfair.org |
| Organic Exchange | Network | International | www.organicexchange.org |
| Project Rejeanerate | Initiative for Change | International | www.rejenerate.com.au/sustainable-fashion.htm |
| Repair Manifesto | Creative Project | International | www.platform21.nl/download/4375 |
| Self Passage | Creative Project | International | www.selfpassage.org |
| Slow Textiles | Network | International | www.slowtextiles.org |
| The Uniform Project | Initiative for Change | International | www.theuniformproject.com |
| Think Act Vote | Initiative for Change | International | www.thinkactvote.org/ecofashion/ |
| WWF (World Wildlife | Non-profit | International | www.panda.org/freshwate |

| Fund) | Organization | | r/cotton |
|--|-------------------------------|-----------------|---|
| Fashion Evolution | Fashion Week | Ireland | http://www.re-dress.ie/fashionevolution.html |
| IED Moda Lab Madrid | Education | Spain | www.iedmadrid.com |
| Clean Clothes Campaign | Labour Conditions | The Netherlands | www.cleanclothes.org |
| Fair Wear Foundation | Labour Conditions | The Netherlands | www.fairwear.nl |
| Made By | Label and Supply Chain Advice | The Netherlands | www.made-by.org |
| Modebewust (Fashion Conscious) | Education | The Netherlands | www.modebewus.nu |
| Worn Relics | Initiative for Change | The Netherlands | www.wornrelics.com |
| 5 ways | Initiative for Change | UK | www.5ways.info |
| British Association for Fair Trade Shops | Associaiton | UK | www.bafts.org.uk |
| Central Martin College of Art and Design | Education | UK | www.csm.arts.ac.uk |
| Clean Up Fashion | Initiative for Change | UK | www.cleanupfashion.co.uk |
| Environmental Justice Foundation | Non-profit Organization | UK | www.ejfoundation.org |
| Ethical Trading Initiative | Labour Conditions | UK | www.ethicaltrade.org |
| Fashioning an Ethical Industry | Initiative for Change | UK | www.fashioninganethicalindustry.com |
| Forum for the Future | NGO | UK | www.forumforthefuture.org |
| Keep and Share | Initiative for Change | UK | www.keepandshare.co.uk |
| Knit Chicks | Initiative for Change | UK | www.knitchicks.co.uk |
| Labour behind the Label | Initiative | UK | www.labourbehindthelabel.org |
| LabourbehindtheLabel | Labour Conditions | UK | www.labourbehindthelabel.org |
| Lifetimes | Initiative for Change | UK | www.katefletcher.com/lifetimes |
| Local Wisdom | Initiative for Change | UK | www.localwisdom.info |
| London College of Fashion | Education | UK | www.fashion.arts.ac.uk |
| LunaMano | Creative Project | UK | www.lunamano.com |

| | | | |
|---|-------------------------|----|--|
| PAN UK (Pesticide Action Network United Kingdom) | Network | UK | www.pan-uk.org |
| Pants to Poverty | Initiative for Change | UK | www.pantstopoverty.com |
| Society of Dyers and Colourists | Association | UK | www.sdc.org.uk |
| Soil Association | Associaiton | UK | www.soilassociation.org |
| Textile Recycling for Aid and International Development | Non-profit Organization | UK | www.traid.org.uk |
| The Global Alliance | Network | UK | www.globalalliance.org |
| Wonderland | Creative Project | UK | www.showstudio.com/project/wonderland |
| 4H | Education | US | www.4-h.org |
| American Reusable Textile Association | Association | US | www.arta1.com |
| Community Alliance for Family Farmers | Initiative | US | www.caff.org |
| Earth Pledge | NGO | US | www.earthpledge.org |
| Eco Chic | Exhibition | US | www.ecochic.com |
| Educators for Socially Responsible Apparel Business | Education | US | www.huec.lsu.edu/esrab/index.html |
| Make Do & Mend | Initiative for Change | US | www.make-do-and-mend.org |
| Organic Trade Association | Association | US | www.ota.com |
| PANNA (Pesticide Action Network North America) | Network | US | www.panna.org |
| Permacouture | Research | US | www.permacouture.org |
| Project Laundry List | Initiative for Change | US | www.laundrylist.org |
| Sustainable Cotton Project | Intiative | US | www.sustainablecotton.org |
| The Designers Accord | Education | US | www.huec.lsu.edu/esrab/index.html |
| The Garment Remake Exchange | Initiative for Change | US | www.garmentremake.com |
| United Students agains Sweatshops | Initiative for Change | US | www.usas.org |

Appendix B: Online Networks and Industry Magazines

| Name | Location | Website |
|--|-------------|---|
| Centre for Sustainable Fashion | UK | www.sustainable-fashion.com |
| Clean & Unique | Netherlands | www.hetisgroenenhet.nl/community |
| Eco Textile News | Int'l | www.ecotextile.com |
| EcoFashionWorld | Canada | www.ecofashionworld.com |
| Ecouterre | Int'l | www.ecouterre.com |
| Ethical Fashion Forum | UK, Int'l | www.ethicalfashionforum.ning.com |
| Fashion Takes Action | Canada | www.fashiontakesaction.com |
| Global Sewing Network | Int'l | www.sew-op.ning.com |
| GOTS (Global Organic Textile Standard) | Int'l | www.global-standard.org |
| Re-dress | Ireland | |
| Reconnect | Ireland | www.re-connect.ning.com |
| Slow Fashion - Agency for sustainable design | Austria | www.slowfashion.at |
| Social Alteration | Int'l | www.socialalterations.com |
| Thread Gazette | Canada | www.threadsgazette.com |
| Treehugger | Int'l | http://www.treehugger.com/green-fashion |

Appendix C: Slow Fashion Designers

| Designers | Location | Website |
|---------------------------|-----------|--|
| Gorman | Australia | www.gorman.ws |
| Hinterland | Austria | www.hinterland.ag |
| Orangorang | Bali | www.organgorangproject.com |
| Adhesif Clothing Co. | Canada | www.adhesifclothing.com |
| Elladora | Canada | www.elladorashoppe.com |
| Elroy | Canada | www.elroyapparel.com |
| Paper People Clothing | Canada | www.paperclothing.com |
| Allison Wonderland, | Canada | www.allisonwonderland.ca |
| Baljit Rayat Designs | Canada | www.baljitrayatdesigns.com |
| Big Rock Bags | Canada | www.bigrockbags.com |
| Bijoux Du Monde | Canada | www.bijouxdumonde.net |
| Billy Would Designs | Canada | www.billywould.com |
| BuenoStyle | Canada | www.buenostyle.com |
| Caroline Calvert Couture | Canada | www.carolinecalvert.com |
| Cream Puff by GG | Canada | www.creampuffbygg.com |
| Deux Fm | Canada | www.deuxfm.com |
| Devil May Wear | Canada | www.devil-may-wear.com |
| Dominic Design Inc. | Canada | www.dominicdesign.ca |
| EchoRain | Canada | www.echorain.ca |
| Ella Peru | Canada | www.ellaperu.com |
| Feelgoodz | Canada | www.feelgoodz.com |
| Filou Designs | Canada | www.filoudesigns.com |
| Flora and Fauna | Canada | www.floraandfauna.ca |
| Funk Shui | Canada | www.bigrockbags.com |
| Green Bean Baby | Canada | www.greenbeanbaby.ca |
| Jabu Bags j | Canada | www.jabubags.com |
| Jasmine Antoinette | Canada | www.jasmineantoinette.com |
| Kaur Shawls | Canada | www.kaurshawls.com |
| Salts Organic Clothing | Canada | www.saltsorganic.com |
| Evolve | Canada | www.shopatevolve.com |
| Granville Island Organix, | Canada | www.granvilleislandorganix.com |
| Precocious | Canada | www.precociousboutique.com |
| Preloved | Canada | www.preloved.ca |
| Susan Harris | Canada | www.susanharrisdesign.ca |
| Label! | Canada | www.seenolabel.com |
| Laura Chenoweth | Canada | http://laurachenoweth.com |
| Nicole Bridger | Canada | http://www.nicolebridger.com/ |

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|----------------------|-----------------|--|
| Revolve Clothing Co. | Canada | www.revolveyourworld.com |
| Twigg&hottie | Canada | http://www.twiggandhottie.com/ |
| WE3 | Canada | http://www.we3.ca/ |
| Jackpot | Denmark | www.jackpot.dk |
| Noir | Denmark | www.noir.dk |
| Cut Off | Denmark | www.makepiece.co.uk |
| Reet aus | Estonia | www.reetaus.com |
| Banuq | Germany | www.banuq.com |
| Edun | Ireland | www.edunonline.com |
| Slowear | Italy | http://www.slowear.com |
| Fin | Norway | www.finoslo.com |
| Ascension | Online Shopping | http://www.ascensiononline.com/ |
| People Tree | Online Shopping | www.peopletree.com |
| Shopenvi | Online Shopping | www.shopenvi.com |
| Anja Hynynen | Sweden | www.anjah.se |
| Alchemist | The Netherlands | www.alchemist.cc |
| Claudia Sträter | The Netherlands | www.claudiastrater.com |
| Inti Knitwear | The Netherlands | www.intiknitwear.com |
| United Nude | The Netherlands | www.spicepr.nl |
| Ethical Classics | The Netherlands | www.ethicalclassics.com |
| 100% Organic Cotton | The Netherlands | www.100percentorganiccotton.com |
| Annie Greenabelle | UK | www.anniegreenabelle.com |
| Asquith | UK | www.asquith-yoga-clothing.co.uk |
| Bam Bamboo Clothing | UK | www.bambooclothing.co.uk |
| Beyond SKin | UK | www.beyondskin.co.uk |
| Bibico | UK | www.bibico.co.uk |
| By Stamo | UK | www.stamo.co.uk |
| Continental Clothing | Uk | www.continentalclothing.com |
| Epona Clothing | UK | www.eponaclothing.com |
| From Somewhere | UK | www.fromsomewhere.co.uk |
| Frugi | UK | www.welovefrugi.com |
| Giggle Organic | UK | www.giggleorganic.co.uk |
| Goodone | UK | www.goodone.co.uk |
| Green Eyed Monster | UK | www.filoudesigns.com |
| Izzy Lane | UK | www.izzylane.com |
| Julia Smith MIA | UK | www.juliasmithfashion.co.uk |
| Karen Cole | UK | www.karencole.co.uk |
| Terra Plana | UK | www.terraplana.com |
| Finisterre | UK | www.finisterreuk.com |
| Ada Zanditon | UK | www.adazanditon.com |
| Annie Greenabelle | UK | www.notjustalabel.com |

| | | |
|------------------------|----|---|
| Elena Garcia | UK | www.elenagarciastudio.com |
| Emesha | UK | www.emesha.com |
| Ivana Basilotta | UK | www.ivanabasilotta.com |
| Not Just A Label | UK | www.notjustalabel.com |
| Eco Boudoir | UK | www.eco-boudoir.com |
| Ciel | UK | http://www.ciel.ltd.uk/ |
| Davina Hawthorne | UK | http://www.davinahawthorne.com |
| Eco Chic Collection | UK | http://www.ecochiccollection.co.uk |
| George at ASDA | UK | www.billywould.com+H33 |
| Howies | UK | www.howies.co.uk |
| Junky Styling | UK | www.junkystyling.co.uk |
| Keep & Share | UK | http://www.keepandshare.co.uk |
| Makepiece | UK | http://www.makepiece.com/ |
| Mark Liu | UK | www.stique.com |
| Neon Collective | UK | www.neoncollective.com |
| New Look | UK | www.newlook.co.uk |
| Raeburn Design | UK | www.raeburndesign.co.uk |
| SUST | UK | www.getsust.com |
| Who Made Your Pants? | UK | www.whomadeyourpants.co.uk |
| Alabama Chanin | US | www.alabamachanin.com |
| Amour Sans Anguish | US | www.amoursansanguish.com |
| Bodkin | US | www.bodkin.us |
| Cmarchuska | US | www.cmarchuska.com |
| Collection Pas | US | www.collectionpas.com |
| Doucett Duvall | US | www.doucettduvall.com |
| Feral Childe | US | www.feralchilde.com |
| JAI | US | www.kizzyjaiknight.com |
| John Patrick Organic | US | www.johnpatrickorganic.com |
| Juleselin | US | www.juleselin.com |
| Kate Organic | Us | www.kateorganic.com |
| Ajna | US | www.ethicalclassics.com |
| Alexandre Herchcovitch | US | www.herchcovitch.uol.com.br |
| Allison Parris | US | www.allisonparris.com |
| Eko Lab | US | www.eko-lab.com |
| Emily Katz | US | www.emilykatz.com |
| Popomomo | US | www.popomomo.com |
| The Battalion | US | www.thebattalion.us |
| Earth Pledge | US | www.earthpledge.org |
| Fashion Incubator | US | www.fashion-incubator.com |
| Grasshopper 510 | US | www.grasshopper510.com |
| Renegade Handmade | US | www.renegadehandmade.com |

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|-------------------|----|---|
| Habit | US | www.habitchicago.com |
| Eco-Panda | US | www.eco-panda.com |
| Bymeadow | US | www.bymeadow.com |
| Entermodal | US | http://entermodal.com/ |
| Frei Designs | US | www.freidesigns.com |
| Miranda Caroligne | US | www.mirandacaroligne.com |
| Moth Love | US | www.mothlove.com |
| Mottainai | US | www.mottainainy.com |
| PACT Apparel | US | www.wearpact.com |
| Pivot Eco Fashion | US | www.freidesigns.com |
| Raquel Allegra | US | www.raquelallegra.com |
| Susan Cianciolo | US | http://www.susancianciolo.com/ |
| Turk and Taylor | US | www.turkandtaylor.com |

Appendix D: Experts, Thesis Reviewees, Interviewees

| Slow Fashion Principle experts | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Name | Company | Position |
| Melissa Baswell | Mountains of the Moon | Clothing Designer |
| Geir Berthelesen | The World Institute of Slowness | Founder |
| Christina Dean | Greener2Green | Founder |
| Simon Goldsmith | Principled Sustainability | Director |
| Zoe Goldsmith | Hucklebones | Owner of children's brand |
| Carl Honore | Slow Planet | Co-Founder and author |
| Carolyn Strauss | Slow Lab | Founder |
| Otto Van Busch | Safe Passage | Designer and artist |
| Thesis Reviewees | | |
| Name | Company | Position |
| Zaida Barceda | BTH | Secondary Advisor |
| Jessa Brinkmeyer | Pivot | Owner |
| Maura Dilley | | Sustainability Practitioner |
| Eric Ezechieli | The Natural Step, Italy | Co-founder and President |
| Simon Goldsmith | Principled Sustainability | Director |
| Ed Hanlon | RGLA | Retail designer |
| Wyeth Larson | MSLS, student | Shadow Group |
| Matt Lobach | MSLS, student | Shadow Group |
| Nancy Newport | RGLA | Director of Communications |
| Merlina Missimer | BTH | Primary Advisor |
| Ece Utkucan | MSLS, student | Shadow Group |
| Chris Soderquist | Pontifex Consulting | Founder and President |
| Gregory Sklar | Indigo Children | Founder |
| Interviewees | | |
| Name | Company | Position |
| Laura Chenoweth | Laura Chenoweth Organic Apparel | Founder, Designer |
| Charline Ducas | Organic Material Exchange | Advisor |
| Zoe Goldsmith | Hucklebones | Owner |
| Lizzie Harrison | Remade In Leeds | Founder |
| Jason Kibbey | Pact | Owner |
| Cheryl Kolander | Aurora Silk | Master Natural Dyer |
| Jane Palmer | Noon Design Studio | Natural Dyer |
| Emma Rigby | MA Fashion and the Environment | Student |

| | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|---------|
| Gregory Skylar | Indigo Children | Founder |
| Chris Soderquist | Pontifex Consulting | Founder |
| Dimitra Giannopoulou | MA Fashion and the Environment | Student |

Appendix E: Labelling Initiatives

| Name | Website |
|--|--|
| Bluesign Label | http://www.bluesign.com |
| European Eco Flower | http://www.eco-label.com |
| Fair Trade | http://www.fairtrade.net |
| Global Eco-labelling network | www.globalecolabelling.net |
| Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS) | www.global-standard.org |
| MADE-By Label | www.made-by.org |
| OCIA International | http://www.ocia.org |
| OEKO TEX STANDARD 100 | www.oeko-tex.com |
| Organic Exchange | www.organicexchange.org |
| Soil Association Organic Standard | www.soilassociation.org |
| Tyria | http://www.aurorasilk.com |

Appendix F: Survey Results

Survey administered March-April 2010

30 completed responses, 46 total submitted surveys

Breakdown of respondents: 33 Designer's, 14 Brand's, 4 Buyer's, 13 Manufacturer's

1. Can you describe the purpose of your business?

- To fulfill me creatively while making a living
- To empower women in rural villages and help keep children off the streets of Bali
- To develop a sustainable lifestyle culture, to ensure life of humans on the planet earth in the future.
- My purpose is to empower women to increase their identity and feel good about themselves.
- To provide affordable chemical-free clothing for babies while making a part time living for myself.
- To express my take on fashion...a creative outlet through clothing. Of course, there is a profit motivator as well.
- To create a venue for contemporary artists to create work that exists outside galleries and responds to the tradition of textile design.
- We aim to reduce textile waste by upcycling on a large scale and collaborating with larger companies to reduce their environmental impact
- To provide a quality, well-designed, 'considered' product to the children's wear market. Heirloom pieces with the intention of being kept and handed down through the generations.
- We design, produce and sell sustainable, fair trade clothing.
- Our purpose is to make beautiful things for people that are not mainstream, but more individual and to have them last
- Providing paper patterns for local small manufacturers.
- To produce clothing and textiles that not only respect the environment but allow an opportunity to create work that is one of a kind.
- Designing and selling handmade goods
- Provide sustainable clothing options for women, while creating awareness and raising funds for local animal shelters, and nature conservation groups.
- To create and produce on a small scale affordable, desirable clothes made entirely from recycled textiles.
- Providing socially and environmentally sustainable fashion to the 18-35 year old woman.
- To show to people that fair trade fashion is possible and to provide work and support to underprivileged ladies communities.
- Our members include the whole fashion "system" - from students to retailers, to manufacturers to boutique designers. We provide them with

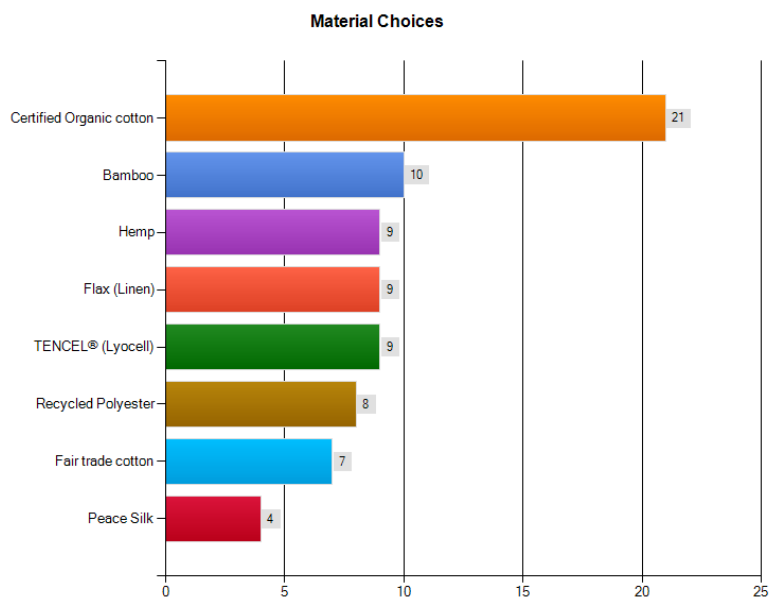
the tools, learning opportunities, big ideas and community they need to integrate "sustainable style" into their core business practice.

- To support designers and to spark a rethinking in the industry.
- We offer people the opportunity to sell and shop handmade year 'round.
- Show the world organic is fashion
- To turn corporate social responsibility sexy.
- We strive to be the antithesis to disposable fashion. To show that fashion can be conscious and cool.
- Support artisans by providing them with employment as well as train them on the basis of good quality
- The garment industry is one of the most detrimental and neglected industries we have. It is a place I have elected to elicit change through everything from business practices to prices to education

Sourcing Materials & Textiles

2. Which of the following materials are used in your garments? (select all that apply)

(28 answered, 18 skipped)



Other responses: Organic wool, recycled clothing, reclaimed textiles, soy, nylon waste hosiery, vegetable dyes, vegetable tinted leather, mohair

3. If you do not use the materials in Q1, are you interested in using them in the future?

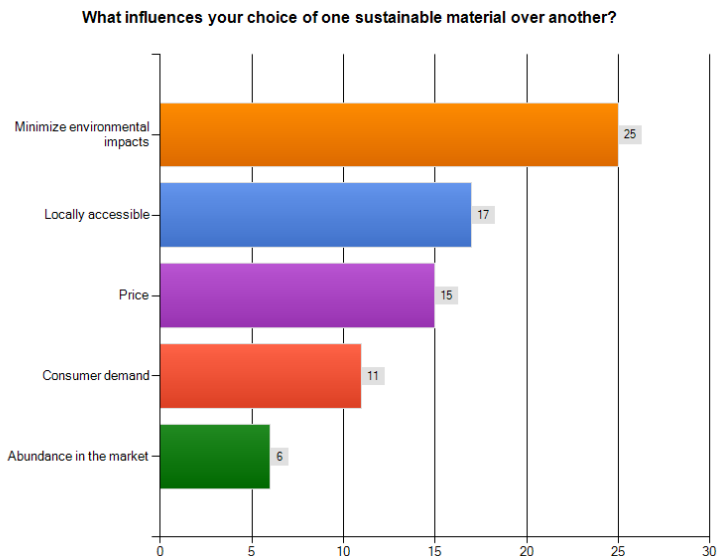
(14 answered, 32 skipped) Yes = 100%

4. Do you have any plans to use any other sustainable alternative materials in the future? Please provide details: (30 answered, 16 skipped)

- Local production of organic linen, wool and hemp, materials that would be possible to grow in Sweden
- Developing custom weaves using soy fiber, milk fiber, Lenzing, Banana fiber and other alternatives that reduce the need for large scale agriculture
- More sustainable silks as well as the potential of bamboo in clothing fibers
- Recycled cloths for redesign. Organic Wool.
- Recycled fabrics and natural pigment inks
- New materials and fibres out of the mountain pine beetle wood in British Columbia
- Others: Tencel, Organic dyes, peace silks, hems, and recycled fabrics

5. What influences your choice of one sustainable material over another?

(33 answered, 13 skipped)



6. What are the barriers to sourcing materials locally? Please provide suggestions for improvement: (32 answered, 12 skipped)

- Price and certification: Price is high and not regionally sourced.
- Fibres are certified, but 'certification' is unclear at times.
- Not enough material choice locally.
- No network of material sourcing knowledge.
- It is hard for designers to meet minimum orders from mills for better pricing. Lower minimums are needed (30-50 metres)

- Not enough local trade shows offering a selection of fabrics. Most sourcing is done online and via mail ordering of samples.
- Education is needed to increased demand and increase economic viability for materials.
- Local skill levels are low.
- It is time consuming and expensive.
- No textile business in USA
- Supplies of environmentally conscious choices are scarce.
- Borders and trade laws.
- Most textiles mills are in India or China

7. Is there an online resource or publication that you use to compare the environmental impacts of each material? (32 answered, 14 skipped)

Yes = 15%, No = 85%

8. If yes, what resource do you use? (8 answered, 38 skipped)

Sustainable websites, Google searches, treehugger.com

9. In general, what barriers have you encountered when sourcing sustainable materials? Do you have any suggestions for how this can be improved? (26 answered, 20 skipped)

- Fair trade certification is expensive.
- Sharing material in a community can help designers 'practice with it', however, it needs to be ensured that it all doesn't look the same.
- Get creative with local materials, they might not be traditional textiles.
- Would like a direct link to Chinese producers instead of going through suppliers.
- Lack of exposure to materials listed above needs to be addressed.
- An intensive online material database/resource is needed for suppliers, recommendations, feedback, and fabric available by region...etc.
- Many grey areas, such as 'organic'...it is hard to know if something is truly organic.
- More selection is needed.
- More transparency showing environmental impacts over entire life cycle.
- Tax credits for organic and local materials should be implemented.
- It is hard to communicate with foreign companies.
- Need a better certification process for fabrics.

10. Are natural dyes used in your clothing line? (29 answered, 17 skipped)

Yes = 59%, No = 41%

11. If no, what are the challenges? Please provide your suggestions for improvement.

(13 answered, 33 skipped)

- No places available to dye, practice and color match.
- Manufacturers could provide more information about the dye for garments.
- We use low impact dyes due to large quantities.
- There is misconception within the industry that all synthetics are bad, however, some do not use heavy metals. More awareness is needed around this issue.
- Sometimes these dyes run on the 1,2,3 wash.

12. Are you interested in using natural dyes in the future? (31 answered, 15 skipped)

Yes = 97%, No = 3%

Garment Design

13. How long do you expect your garments to last in a typical consumers wardrobe?

(33 answered, 13 skipped)

| | |
|------------------------|-------|
| One year | 6.5% |
| 2-3 years | 16.1% |
| 5 years or longer | 64.5% |
| I do not consider this | 12.9% |

14. How do you ensure the longevity of the clothing that you produce?

(31 answered, 15 skipped)

- Classic not trend based, design
- Quality fabrics
- Quality stitching (12 stitches per inch)
- Made with love
- Engage wearer in manufacture/design
- Engage wearer in issues around sustainable fashion
- Repairing and restyling influences longevity
- Multi-use garment design
- Cold water wash, air dried, hand washed.
- Encourage heirlooms and hand-me-downs
- Custom fit and design
- Lifetime repair or redesign assistance
- Skilled labour
- Quality check

15. Do you use life-cycle thinking or eco-design principles when sourcing materials or designing garments? (32 answered, 14 skipped)

Yes = 73%, No = 27%

16. If yes, can you please provide some specific details here: (23 answered, 23 skipped)

- Use organically produced materials
- Use vintage fabrics
- Recycled fibre for tags
- Dye processes with no water or chemicals
- Renting not buying, swapping not shopping
- Make garments from recycled materials
- Make garments from materials that are in closed loop scenarios
- Make Fast Fashion with compostable materials.
- Redesign old clothing
- Tried to source recycling facilities, but no local options for this.
- Biodegradable packaging.
- Try to weigh pro-cons of difference materials
- Use natural materials that will break down
- Use long-lasting fabrics that can be reused

17. If no, would you be interested in having more support in life-cycle thinking or 'eco' design? Please provide suggestions for how you would like to receive this support:

(11 answered, 36 skipped)

- Yes, through newsletters, websites, and social media
- Yes, online
- Yes, emails
- Yes, through green business advisors.

18. Do the designs or production methods in your business rely on traditional skills or cultural heritage? Please provide details:

(26 answered, 21 skipped)

- I studied as a tailor dressmaker, and appreciate traditional handcraft skills. Not necessarily handmade but more of 'hands on process'. Passing on traditional skills of weaving with old fashioned looms and knowledge.
- Beading and batiks are traditional Balinese art forms and are incorporated into our designs
- I sew according to traditional skills with a flair of culture color.
- I wish, but I believe they are all lost.
- I focus on the artisanal aspect of making garments and textiles. These are skills that are quickly being lost. I believe in preserving these skills and educating the public on their importance in our society.
- Yes, I have been sewing since age 2 and learned from my Great Grandmothers.
- Yes, we have an entire collection made using traditional techniques like cross-stitch, crochet, embroidery, lace making. The labour is local women who know these techniques.
- I fuse traditional skills with my modern background.

19. Do you restyle or co-design any garments with your customers?

(31 answered, 16 skipped)

Yes = 45%, No = 55%

20. If yes, please provide details on this process: (13 answered, 34 skipped)

- In some cases, remaking existing vintage garments into individual pieces.
- We work with people on different lengths or samples of other products.

- We try to work with individuals o restyle their clothing to a specific theme. Normally people are happy to hand it over, give a specification and receive an altered garment.
- We work to do different colors, sleeveless, etc.
- We collaborate with artists to make the fabric and editions.
- Only for custom work.
- Most garments are a collaboration between me and the client.
- We take requests.

Brand and Retail

21. How many clothing lines are released per year? (28 answered, 19 skipped)

- Answered '1': 1
- Answered '2': 15
- Answered '3': 2
- Answered '4': 2
- 1-2 but consistently supply basics
- 0-2
- 3, depending on resources
- 3,500 (approx) designers under one label
- 40
- 4 seasons a year of a main line
- 4 now and pieces daily

22. What do you do with clothing that does not sell during its season?

Please provide details: (28 answered, 19 skipped)

- Usually the garments find a wearer. Others are kept for exhibition.
- Keep on hand for trunk shows and sample sales
- Sell in 'one off 'stores in Shanghai, Beijing, Montreal, and Bali
- Give as gifts
- Sell on Ebay
- Donate to Salvation Army
- Sell as discount
- Only produce to order (3)
- Archive
- Leave it up until it sells out
- Donate to Dress for Success
- Remake into other garments and accessories
- Promotions to sell as soon as possible
- Utilize pop-up stores

23. Do you currently have a take-back program for clothing? (26 answered, 21 skipped)

Yes = 8%, No = 93%

24. If yes, are incentives provided to your customers to return these? Please provide details: (5 answered, 42 skipped)

- I discount a percentage of materials and labour towards new garments
- No
- This does not apply to our business model

25. If yes, do you restyle these for future sale or return clothing for recycling? Please provide details: (6 answered, 41 skipped)

- Restyle for future seasons
- No
- Yes, all the time
- Yes, we return the items to hopefully be sold in other markets.

26. If no, do you have plans to start a take-back program in the future? Please provide details: (22 answered, 25 skipped)

- No (many answers)
- Yes, in the future I will redesign
- Maybe
- I hope people want to keep our clothes
- We encourage a 'share' policy. Our garments are designed as heirloom pieces and we hope that they will be handed down and shared through generations.
- No, we do not have the facilities for this
- No, our company is too small

27. Does the retail price reflect the external social and environmental costs of producing the clothing? For example, are clothing producers paid a living wage for their skills? Do any profits go back into environmental preservation? Please provide details on your price structure: (25 answered, 22 skipped)

- I am particular about the whole process from seed to finished garment to be ethically and organically produced. The price of our clothes reflects the true cost.
- Our price reflects the cost of manufacturing domestically; paying living wages and purchasing textiles that are much higher priced than conventional.

- A percent of our profit goes to yayaan (YKPA) an orphanage in Bali.
- Our profits go back into the business
- Yes. That is why I like to work with fabric from North America and have the sewing done locally. (I can not afford to check out conditions in third world places, but I'm open to working with co-ops in the future)
- We pay over minimum wage. We are not making profit and cannot afford to give to charity. However, we run workshops and give lectures/seminars to encourage people to think about recycling and we educate the next generation of designers. Our price structure varies greatly due to the nature of the product. Some pieces costs a lot due to handwork.
- Pay workers a living wage.
- Produced locally
- Unfortunately the cost to produce keeps going up while the buyer wants to pay less.
- We manufacture fair trade.
- My dress line is priced slightly higher than average because of the 'handmade in USA' stamp and the cost of production.
- \$2 from sales of most of our pieces go to local animal welfare/nature conservation charities.
- Price depends on how long it takes to make.
- 20% of what you pay for our garments goes directly to the development of the communities we work with. So far we are only working with the social aspect of fair trade. The environmental aspect is always in our mind and we will start investing on it shortly.
- Our prices reflect the higher price point of local production, living wage, organic cotton etc. This ensures we are supporting organic farmers/mills and local production. It is an ecosystem that supports ethical production from start to finish.

Community Development & Environmental Preservation

28. Do you donate any of your profits to a grassroots environmental organization or to community group/project? (27 answered, 20 skipped)

Yes = 22%, No = 73%

29. If yes, can you please provide details (percentage of sales or products, and details on the organization or project): (7 answered, 40 skipped)

- We offset our carbon emissions by purchasing carbon offsets which get invested into alternative energy projects.
- 2% of profits as well as about 10 hours of volunteer time a week go to the yayaan. www.yayaan.org
- We often donate 10 % to a women's shelters

- 2 per sale of specific pieces go to help animal charities.
- I typically donate about \$500 per year to different organizations.
- Right now there are no profits to donate. I do participate in many community causes through donations of goods and gift certificates, and support through hosting events and advertising through my email list.

30. If no, do you have any future plans for supporting communities or environmental organizations? Please provide details: (19 answered, 28 skipped)

- I believe by working with these fabrics and hoping to spread the word for sustainability, it is a supportive collaboration. If I get a possibility in the future, I would like to do more for specific projects, such as saving old growth forests, birds and similar.
- I have plans to make a project with women's in developing countries.
- In 3 years but I do attend environmental seminars to learn what materials to use to save the environment.
- I do, but I am still a new company and have not really made a profit yet! Will probably support a local child support group and one environmental group in the future
- We will be looking for charity work in the coming months, may not be directly related to the business
- When we make enough money, yes!
- We have supplied garments to charity events to generate profit for their charity.
- I would like to work with local youth organizations, offering training.

Industry Collaboration & Communication

31. Do you collaborate with your suppliers or stakeholders on sustainability issues?

(26 answered, 21 skipped)

Yes = 39%, No = 61%

32. If yes, what are some of the successes/challenges you have faced in this process?

(11 answered, 36 skipped)

- We try to promote organic fibers and vegetable dyes locally by educating the suppliers.

- I find getting information from the mills very difficult. It may be because I am still a small operation.
- Discussions on certifications between my main supplier and I. More discussion overall, try to improve transparencies on fabric suppliers.
- Success: really nice bright colors.
- Challenge: Availability of organic cotton.
- Challenge: price fluctuations
- We partner each year with St. Vincent de Paul's Discarded to Divine project where we raise the subject with the public while utilizing discarded garments to make new ones to auction for the benefit of the poor.
- Hand woven and hand dyed fabrics are not perfect
- The supplier I was collaborating with went bankrupt and closed down.
- Organic cotton is expensive and there are only a few suppliers who do not have a lot of stake. Therefore it is tempting to settle on other fabrics.

33. Do you communicate sustainability information (environmental or social/ethical) of your operations to your consumers? (27 answered, 20 skipped)

Yes = 85%, No = 15%

34. If yes, please provide details on how this is communicated (is this via websites, through garment labels, in your retail store or through dialogue?):

(24 answered, 23 skipped)

- Direct contact/dialogue with customers in our retail/showroom environment
- Blog to promote awareness.
- Flyers
- Garment labels
- Website
- Seminars, lectures and workshops
- Twitter and Facebook
- Media interviews
- Teaching
- Fashion fairs
- Email blasts
- Our studio is the shop so people can see production first hand.

35. If yes, What challenges and successes have you experienced in communicating sustainability? Please provide details: (21 answered, 26 skipped)

- People's lack of understanding regarding the general environmental impact of the fashion industry.
- Everyone talks the talk but no one walks the walk.
- People don't feel it has anything to do with them/they can't change/they don't have enough money/don't want to be seen in the 'same' clothes all the time/they follow 'fashion' and want a different look every week to keep up with trends.
- People are surprised at the fact that recycled materials look good.
- Building a reputation locally.
- Showing people how to work with clothes is a great way to encourage them not to throw them away. The website is in constant use by students and we are always happy to offer them one on one interviews to help with their studies etc.
- Challenges on discussing the true price.
- Success: loyal customers
- People are usually inspired to make a difference after our conversation
- I always enjoy being asked a question I don't know the exact answer to. It pushes me to look into things further and I'm always learning about sustainability issues and better ways to do things.
- It's not the 'selling factor' - most customers don't care. But if someone is already purchasing something, and we tell them about sustainability and our work with the charity groups, they feel good about their purchase.
- I have clients who will say point blank "I don't care about that stuff".
- It's vital to make it totally clear what the clothes are made from and how, having it on the garment labels is probably the most successful
- Generally, people have very little knowledge & are very confused so they are impressed to hear my impressions about it all.
- Communicating is either made too easy with marketing "green wash" or too complicated with metrics and technical terms that the average consumer doesn't understand. The trick is finding a balance.
- No challenges, only advantages.
- We have been successful in encouraging and increasing awareness on sustainability as customers have purchased items from our ethical labels.
- I believe many consumers do not think about the origins of the products they consumer, I feel like we have lost touch with the process of creation, it is an important yet difficult task to try and educate people without being preachy or judgmental.

Regulations & Codes of Conduct

36. What voluntary codes of conduct do you participate in? (Please select all that apply):

(5 answered, 42 skipped)

| | | |
|---|--------------|----------|
| Business Social Compliance Initiative | 40.0% | 2 |
| Ethical Trade Initiative | 60.0% | 3 |
| Fair Labor Association | 40.0% | 2 |
| Fair Wear Foundation | 40.0% | 2 |
| SA8000 or Social Accountability International | 20.0% | 1 |
| Worldwide Responsible Apparel Production | | |

37. Is your business or your suppliers impacted by environmental or social regulations (Labour and ethical standards, Pollution control)?(17 answered, 30 skipped)

Yes = 47%, No = 53%

38. If yes, please list these and describe how these impacts your business:

(11 answered, 36 skipped)

- Tighter EPA restrictions because we use domestic companies
- There are no restrictions in Indonesia. This impacts us negatively because people locally and internationally neither expect nor demand the regulations. We are trying to pioneer this demand and expectation on the local level.
- Many of our fabric suppliers have developed production with lower impact on the environment and are still working towards these goals.
- Suppliers are regulated, prices are not as sharp and quality is good.
- Season affects the quality of silk and we are constantly waiting for the supplier to get his shipment from India.
- Canadian labour laws ensure workers at the manufacturing facilities we work with are paid fairly, entitled to vacation pay, etc.
- They are all members of WFTO.
- Labeling can often be mandated to the point of trivial information at the cost of the business
- I only work with companies that can supply certified goods.

39. Will future regulations impact your business or your suppliers (for example EU REACH, extended producer responsibility regulations, carbon taxes, environmental regulations)? (19 answered, 28 skipped)

Yes = 53%, No = 47%

40. If yes, please comment on how they will impact your business:

(12 answered, 35 skipped)

- Increased cost of production and sourcing.
- For us to be certified under the 'Fair Trade' label it will cost us thousands of US dollars. It is unaffordable. It is meant to support sustainability, why is the price so unattainable?
- Hopefully carbon taxes will give us an advantage as we are now so low on carbon usage throughout our production.
- I assume carbon tax will effect ocean shipping costs, more regulation in China will make prices rise too, even in good factories.
- I guess so, and have no idea how.
- If future regulations cost money, we might not survive, as we are a small business on a tight budget..
- Taxes are currently too high.

41. How do you keep updated on changing regulations and standards?

(15 answered, 32 skipped)

- Online research
- I rely on Canadian labour laws for my local manufacturing.
- We are involved with EFF and have regular contact with lots of other key brands in our sector. We do not meet the criteria for most standards, as we are making recycled and most regulations effect virgin fabrics.
- Word of mouth
- Talking with other designers on the internet.
- Read the news.
- Industry newsletters (from different sectors as well.
- Through the CFIB
- I do not

42. Please provide any general comments on how regulations, standards codes of conduct provide opportunities or present challenges: (10 answered, 37 skipped)

- I personally contact subcontractors and fabric suppliers to know the process.
- I have not had to deal with this yet.
- If we can meet standards and regulations they will benefit us and quality us as an ethical business with publicity opportunities.
- We will tell the story behind the garment
- More regulation and talk about the environment is good for our business. But the regulations are more like recommendations and are not enforced.
- The USA is not regulated, it is self-imposed rules.

Eco-Labeling

43. Are you currently using any of the following eco-labels? (Please select all that apply):

(8 answered, 39 skipped)

| | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------|----------|
| Fair Trade | 50.0% | 4 |
| Certified Organic Cotton | 62.5% | 5 |
| OEKO TEX STANDARD 100 | 37.5% | 3 |
| Global Eco-labeling network | 0.0% | 0 |
| Bluesign Label | 0.0% | 0 |
| Made-By label | 25.0% | 2 |
| Luxury Eco-label | 0.0% | 0 |
| European Eco-label | 0.0% | 0 |

44. If you use eco-labels, do you see how can be improved? Please offer suggestions:

(8 answered, 39 skipped)

- I do not know where to get them. No supplier I can find has these listed. All of my clothes are made in the USA
- It can be better marketed so people know what the certification means.
- The money from these goes to the West and not poor communities in the East.
- Transparency and pricing could help as they all cost a fortune and it is hard for a small company.
- We need clear labeling.
- I use my own version of these labels when in production with my goods- i have not received any labels from outside agencies.

45. If you do not use eco-labels, can you tell us why not and what are the biggest barriers for a company to be awarded an eco-label? Please provide details:

(12 answered, 35 skipped)

- Very expensive to have individual designs certified. Instead I choose transparency (where is the garment made and with what) and I show the organic certification of the fabric.
- Control of supply chain
- Start up issues
- Time, no time to seek it out.
- Money required to attain label makes it not worth it to us. We know we are fair trade and act socially and ethically responsible.
- Existing eco labels are to weak in their marketing. We need ONE strong system that is well known by consumers and there is confidence in it. Maybe three levels.
- I was not aware of eco labels before this survey.
- Our small size gives us control of the product.
- We are investigating the other eco-labels to see if we can qualify for them.

46. Would you support a globally recognized, third party, eco-label to certify social and environmental impacts for the entire life-cycle of the garment?

(24 answered, 23 skipped)

Yes = 96%, No = 4%

Slow Fashion

47. In general, what does 'sustainability' mean to your business? (14 answered, 33 skipped)

- The direction everything in on our earth needs to go.... consuming only what you must, buying only what you need, and creating with an awareness that everything we eat, wear, buy has an impact.
- That our lifestyle is in harmony with the nature so the environment we know today with humans, animals and plants can also exist in 7 generations from now.
- Providing a framework and network between people in which fashion is valued and enjoyed and the stories behind the production of manufacture are shared and transparent. That there is no such thing as waste and a culture of passed on clothing exists amongst the majority of people who can easily access and be taught techniques or skills to restyle/alter/repair their garments
- Using eco friendly materials that natural fibers and help the green economy.
- Trying to make the smallest impact on the environment while still running a business and making money.
- Keeping cash flow
- Keeping creative
- Repeat intelligent customers
- Everything, it is not just a practice but a lifestyle
- Utilizing materials that can be recycled.
- Sustainability is not just confined to our product; it is everything on the business side as well. We want healthy relationships and employees so that they provide the best they can do and everyone is happy!
- Not over producing any collection, we only produce to order and never destroy our garments. Raw materials are all used up and never wasted. This is natural with a small business as everything is very tight and well used. In ensuring that very little is wasted we then in return hope that the customer will respect and care for their item, prolonging the life of the garment.
- We want to be able to run a business that supports artists, supports us and does as little harm as possible to the environment.
- Quality made, long lasting versatile and classic lined garments are sustainable... instead of the one season, trendy designs that don't last. Having garments made in a production house that pays fair wages, has flexible working hours. This creates for a more quality made garment and being environmentally conscientious in all aspects of sourcing, from fabrics to office supplies, etc.
- At present the most important meaning of the word sustainable is in reference to our financial set up and as we are growing and incurring increasing costs, we need to make sure we can secure enough business per season to cover them. Also we have now employed a full time member of staff and our price point has gone up so sales are the key to sustaining our business at present. We will aim to continually improve the environmental

sustainability in future by investing in new fabrics, processes and techniques whilst making discerning choices about which ones we invest in.

48. What would be the benefits for your business of joining the Slow Fashion movement?

(23 answered, 24 skipped)

- Learning more about what other companies in the industry are doing and cross-educating both other manufacturers and consumers with new or exciting ways of doing things in a more sustainable way.
- Strong focus and cooperation for a sustainable fashion industry.
- To link with others who are passionate about the same values and to learn the ways in which they inspire others
- This will allow my products to be sold with the new green movement.
- It aligns with my company mission
- We are not interested in joining a movement or labeling ourselves.
- We aim to offer a constant/trans-seasonal range, moving closer to 'slow fashion'.
- I've thought about switching to an 'open' line and moving away from the 2 seasons per year production. It's a hard switch though because the retailers are so used to booking their orders twice a year.
- Our work would be appreciated on another level, access to a market that values handmade, locally made, and thoughtfully sourced materials.
- Communicating to the customer the benefits of sustainable fashion. Educating and encouraging the consumer.
- Benefits would be great for the workforce in Vancouver and organic cotton grown in USA
- The benefit is to the planet.
- I have been producing slow clothes since the late nineties and I am not about to change that. I am passionate about making a change in our consumption habits and educating the public forum on the practices that continue to exist in the industry. It is equally important to me that I educate people on the work I do and why it is so important culturally, socially and economically in today's society.
- We joined before you had a label!
- It's my personal value and beliefs.
- Meeting and possibly collaborating with like minded people, information exchange
- We are all about Slow Fashion, I come from over 11 years working as a designer for high street and I hated it so much that I started my own business to prove to people that slow fashion is possible and that is the future.
- Further driving the industry forward on tackling ethical issues rather being a hindrance on sustainability.
- Not sure
- I am happy to do what I believe in

- Power in groups and educating without carrying all the weight
- Brand awareness
- I believe I am already a part of that movement.

49. Would you be interested in connecting to others in the movement?

(27 answered, 20 skipped)

Yes = 100%, No = 0%

50. In general, what do you think it's missing and required for the Slow Fashion movement to be stronger and to reach a wider consumer base? Please provide your comments:

(22 answered, 25 skipped)

- Grass roots activism. It is all fine and good for us all in the industry to talk to one another. But we already know all the problems and we are already working towards solutions. But what about the workers in the textile industries in developing countries? What about other manufacturers for large multinationals in areas where there are no regulations? We need to get out and be speaking with and educating those who know nothing about global warming; it's impacts, and their options. It is silly to bring sand to the beach.
- I don't really know enough about it to know what is missing.
- There are not any seminars focused on the sewer, buyer, designer in using there materials to help our environment.
- Simplify terminology, labels, and accreditation so consumers don't have to do so much research to learn about what they are buying.
- PR, if we want to work as part of the fashion industry and compete with people who work without strong ethical codes we have to as good as them at PR, advertising, branding, etc.
- A friendly network to share information. On the business side it is all very secretive, no one wants to give away suppliers etc. To have a neutral platform to go for information would be great. Interestingly the UKFT.org and launched a 'lets make it here' program linking UK business and manufactures together.
- Visibility.
- More internet presence: websites devoted to slow fashion. Bringing the consciousness out to the public more. Changing the way people think about buying clothing. Changing the idea that lines need to be booked twice a year at the same times each year.
- People have to care about production chain, people are becoming more apathetic about fashion chain, grown ups think it is acceptable to shop at forever21 and throw shirts away after 2 or 3 washes (because they fall apart

and look gross) but still, this is unacceptable for working people and should be left to high school kid's. People should be more aware about how much they buy and throw away.

- Education
- Promotion
- More media coverage and education not to mention the industry recognizing its importance.
- Press, global awareness - a "whole foods for clothing"
- When bigger labels start becoming more eco-friendly is when the consumer will have a different approach to these issues. We need more media attention as well.
- Attraction rather than promotion
- The fear to be lifted, it has to be attractive, luxurious and affordable for people to join.
- To be further promoted within the industry.
- Product, product & product. Also deal with the politicians and the high street retailers to band fast fashion as they have put higher taxes in alcohol...fast fashion is causing big problems all over the world and we need the power of politicians and the greediness of high street retailers to change this
- Consumers have been demanding eco-fashion for a long time. Everyone says they are willing to pay more for something made ethically and sustainably by local designers. However, people still spend more at H&M and other retail giants for the cheap fast fashion. I think the culture and attitude towards spending needs to change before we all get buried in a mountain of garbage... but how?
- When Joe 6Pack gets it, then it'll work. Throwaway clothing needs to stop being the norm in the US.