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“Weaving Wisdom, Building Futures: Awakening the potential Latin American Dialogue on Sustainability”

Side event Hecho por Nosotros.



This event,

hosted by Hecho por Nosotros, focused on the potential that Latin America has as a region in terms of sustainability, circularity and innovation, especially through the younger generations. Thus, we discussed our future, challenges and opportunities, and how empowering young people is the first step in order to build a brighter future, and be successful in the completion of the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2023 Agenda. More specifically, with this event we hoped to highlight the interconnection between ancestral roots, circular digital innovation and inclusive entrepreneurship; showcase successful models and case studies where systemic change has been achieved; encourage the active engagement and participation of diverse stakeholders; and finally, foster local empowerment and collaboration.

Our session began with some welcoming words from Julia Salas, leader of Hecho por Nosotros, and founder of Julia Salas LLC, and Draft and Plans, on behalf of Adriana Marina, founder of Hecho por Nosotros & Animaná. She emphasized the significance of systemic change for sustainable development, and highlighted how HxN fosters collaborative networks throughout Latin America to promote innovation and cooperation. Afterwards, she presented the speakers who were going to participate in the discussion, each one of them representing different sectors such as academia, youth entrepreneurship, sustainable development and policy-making. The objective of their discussion was to delve into tailored strategies for Latin America and the Caribbean, and showcase how their own initiatives aim to enhance systemic change while promoting collaboration and innovative development, ultimately striving for fairer and more sustainable societies.

Before the panelist discussion began, Leonel Aguilera and Juanita Hernández, both HxN collaborators, presented the toolkit developed by Hecho por Nosotros for MSMEs. Firstly, Leonel mentioned the role it can play in generating systemic change through education and collaboration, as well as the possibility of creating a new reality in which technological advances reflect the practices of artisans and small businesses, and allow them to participate in global value chains. On the other hand, Juanita explained

the impact that the toolkit has had in the lives of artisans and how it strengthens the technical, design and entrepreneur capacities of artisans, developing an ethical and innovative production capacity. Once Leonel and Juanita intervened, the discussion began.

The panel was based on the following Guiding Questions for discussion/s:

- What specific strategies do you recommend to promote systemic change and embrace circular economy practices?
- How can we encourage social innovation? Can you provide an example?
- Can you discuss the impact of collaborative efforts among cross-sector partnerships on advancing systemic change?

The first panelist was Luciana Mitjavila, Executive Director of the Sustainable Development Hub at Universidad Andrés Bello, whose work focuses on promoting the SDGs. During her intervention, she mentioned the importance of developing methodologies to create sustainable, circular and conscious businesses, and that collaboration is key in order to generate transformation and solutions with regards to social and environmental issues. Giselle Della Mea, founder of 3Vectores, the first B Corporation in Uruguay, followed as the next panelist, and she affirmed that toolkits are useful to promote creative thinking, since it is a crucial way to combine academy and cultural change. Additionally, she advocated for new ways to connect design thinking with creative economies, specially in the case of Latin America, since the region's interest in these kinds of economies have been rapidly increasing in the last few years.

Subsequently, Andrea Escobar, representative of Catalyst 2030, spoke about the existing alliance between Catalyst and HxN, and mentioned its importance to generate collaborative opportunities and a safe space for different initiatives to surge and thrive through intersectoral work.

Finally, Eduardo Íñiguez, director of Enactus México, was the last speaker, and he talked about the work of Enactus and their focus on projects led by

young university students, where they are given the opportunity to get involved in sustainable and innovative solution-making processes.

After the panel, the speakers delve into a deep conversation in regards to the topics above. Giselle Della Mea opened the discussion and stated that we need to focus on multiplying concrete actions with specific tools to deepen the adoption of these new concepts in the circular economy.

On the other hand, Eduardo Íñiguez highlighted that entrepreneurship has become trendy, but there's a need to address the romanticized notion of it within the context of a capitalist model. In this sense, solutions should address social issues while also contributing to a circular economy that gives back to the planet. He concluded by emphasizing circularity and creating positive impact through innovative business models.

Andrea Escobar, representative of Catalyst 2030, stated that in order to create growth the focus needs to be on the importance of engaging multiple stakeholders to accelerate results and improve business practices. For her, multi sector collaboration is key for success. Innovation and sustainability are essential for long-term entrepreneurial success, supported by education.

Luciana Mitjavila agrees with Andrea and accentuates the idea that collaboration on shared needs is critical for success. To create this collaboration, a new type of leadership is required to transform businesses. The keys to achieve success are: 1) Raising awareness of the necessary changes, 2) Equipping professionals with new skills to lead the shift, and 3) Fostering innovation within companies. Support ecosystems for entrepreneurs should focus on practical, easy-to-use tools.

For Leonel Aguilar, social innovation relies on partnerships and coalitions. Social entrepreneurs require different support strategies compared to traditional startups. He underlines that incremental development is often the path to success for social innovators, as it helps achieve partial goals that enable future advancements.

Following Leonel's comment, Miss Mitjavila delves into the idea of support strategies on social entrepreneurs. For her, raising awareness is key to fostering entrepreneurship as well as organizing youth events where they have a voice that can strengthen and build an agenda for change. Social entrepreneurship needs to connect public, private, and academic sectors to empower young people and motivate them.

Andrea accentuates that we should foster spaces for social innovation. It's essential to understand whose problems are being solved and include communities in co-creation processes. Solutions should come from listening to the ideas and talents of the community, with a focus on collaboration and inclusion.

Finally, the conversation concluded when Eduardo Íñiguez stated that young people have extraordinary talent and agreed that a deep understanding of the problem is necessary to create appropriate solutions. However, he thinks that projects should be profitable, but collaboration and competition are both important as competition drives innovation.

For her closing statement Julia Salas, in representation Adriana Marina, founder of Hecho por Nosotros and Animaná remarked that we must heed the invitation of all panelists to continue fostering intersectional collaboration and developing tools to change the system. To achieve this, it is essential to seek out pioneers and key allies, and to strive to develop new business models with the central goal of giving back to the planet. She also highlighted the importance of focusing on education and awareness, as well as on leadership and business transformation. It is crucial to train young people within the framework of the SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) so they can become leaders capable of driving systemic change.

Hecho por Nosotros envisions igniting systemic change and unlocking human potential in a journey towards a world built on sustainability, justice, and resilience. This vision is not one that can be achieved alone; it is a collective effort that requires the harmonization of policymakers, communities, the private sector, social organizations, academia, and civil society, working together to share knowledge and experiences.

Thank you for helping us fulfill our vision.