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CATALYST 2030

# “Catalyst Change Week 2030”

Coming Back to the Roots: How to Transform the “Fashion System Wisdom” Using Ancestral Techniques & Technologies.



# Catalyzing Change Week 2024

The Catalyst Change Week is dedicated to building the social innovation sector, and to tackle system change solutions with action-oriented sessions focusing on policy, leadership, and innovative solutions. In order to make this happen, the hope is to bring together all actors involved with this change, including grassroots, social entrepreneurs, representatives from the private sector, governmental funders, youths, and others working to address the world's most pressing challenges. Hecho por Nosotros (HxN) believes in a future where tradition and innovation converge seamlessly. HxN and Animaná have dedicated many years to working on this path. Both HxN and Animaná recognize the importance of bridging the gap between grassroots communities, which hold abundant ancestral knowledge and best practices, and the fashion industry. The fashion industry is one of the most harmful industries regarding environmental impact. HxN is a non-profit organization founded by Adriana Marina in 2008; the primary mission of HxN is to shift the fashion industry from a fast fashion economy to a sector that respects the environment and human rights and is in harmony with Fairtrade principles, the ancestral knowledge of Indigenous people and natural raw materials through stakeholders development and emerging technologies.

## Speakers:



Adriana  
Marina



Trish  
Langman



Leonel  
Aguilera



Juanita  
Hernández

## Adriana Marina's Insight

After a few words of welcome, the first dialogue of the event was initiated by Adriana Marina, founder of HxN and Animaná. Adriana begins by stating that everyone must work together to 'catalyze' this system change by learning to collaborate, integrate, and share knowledge. HxN and Animaná are dedicated to collaborating with artisans, producers, and micro, small, to medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) in a transdisciplinary and co-creative manner to develop collaborative solutions. She emphasizes the importance of engaging with key stakeholders to drive systemic change and implement scalable solutions. While facing daily obstacles, Catalyst 2030 is crucial in uniting impact investors, policymakers, and universities that share HxN's vision. There is a pressing need to strengthen and expand this influential space.

In this meeting, she shared the story of HxN and Animaná. Animaná is a social brand that collaborates with artisans and natural fiber producers from Patagonia and the Andes. This

partnership has enabled Animaná to understand the industry's bottlenecks and challenges deeply. The United Nations has declared 2024 as the International Year of Camelids (IYC 2024), which highlights the importance of this species for the livelihoods of millions of households in hostile environments across 90 countries, particularly Indigenous peoples and local communities.<sup>1</sup> This is central to the work of Animaná and HxN as we strive to address the root causes of fragmentation and issues and work towards being co-creators of systemic change.

She highlights that if we delve into it, Camelids produce some of the finest fibers globally. In Patagonia, civilians have the highest and lowest socioeconomic statuses in the world. The question arises about what happens in the middle of this stark contrast. This emphasizes the fragmentation or 'denial' of grassroots in the communities, as their knowledge and wisdom are overlooked. This is where we step in to implement the various tools created by Animaná and HxN in collaboration with the grassroots, aiming to truly understand how to reconnect with our roots, embrace circularity, and ultimately regenerate our system.

<sup>1</sup> Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, retrieved at <<https://www.fao.org/camelids-2024/about/en>>

Adriana states that at HxN, the collaboration with Animaná has facilitated the sharing of co-creation and collaboration practices with stakeholders, students, professionals, and sustainability leaders worldwide. This collaboration addresses the challenges humanity and society face, emphasizing the necessity to engage with diverse stakeholders to develop alternative production concepts. The speaker notes that this has been the ongoing work of HxN, and their consultative status at the UN has enabled them to host over 30 events, promoting their vision of grassroots local wisdom.

As such, we want to answer the question, 'How can we intertwine technology and the tools of HxN's system with grassroots to create innovative circular and regenerative models together?'

Adriana speaks about the "University of Systemic Change," highlighting its role in providing tools for consumers, professionals, and business leaders worldwide interested in embracing circularity and best practices. It is important to remember the significance of supporting local firms, particularly in the global south. Many of these businesses focus on sustainability and circularity but lack the necessary technological tools to truly enhance their local productions and contribute to the development of their communities. Additionally, artisans and producers who are disconnected from the system can significantly benefit from gaining access to technology and tools that can help strengthen their communities and improve their position in the value chain.

## Trish Langman's Insight

Trish Langman plays a vital role as a Managing Partner at HxN and is based in the US. She is an educator and designer who is dedicated to managing educational and African initiatives. Trish is eager to share her insights on the circular economy and emphasizes her integrative work in various regenerative systems, with circularity as a core focus. She underlines that HxN's approach revolves around co-creation and collaboration, working with educators and designers worldwide. One of the main projects at HxN has been the development of a 'toolkit.' The goal of this toolkit is to provide access to information about systems such as circularity. She points out that there is a linear mindset regarding consumer behavior, with little consideration for the long-term impact of clothing. She believes there needs to be a shift towards a more circular way of thinking. This 'circular thinking' has led many individuals, especially designers at the beginning of the product cycle, to approach their work with greater intention and mindfulness. They are now designing with a focus on being more conscious of the materials being used and their sources, intending to enable easier recycling. The concept of a circular economy

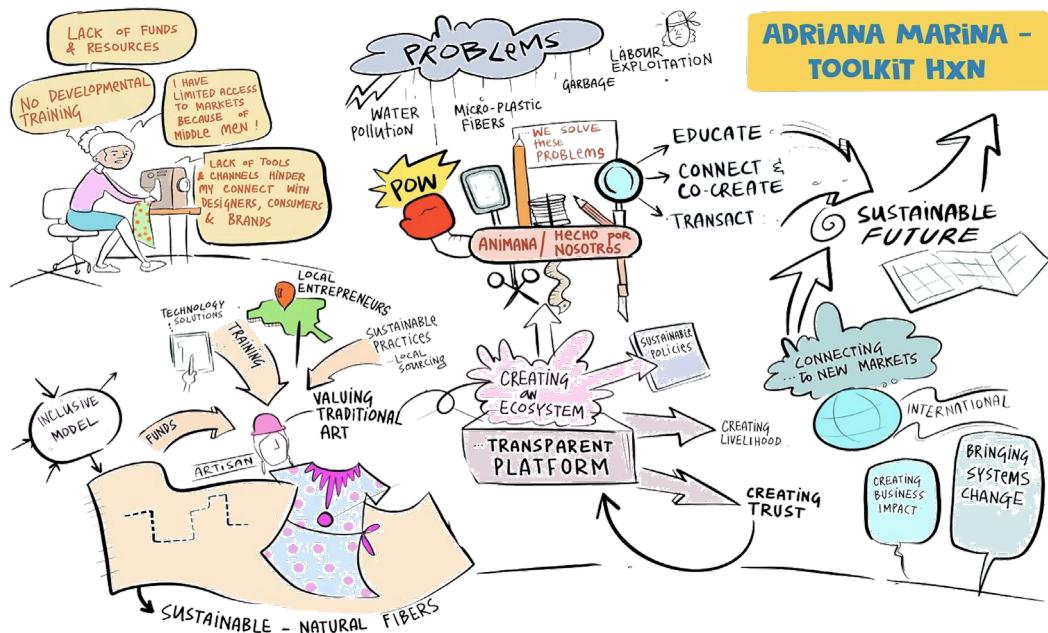
involves keeping products within a circular system. For instance, when purchasing a piece of clothing, it is essential to consider its end of life and how it can be repurposed. HxN is dedicated to integrating and advancing the circular economy through technology. By offering access to tools, we empower people to turn the concept of circularity into a tangible reality within their communities. Large corporations that generate significant amounts of waste can benefit from adopting a circular approach to managing their products' end-of-life phase. This shift in thinking is crucial for environmental sustainability. Implementing a circular economy can also be effectively carried out on a local scale, and this is a fundamental aspect of HxN's approach. HxN works with grassroots and indigenous communities, which are inherently more sustainable due to their harmony with nature. They provide tools and education to help these communities understand the potential of their resources, learn about systems, and utilize resources like the HxN toolkit. This empowers local producers to expand their operations if they wish or to maintain their livelihoods in a manner that ensures they are treated fairly. In the fashion industry, prosperity is often not distributed equitably, so creating opportunities

for fair treatment is essential. One key takeaway from the toolkit is the concept of co-creation, collaboration, and drawing on our ancestral knowledge to inform our practices.

Trish specializes in teaching about wovens and knits, emphasizing techniques that are in harmony with nature, considering the materials being used. While these methods historically operated on a localized scale, the current

mass-scale production in the industry presents challenges in implementing such sustainable systems. Thus, this is what HxN intends to do with our toolkit; we have ensured that our tools and educational initiatives raise awareness among businesses, localized communities, and the next generation of changemakers. This is a sum of what Trish does and how HxN integrates technology and ancient wisdom with circularity.

## Hecho x Nostros' Toolkit



## In the Toolkit project,

HxN is focusing on promoting traceability throughout the value chain, building the reputation of natural fibers, and underscoring the value of ancestral wisdom. Additionally, HxN is facilitating, training, and building resources for artisans, designers, and MSMEs. Through this platform, HxN plans to deliver circular, sustainable solutions to designers, producers, and fashion practitioners. HxN hopes to help MSMEs scale up their ventures in a sustainable way and enable designers to use circular design techniques.

Leonel Aguilera is a collaborator for HxN and provides an in-depth look at the HxN toolkit during the event.

Using the mindmap mentioned above, Leonel illustrates how HxN's goal is to connect artisans with resources that help them prepare their goods for the market and elevate them from the sidelines to the forefront of the global fashion economy. Several volunteers are currently working on this initiative, collaborating and contributing to developing this toolkit for education and collaboration.

This toolkit stands out due to its comprehensive approach and dedication to sustainable and ethical practices. It's not just a resource but a roadmap for driving change. HxN is dedicated to aiding micro, small, and medium textile enterprises (MSMEs) that strive to adopt

sustainable practices and eventually surpass industry standards. For instance, it integrates cutting-edge technology like blockchain into the industry to ensure traceability and integrity.

The HxN toolkit's roadmap is designed to be straightforward and strategic. It begins with an educational platform covering business management, sustainability, supply chain, creativity, and environmental practices. This is followed by a networking app, which aims to bring together diverse actors from various backgrounds with practical experiences, fostering the co-creation of solutions. Finally, the toolkit culminates in a business-to-business marketplace tailored for small and medium enterprises—a platform to highlight sustainable practices and products, demonstrating the successful implementation of the toolkit.

The vision for the toolkit is to address some of the fashion industry's most pressing challenges. These include issues such as water pollution, microplastic fibers, and labor exploitation. The speaker explains that the fashion industry uses approximately 9 billion cubic meters of water annually, contaminating bodies of water with dye and chemicals. Additionally, nearly 500,000 tons of microplastics from synthetic materials enter our oceans yearly, causing irreversible damage to marine life. Furthermore, millions of garment workers, predominantly women, earn below living wages and are subjected to poor working conditions. Leonel states that the HxN toolkit is not just a solution to the fashion industry's challenges but also a gateway to a more sustainable and ethical future. The toolkit empowers artisans and MSMEs by bringing together Animaná and HxN and providing a platform for collaboration and market access. This transparent platform seeks to transition the

fashion industry from a fast fashion economy to one that respects the environment, human rights, fair trade principles, indigenous knowledge, and natural raw materials. Thus offering a promising future for all the stakeholders. At the core of this ecosystem is the value of traditional art. This toolkit supports local entrepreneurs and artisans by ensuring their traditional skills and products with the expectation of them being able to reach global markets. As such, the toolkit provides training, sustainable sourcing, and production methods, introduces quality control, and offers financial resources to artisans and MSMEs. In the future, advanced technology, such as blockchain, will enhance transparency and traceability, building trust between producers and consumers. HxN's vision is to establish a circular and regenerative economy where artisans and MSMEs can connect to new markets, create livelihoods, and promote sustainable practices such as natural fibers from alpacas and llamas—furthermore, HxN advocates for inclusive policies, creating an ecosystem where trust and transparency can flourish. The HxN toolkit is not just a tool but is a catalyst for change. In the fragmented fashion industry, we aim to create business impacts through sustainable sourcing, transparent supply chains, and a commitment to circularity, inclusivity, and co-creation. By addressing systemic problems and promoting sustainable practices, our toolkit is designed to bring about a significant shift in the industry, making it more suitable, ethical, and equitable. Together, we can empower the fashion industry to become a force for good, honoring traditions, respecting the environment, and promoting economic prosperity. The HxN toolkit bridges the gap in this fragmented industry by addressing systemic problems while creating a more sustainable and equitable future for all stakeholders.

## Adriana Additional Input

Adriana remarks that it is crucial that we transition to projects that are developed from holistic models and a systemic point of view, considering all areas as interconnected. The fragmentation

of our value chains is causing significant damage to our biodiversity, culture, and people worldwide. This fragmentation is reflective of a disconnection within ourselves. We must recognize that we are part of a larger system and play a collaborative role in nature. She states

that without a comprehensive understanding of our system involvement, we risk unintentionally disrupting it. It is critical for HxN to engage with grassroots and artisan producers of MSMEs, as they form the majority of our societies and yet often lack access to essential tools and opportunities. To truly engage in collaborative efforts and enable individuals to grasp the complexity of the value chain, address local issues, and facilitate an exchange of ideas, we can pave the way for a new creative and circular economy aimed at regenerating our system.

The fashion industry is one of the wealthiest sectors, but it also has a significant impact on issues such as biodiversity, immigration, sexual abuse, and human rights violations, often with little to no accountability. The industry's largest

consumers are typically younger generations who support the "hyper-fast" fashion trend, unknowingly contributing to these problems. It's essential for all of us to fully understand and address the negative aspects of this industry and work towards transforming it into a force for good. This transformation requires collective responsibility and a shift towards a new creative and circular economy. To achieve this, we need to consolidate knowledge and resources into a platform for systemic change, such as the HxN Toolkit, and raise awareness and share insights with universities and organizations.

Furthermore, Adriana eloquently introduced Vanessa, highlighting her personal journey in this field and her ongoing advocacy based on her experiences working with HxN.

### **Vanessa's Testimony**

Vanessa introduces herself by sharing her background. She grew up in Pachacútec, Peru, a village that was isolated from the city and covered in sand for many years. She describes the challenges of lacking access to basic necessities such as water and electricity, often relying on donations and second-hand clothing for resources like food and clothing.

Despite her humble upbringing, she earned a scholarship to study Fashion Design in Spain. Upon arrival, she experienced a culture shock, witnessing the prevalence of hyperconsumerism and the disposable nature of clothing. Once the winter season started in Europe, Vanessa stated that she had bought winter clothing intended for her 4-year stay but hardly lasted months instead. She was surprised by the fact that second-

hand clothing from Peru lasted longer than the clothing she had bought in Spain. Vanessa was particularly saddened by the realization that the clothes purchased in European countries were manufactured by industries that exploited workers, enabling European consumers to access cheap 'fast fashion.' She expressed, "Having worked in a factory myself, I can empathize with the hardship, but I cannot fully comprehend the exploitative conditions that my colleagues endured." Once she returned to her home country, her colleagues endeavored to explore alternative methods for reusing or recycling their clothing rather than simply discarding it. Upon returning to Peru, she dedicated herself to learning how to sew and repair clothing. This led her to become a clothing designer, committing to producing sustainable products in line with the practices of our ancestors while also ensuring dignified working conditions for her employees.

## **University Hecho x Nosotros**

Since 2008, HxN has collaborated to establish an ecosystem for building capacity, which is centered on a "learning by doing" approach. At HxN University, capacity building is closely

linked with local initiatives and global policies and involves MSMEs, entrepreneurs, artisans, designers, students, professionals from various fields, NGOs, Ashoka fellows, international

organizations, and universities. HxN University has jointly developed courses, seminars, webinars, workshops, training sessions, and discussions that introduce social innovation tools aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals and strive for a paradigm shift towards systemic change. As a member of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and an Ashoka fellow, HxN regards these as essential components for achieving lasting social and economic transformations.

Juanita Hernandez is a collaborator of the artisan capacity-building team at HxN, where she works closely with artisans in Colombia. The organization is deeply committed to preserving heritage and cultures, with a particular focus on supporting these skilled artisans. Through University HxN, these individuals have the opportunity to not only enhance their existing knowledge but also to develop new skills, ensuring that their unique expertise is passed down through generations. Juanita finds it incredibly rewarding to witness the transformation of these artisans as they gain confidence in their abilities and projects, all thanks to the support provided by HxN.

The University is dedicated to providing artisans with tools and resources to establish their own enterprises, allowing them to expand their expertise through the use of colors and catalogs and to create their own collections. By participating in capacity-building programs, artisans can better position themselves to compete in international markets and become part of the fair trade movement, which ensures fair compensation for their work and helps them recognize the true value of their contributions. Additionally, they come to understand that their intergenerational knowledge is invaluable. By preserving cultures and intergenerational knowledge, we also contribute to preserving biodiversity. The UN IYC 2024 recognizing their vital role in providing essential services and their incredible resilience. This underscores the significance of HxN's work, and Juanita is thrilled to witness firsthand how local artisans skillfully craft products using wool from native wildlife. The use of technology in these processes allows artisans to share their knowledge with a global audience, turning their expertise into a valuable learning experience for people around the world.

## Adriana's Final Remarks

Adriana, founder of HxN and Animaná, thanked Juanita for her input and explained how Animaná worked with camelids in the Andean region alongside artisan producers. The aspiration was to share these new insights with leaders and professionals globally using the system change approach. Emphasizing the importance of sharing each of the tools to facilitate within each community, they co-created new tools to continue enhancing and enriching the toolkit.

Adrianna emphasizes the importance of understanding the message conveyed by our fashion choices. She describes fashion as an unpredictable phenomenon where our preferences change rapidly. She believes we should adopt a rebellious attitude by being passionate about our clothing and reflecting on

our personal experiences. By raising awareness about fast fashion, we can encourage more responsible consumer behavior and promote a sustainable fashion industry. It's time to embrace a fashion revolution, making choices that benefit the planet and its inhabitants.

Adriana concluded the event by expressing gratitude to all the participants and speakers in attendance.

Trish, managing partner of HxN, made some thought-provoking concluding remarks on the topic of behaviors, emphasizing that consumer involvement is crucial for addressing clothing-related issues. She highlighted the lack of awareness and education surrounding the ethical aspects of clothing, a fundamental

human right. She stressed the need to educate future generations about the importance of wearing ethically produced clothes. Trish also pointed out that many consumers are unaware of toxins in clothes and the exploitation of workers in the clothing industry. Furthermore, she discussed how HxN collaborates with indigenous communities, exposing them to diverse languages, rich cultural traditions,

and knowledge systems through textiles. This collaboration helps preserve traditions and awareness among professors, students, and families about the significance of reconnecting with our roots through textile materials.

In conclusion, remember to choose wisely, wear responsibly, and let your fashion choices speak volumes about the world you want to create.

## Special Thanks to Catalyst 2030

On behalf of Hecho x Nosotros, we would like to extend our deepest gratitude to Catalyst 2030. Catalyst 2030 is a global movement committed to achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030, fostering collaboration among social entrepreneurs, innovators, governments, businesses, and communities. With the support of ecosystem partners like Ashoka, Echoing Green, the Schwab Foundation of the World Economic Forum, and the Skoll Foundation, Catalyst 2030 has been a beacon of hope and progress.

Thank you, Catalyst 2030, for being an integral part of our journey and their commitment to a more sustainable future for all to "catalyze" this system change.