

Circular Production and Consumption in Fashion and Beyond

A summary of expert perspectives from the
GlobeScan—C&A Foundation SDG Leadership Forum
on Goal 12: Responsible Consumption and Production

March 2019



Contents

Introduction from GlobeScan	3
Introduction from C&A Foundation	4
Executive Summary	5
The Fashion Industry	6
Circular Economy Business Models in Practice	8
Barriers and Solutions	12
Crucial Actors for Unlocking Circular Models	18
Ways Forward	21
Additional Examples of Sharing Services.	23
List of Expert Guest Contributors	25

Introduction from GlobeScan

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide a roadmap for the future we all want. However, while the initial launch of the Global Goals captured the imagination of businesses, governments, multilateral organisations, NGOs, and parts of the media, a great deal more engagement and awareness is required to deliver on the 2030 targets.

At GlobeScan, we believe more leadership is needed to inform, inspire, and catalyse collective action across the SDGs. One way to foster more leadership is to listen to and engage stakeholders worldwide.

To do this, we are hosting the SDG Leadership Series. This is a series of 17 open, online events—one for each of the 17 Global Goals—to foster discussions with thousands of influential stakeholders across the world.

We are delighted to have co-hosted this forum with C&A Foundation on Goal 12: Responsible Consumption and Production.

Decoupling economic growth from resource use is one of the most critical and complex challenges facing humanity today. Our forum explored how the fashion industry is taking on board principles of the circular and sharing economy and what can be learned from other industries. We identified challenges and solutions to making progress and identified the key stakeholders who need to be involved and engaged.

Many examples were cited during the forum, showcasing some of the progress that has been made in developing a more circular industry. The challenge now is to learn from and build on these experiences and insights in order to bring initiatives to scale.



Chris Coulter
CEO, GlobeScan

Introduction from C&A Foundation

The promise of fashion is a positive one. Every day, the industry brings jobs and powers economies, it encourages creativity, and gives us new ways to express who we are and how we feel. At the same time, today's fashion industry also has negative effects—on the environment and on people and communities around the world. Tackling this requires brave leadership in every corner of the industry. It requires us to think out of the box and disrupt the status quo.

Sustainable Development Goal 12 on Responsible Consumption and Production challenges the entire fashion industry to come together to think about innovative solutions. For us, this includes “circular fashion”.

This means applying circular economy thinking to redesign the apparel industry to make it work for the people and ecosystems it touches. It means challenging the industry on its material sourcing, chemical choices, manufacturing decisions, business models, and end-of-use options.

It means putting in place a system in which safe materials are used endlessly, water is re-stored and energy is clean, and people work with dignity. It allows the apparel sector to be a force for good. C&A Foundation's aim is to foster this new system by enabling best practice today and supporting the innovation of tomorrow. But to do that we need the best and brightest minds working together. That is why we were pleased to have co-hosted this forum with GlobeScan on Goal 12: Responsible Consumption and Production. It gave us much needed insight, but more importantly, it created connections and discussions. And ultimately it is only by fuelling those connections that we are going to build a new fashion industry.



Leslie Johnston
Executive Director, C&A Foundation

Executive Summary

Sustainable Development Goal 12 aims to “do more and better with less” by ensuring sustainable consumption and production.

For our SDG Leadership Forum on Goal 12, GlobeScan and C&A Foundation were joined by more than 250 guest contributors and participants from brands, manufacturers, funders, innovators, academics, and government who made a total of 1,361 individual contributions.

Our discussion focused on the fashion industry specifically and how we can scale the adoption of circular business models and accelerate the transition to a circular economy.

Overall, the forum highlighted the need for multi-stakeholder collaboration—in creating a network for circular businesses, developing strategies, and combining workforces for more efficient processes. This was emphasised throughout the whole discussion, with many participants expressing the need for a sharing platform that enables progress from actors across the value chain.

There are still many barriers to the fashion industry achieving a circular and collaborative business model. These include a business culture dependent on “fast fashion” and a traditional, linear supply chain, as well as limited knowledge of circular approaches and a lack of consumer demand for sharing and service models.

A wide range of solutions are needed to tackle these challenges. First, a strong business case would bring on board the wider industry and help sell the benefits of quality and durability to consumers. Second, several factors facilitate the transformation—such as leadership, collaboration, and innovation. Third, new initiatives in subscription, service, and repair models should be developed and scaled. Fourth, there is a need for education in circular design and production, as well as consumer communication and engagement. Finally, incentives and regulatory changes have a crucial role in accelerating the shift to circular principles.

Going forward, organisations like C&A Foundation and Fashion for Good will be crucial in raising awareness of circularity, encouraging change, and accelerating the uptake of circular and sharing models.

The SDG Leadership Forum on Goal 12 demonstrates the progress that parts of the fashion industry have made toward becoming more sustainable. Sharing and applying the lessons learned will enable the transformation at scale.

The Fashion Industry

Key Learning

Overall, the fashion industry is seen as a laggard in terms of circular models across the value chain. Although examples of small circular and collaborative businesses exist, these are not at scale. To be effective, the industry should work together to develop creative and actionable initiatives.

The forum began by asking whether the fashion industry is a leader or a laggard in terms of circular models for product design and manufacturing processes. The majority view was that industry efforts have had limited impact. However, there was a sense of optimism with many participants noting an increase in circular initiatives in recent years.

Three elements are needed to make further progress:

1. **Collaborative action from key industry players** can create and define a purpose and structure for circular initiatives.

“ *The industry is making slow, but strong steps toward circularity. We have big stakeholders in this industry who are really striving and supporting this model by looking at every aspect of the production of clothing from design to manufacturing to consumer education, and to recover all that product that we put in this world to go back into the circle. But it's only through collaboration that we will achieve this change.*

– Carmen Gama, EILEEN FISHER

2. **Demonstrable proof of successful initiatives** that have visibly employed the circular model will help to gain support from the industry.

“ *The fashion industry is at the beginning of its reflection on circularity but there is great momentum and a lot of progress has been made in terms of awareness, although this has not yet resulted in a lot of concrete results.*

– Charline Ducas, C&A

3. **Creative expertise and a future-focused mindset**, which are already characteristics of the fashion industry.

“ Unfortunately, I would say that the fashion industry has been slower than many other industries. We need to speed up the shift toward waste-free models and a circular economy. I believe this industry has a unique role thanks to the creativity, global reach, and forward mentality. So, we should be able to use this and inspire change even beyond our own industry.

– **Diana Amini**, H&M Foundation



Circular Economy Business Models in Practice

Key Learning

The most successful examples of circular and sharing economy models tend to focus on the consumer rather than on sustainability. To maximise engagement, brands should communicate the personal benefits of the model, with sustainability being an added bonus.

Despite a general consensus that the industry has been slow to adapt to circular business models, forum participants were able to name many examples (both in and outside the fashion industry) that demonstrate the benefits of a sharing and collaborative economy. The most popular models mentioned in the forum were those that balance the “sustainable” value of products without compromising on overall consumer benefits. Participants emphasised the need for these models to be logical choices for consumers, combining conventional elements (e.g., quality, price, convenience) with circular principles.

“ *Generally, the best ones out there are those with an ability to address larger markets by offering their service or product not solely on the premise of conscious consumption, but by making their solution easy to adopt and near-similar in appearance or experience as conventional alternatives.*

– Erick Bouwer, VIGGA

Examples of Collaborative and Sharing Economy Models

EILEEN FISHER Renew

Take-back, reuse, and remake scheme that committed to being circular by design.

Eliot Metzger of the World Resources Institute cited EILEEN FISHER as an example of how brands are integrating circular business models into their mainstream business strategies.

EILEEN FISHER (an American clothing brand) has created “Renew,” a take-back and re-use scheme which allows people to trade their old EILEEN FISHER clothes in exchange for \$5 reward cards. Once received, the brand assesses the quality and condition of the items. Those which can be renewed will be, and those which cannot will be regenerated into new fibres.

More information can be found [here](#).

Lena Fashion Library

A clothing library in Amsterdam which allows members to lend and rent clothing each month. The aim is to “encourage consumers to consume more consciously.”

Gwen Cunningham of Circle Economy shared Lena Fashion Library in Amsterdam as an example of a successful sharing economy model. Lena serves the wider community in Amsterdam through local swap points.

The clothing library “offers consumers access over ownership to seasonal, high-quality, vintage clothing and sustainable brands.” As an accessible service, consumers can choose between monthly subscriptions or one-off rentals. Members have “points” that determine the amount of clothes they can have in their possession at once. There is no limit to the amount of times clothes can be changed (as long as it stays within the points limit), and there are swap points located throughout Amsterdam to serve the wider population.

More information can be found [here](#).

VIGGA

A circular subscription model for maternity and children’s wear.

Holly Browne, formerly with MADE-BY, mentioned “VIGGA” as one of her favourite examples of brands that “tackle real-life issues for customers and truly help reduce consumption.”

VIGGA is a circular clothing concept in Denmark tackling the issue of outgrown children’s wear. The subscription service enables parents to lease sustainable and organic maternity and children’s clothing. Customers are sent 20 VIGGA garments in their size and once they no longer fit, they return them and are sent a new package of clothes in a larger size. Returned clothes are treated and checked, then repackaged and sent to the next customer.

More information can be found [here](#).

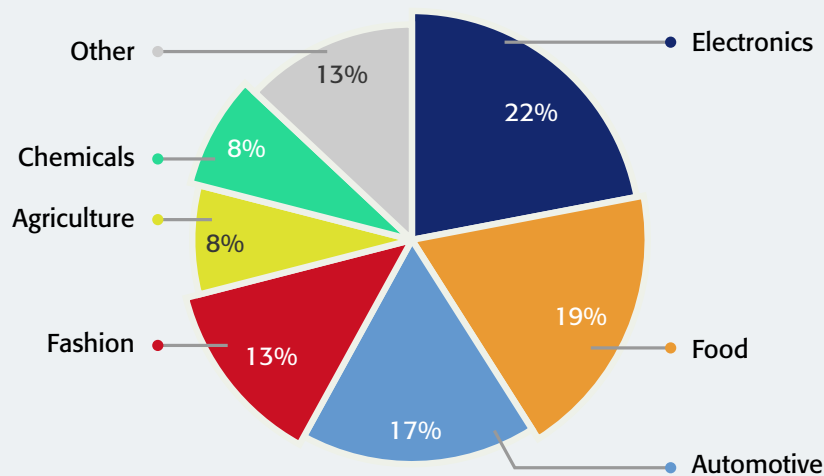
Please see page 23, “Additional Sharing Services” for more examples.

Lessons from Other Industries

Through our participant poll, we asked which industry sector is currently the most advanced in creating circular product designs and/or manufacturing models. Results showed that the electronics industry is considered a leader in circular models, with the food and beverage industry following closely behind.

POLL 1

Which industry sector is today most advanced in creating circular product design and/or manufacturing models? ($n=64$)



Examples provided by participants highlight the range of initiatives from different sectors, with a focus on their ability to bring circular economy business models to scale. The plastics industry was cited by several participants as a sector that is gradually being transformed. Peter Majernowski, of Tyton BioSciences, mentioned the “endless loop” of plastic bottles (PET) that goes into “everything from textiles to carpets and more.”

Chris Coulter, of GlobeScan, referenced the carpet industry and Interface specifically, as having “pioneered the concept of closed loop and circularity.” Sandy Black, at the Centre for Sustainable Fashion, also noted that the tech industry has been “excellent at forming interdisciplinary teams” which is now starting to happen in the textile industry for circularity using bio waste.

Four Main Lessons from Other Industries

1. Lead the way

Taking the lead and being a forerunner for the circular evolution will set brands and retailers apart and help initiate more action.

As Douwe Jan Joustra from C&A Foundation noted, “there always needs to be someone who dares to start from a new perspective.”

2. Collaborate for scale

In line with SDG 17, partnerships are critical for enabling pilot projects to be brought to scale. Diana Amini, of the H&M Foundation, emphasised the need for “collaboration across thought borders and sectors.” Combining the intelligence of a range of sectors will help to accelerate the rate at which a circular fashion industry can be achieved.

3. Leverage elements of successful models

As with the examples above, it is crucial to identify relevant case studies and apply the elements that contribute to the overall success of the model. Using these “tried and tested” routes is an effective enabler of positive results and can foster collaboration with companies on a similar journey.

4. Commit to circularity in its entirety

It is critical to demonstrate passion for the process of developing new norms. Demonstrable commitment to adopting circular business models through lobbying, marketing, or campaigns can be the difference between a model that is successful and one that is not. As Sandy Black (Centre for Sustainable Fashion) notes, “passionate individuals make a difference and can start a movement.”



Barriers and Solutions

Key Learning

Participants identified several barriers to the adoption of circular principles. These range from the ubiquity of traditional systems for design and manufacturing and a business culture dependent on fast fashion, to limited knowledge and innovation in circular models and a lack of consumer demand. Five main solutions to addressing these challenges emerged during the discussions: making a business case; attributes for transformation; new subscription and service models; education and consumer communication; and incentives and regulatory change.

Barriers to adopting circular processes and collaborative consumption models

Barrier #1: Traditional linear system

The fashion industry has operated under the same linear system for decades. There are no business incentives to change, and the prospect of doing so is seen as more of a risk than an opportunity. While small initiatives and start-ups are important for instigating circular concepts from the ground up, larger fashion designers and manufacturers need to demonstrate leadership in order to bring new models to scale. Setting an agenda, sourcing, and supplying funding for innovation will all be important areas for the industry to address.

Barrier #2: Limited knowledge of circular

There is limited understanding of circular business models. The key fashion industry players who will need to drive the change are ill equipped to lead the evolution across a complex supply chain. To be efficient in implementing the model, all actors involved in the fashion creation process will require sufficient knowledge on circularity in order to properly adapt.

Barrier #3: Demand for “fast fashion”

“Fast Fashion” is the process of creating inexpensive clothing to meet consumer demand for trend pieces. Consumers are reluctant to shift from the consumption of fast fashion while there are attractive alternatives that strike an acceptable balance between price, style, and sustainability. If consumer behaviour does not change, then fashion brands will be unwilling to commit to circular models.

Barrier #4: Consumer resistance to sharing

A major challenge for fashion brands is how to sell access over ownership. Consumers are comfortable with the idea of owning their clothing, and the concept of “sharing” gives rise to concerns associated with second-hand clothing. Social stigma, hygiene, quality, cost, and durability are just a few of the issues associated with collaborative models.

Barrier #5: Business culture

Making the shift from the current business model of fast fashion to a more sustainable model will be difficult. Finding a way to address the conflicting objectives of the fast-fashion industry (high sales targets and profits) and the circular and collaborative economy (ensuring sustainable consumption) is crucial for bringing retailers on board with new models.

Solutions to Challenges

Many solutions were generated during the discussions about challenges in circular design, production, and the sharing economy. These are grouped into five main areas.

1. Making a business case

There are several ways to “sell” the circular and sharing economies to the industry and to consumers.

Tackling quality

If consumers are expected to shift their behaviour, there must be a powerful case for doing so. Clothes that are high quality and long lasting with the potential for repair can support increasing the demand for circular fashion.

“ *There’s another component of product design important in rating circularity, and that is durability. The more durable products that last as long as possible, that also are repairable, won’t have to be recycled as frequently, thereby reducing—potentially drastically reducing—the product’s footprint over its lifetime. That is apart from whether the product’s materials of construction are closed loop or even recycled. So, at Patagonia our thinking of “circularity” includes durability and repairability in addition to recyclability. We captured those goals in our Worn Wear program, which is a partnership with our customers to take mutual responsibility for our products around the four “Rs” of repair, reuse, recycle, and reduce.*

– Rick Ridgeway, Patagonia

Apply consumer insights

If sharing and collaborative models are to be successful, the fashion industry must develop strategies with real-life consumer insights in mind. [GlobeScan research](#) looks specifically at the rise of the Aspirationals, consumers who are defined by their love of shopping, desire for responsible consumption, and their trust in brands to act in the best interests of society. Research that segments consumers can help brands to devise their marketing and communication strategies and appeal to target groups.

Michael Waas from TerraCycle Inc. emphasised market research which “shows consumers are looking for more sustainable/purpose-driven products across most product categories.”

Consumer benefits first

In selling the service model, brands should be careful when constructing their marketing strategy. Several participants agreed that sustainability and circularity should not be the core selling points, but rather personal benefits such as convenience, availability, quality, and accessibility of new trends.

“*Focus on the benefits—trying clothes you wouldn’t normally buy, you can be more adventurous without the risk. If something doesn’t fit or doesn’t look great you can send it back and try something else. For young people, it’s a cheaper way to shop. Millennials and Gen Y are the most eco-conscious generations ever—but have a big value-action gap between their eco-values and what they buy. They don’t feel good about this—help give them a solution.*

– **Natasha Parker**, Global Action Plan

2. Attributes for transformation

To transform to circular business models, the industry needs to foster several key actions:

Strong Leadership

Across companies, C-suite leadership is particularly important to gain support for circularity and the shared economy.

The [CEO Guide to Climate Action](#) report by the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (cited by Cristina Sánchez of Fashion Revolution Spain) is a guide aimed at providing CEOs clarity on how to engage their company on sustainability.

Comprehensive approach

When presented with the enormous task of transforming the fashion industry, companies must recognise that solutions will need to be multi-faceted.

Edwin Keh (Hong Kong Research Institute of Textiles and Apparel) specifically proposed the need for “a more comprehensive approach to the circularity challenge.” Solutions should address issues arising in the existing business model, technology, engineering, retail model, and suppliers. Creating a sophisticated plan that addresses each area of the business will facilitate a smooth transition to circular models.

Collaboration and partnerships

To realise SDG 12 through the principles of circularity, it will be crucial for industry players to work together. Collaboration and partnerships (in line with SDG 17, Partnerships for the Goals) between the fashion industry, government, and academia will enable cross-sector stakeholders to align their strategies.

Case Study 1

Jeffrey Hogue from C&A cited the Ellen MacArthur Foundation’s [Make Fashion Circular](#) initiative as an example of an engagement platform making “the necessary nods to work together amongst stakeholders.” The Make Fashion Circular initiative brings together fashion industry leaders with the aim of collaboration and innovation in the textiles industry, in line with the principles of the circular economy.

Innovation

Encouraging innovation, particularly among designers, textile producers, and manufacturers, is the foundation for building a circular economy. Several participants mentioned the need to invest in innovation to help accelerate the movement. Solutions such as chemical recycling or innovative fibres, mentioned by Katrin Ley from Fashion for Good, are examples of innovations that can disrupt the industry. And critically, these innovators must be linked with industry leaders to help take ideas to scale.

“ *To drive real change through disruptive innovation, collaboration is key. On the one hand, you have start-ups and innovators with breakthrough solutions, but they are often stuck in the labs and struggle to reach scale. On the other hand, you have large corporations who are looking for innovations and solutions to their supply chain challenges. Connecting these innovators with these large, mainstream corporate players is a crucial step in driving adoption, enabling tipping points, and creating real change toward circularity.*

– **Katrin Ley**, Fashion for Good

3. New subscription, repair, and service models

New models provide consumers with an alternative to conventional consumption, while still providing the “fast” element in the forum of exchange. Not only do subscription or rental models keep prices low (usually set at a fixed price per month/item), they also keep clothes in circulation so as to minimise or avoid waste. These models promote access over ownership and help to keep the cycle of reuse and re-wear in motion.

Case Study 2: Rent the Runway

Rachel Kibbe from Helpsy provides the example of [Rent the Runway](#), an online service that provides designer dresses for rent at a fraction of the retail price. Their ethos is simple—by renting, you are saving resources that would have been used to manufacture new clothing, you are being sustainable by being less wasteful with clothing, and you are extending the lifecycle of the product.

As noted by Rick Ridgeway of Patagonia, ingraining repair, reuse, recycle, and reduce initiatives in fashion brands is critical for driving sustainability. Providing consumers with a legitimate motive (e.g., wear our clothing and we will repair or recycle it) for investing in circular brands will help to drive demand. According to Gwen Cunningham from Circle Economy, “connecting existing infrastructure to new developments and pilots, making use of the capacity, skills, and knowledge already in existence is key.” If fashion brands can incorporate repair models into their current business strategy, this will also help strengthen the brand connection with existing consumers.

4. Education and consumer communication

Initiatives to educate designers, merchandisers, and suppliers would help instil an understanding of circular processes and principles.

Vivek Singh from Your Public Value suggested that organisations “embed the circular production and economy principle in their codes of conduct” to help aid compliance with the model. At the same time, integrating sustainable values in fashion universities and higher education curriculums will instil circular concepts in future industry leaders, thus facilitating the transformation process through ingrained teachings.

Sandy Black, from the Centre for Sustainable Fashion (CSF) of the University of the Arts London, said that education is one of the prime activities at CSF. She gives the example of the recent launch of the “first online sustainable fashion course in collaboration with Kering.” The [course](#) provides an introduction to the issues, agendas, and contexts involved in making the fashion industry sustainable.

Making consumers aware of the impact of their shopping habits and educating them on the circular economy is critical for gaining support for sharing models. Raising awareness through different platforms can help to make circular and sharing initiatives more mainstream. Caroline Holme, at GlobeScan, cited [Elle UK's sustainable fashion edition](#) as a strong example of the power of media. By engaging consumers through advertisements in stores, in public, and on social media, the message will remain consistent and clear.

“ *Trend-led consumerism must be forced to be made in a way that reduces its impacts and is recyclable, entirely—then it can be made into next season's trends—and if those were rented, then returned wholesale and got rid of, it would be great.*

– **Holly Browne**, formerly MADE-BY

“ *Many participants felt that celebrities and influencers have a powerful role to play in endorsing circular, sharing, and collaborative business models. Tapping into their potential is critical for raising awareness and appealing to mainstream consumers.*

– **Sigrid Barnekow**, Mistra Future Fashion

5. Incentives and regulatory changes

Incentives and regulatory changes are powerful tools for supporting and accelerating the move toward a circular economy.

Arthur ten Wolde of Ecopreneur.eu suggested financial incentives in the form of “extended producer responsibility (EPR), tax shift, and VAT differentiation” were practical examples of leveraging cost for overall good. Legislation is also referred to as a lever for shifting the status quo. Chris Coulter of GlobeScan proposed learning from the “progressive regulatory schemes in Brussels and California” that have shown how regulations can help to “shift industries toward more circular behaviours.”

The “carrot and stick” approach has been utilised in reducing plastic bag use in the UK, and several participants mentioned it as a possible solution to disrupting the industry. Simple deterrents for consumers of fashion can also play a role—for example, deposits for clothes (similar to those introduced for plastic bottles in the USA).

“ *Right now, there are few disincentives for linear consumption. NYC spends \$60M/year carting textiles to landfills. If consumers/residents/businesses felt that cost (like through Pay to Throw programs some municipalities have), perhaps that could help people start to treat clothing more like a commodity and less like trash.*

– **Kate Daly**, Closed Loop Partners

Crucial Actors for Unlocking Circular Models

Key Learning

Although it is essential to involve individual actors for specific elements, there is greater opportunity in engaging with all actors and leveraging collaborative efforts to realise the full potential of circular business models.

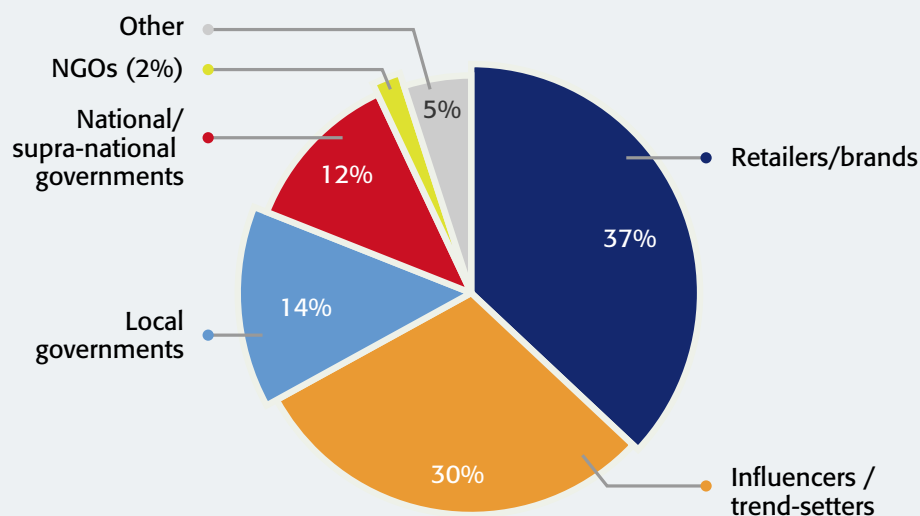
Many participants emphasised the need to bring everyone on board with the movement toward a circular and shared economy. To achieve an industry-wide transformation, all actors need to be involved and committed. As mentioned earlier, collaboration and partnerships were highlighted as critical enablers of the transition.

“ *Collaboration and partnering as well as agreeing to a common platform and language in order to communicate is one example, and the frame for this conversation is the SDGs. Let's all agree to use this common framework to share information and promote the use of tools and reports.*

– La Rhea Pepper, Textile Exchange

POLL 2

Which one of the following actors is most crucial to closing the loop with fashion consumers? (n=43)



Retailers and brands

Retailers and brands were named as the most important actors in closing the loop. Consumer-facing brands have a strong influence on consumers, and they are accountable to both to customers and government. Brands have potential to implement circular and sharing models across the supply chain, encouraging retailers to gradually adapt their business models at pace with consumer demand. At the same time, greater publicity about the role of retailers and a “carrot and stick” approach from legislators will allow for increased accountability and enforcement of circular models.

Influencers

It is also crucial to involve influencers in the transformation to circular. Involving the next generation of celebrities and influencers would help raise awareness of circular initiatives amongst mainstream consumers, educate younger generations on circular models, and promote circular fashion as the “next hot thing.”

“ *We need to make circularity easier to understand or, as Vanessa Friedman once said, we need to make sustainability sexy. Until it becomes what the cool kids want, it's hard to create customer demand for it. So, let's get the influencers involved—the YouTube stars, the Meghan Markles, etc.*

– Leslie Johnston, C&A Foundation

Consumers

Consumers also play a key role in accelerating circular and sharing models. Ultimately, they are the actors who have the most impact through their consumption and can shape the way brands innovate. Engaging consumers at scale by leveraging collective expertise in marketing and communication strategies can help educate consumers and provide them with comprehensive arguments for changing their behaviour.

Governments

There is a crucial role for governments, both national and local, in unlocking circular models in the fashion industry. National governments are important in setting the standards for all actors in the supply chain. Policies that foster transformational change will help drive success for the circular movement. Carmen Gama from EILEEN FISHER suggested using the government to “incentivise healthy practices.” Alternatively, disincentives can be particularly useful for encouraging change among consumers, with examples shared from the plastics industry.

Local governments, on the other hand, have an important role in taking responsibility for smaller initiatives in infrastructure, such as collection and recycling of textiles.

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs)

NGOs can reach large populations, instigating effective campaigns and collective action that challenge the consumption culture that we live in. Leslie Johnston from C&A Foundation cited Greenpeace as a great example of how civil society can help to increase the speed at which change occurs: “Greenpeace nudged the industry to embrace zero discharge of hazardous chemicals via its detox campaign.” By bringing NGOs on board, campaigning can be used to raise awareness of the issue of unsustainable consumption and reward brands that make positive shifts toward circularity.

Other

Other critical actors mentioned by participants include employees, fibre producers, and mainstream media.

“ *For the production of circular clothing, you need to start with fibres. Producers need incentives to not source virgin fibres. This happens with many moving pieces... innovation for a comparable raw material, money for that innovation, brands designing/demanding it, governments regulating to accelerate change, academics certifying its sustainability impact, etc.*

– Peter Majernowski, Tyton BioSciences

“ *Another group is employees—they are retailers’ secret weapons! Getting them on board to help educate consumers and act as ambassadors.*

– Caroline Holme, GlobeScan

“ *We need to go beyond influencers to impact the whole society; we should speak about media more generally I believe, and influencers are one of the media actors to engage. Mainstream media also has a role to play.*

– Charline Ducas, C&A

Ways Forward

Key Learning

To drive positive change, actors like C&A Foundation and Fashion for Good can focus on showcasing their efforts to bring about transformation in the fashion industry. Combining actionable initiatives that raise awareness of the cause with collaborations and strong leadership will help to accelerate the pace at which circular models are brought to scale.

Toward the end of the forum, the conversation focused on how actors like C&A Foundation and its strategic partner Fashion for Good can help drive positive change. A collaborative approach was largely advocated to forge new partnerships and initiatives within the industry. Several participants mentioned the need to create a platform with three main aims:

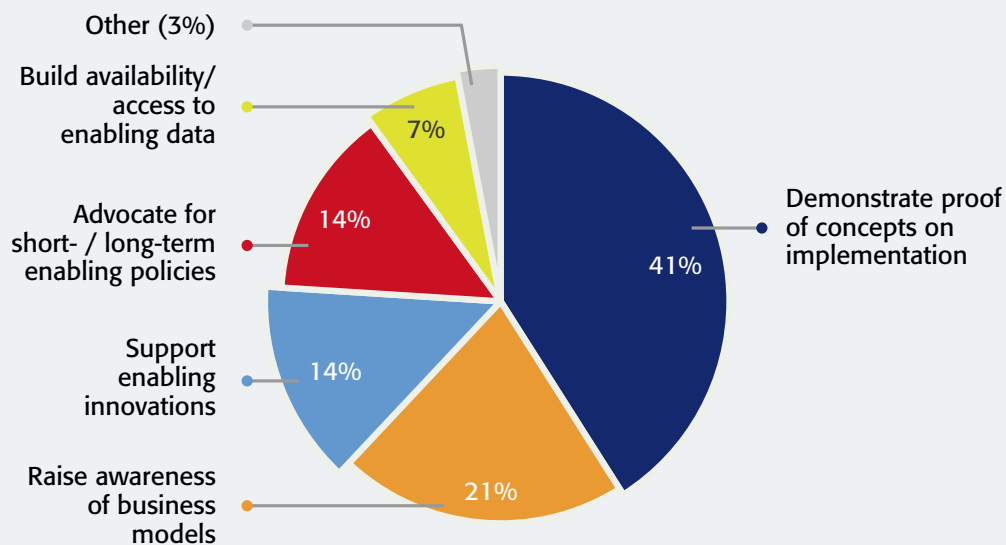
1. To share best practices, successful case studies, expert information, and research;
2. To agree on a common framework that can be applied by all industry players; and
3. To develop innovative tools that can help scale up circularity.



[Fashion for Good](#) was cited as an example of a pre-competitive platform which fosters partnerships between and among brands, producers, retailers, suppliers, non-profits, innovators, and funders.

POLL 3

What kind of initiatives will be the most important for C&A Foundation to close the loop in fashion? ($n=29$)



Our poll question gave some clear direction for C&A Foundation and Fashion for Good. Demonstrating proof of concepts on implementation (e.g., within retail and manufacturing) was voted the most important, underlining the need for more visible initiatives.

C&A Foundation also has the potential to leverage the power of its brand to increase awareness of circular and sharing initiatives amongst mass markets. Marketing and communications strategies are important here to effectively engage consumers via a brand they trust. Another role is working with government and politicians to encourage and support a shift toward regulatory regimes that facilitate and reward the implementation of circular models, which will help to bring more sceptical organisations on board.

Aside from initiatives, participants emphasised the need for strong leadership in driving forward the circular model. If business leaders understand the deeper implications of the linear system that currently dominates the fashion industry, and believe that change is imperative, they will find a way to make progress. Buy-in from leadership of top brands will enable the concept of circularity to gain attention from industry stakeholders (such as investors) who have the power to bring the model to scale.

Additional Sharing Services

[Armarium](#) – A luxury, high-fashion, designer clothing rental service

[Boro](#) – Online marketplace for women to list their own clothes and rent clothing from others

[Fashion Takes Action](#) – A non-profit fashion industry organisation that works with industry and consumers, with the goal to shift behaviour toward more positive social and environmental impacts

[For Days](#) – A zero-waste, closed-loop apparel company that will replace t-shirts bought from them for \$8, whilst recycling the old one

[Freshrents](#) – A fashion service that provides a sustainable solution for communities to rent or buy stylish and affordable occasion wear

[Global Fashion Exchange](#) – An international platform promoting sustainability in the fashion industry by using clothing swaps as well as forums, educational content, and cultural events

[Gwynnie Bee](#) – An online clothing subscription service that allows women to access an unlimited wardrobe

[Infinite Style by Ann Taylor](#) – The Ann Taylor subscription rental program gives its members access to hundreds of Ann Taylor looks for one monthly flat fee

[Let Go](#) – Online or app-based marketplace for a range of “stuff”

[Le Tote](#) – A monthly clothing and accessories rental subscription

[Mud Jeans](#) – A sustainable and fair trade denim brand that takes old jeans, blends them with cotton, and turns them in to new jeans

[North Face Renewed](#) – A re-commerce programme that sees North Face clothing is cleaned, repaired, and re-sold

[Olio](#) – Mobile app that connects communities to allow the surplus of food and household items to be shared

[Patagonia: Worn Wear](#) – Sell, buy, and repair used Patagonia items

[Poshmark](#) – Digital fashion marketplace driven by sellers

[Recommerce](#) – Provides retailers and manufacturers with a comprehensive green approach to managing, remanufacturing, recycling, and selling returned consumer products creating profits from returns

[Re/Done](#) – Vintage denim Levi's which are repurposed as the fabric of new jeans

[Rent Frock Repeat](#) – Rental site for designer dresses and accessories; rent for four or eight days, then return them

[Rent the Runway](#) – A website/app for renting designer clothing

[Stitch Fix](#) – An online, personalised styling service that delivers clothing, shoes, and accessories to your home

[Thredup](#) – Resale site which allows consumers to buy and sell high-quality second-hand clothing

[The RealReal](#) – Women's luxury consignment marketplace for buying and selling luxury goods

[The Renewal Workshop](#) – An apparel company that partners with international brands and retailers to turn waste apparel and textiles into something new whilst maintaining the highest value of the products

[Wool and the Gang](#) – Works with the fashion industry to repurpose waste into new yarn

[Yerdle](#) – Works with leading brands to develop white-label resale channels, enabling companies' customers to return used goods for store credit. Yerdle then repairs and refurbishes those goods so that the apparel companies can sell them again as refurbished under their own brands, complete with warranties, customer service, and return policies.

List of Expert Guest Contributors

Thank you to all of the expert guest contributors who joined us and shared invaluable ideas and experience from a wide range of backgrounds, disciplines, and geographies:

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