

10 years of

Designing & building collective liberation

Climate Justice & Human Rights

Impact Report (2012-2022)

Celebrating ten years of powerful and bold change in climate justice & human rights



HOW FAR WOULD YOU GO FOR?
Someone else?



IN THE FACE OF ERASURE, Creativity and Storytelling BECOME ACTS OF Survival



THE EARTH'S RESOURCES ARE NOT INFINITE



DECOLONIZE HOW WE INTERACT W. LANGUAGE



Our theory of change

Slow Factory is a **school, knowledge partner and climate innovation organization**.

We address the intersecting crises of climate justice and social inequity through open education, narrative change and regenerative design.

Open Education

Fostering and facilitating important conversations and education around climate justice and human rights.

- + Centering the voices and ideas of the Global Majority [Black, Indigenous, and other people of color] to share their knowledge outside the boundaries of institutions & oppressive systems.
- + Providing tools of empowerment:
 - + Anti colonial education & critical theory to drive narrative change
 - + Workforce development & skills training

Systems Design

Designing models that are good for the Earth and good for people, we make meaningful contributions to the climate movement through supply chain consulting, material innovation (the lab), and developing regenerative systems (waste to resource).

Reversing the intersecting global crises of climate change, biodiversity loss, and human rights abuses.



Our theory of change

Narrative Change

Accelerating progress and systems design thinking by offering solutions for people, organizations and brands addressing global challenges.

According to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), “Education is an essential element for mounting an adequate global response to climate change.” At Slow Factory we build climate literacy and foster climate positive solutions that are Good for the Earth, and Good for the People.

Over 28,000 students from 46 countries participate in our equity-focused education programs. The majority of students, collaborators, program beneficiaries and voices we center are visible minorities and over 85% self-identify as women. We must dismantle the current paradigm of extraction, exploitation, and racial oppression and revive a pan-Indigenous paradigm to restore our relationships to each other and our planet.

Our impact and reach goes beyond just the individuals who attend our programs. We have over 150 million media impressions and our educational social posts have reached 34 million people.

We work with a wide range of companies to change their systems and supply chains, pushing them to change their policies by taking into consideration environmental impact and human rights concerns.

Our theory of change

Our research on sustainable strategies for materials technology, textile innovation and life cycle analysis communicates and influences consumer perception and behavior and creates scalable climate positive solutions.

We are at a turning point where we need to create the right kind of changes if we want our children and their children to have a healthy planet. Slow Factory's goal is to empower individuals, companies and governments to adopt bold strategies while reforming and evolving existing systems with the focus on benefiting all people and the planet.

Through a lens that examines the intersection of climate justice and social equity we can shift our culture to create systemic change for our collective liberation.





Letter from the leadership collective

Ten years ago, sustainability wasn't even part of the mainstream lexicon of people, media and industry. We had to trailblaze an industry like fashion to make way for progress in a much needed way for our collective liberation and wellbeing.

When we first started we were called crazy, we were called idealists and we certainly were not welcomed with open arms in an industry as colonial and cut throat as Fashion.

When we launched our collections tied to charity donations to nonprofits, it was considered too far-fetched. Today, this has become the norm of how commerce needs to be aligned with non-profits.

When we coined the term “fashion activism” not only were we told that the two words have nothing in common, but we weren't taken seriously until 2016 when the new US presidency took place in a sea of pussy hats and white feminist values that was the beginning of a reckoning America desperately needed.

The amount of barriers we have taken down in order for the industry to see eye to eye with front-line communities, to be inclusive enough to even begin reckoning with the reality at hand and the solutions we have invited designers and decision makers to partake in to accelerate progress cannot possibly fit in this report.

From the first anti-colonial inclusive climate conference in the Fashion Industry to the first science incubator in fashion to the groundbreaking free open education body of work that has allowed 28,000 people to evolve in their careers with applicable climate justice knowledge to their industry, Slow Factory is a vibe, it's a culture, it's a movement, it's a way of life. — Céline & Team



Pyramid of change

Change

Directly improving the lives of 8,000 people in private chats building communities with each other, 500K engaging on progressive topics

Action

Applying climate education through 250 open education classes,

Engagement

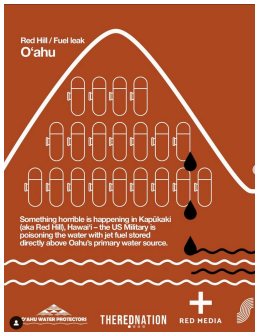
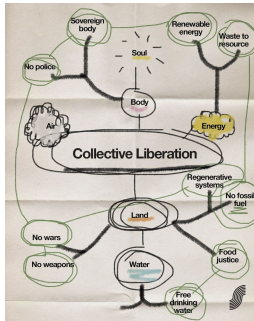
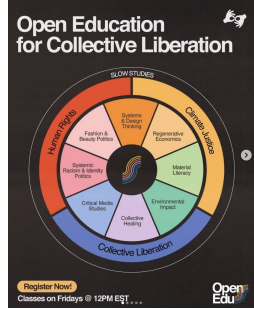
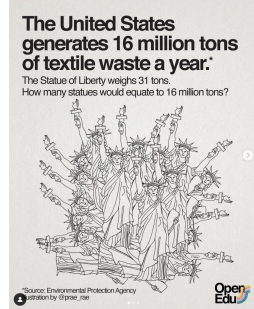
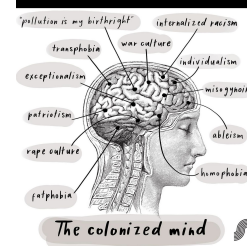
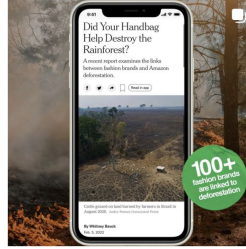
\$2M funding progressive climate education, climate action and material science as well as immediate action

Awareness

A decade of narrative change reaching over 40 million people with paradigm-shifting programs; rendering accessible climate education for all

100+

campaigns



6M

Impression & reach



Strategic Narrative Change

Ten years of narrative change

Open Education

- 28K students
- Climate education
- Critical race theory
- Fashion & design
- Agriculture
- Accessibility
- Architecture
- Material science

Landfills as Museums

- Waste to resource
- Waste-led design
- Field trip
- Open learning environment
- Biodegradability
- Material science
- History
- Geography
- Soil health

WM Design Challenge

- Waste to resource
- Waste-led design
- Field trip
- Open learning environment
- Biodegradability
- Material science
- Fashion design
- System design
- Collaboration

100
Programs for
quality of
education



Strategic Narrative Change

Ten years of narrative change

I Really Love this Song

- Art
- Music
- Cultural change
- Behavioral change
- Prompts
- Interactive arts
- Storytelling

The Revolution is a School

- Art installation
- Workshops
- Upcycling
- Planting
- Open learning environment
- Design for accessibility
- Collaboration

Study Hall

- Open lectures
- Free education
- Convening
- Networking
- Showcasing solutions
- Art installations
- Collaborations
- Dinner series
- Thought provoking conversations

2M

People impacted for sustainable development



Systemic Regenerative Design

Reducing carbon emissions

Amazon Rainforest

- Campaign reporting on Amazon deforestation
- Accessibility justice
- Indigenous knowledge
- System design

One X One

- Material science
- Incubator
- Partnerships & collaborations
- Waste-led design
- Waste to resource
- Sustainable manufacturing

Slow Factory Labs

- Plant-based material
- Waste-led design
- Material science
- Food waste to material
- Plastic-free solutions
- Biodegradable solutions / circular solutions

\$500K
Raised to improve
industry innovations



10

**Years of
climate
innovation**

2012

- Launch
- Changing narratives
- Introducing Fashion Activism

2013

- NASA collaboration
- 25K+ donated to human rights groups

2014

- Partnership with World Wildlife Fund
- \$250K raised for climate justice

2015

- Narrative change within the Fashion Industry
- “Fast Fashion is a feminist issue” by SF goes mainstream

2016

- MIT Media Lab Fellowship
- Material science to market

2017

- First inclusive climate conference in Fashion
- “Sustainability” goes mainstream

2018

- International awareness on fashion and climate
- Partnership with United Nations



10

Years of
ground-
breaking
change

2019

- United Nations Study Hall — Narrative change in Sustainable Fashion
- Partnership with Swarovski

2020

- \$250K funding material science
- \$150K funding immediate action in human rights
- Open Education 28,000 students

2021


- Partnership with the New York City Department of Economic Development
- Waste Management partnership \$25,000 donated to young designers
- Donated over \$100,000 to Lebanon urgent relief funds & development of long- term solutions

2022

- Opening Slow Factory Institute
- Raising \$3M to support Climate Justice & Human Rights
- Launching lab-grown leather alternative
- Partnering with Parsons, Central Saint-Martins
- **Awarded for Innovation in Education by Harvard University**

Our Community





“Slow Factory is infiltrating, challenging and enhancing traditional disciplinary education.”

“Open Edu has made me understand that I can contribute to making the world a better place.”

Community Care

Is Climate Action

“It values making education open and available - resisting the commodification of ideas, especially those that can make our communities just.”

“I have been made more aware of the lens through which I view the world, and Slow Factory continues to help me consider other ways of being.”

“Open Edu is a place of refuge for me, where I find support for the work I am trying to do, typically alone in my field, and not fitting at all in the normal structures of the traditional university. It is lonely and painful lots of times[...] A place of honesty, hope, constructive effort, learning, and connection.”

“This is one of the only places where I feel like I belong and safe.”

“The accessibility of courses that Slow Factory has fostered in their open source model has been inspiring and is fundamental to educational paradigm shift.”

“OpenEdu was so helpful during the pandemic. A place of honesty, hope, constructive effort, learning, and connection.”

“Not only does it provide healing to be able to go on, but guides me as to how and towards where to move. Growing and evolving has felt invasive lately knowing what that impact does. This allows me to move and grow.”

“I think that your classes are very aware of nuance and also have a more radical worldview that wants to catalyze the transition to a just and regenerative future.”

People



88%

Global
Majority



90%

Success rate:
promising
career path
after taking
Open Edu



500K

Community
active
members



100+

Classes
Events / year



5K

Young
leaders
empowered
by SF



Industry Impact

International solidarity matters

In the next decade we will have to become fluent in reparative design and designing for chaotic events: how do we survive a tsunami, how do we design for irrigation, how do we design for top-soil regeneration, designing for human survival will become the new necessary field of design: ecosystems over aesthetics.

— **Céline Semaan, Fast Company**

Slow Factory's opening at the garment hub in Sunset Park will help create hundreds of fashion jobs onsite and bring tens of millions of dollars of direct economic output to New York City. Additionally, in New York, we are leading the way and showing that prioritizing sustainability can go hand-in-hand with the fashion industry. — **Mayor Adams, NYC.Gov**

Slow Factory Foundation has assertively made an effort to reimagine the fashion industry from the history of its cotton fields to the future, where it consumes our planet. — **Forbes**



Press

Forbes

- [Slow Factory Teams With Adidas And Stella McCartney On Paid Apprenticeships With Free Online BIPOC Course](#)
- [Slow Factory teams with Vestiaire Collective](#)

Vogue

- [“Fashion Creates Culture, and Culture Creates Action”](#): Céline Semaan on the Industry’s Role in Times of Crisis
- [Is Your Leather Bag Causing Deforestation In The Amazon Rainforest?](#)

Fast Company

- [Brands like Nike, Coach, and Gap are destroying the Amazon with their leather products](#)
- [These are the most important innovations in material design of 2021](#)

New York Times

- [What Is Slow Fashion? We Explain](#)
- [How to Buy Clothes That Are Built to Last](#)
- [Did Your Handbag Help Destroy the Rainforest?](#)
- [Refugee Designer Shines a Light on Global Issues](#)

The Guardian

- [New study links major fashion brands to Amazon deforestation](#)
- [‘Lockdown has been a wakeup call for the industry’: what next for fashion?](#)



Partners

NASA

Narrative
change /
climate action

Anera

Human rights
/ Refugee
rights

MIT Media Lab

Lecture series
Material
science

World Wildlife Fund

Climate
action /
Campaigning

Stand.Earth

Campaigning
/ mobilizing

ACLU

Immigration
rights

adidas

Open
Education

Waste Management

Circular
design
Waste-led
design

United Nations

Advocacy /
Systemic
change

Clean Creatives

Campaigning
/ mobilizing



Partners

Parsons

Non-degree
certification

Columbia University

Lecture series
on climate
justice

Bolt Threads

Material science as
climate solution /
open education

Ace Hotels

Hosting first
climate conference
in Fashion /
narrative change

Fibershed

Soil health
Open Education
Narrative Change

Swarovski

First science
incubator in
Fashion / Material
science &
innovation

Natura / Vestiaire / New York Live Arts Tony's Chocolonely

Supporting Open
Education

Climate and
Human rights
festival /
Climate &
Culture

MoMA PS1

Exhibition
Free workshops
Climate & Culture /
Narrative Change

The Other Dada

Biomimicry /
Narrative change /
campaigning

Planet





Climate Impact

\$5M

Funding
climate
justice &
human rights

\$450K

Grants

\$700K

Free open
education

\$200K

Accessibility
& Disability
Justice

\$300K

Immediate
humanitarian
response



Climate Institute

- Pollution reduction
- Climate adaptation
- Circular design solutions
- Material science
- Youth program for climate studies
- Garment to garment — upcycling manufacturing
- Non-degree certification
- 90% success rate



By the Numbers

430K Followers



7 Million Folks Reached

28,000 Open Edu Students

88% BIPOC





Overview

People	Numbers	Programs	Reach	Impact	Reach
Team	15	Science	+1.5M	Human Rights	1.5M
Fellows	6	Education	3M	Feminism	7M
Teachers	55	Culture	2.5M	Land-Rights	2M
Partners	18+	Art	1.5M	Indigenous Sovereignty	1.3M
Grantees	20	Grants	100K	Climate justice	8M
Scientists	5	Design	2M	Material Innovation	1.2M



Programs

Name	People	Impact summary
Open Edu	28,000	Free education
Study Hall	65,000	Lecture series
One X One	100	Science Incubator in Fashion
WM Design Challenge	100	Waste-led Design
Landfills as Museums	250	Circular Design
I Really Love this Song	10,000	Climate & Culture

People

COMMUNITY CARE

*The thread
that connects us*

KINSHIP

HEALTH AT EYES
SIZE
POSITIVE TENSION
DRIVES CHANGE

RESPECT EXISTENCE
EXPECT RESISTANCE

ACTIVATE
AWARENESS





Team

Slow Factory is a nonprofit that transforms socially and environmentally harmful systems by designing models that are good for the Earth and good for people. We are People of the Global Majority advancing climate justice and social equity through regenerative design, education, and materials innovation. Education is central to the systemic change we need for a livable equitable climate future. We must dismantle the current paradigm of extraction, exploitation, and racial oppression and revive a pan-Indigenous paradigm to restore our relationships to each other and our planet.



Céline Semaan
Leadership
Collective,
Creative



Colin Vernon
Leadership
Collective,
Technology



Anja Tyson
Leadership
Collective,
Development



Kima Cooper
Director of
Strategy



Nicole Nimri
Project Lead



Paloma Rae
Community &
Design



Joshua Potash
Analyst &
Education Lead



Seung Won Bail
Video Editor



Board



Abrima Erwiah, Fashion entrepreneur & educator, Studio 189 and Parsons School of Design



Aja Barber, Writer & fashion consultant with a focus on race, intersectional feminism, sustainable & ethical fashion



Christine Platt, Author, advocate, & lifestyle strategist with a focus on sustainable living



Henrietta Gallina, Creative Director & strategist, social commentator and advocate



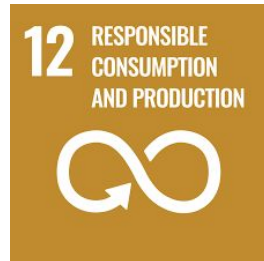
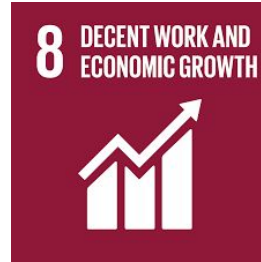
Amber Valletta, Actor, model & sustainable fashion activist



Marni Majorelle, Environmentalist, urban horticulturist & community organizer



We support the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals



Make a bigger impact by joining us

Here's to 10 more years of climate justice & human rights



ABOLITION

LIBERATION

JOY

