

CHANGING FASHION: TOWARDS A REGENERATIVE FUTURE

**Learning from the Rethink
Fashion project on growing
capacity, capability and
collaboration among
trailblazers**

By Rebecca Ford,
Head of Collaboration
and Learning Design

RSA

Acknowledgements

A massive thank you to the Rethink Fashion team, cohort, and guest contributors for the wisdom and unique contributions each of you brought to the journey:

Project team: Rebecca Ford, Josie Warden, Natalie Ortiz and Gabriella De Rosa from the RSA; Nat Hunter from Other Today.

The cohort: Comet Chukura, Trishna Daswaney, Nina Falk, Sara Grady, Sophie Hawkins, Mairi Lowe, Rob Nicoll, Adam Robertson, Alice Robinson, Layla Sargent, Nat Spencer, Bisma Whayeb.

Guest contributors: Elodie Rousselot and Chiara Catgiu (Ellen MacArthur Foundation), Viola Clark, Vanessa Podmore, Joanna Choukeir (the RSA), Deborah Barker (Southeast England Fibreshed) Cat Drew (Design Council), Jodi Muter-Hamilton and Davina Appiagyei (Fashion Roundtable).

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The Rethink Fashion methodology uses the RSA (The royal society for arts, manufactures and commerce) [Regenerative Futures design principles](#) and our [Living Change Approach](#). It builds on previous RSA research [From Design Thinking to Systems Change](#), and the Economic Security Impact Accelerator methodology developed by the RSA and Alt-Now and outlined in [The Impact Entrepreneur](#) by Rowan Conway, Charles Leadbeater and Jennie Winhall.

Special thanks to some key Rethink Fashion collaborators whose thinking and practice shaped our approach: Nat Hunter, who co-designed and co-facilitated a number of the group sessions and coached the cohort; Cat Drew, Chief Design Officer at the Design Council, who led a two-day Systemic Design Sprint with the cohort bringing theory, stories and methods from her [System-Shifting Design](#) work with Cassie Robinson and Jennie Winhall; and Elodie Rousselot, Programme Manager at the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, who provided key insights from the Make Fashion Circular initiative and their forthcoming Circular Design Guide for Fashion.

Shout out to all of the trailblazers and collaborative communities driving change towards a regenerative future within and beyond fashion. You inspire and galvanise us.

In partnership





Rethink Fashion gathering at the RSA in September 2021, six months on from the learning journey

Summary

The RSA wants to see a world where people and communities harness their potential to be sources of health and regeneration for all life on earth. We are working towards this vision across different systems, industries and communities in a highly collaborative way through our Regenerative Futures programme.

Building capability (skills, methods, behaviours) and capacity (mindsets and enabling conditions) in regenerative practice across many sectors and systems is vital to accelerate the transition to this future. The programme is seeking to explore this through five interdependent pathways to change, or 'entry points' for discussion: rethinking finance, lifecycles, lifestyles, movements and leadership. Fashion cuts across them all, and is the system we explored in our Rethink Fashion project.

Fashion is a highly complex and global industry. It is also one of the best – or in this case worst – examples of the damage that an extractive, linear economy causes to both people and planet, creating huge volumes of waste, pollution and exploitation. It is a system which needs radical rethinking to make it fit for a regenerative future in which we address the intertwined challenges of climate change, environmental degradation and inequality.

Transformation towards a regenerative future requires change across every level of the fashion system. In 2020-21, the RSA partnered with the Ellen MacArthur Foundation's Make Fashion Circular initiative, which works with players across the global system, to lead Rethink Fashion: a new project aiming to accelerate change by growing capabilities, capacity and collaboration among trailblazers.

Trailblazers have an important role to play in accelerating transition. They offer 'glimpses' of a potential new, emerging system in the here and now. They show what's possible and shape markets. But they cannot transform the system in isolation; each plays a role among many in influencing wider change. By convening a diverse cohort of 12 'positive deviants' working across different parts of the fashion innovation landscape, we formed a constellation of complementary ventures with a shared mission for transformation and greater collective impact.

In November 2020 we kicked off an in-depth learning journey with the Rethink Fashion cohort. The journey wrapped up with a public showcase in March 2021, followed by an ongoing engagement phase including a six-month reunion and 'impact show and tell' in September 2021. We can see the impact of the project across three layers: the individual trailblazers and their ventures, the group of collaborators as a cohort, and the wider fashion system that together we are working to shift. Here we share the story of Rethink Fashion: the key context, our approach and the change we have seen.

Learning from and alongside the trailblazers and our partners, we have deepened our understanding of the conditions which enable us to push beyond incremental change, and towards transformation. These insights can be applied to systems other than fashion, and so we offer learnings from this project about building capability, capacity and collaborations to accelerate the transition to a regenerative future.

We invite facilitators of and partners in change – past, current and future, as well as anyone interested in building their own regenerative practice – to delve into the related recommendations, reflective questions and resources.

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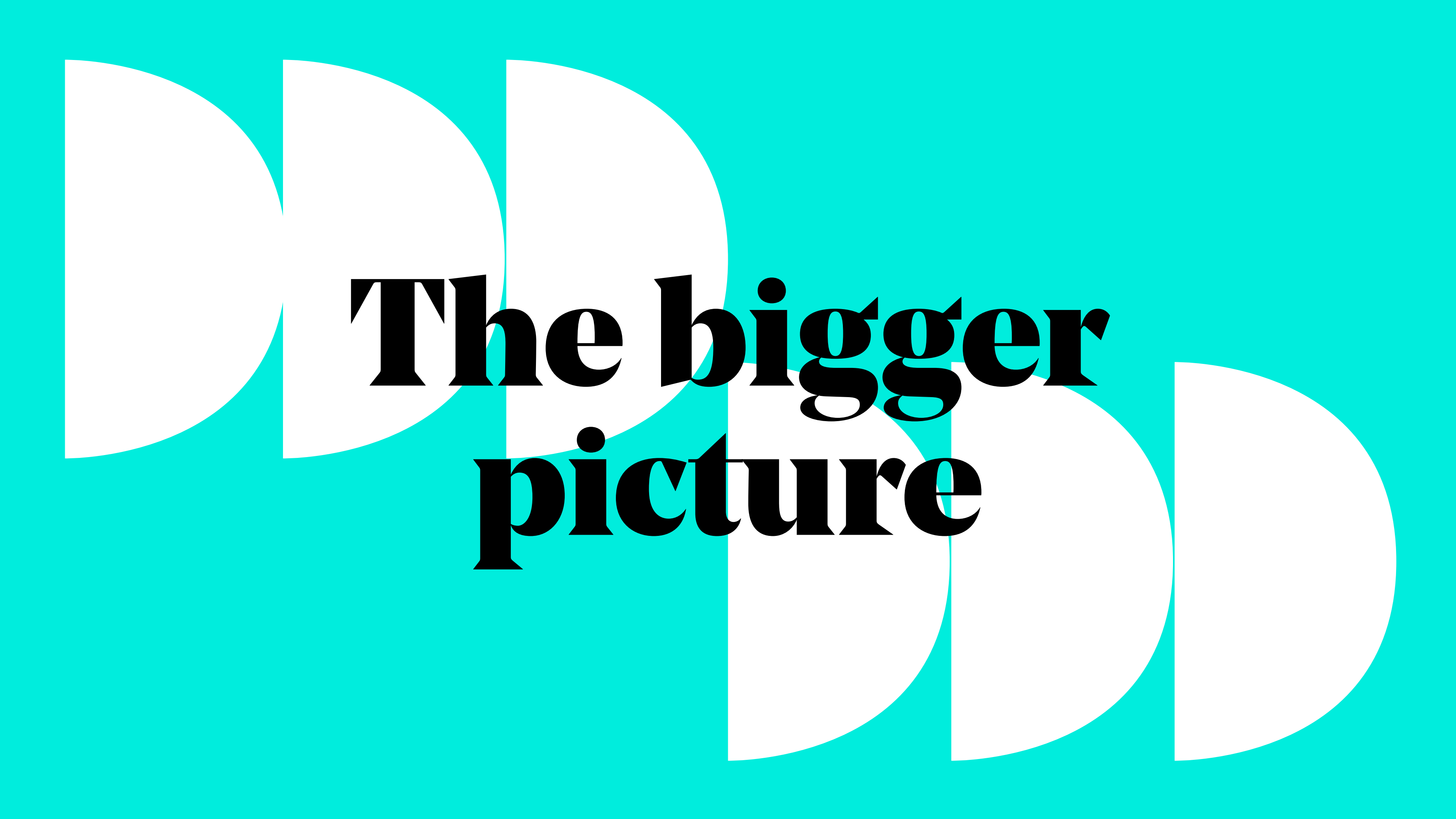
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**The bigger
picture**

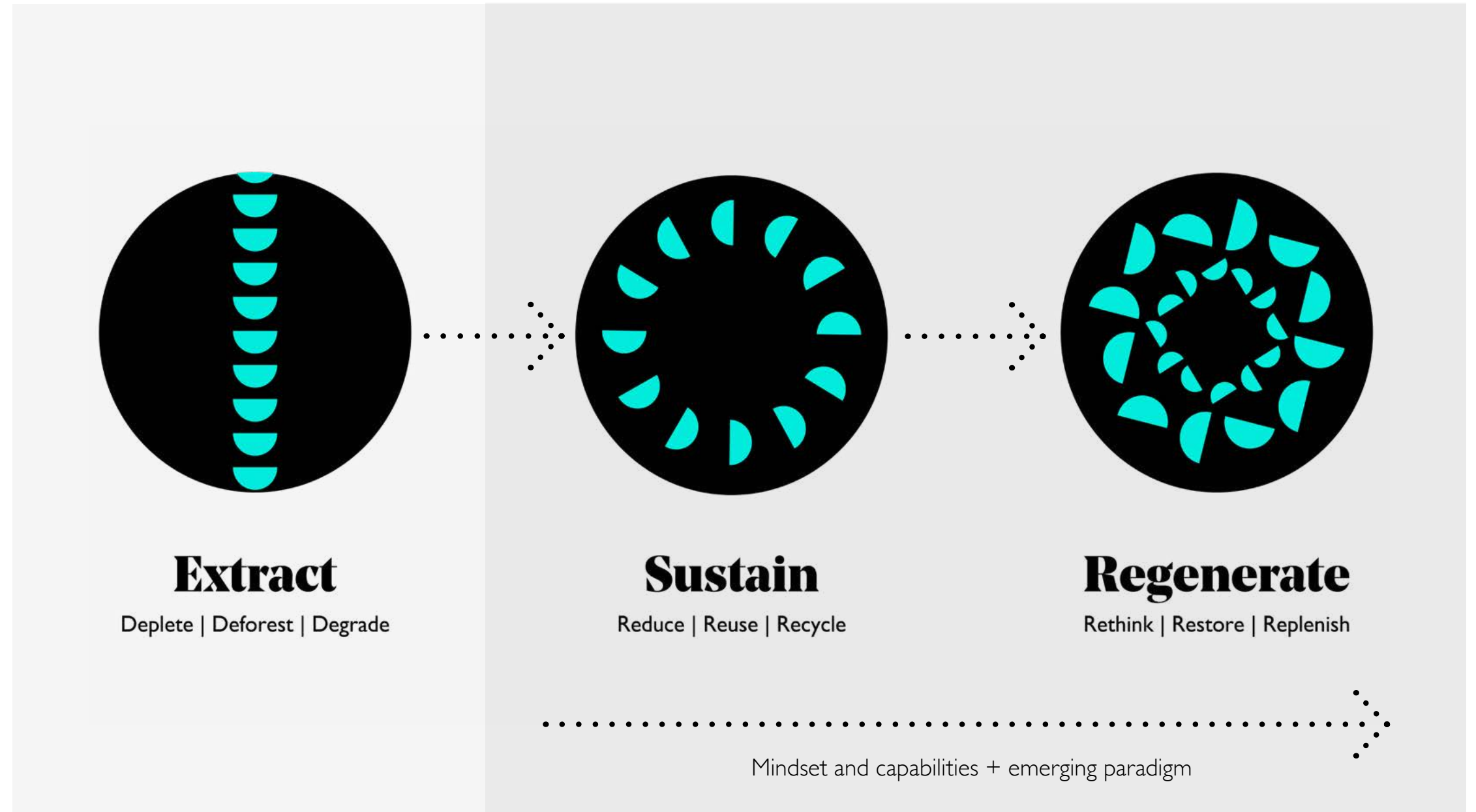
Towards a regenerative future for fashion

At the RSA, we want to see a world where the clothes and accessories we wear improve the health of our communities and our environment. Our social, planetary and economic spheres of life are interdependent, so only by rethinking, restoring and replenishing all three can we improve the health of each in the long term.

Today's fashion industry doesn't fulfil this ambition. Instead, it drives waste, pollution, climate change, and poor conditions for many workers.

We need to move away from an extractive model which takes from communities and the environment, beyond the 'do less harm' model that dominates the sustainability paradigm, and towards a regenerative model, which builds the health of the whole for the long term.

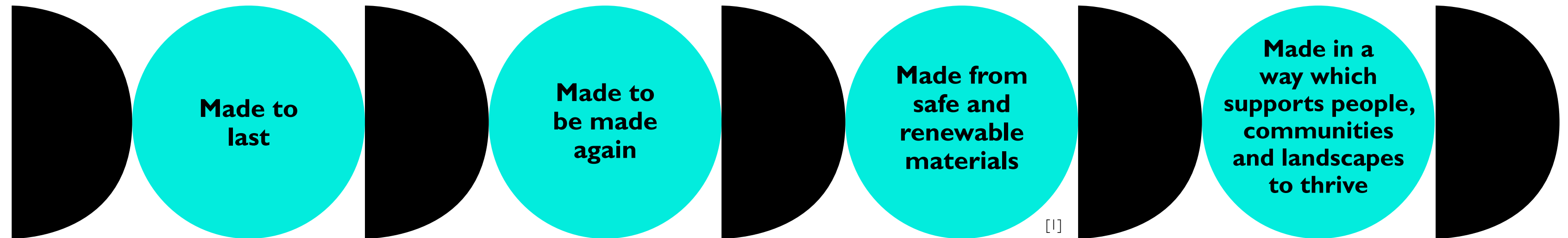
We need to Rethink Fashion.



Shifting the fashion system

Bringing to life this regenerative future requires significant shifts within the system as a whole. We need to think about the purpose of fashion and its relationships with citizens, producers, governments and workers. About how the industry works, what it produces, where it produces it and how clothing is used and cared for. We need to think about the relationship between our clothing and nature.

We want to see fashion transformed so that clothes are:

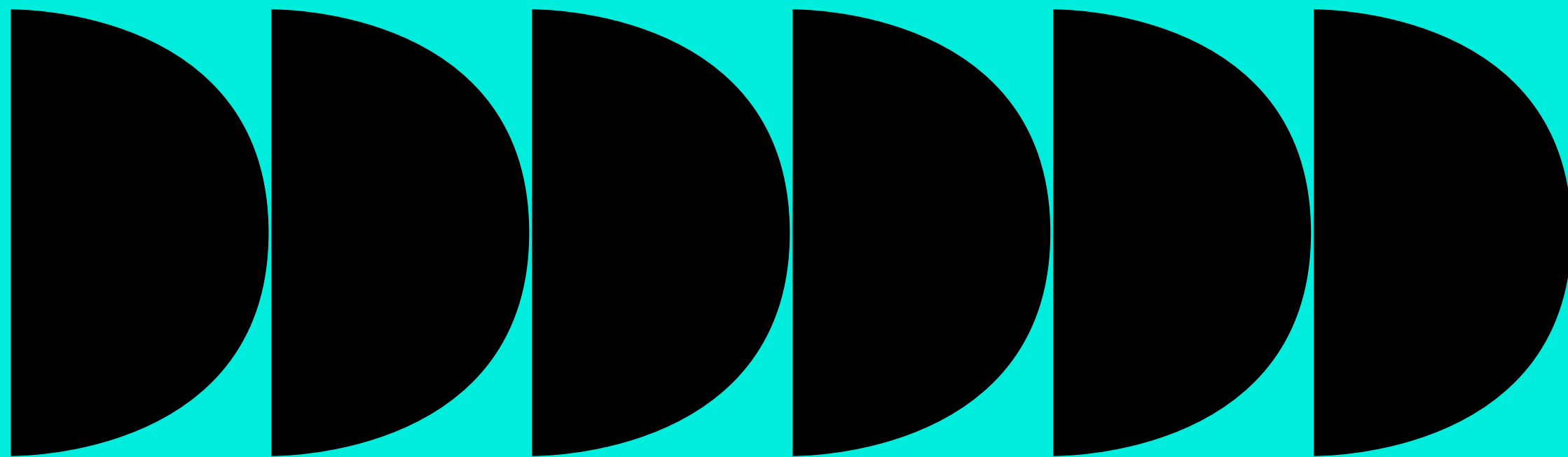


To do this we need change at different layers and in different parts of the system; from the biggest brands to emerging designers and innovators; from policy makers to citizens and educators.

We need to create and bring into being a vision of a different future for fashion, starting now. In doing so we need to build the capacities, capabilities and collaborations necessary for this transformation, because it requires different skills and ways of thinking, working and being.

[1] The first three points form the [Ellen MacArthur Foundation's vision for a circular economy for fashion](#).

**How might we enable
trailblazers to develop the
capacities, capabilities
and collaborations
needed for a regenerative
fashion future?**





**About Rethink
Fashion**

The challenge

Clothes, accessories and textiles play an important role in our lives – they protect us, allow us to express ourselves and furnish our surroundings. But our global fashion system is no longer fit for purpose. The dominant ‘take-make-dispose’ linear system is creating vast amounts of waste, pollution, and exploitation. One truck-full of clothing is burned or landfilled every second,² every time we wash our clothes microfibres are released into the water, and low pay and poor working conditions are rife within the sector globally.

These challenges are complex. The fashion system needs urgent and radical rethinking to make it fit for a future in which we address the interdependent challenges of climate change, environmental degradation, and inequality.

The opportunity

The RSA’s vision of a regenerative future is one where people and communities are sources of health and regeneration for all life on earth. Research by the RSA shows how regenerative thinking and design can enable this future³. To transform a complex, global system like fashion, we need to see change across its different levels and parts.

The Ellen MacArthur Foundation’s Make Fashion Circular initiative works with global fashion players to accelerate the transition to a circular economy for fashion. We partnered with them to lead an 18-month project focusing on emerging trailblazers, complementary to the Foundation’s work with other audiences and parts of the system.

How might we enable trailblazers to develop the capacity, capabilities and collaborations needed for a regenerative fashion future?

What role can pioneering ventures and their leaders play in transforming fashion? Disruptive innovation and change often starts at the ‘edges’, with trailblazers outside of mainstream industry paving the way for large scale systems change.

Our discovery phase research confirmed that there are emerging fashion innovators creating radically hopeful alternatives in the here and now, but they lack learning and collaboration infrastructure that could accelerate transformation.

How might we grow the capabilities (skills, methods, behaviours) and develop the capacities (mindsets and enabling conditions) needed to design for regenerative transformation? And how can we connect and amplify the work of these ‘positive deviants’ to increase their individual and collective impact, and inspire wider change within the fashion system? Rethink Fashion set out to respond to these questions.

[2] Ellen MacArthur Foundation (2017) A New Textile Economy: Redesigning Fashion’s Future [PDF], Ellen MacArthur Foundation. Available at: ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/a-new-textiles-economy.

[3] Warden, J. (2021) From sustaining to thriving together. [PDF] The RSA. Available at: thersa.org/globalassets/pdfs/reports/from-sustaining-to-thriving-together-final.pdf

Our response

What? In 2020-21 we scoped, designed, and delivered Rethink Fashion: a four-month learning journey with a cohort of trailblazing ventures to accelerate the transition to a regenerative future.⁴

Why? To support the leaders of pioneering creative ventures to increase their individual and collective impact towards a regenerative fashion future.

Trailblazers outside the mainstream have a vital role to play in systemic transformation; as 'positive deviants', they offer glimpses of a potential new, emerging future system now. They demonstrate potential, reveal hidden barriers and opportunities, and illuminate alternatives. They can shape markets with the new business models, offers and resources they bring. But leading these ventures can be isolating and demanding work. We identified an opportunity to build capability, capacity and support collaborations for greater collective impact, and in doing so to influence wider change in the fashion system.

Who? We convened a peer learning cohort of 12 trailblazing leaders of small ventures across the UK, from a diverse range of backgrounds, skillsets, and parts of the fashion system: manufacturing, textile design, material development, marketing, journalism, community organising and more. All are creative innovators working on initiatives which tackle the extractive and linear status quo in the fashion system - yet each is addressing different parts of the challenge in different ways. Together, they form a constellation of complementary ventures changing fashion and its relationship to other systems, from food and retail to employment and beauty.

The journey was hosted and delivered by the RSA, in collaboration with the Ellen MacArthur Foundation and a cross-sector faculty of guest contributors from fashion and systems innovation.

[4] 'Ventures' refers to a mix of social innovation initiatives: from early-stage projects to fast-growing start-ups and social enterprises

[5] Cat Drew, Chief Design Officer at the Design Council, led a two-day [Systemic design sprint](#) with the cohort bringing in theory, stories and methods from her System-Shifting Design work with Cassie Robinson and Jennie Winhall.

How? A unique learning experience or 'journey' designed to shift the fashion system by developing systemic and regenerative capabilities, capacities and enabling collaboration among trailblazers.

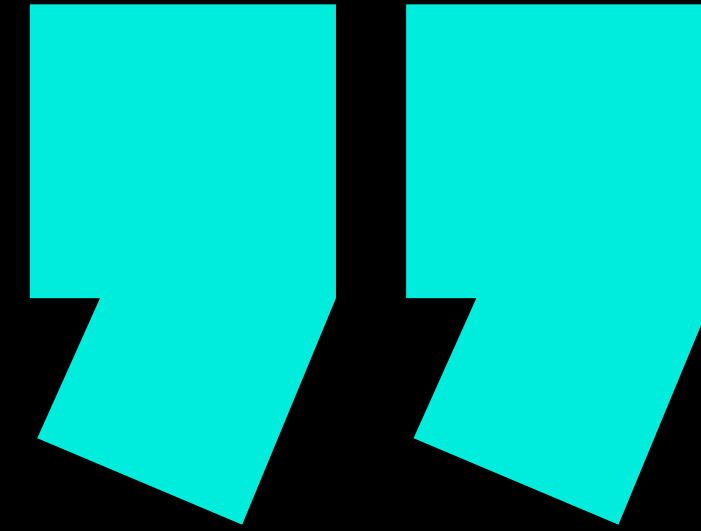
The journey combined collective and self-directed action learning with practitioner-led and peer-led learning, underpinned by the [RSA's Living Change approach](#) and regenerative design principles. The first half of the journey focused on exploring the dynamics in the current system and developing a collective vision of a future where fashion is in service of a regenerative world. The second half focused on working collaboratively to design and test interventions to take action towards that shared vision: through disrupting and remaking the current system, probing and provoking to reveal where there is energy for change, or attracting other actors within the wider system to create the conditions for transition⁵ The journey wrapped up with a public showcase event to share the cohort's learning, and was followed by an ongoing engagement phase capturing and sharing learning and impact.

Running throughout 2020-21, the journey took place during the Covid-19 pandemic - we therefore adapted what would otherwise have been a mix of online and offline sessions into a fully online, participatory learning experience.

Before the state can act, the field must be marked by a first generation of pioneers. Innovators and activists are the only ones capable of doing the hard work at the early stage, namely spotting the new economic and social challenges of the day and discovering the basics of the new mechanisms that can effectively tackle them.

Nicolas Colin

Author of Hedge: A greater safety net for the entrepreneurial age ⁶



The cohort



Adam Robertson

Managing Director/ Founder,
Kalopsia Collective

Creating balanced industry
partnerships between designers
and manufacturers.



Alice Robinson

Co-director, Grady
+ Robinson

Creating the UK's first traceable
supply of leather from British
pastured livestock farms.



Besma Whayeb

Director, Curiously Conscious/
Ethical Influencers

Empowering influencers and citizens
through a digital community
doing good.



Comet Chukura

Founder/ Director,
GLOW & SEE CIC

Creating sustainability, activity
and high visibility whilst
empowering craftswomen.



Layla Sargent

Founder, The Seam

Changing the way people care for their
clothes through a marketplace
for alterations and repairs.



Mairi Lowe

Founding Member,
Sustainable Fashion Scotland

Strengthening capacity for
community-led systems
change in fashion.



Nat Spencer

Materials Researcher and Designer,
Nathalie Spencer Design

Putting innovation in natural
materials at the forefront
of the design process.



Nina Falk

Director, Kalopsia Collective

Creating balanced industry
partnerships between designers
and manufacturers.



Rob Nicoll

Co founder & Chief Marketing
Officer, Chip[s] Board Ltd

Innovating circular economy materials
using industrial food waste.



Sara Grady

Co-director, Grady
+ Robinson

Creating the UK's first traceable
supply of leather from British
pastured livestock farms.



Sophie Hawkins

Director/ Garment Designer, S.
HAWKINS Ltd

Designing circular denim garments
that move with and sustain
through everyday life.



Trishna Daswaney

Director, Kohl Kreatives

Empowering diversity and inclusion
through the power of make-up.

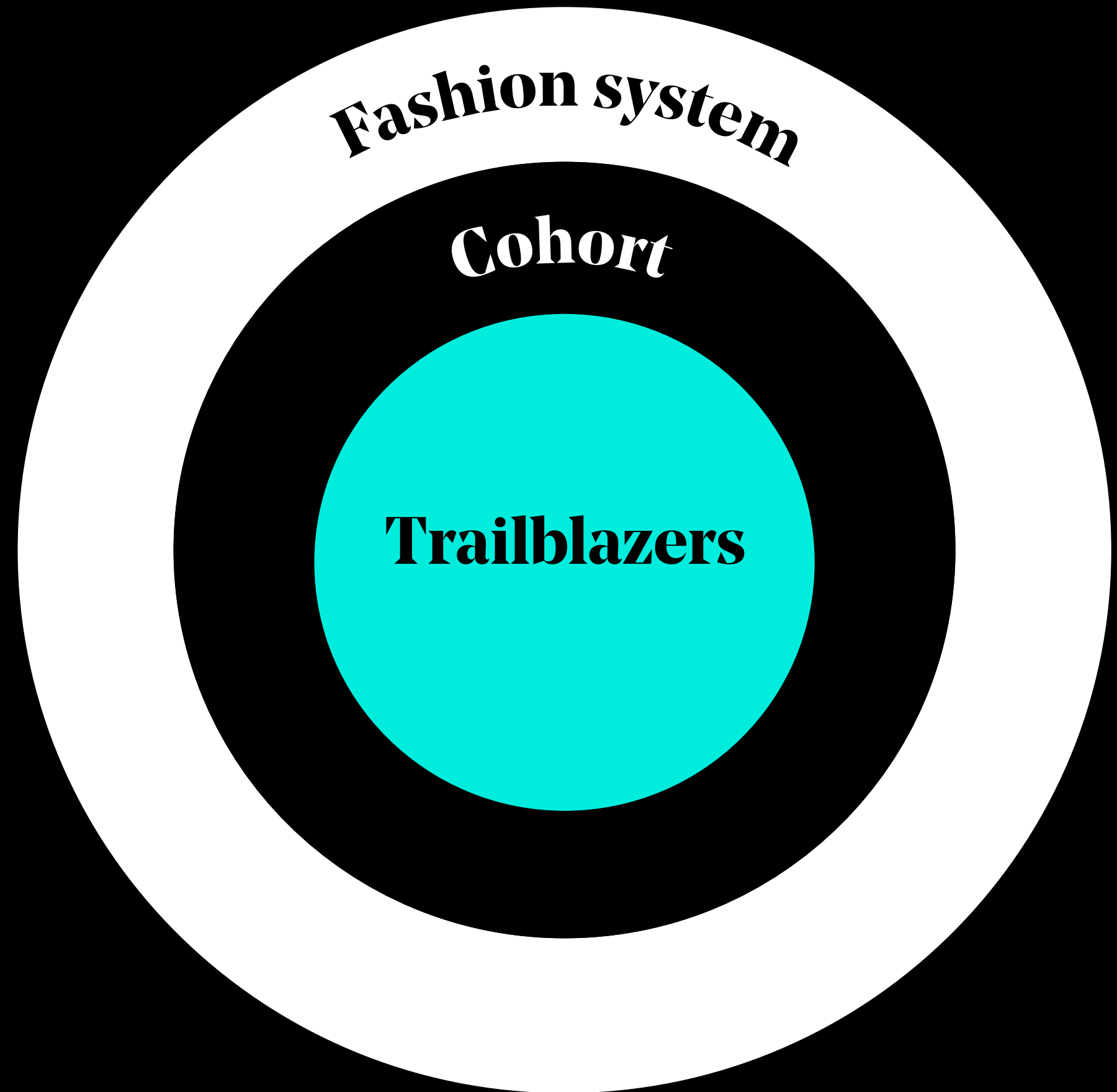
Systemic impact

Layers of impact

Throughout the Rethink Fashion journey we reflected on insights, learnings and shifts at three different layers, which are nested and interconnected:

- 1 Trailblazers level**
Individuals within the cohort and their ventures
- 2 Cohort level**
The Rethink Fashion group as a group of collaborators
- 3 Fashion system level**
The wider fashion system the individuals and cohort are a part of

We can see impact at each of these levels. The shifts that evidence this impact are ongoing; the trailblazers and their ventures have been constantly evolving through their experiences within and beyond Rethink Fashion. We have mapped signals of impact and highlighted related Rethink Fashion activities, acknowledging that this project is one of multiple influences contributing to the change and impact we see.



① Trailblazers: The impact we have seen...

New capacity: Trailblazers transforming their practice and ventures

Signals of impact

Trailblazers demonstrated and self-reported developed capabilities (skills, methods, behaviours) and capacities (mindsets and enabling conditions), enabling them to accelerate the transition to a regenerative future:

- New insights and deeper knowledge of the fashion system.
- Greater understanding and applied experience of circular and regenerative design.
- Expanded horizons and longer term thinking about vision and venture mission.
- Increased resilience, confidence and clarity of mission.
- Developed reflective capacity and self-awareness.

Ventures growing, adapting and evolving with new offers and achievements:

- New ambition and rearticulation of mission.
- Successful investment and funding rounds.
- Expanded business offer and new delivery models.
- New materials developed using waste streams.
- New products launched.
- Pivots towards bolder approaches, turning down opportunities that don't align with regenerative vision.

What we did...

- Researched individual and collective needs and opportunities for trailblazers, through in-depth discovery phase.
- Designed a blended, applied learning experience.
- Delivered a curriculum including masterclasses and workshops led by contributors from across the fashion ecosystem.
- Taught circular and regenerative design principles, frameworks and tools and learned about a living systems worldview.
- Applied frameworks to surface system dynamics and identify needs, assets, energy and opportunities.
- Hosted two-day 'systemic design sprint' which led to new venture-level interventions.
- Developed reflective leadership capacity.
- Offered Organisation and Relationship Systems Coaching sessions with Nat Hunter to support individual trailblazers (as well as collective cohort) leadership and development.

1 Trailblazers: The impact we have seen...

“ I want to continue to disrupt the current, linear system as much as possible... This journey has helped me discern and develop the way I work: really driving a shift to regenerative practices and making it possible for others to be a part of that journey. My experience through Rethink Fashion has helped [myself and business partner Sara Grady] to articulate our desire to drive a paradigm shift towards regenerative leather practices. **Alice Robinson** ”



“ Being a part of this cohort has strengthened my understanding of the dynamics in the fashion system. It's helped me reflect on the perspective I bring and feel better able to navigate constantly changing challenges – I've been using tools from Rethink Fashion in my work at Hylo. **Nat Spencer** ”



“ Things have moved so fast with Chip[s] Board – we raised a substantial amount of money, relocated to Leeds, doubled the size of our team... it's been a period of intense scaling. A takeaway for me has been the value of that reflection space; that regular time to slow down, zoom out and spend time together every week. **Rob Nicoll** ”

Ventures growing with new approaches, offers and achievements



Besma Whayeb
Redefined goals and success measures for working with brands.



Layla Sargent
Successful investment round, now planning to scale The Seam to other cities.



Sophie Hawkins
Relaunched her company in June 2020 with three new circular products.



Trishna Daswaney
New innovations + product launches:

- Feast your Eyes vegan makeup brush collection with Braille QR code and an audio guide to enable customers with visual impairments or motor disabled customers.
- Mi Fan brush with inclusive handle design, made from compostable bioplastic.

Trailblazers demonstrated and self-reported developed capabilities (skills, methods, behaviour) and capacities (mindsets and enabling conditions), enabling them to accelerate the transition to a regenerative future

② Cohort: the impact we have seen...

Collaborations for change: Cohort of trailblazers collaborating to increase their collective power and influence to shift the fashion system.

Signals of impact

Cohort working collaboratively, systemically and entrepreneurially as a group towards a shared long-term vision; demonstrating increased collective capacity to lead regenerative practice across different parts of the system:

- New collective understanding of challenges and opportunities in fashion and how they interconnect.
- New sense of shared mission and understanding of individual roles and purpose within that.
- New sources of peer inspiration and support.
- Sense of collective momentum and resilience
- Trailblazers reframed individual venture challenges and opportunities towards shared regenerative vision.
- Shifts in identity – from entrepreneur to system-shifter within larger mission.

Cohort forming mutually reinforcing relationships and collaborations that sustain and continue evolving towards the regenerative vision:

- Ongoing collaborations six months on.
- Shared articulation of value and depth of relationships formed.
- Using and continually cross-promoting each other's services and products.
- Holding space for shared learning and reflection.

What we did...

- Convened a diverse cohort of Trailblazers with different skills, perspectives, and roles in the fashion system.
- Used a range of frameworks and theories as a group to surface different perspectives and reveal new insights about the system, its challenges, and the opportunities for change.
- Facilitated a collective imagining process to create a dream future vision for fashion in 2050, and explored the different roles they each play in realising it.
- Co-designed a group alliance – articulating intentions for how they want to feel, act and contribute as a community.
- Shared commitment to core guiding principle: “Inviting and valuing multiple perspectives”.
- Hosted two-day systemic design sprint – leading to collaborative and complementary interventions towards shared vision.
- Offered group (as well as individual) coaching sessions to support collaborations.
- Embedded collective reflective rhythms throughout the journey.
- Designed in peer-led learning spaces – within RSA – hosted group sessions and self-organised through regular peer huddles.

2 Cohort: the impact we have seen...

Cohort working collaboratively, systemically and entrepreneurially as a group towards a shared long-term vision; demonstrating increased collective capacity to lead regenerative practice across different parts of the system



It's been really great week on week to talk about the other challenges people find within the same industry. Gaining a much broader understanding of problems across the fashion has allowed me to step back and realise we're part of a larger network of solutions. **Rob Nicoll**



It's been an amazing opportunity to work with people you're not competing with; you're working towards a shared mission. As the journey has gone on, we've been able to trust each other with sharing challenges we're facing and finding cross-collaborations, ways we can genuinely help one another – that's been an amazing thing to come out of this journey and I feel there's so much more to come too. **Besma Whayeb**

Cohort forming mutually reinforcing relationships and collaborations that sustain and continue evolving towards the regenerative vision



In the past couple of months I've given a talk for Trish's university students, collaborated with Kalopsia on an event about rebalancing power and responsibility within the manufacturing sector in Scotland for their community, which I then shared back with my Sustainable Fashion Scotland community ... I'm working with Besma, and I'm keen to showcase the organisations in this group as part of my installation at COP 26.

Mairi Lowe



- Ventures led by other cohort members being showcased by Mairi Lowe within her exhibition at COP26 UN Climate Change Conference - in the Blue Zone negotiation space .
- Ante House: the design house for product reincarnation collaboration – new brand developed by Adam, Nina, Rob and Sophie and launched as a provocation at the Rethink Fashion showcase event .
- Sophie, Comet and Trishina collaborating on 'Design Archive' Instagram Live conversation series.

③ Fashion system: The impact we have seen...

Shaping systemic conditions: Cohort of trailblazers influencing the wider fashion system towards a regenerative future

Signals of impact

Trailblazers working directly with other layers of the system to accelerate change:

- Trailblazers identifying new leverage points for collaboration at different levels of the fashion system.
- New partnerships for change across big businesses, government, educational institutions, campaigning groups and more.

Cohort shaping the wider narrative in fashion - influencing upwards and outwards, demonstrating what's possible, making the future vision tangible now:

- Story of collective vision - and the cohort interventions and collaborations within that – showing 'glimpses' of an emerging future in the present and inspiring wider change.
- Cohort network effect reaching and influencing new audiences, communities, clients, suppliers.

Cohort creating the conditions for wider change to take root:

- Interventions co-designed and tested through Rethink Fashion provoking new thinking.
- Cohort ventures shaping the market with new offers, resources and business models.

What we did...

- Used the RSA's Living Change Approach – including theory and frameworks to deepen understanding of how systemic change happens.
- Mapped different layers of the fashion system, exploring how the work of trailblazers relates to the 'meso' environment of institutions and funding systems and the 'macro' environment of laws, regulations and societal norms with Vanessa Podmore.
- Connected the cohort with guest contributors in different roles and layers of the fashion ecosystem
- Used I/We/World framework to continually reflect on how shifts at the personal and organisational levels relate to wider system change.
- Learned about and tested 'system shifting design' approaches with Cat Drew.
- Engaged with Ellen MacArthur Foundation's Circular Design Guide for Fashion and the Jeans Redesign Project.
- Learned about influencing policy across the fashion and textiles industry with Fashion Roundtable.
- Hosted a Rethink Fashion Showcase event to share the group's vision, collaborations and learning with a public audience.
- Ongoing: sharing the Rethink Fashion story via the RSA's platform and global community.

3 Fashion system: The impact we have seen...

Trailblazers working directly with other layers of the system to accelerate change

Cohort provided feedback on the Ellen MacArthur Foundation's work in progress Circular Design Guide for Fashion.



Mairi Lowe Sponsored by industry partners to host a Sustainable Fashion Scotland space at COP26. A large-scale installation will highlight the interconnected socioeconomic and environmental impacts of the current fashion system and include provocations for policymakers. The installation will be in the United Nations-hosted Blue Zone at COP26 for world leaders and official delegates.



Layla Sargent

Guardian news feature on The Seam and its role in slower, less wasteful fashion: 'Tinker, tailor... the return of made-to-measure clothes'. (November 2020)

Cohort shaping the wider narrative in fashion - influencing upwards and outwards, demonstrating what's possible, making the future vision tangible now



Trishna Daswaney

Kohl Kreatives nominated for the Vogue 2021 Inclusivity Lifetime Achievement Award.



The Rethink Fashion Showcase event attended by audience of 300+ people spanning different sectors and continents.

“ Loved seeing the energy in bringing entrepreneurs together all doing awesome stuff in their own right, and taking a systems view together. No doubt the relationships formed will have ripple effects long into the future!

Audience member Rethink Fashion showcase



Besma Whayeb

Campaigns with the UN and Slow Fashion Movement, circular fashion guide with BAM clothing.

Cohort creating the conditions for wider change to take root

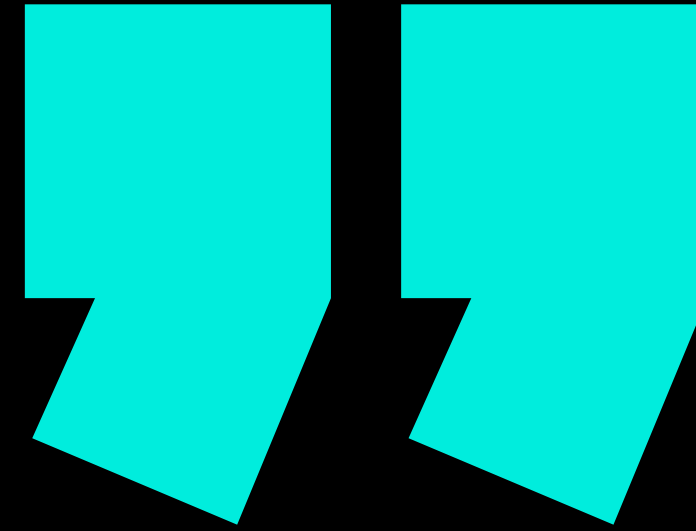


“ Since the journey I've started working with the National Guild Services, where I've been integrating diversity, equity and inclusion into courses for beauty and spa services – that rolls out next month, and means that they will learn about different people and body types, which is quite exciting. **Trishna Daswaney**

Over the past few months I've been seeing threads weaving between everyone, building up trust and creating a sense of strength as a cohort. They've realised that their visions for a regenerative fashion future are really aligned, and that they share a mission. This brings the much needed energy that will be able to create change.

Nat Hunter

Director, Other Today
and Systems Coach



Stories of impact - Alice Robinson and Sara Grady



Arriving into Rethink Fashion...

We'd formalised our partnership earlier in 2020, and when Rethink Fashion kicked off we were in the thick of our pilot creating a new traceable supply of leather made from the hides of pastured animals raised on agro-ecological or regenerative farms. Our mission is to connect leather to land stewardship and to the lives of grazing animals that benefit landscapes and ecosystems. We focus on changing perceptions within the industry, as well as making new material choices available.

We arrived at Rethink Fashion grappling with how to share the story of the farming practices involved in making leather – to help people to understand the implications and educate designers about their material choices; about what their involvement can do to create change in supply chains. We saw how valuable building a cross-discipline community of smaller organisations working to change fashion and built on similar values could be, especially at this early stage of our partnership. We wanted to learn from different perspectives, and to be part of a bigger conversation around transforming fashion. And we hoped our experience of the relationships between food and fashion could bring value to the group too.

Six months on...

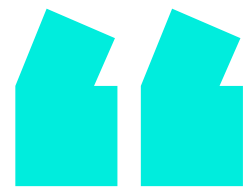
A lot has happened! We've finished production of our pilot batch of traceable leather and we've received funding, including an RSA Catalyst Grant and BFTT (Business of Fashion, Textiles and Technology) support, which is enabling more research and development – especially around the dyeing and finishing of leather so it can be bio-regional and biodegradable.

Creating a collective vision with the rest of the cohort and being able to visualise where we sit within that vision and our ambitions as a company was really valuable. The common goal enriches what we are all doing. Rethink Fashion helped us gain clarity on our mission, tell our story and articulate how we are driving a paradigm shift towards a regenerative future. We've since been sharing this at fashion and farming industry events and started working with educational partners. External validation is important, but even more so is being able to show what's possible and shift perceptions. One of our 'aha moments' during the journey was after the multi-level perspective mapping session: we realised we needed to develop our strategy by considering where we sit within the system as instigators of change, and how we engage with different layers. We were able to act on that realisation in real-time and shift our approach.



“In the future, we hope fashion will be... supporting the regeneration of the natural world.”

Stories of impact - Mairi Lowe



Arriving into Rethink Fashion...

Whilst studying for my Masters in Social Innovation I co-founded Sustainable Fashion Scotland (SFS): a community-led venture aiming to connect the fashion community in Scotland and accelerate collective action for a sustainable fashion transformation. When Rethink Fashion began, I was immersed in initial scoping, working with the emerging SFS community to shape our activities, host monthly community calls and build momentum. My priority was exploring how to influence policy makers to take seriously the connection between fashion and climate change. I was frustrated by the tendency to avoid challenging brands on their responsibility to act, and by the fragmented approach of many 'solutions', and wanted to support connected, systemic interventions.

I was excited by prospect of going deeper into the fashion system through Rethink Fashion – broadening my experience and building a community of practice. I was attracted by the blend of systems thinking and design approaches in the curriculum, and the access to both peers and experts in this space. The credibility of the RSA and Ellen MacArthur Foundation as trusted organisations creating change was enticing too.

Six months on...

So much has changed for me. One of the biggest shifts has been developing the ability to constantly zoom in and out between the bigger picture and vision, and my role within that and day to day work. I've stepped out of my bubble, learned more about the breadth of the industry and come away with a more holistic view, feeling more confident that I don't have to do everything - my work is an important part of an overall collective effort. Together, as creative leaders we can really inspire and empower people to take action, rather than feeling overwhelmed by all the problems.

There have been lots of new collaborations! I did a talk with Trish's university students, Kalopsia spoke at one of SFS' Community Calls, Besma and I are working together on directories... I've taken away and used tools from Rethink Fashion with SFS, for example in a goal setting workshop with our community. There was a huge mix of people there – students, business owners, academics – with their individual goals. Together we envisioned a world that's seen radical change by 2050, then we looked at what's happening right now in Scotland within those individual goals that we can connect or build on to bridge the gap towards that bigger collective goal. New opportunities emerged from that, and we've collected data that we can use for our ongoing strategy.

What's next? A big one is COP26, the UN climate summit. SFS has got a space sponsored by industry partners in the Blue Zone for official delegates. We'll be highlighting

the impacts of the industry and showcasing interventions and inspirational work to tackle these from organisations in both the global north and south. Our installation includes provocations for different audiences, including recommendations for policymakers. And we'll be featuring the other Rethink Fashion ventures!



“In the future, I hope fashion will be.... a practice which strengthens community relationships, develops community capacity and supports people and the planet's wellbeing.”

Stories of impact - Besma Whayeb



Arriving into Rethink Fashion...

Back in 2014 I created Curiously Conscious, a sustainable fashion blog, and in 2018 it became my full-time work. I noticed there wasn't much visibility for influencers, writers and bloggers focusing on sustainability and fashion online, so I set up Ethical Influencers: a free community platform for creatives championing sustainability and social justice and the intersectionality of these areas. The community has over 1000 members from around the world and we also work with brands and charities to support them with social media campaigns. There's huge potential to change individual behaviour, build awareness and create different relationships with fashion through this community of influencers.

Through Rethink Fashion I wanted to focus on strategic direction to increase our impact. I was conscious that although I had lots of great content, I didn't have an intentional learning platform for my community and wanted to work towards that. I also hoped the learning journey would give me a richer understanding of the fashion system to share with my network, insight into how other ventures are creating change, and the chance to connect and learn from an interesting mix of people with different experiences.

Six months on...

The new intervention I prototyped through Rethink Fashion was the Ethical Influencers course platform, and now it's about to launch. I'm working with the UN on media resources, campaigns with Fashion Revolution and I Love Linen, and I've just written a guide on circular fashion with BAM clothing, who I met through the Ellen MacArthur Foundation. My business is growing, I'm about to hire my first member of staff which will be lovely after four years of working for myself!

Rethink Fashion helped me to recognise where my work sits within the fashion industry – it revealed potential for me to play a more expansive role, influencing and connecting across different layers of the system. Developing our collective vision was a massive “aha” moment. Designing hopefully is something I've taken away and applied to the work I'm doing now.

This journey has stopped me looking at the problem just in terms of the existing state now, and made me ask: what's the ideal future we want to move towards? Being able to visualise where we're going is a completely new practice for me, and I think that's true for a lot of people in the influencers space who are commending small 'slightly better' sustainable steps, but aren't asking 'what if' – what could be? – if we dreamed big. It's really opened my eyes to the role of influencers in working towards that future vision in that today, by calling for more change and showcasing trailblazers. I've brought this into my new courses for influencers and into the way I'm challenging brands.



“In the future, I hope fashion will be.... fair, sustainable within planetary limits, circular, and inclusive.”



Rethink Fashion reunion at the RSA in September 2021

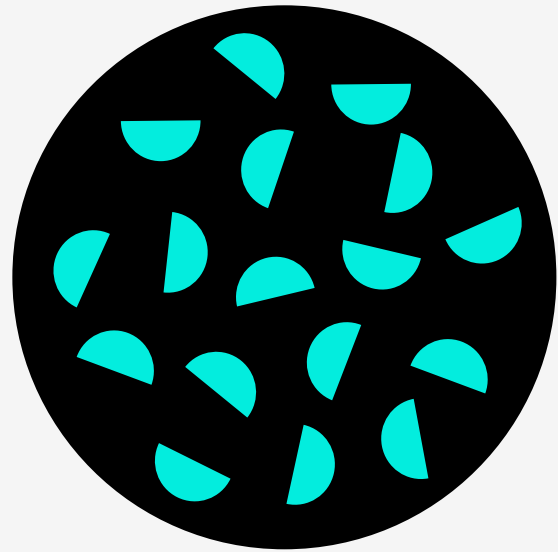
The background is a solid teal color. Overlaid on this are four large, overlapping white circles. The circles are arranged in a horizontal row, with each circle overlapping the one to its left and the one to its right. The text "Our approach" is centered horizontally across the middle of the circles.

Our approach

Methodology

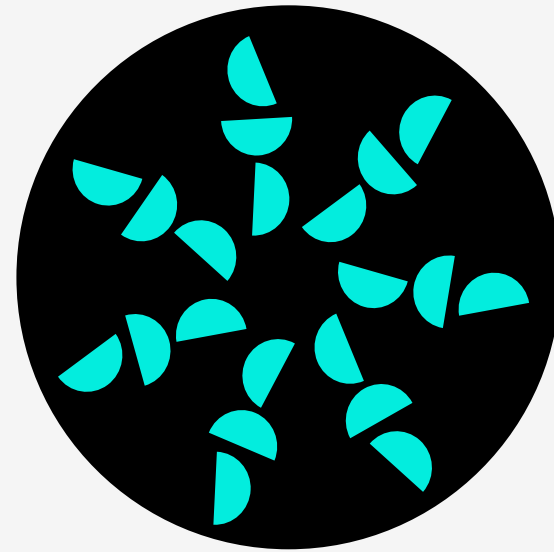
Discovery

Six months



Design and recruitment

Four months

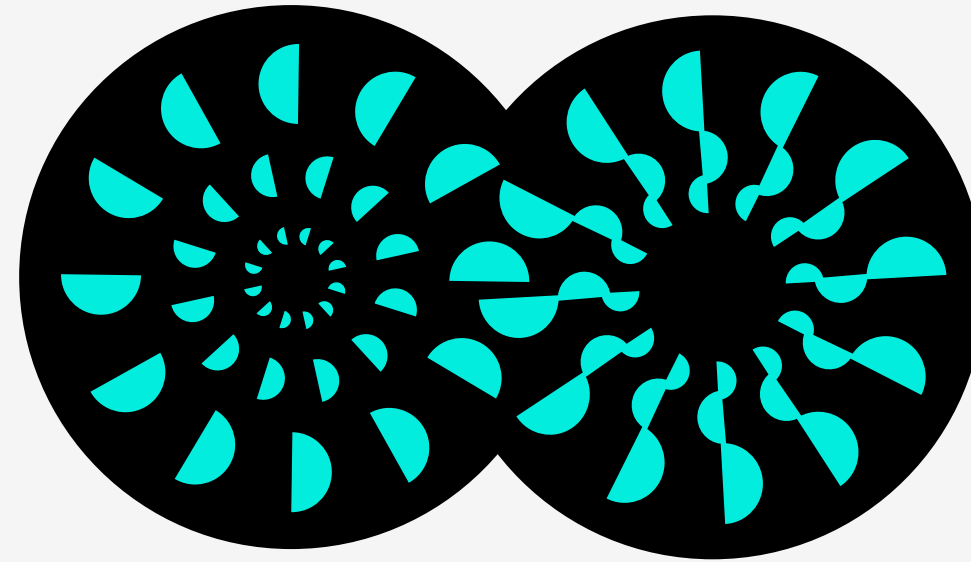


The learning journey

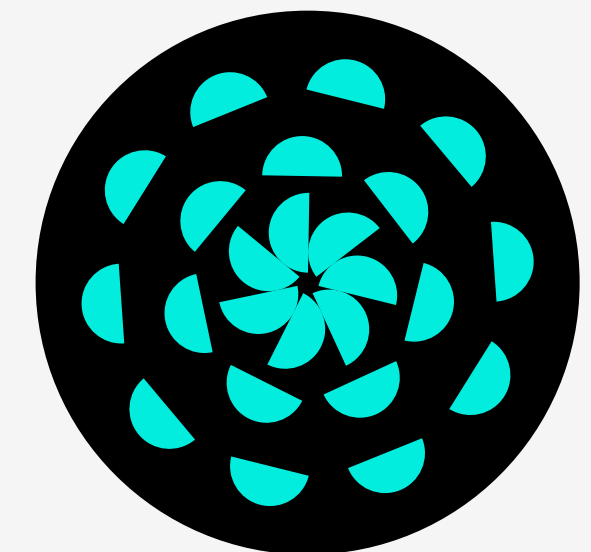
Four months

Part one:
Thinking systemically

Part two: Designing
systemic interventions



Ongoing engagement



Research to gain a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities for capacity-building and collaboration among trailblazers in the fashion system.

Including: workshops and interviews with pioneering initiatives, interviews with fashion industry stakeholders, a review of existing support programmes and accelerators, synthesis of secondary insights from Ellen MacArthur Foundation's Circular Design Guide for fashion, synthesis of research insights and brief development for the design and recruitment phase.

Designing a highly participatory online learning journey experience and curriculum using the RSA's [Living Change](#) approach and regenerative design principles. Designing and delivering a recruitment process to convene a cohort of 12 diverse yet complementary ventures. Engaging our faculty of guest contributors and onboarding the cohort.

Delivering a four-month learning journey with a cohort of 12 trailblazing ventures to accelerate the transition to a regenerative fashion future.

Including: Kick-off weekend, fortnightly 'inhale' practitioner-led group session, fortnightly 'exhale' peer-led sessions on alternate weeks, mid-point intensive with two-day systemic design sprint, public showcase event and cohort closing circle.

Capturing and sharing the impact and learning from Rethink Fashion to inspire and influence wider change.

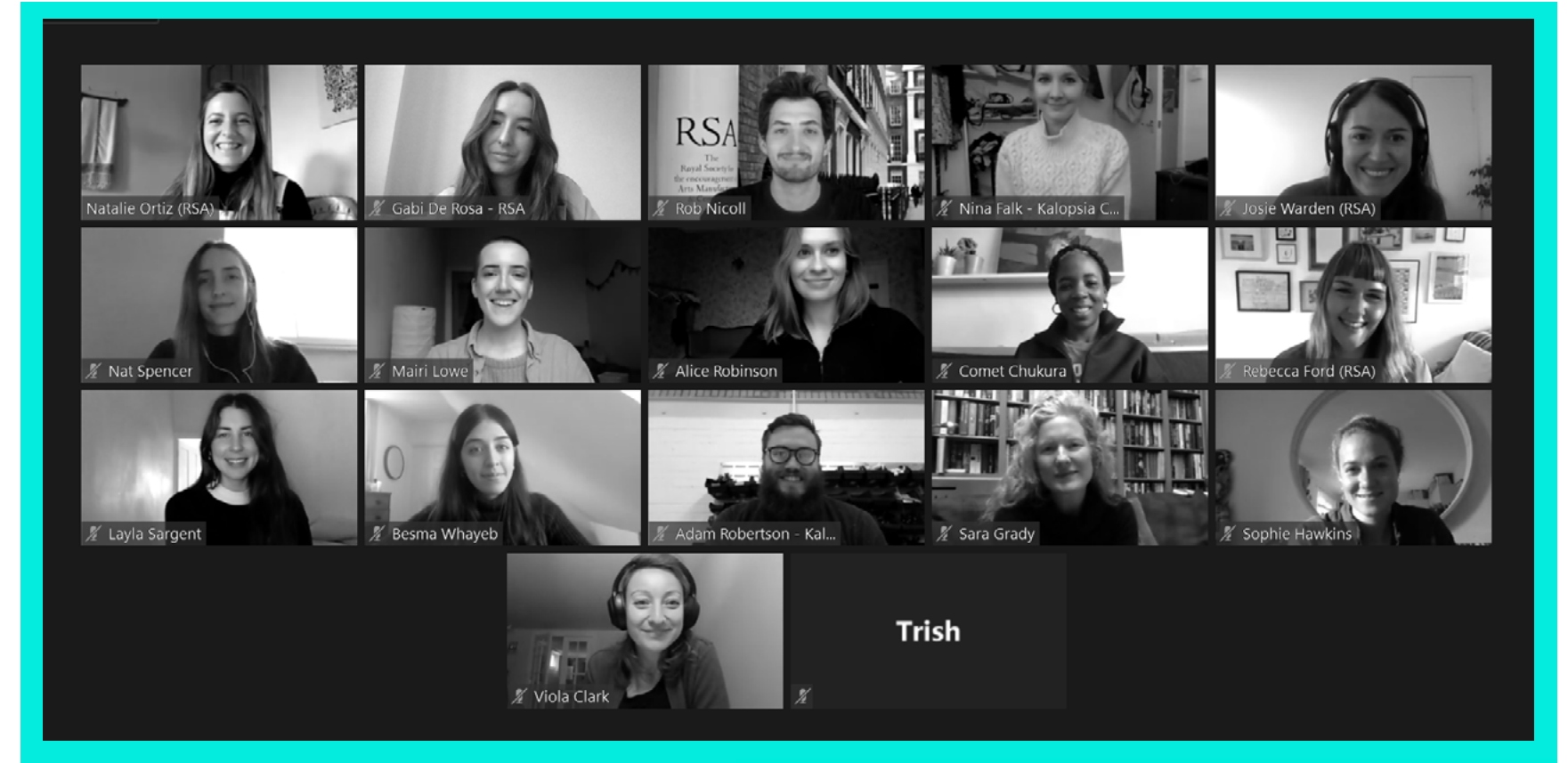
Including: completing evaluation, six-month cohort reunion with impact show & tell, sharing the Rethink Fashion story via the RSA's platform and global community including 2021 Regenerative Futures campaign.

The learning journey

The learning journey was underpinned by the RSA's [Living Change Approach](#) which combines 'thinking like a system' with 'acting like an entrepreneur', embedding regenerative design principles throughout. The learning experience was intentionally designed to evoke and blend these philosophies and principles, whilst developing the capabilities (skills, methods, behaviours) and capacities (mindsets and enabling conditions) to put them into action.

Our pedagogical approach combined collective and self-directed action learning with practitioner-led and peer-led learning. The journey structure followed an 'inhale and exhale' rhythm: fortnightly 'inhale' sessions with the whole group including workshops and masterclasses with guest contributors and 'exhale' sessions on alternate weeks to put learning into practice in smaller peer-led learning groups.⁷ In addition, we offered coaching sessions throughout the journey.

The first phase focused on collaboratively exploring the evolving fashion system through time: applying a range of theories, frameworks and practices to reveal current system dynamics, challenges and opportunities for change, and developing a collective vision for 2050. The second phase focused on working collaboratively to design and test interventions to take action towards that shared vision: through disrupting and remaking the current system, probing and provoking to reveal where there is energy for change, or attracting other parts of the system to create the conditions for transition.



Rethink Fashion kick-off weekend, November 2020

[7] Taking inspiration from the GAIA journey learning experience rhythm of inhalation and exhalation, designed and hosted by the [Presencing Institute](#)

The learning journey



This diagram shows the focus of the 'inhale' group sessions.

Learning through living change

The RSA's [Living Change approach](#) is how we address complex challenges: it combines a philosophy, an adaptive model, set of practices and flexible toolkit of methods. It draws on a broad range of disciplines, theoretical foundations, and ways of knowing.

We designed the Rethink Fashion curriculum using elements of the Living Change approach to respond to the capacity and capability-building needs and opportunities identified in our discovery phase research.

We created the overarching learning experience and curriculum DNA up front, but as a project team we were committed to reflective learning in our delivery of the learning journey – and we continually learned and adapted our own approach throughout in response to emerging insights. This felt particularly important given the Covid-19 and UK lockdown we experienced during the delivery of the project.

Curriculum foundations

Regenerative practice

Systems thinking

Circular design

Futures & foresight

Design thinking

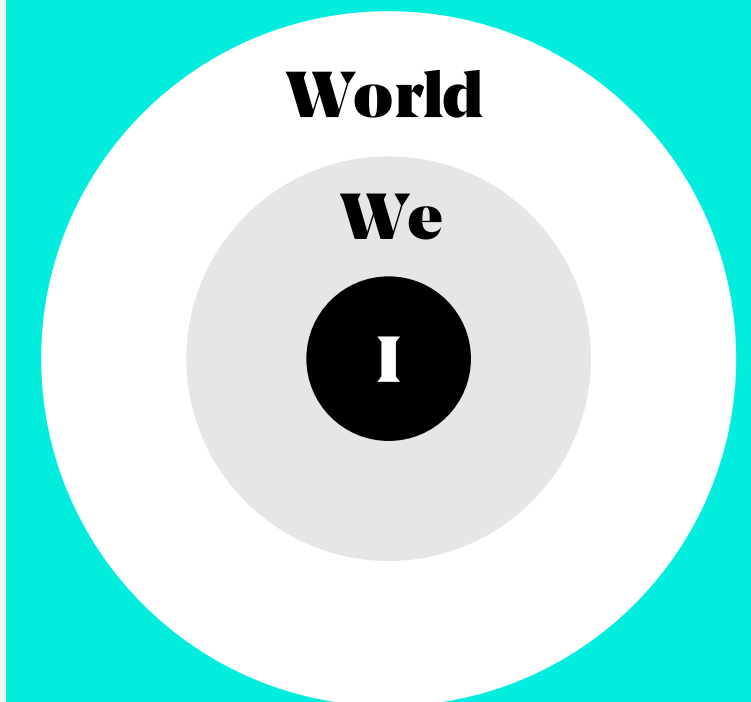
Social innovation

Reflective leadership

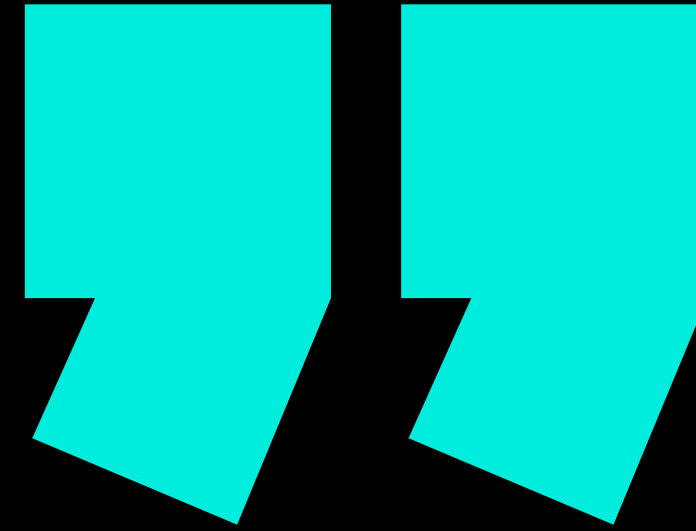
Living change model



Learning and impact mindset



It's been inspiring to see the Rethink Fashion cohort working deeply, collaboratively and hopefully to design systemic interventions.



The commitment they have shown to connecting and working with allies is as important as the shared vision they created: together they are not only disrupting the current system, but also revealing what's possible and attracting other parts of the system to think and act towards a regenerative future.

Cat Drew

Chief Design Officer,
Design Council

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**LEARNINGS,
RECOMMENDATIONS
AND RESOURCES**

Learning: building capacity, capability and collaboration for systemic change

We set out to explore and respond to this question:

How might we enable trailblazers to develop the capacities, capabilities and collaborations needed for a regenerative fashion future?

We have distilled 5 key learnings about the capabilities, capacity and collaborations needed to shift the fashion system to a more regenerative future – each accompanied by a recommendation, and further references and examples to explore.

We also share some reflective questions for actors in different parts of the system to spark and continue the conversation around enabling conditions for transformative change.

- ① **Cultivate competence in systemic and regenerative thinking**
- ② **Support interdisciplinary cohorts of mission-driven trailblazers to collaborate**
- ③ **Accelerate field-building through multi-layer collaborations between trailblazers and established institutions**
- ④ **Unlock the power of collective imagining for a hopeful future**
- ⑤ **Attend to the ‘how’ of transformative facilitation**

1 Cultivating competence in systemic and regenerative thinking

Learnings

The challenges in the fashion system are complex, interdependent and dynamic. Creating change is hard, and there's no single fix or blueprint to follow. Nor can any single stakeholder see or make sense of the whole picture, let alone create change in isolation. Complex problems look different from different perspectives and a diversity of views are needed to address them. For these reasons, transforming the system must be a collaborative and interdisciplinary effort, and will only be achievable if those involved have the capacities and capabilities to work with the nature of the challenge in hand.

This means having the ability to recognise and work with complexity, to engage multiple perspectives and integrate different disciplines and ways of knowing. And if we are to move towards a regenerative future – where human and planetary needs thrive hand in hand – then we need to understand the world as a living system and be able to put that thinking into regenerative action. Mainstream education and learning approaches rarely focus on developing this competence.

Rethink Fashion demonstrated the value of investing in developing practices, tools and applied learning approaches to do this. We saw shifts among the Rethink Fashion trailblazers in their understanding of the complex challenges in fashion and their relationship to other systems such as food, agriculture, and cosmetics. We also saw shifts in understanding how to move from sustainable to circular

and regenerative fashion, and in how systemic change happens including the cohort's roles alongside others in creating change. Through the journey they explored the challenges and opportunities in fashion collaboratively, combining thinking systemically with entrepreneurial action and using regenerative practice across disciplines. Intentionally designing the curriculum, learning experience, facilitation approach and cohort curation process to enable this was key.

Recommendation:

Support learners and organisations to meet and respond to complex, interdependent and dynamic challenges using systemic and regenerative practice - within formal education, as well as through lifelong learning opportunities and within organisational development initiatives.

Reflective questions

Educators and learning providers:

- How could you reimagine educational approaches, curricula and learning experience design to develop capabilities (skills, methods, behaviours) and the capacities (mindsets and enabling conditions) for students to embrace and work with complexity? To be collaborative, systemic, entrepreneurial, and regenerative in their approach?
- What if blended approaches to learning about regenerative principles and practice became a core part of your curricula? What if each and every teacher and learning facilitator applied regenerative principles in their work?

Trailblazers and learners:

- How might our regenerative design principles relate to your work and practice?
- Could the prompt questions that accompany each principle shift your thinking and actions?

Funders and investors:

- How does your portfolio address the need for a regenerative future?
- How might building capabilities and capacities for regenerative practice amongst your grantees help you achieve your – and their – strategic goals?
- Could you encourage your learning and evaluation partners to build regenerative principles into their ways of thinking, acting and being?

① Cultivating competence in systemic and regenerative thinking

Explore further...

- RSA Regenerative Design Principles – see Figure 1.
- [The School Of System Change](#).
- [The Bio-Leadership Project](#).
- [The Wolf Willow Institute](#).
- [The Regenerative Practitioner Series](#).
- [The Really Regenerative Centre](#).
- [IFF Competence in Complexity programme](#).
- [The London Interdisciplinary School](#).
- [‘Designing Regenerative Cultures’](#) (2016) book by Daniel Wahl.
- [‘Ecologies for Learning and Practice’](#) (2020) book edited by Ronald Barnett and Norman Jackson.
- [‘Bringing Schools Back to Life’](#) (1999) article by Margaret Wheatley.

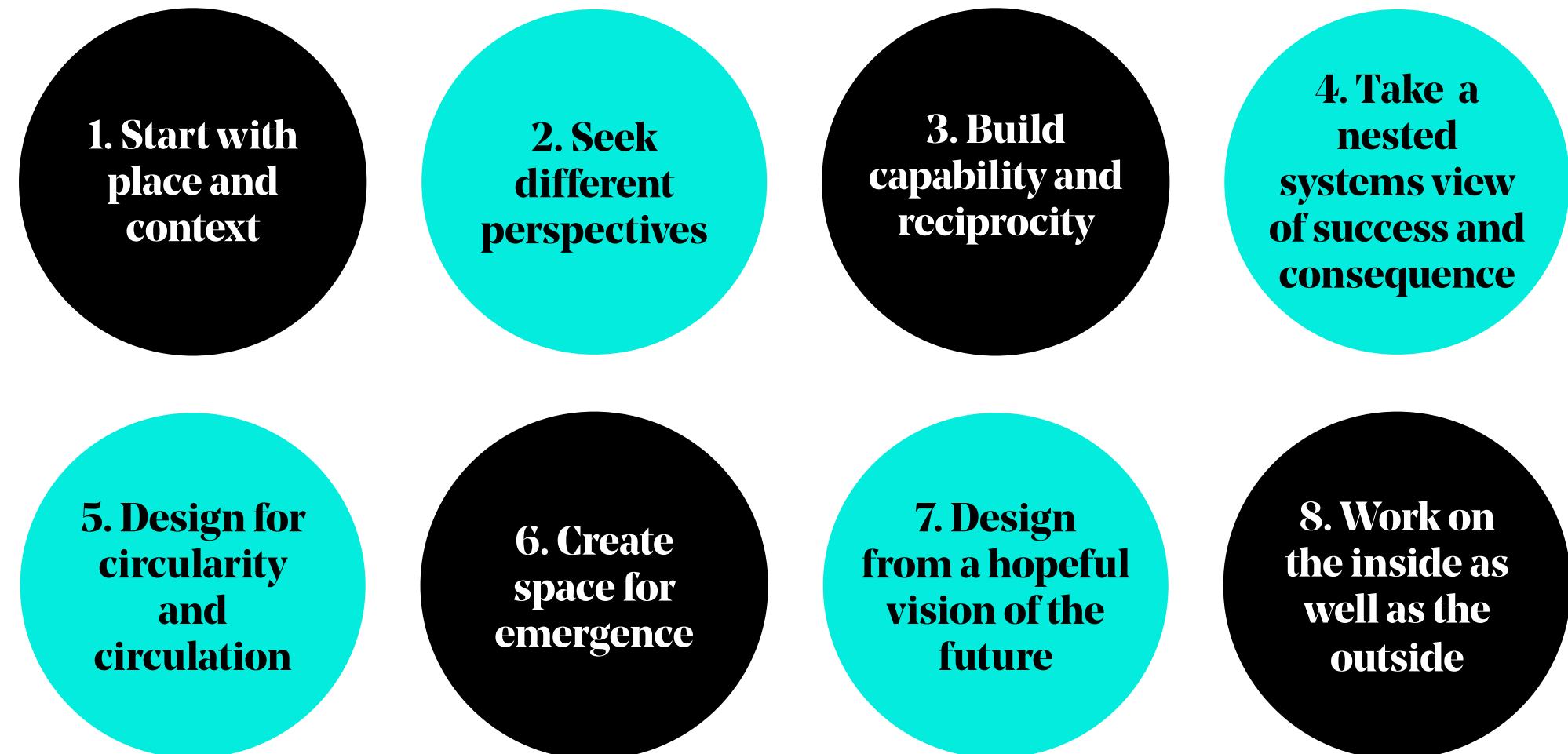


Figure 1: Regenerative Design Principles

A longer version of these principles, including explanations and guiding questions, can be found on pages 24-28 of 'Regenerative Futures: From sustaining to thriving together' by Josie Warden, RSA (2021) Available at: thersa.org/reports/regenerative-futures-from-sustaining-to-thriving-together

② Support interdisciplinary cohorts of mission-driven trailblazers to collaborate

Learnings

Accelerating the transition to a regenerative future for fashion is a big mission. Trailblazers have a crucial role to play; they pave the way, shape markets and show what's possible. Yet previous RSA work has shown that for 'impact entrepreneurs (those working towards a larger mission), the success of individual ventures depends in part on the success of the wider innovation landscape; each plays a role among many in influencing wider change.⁸ Our Rethink Fashion discovery phase research found that most accelerators and other programmes working in the fashion system are designed primarily to support individual ventures to develop and scale through growth and replication. We found less emphasis on supporting interdisciplinarity, enabling collaboration for wider impact across cohorts, or influencing beyond core business audiences.

To realise the huge potential for collective impact and influence that constellations of complementary ventures can bring about, we need to resource communities of trailblazers operating from different parts of the same system to learn together and support each other. The impact we have seen from Rethink Fashion - and some innovative approaches in other contexts - shows the value of support programmes explicitly designed to do this. There is great potential to support interdisciplinary cohorts of diverse yet complementary trailblazers across different parts of

innovation landscape in fashion (and in other systems and industries) to collaborate. This was at the heart of our approach, bringing together a diverse range of backgrounds, skillsets, and parts of the fashion system: manufacturing, textile design, material development, marketing, journalism, community organising and more. We saw the ways in which this amplified individual and collective impact (outlined in pages 16-22); from the support, resilience and identity value it brings individual leaders through to the regenerative business pivots, increased power and influence that come from being part of a community with a shared mission. As a collaborative cohort, trailblazers become part of a bigger story that can inspire wider change.

Recommendation:

Invest in collaborative cohort support models to enable greater collective impact among diverse ventures operating across different parts of the system

Reflective questions

Funders, accelerators, and other support providers for social impact ventures:

- How might you connect your grantees and enable collective learning opportunities, or cultivate a portfolio that encourages more interdisciplinary activity and coalition-building?
- What disciplines and approaches might represent gaps in your portfolio of initiatives towards a larger mission?
- How else could your resources, platform and networks strategically convene and support interdisciplinary collaboration?
- How might wider sector collaborations you are already a part of support this goal, and what new partnerships might offer new opportunities for interdisciplinary connectivity and collaboration?

[8] Conway, Leadbeater & Winhall (2019). The Impact Entrepreneur: Building a New Platform for Economic Security in Work. [PDF] The RSA. Available at: [thersa.org/globalassets/pdfs/reports/impact-entrepreneur-report.pdf](https://www.thersa.org/globalassets/pdfs/reports/impact-entrepreneur-report.pdf)

② Support interdisciplinary cohorts of mission-driven trailblazers to collaborate

Explore further...

- The amplifier approach to venture development – see Figure 2.
- The RSA's & Alt/Now's [Economic Security Impact Accelerator](#).
- The RSA & New Jersey Office of Innovation's [Future Work Accelerator](#).
- Alt/Now's [Banff programme](#).
- The National Lottery Community Fund's [Emerging Futures Fund](#).
- Nesta's [Social Action Innovation Fund](#).
- The McConnell Foundation's [Applied Dissemination Strategy and Learning group](#).
- Lankelly Chase & Point People's [Systems Changers](#) programme with The Children's Society.
- The Mayor of London's [Designing London's Recovery](#) programme.
- Resolution Foundation's [Workertech Partnership](#).

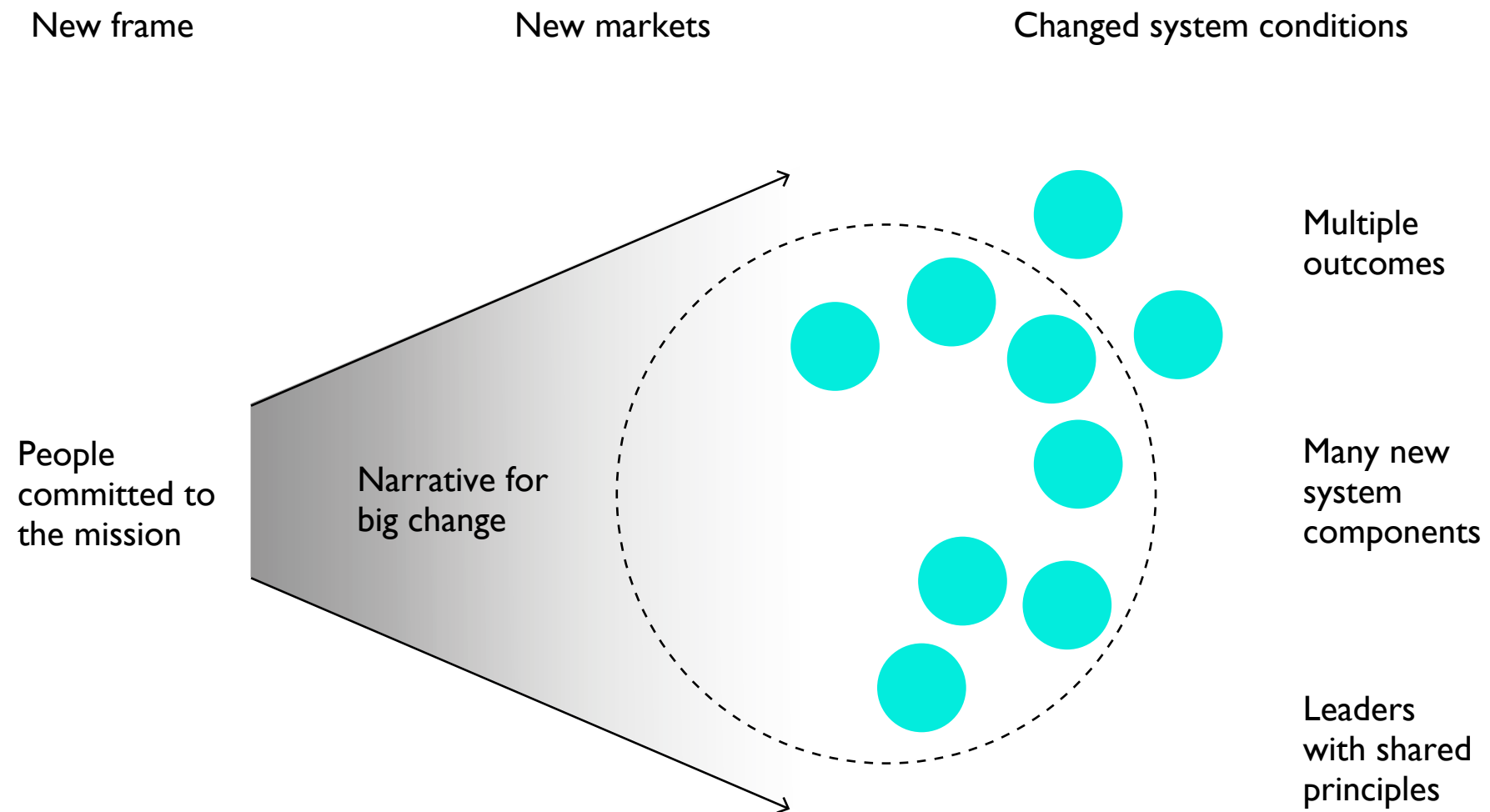


Figure 2: The amplifier approach to venture development

Source: Conway, Leadbeater & Winhall (2019) *The Impact Entrepreneur: Building a New Platform for Economic Security in Work*. [PDF] The RSA. Available at: thersa.org/globalassets/pdfs/reports/impact-entrepreneur-report.pdf

③ Accelerate field-building through multi-layer collaborations

Learnings

Whilst trailblazers working across different parts of the system play a crucial role in transforming fashion, systemic change on complex challenges requires participation and collaboration between different actors, organisations and communities in all parts of the landscape. Just as we need to resource support for cohorts of complementary ventures at the micro layer, we also need to resource building the wider field of practice, intent and connective tissue across different roles, sectors and layers of the fashion system.

During Rethink Fashion we used the Multi-Level Perspective on System Transition framework with the cohort to explore changing dynamics at different layers of the fashion system.⁹ We explored how pioneering ideas, practices and innovations at the micro level can intentionally work together to influence the 'regime' layer of institutions, funding systems and incumbent organisations, and the 'macro' environment of laws, regulations and societal norms. Transforming fashion requires change at all of these layers, and they are all dynamic and interconnected. This means that growing a strong, multi-layered field of people on a mission to transform fashion – trailblazers, yes, but also 'intrapreneurs' within institutions, incumbents, government and civil society – is crucial in accelerating transition. Field-building can create the enabling conditions, the 'fertile soil' into which trailblazing seeds of change such as the Rethink Fashion interventions can grow and become mainstream.

Field-building towards a regenerative fashion future is currently under-resourced, and spaces and infrastructure for building connective tissue between and across layers of the system is lacking. We see a big opportunity to create spaces and programmes for multi-layer collaboration towards a regenerative fashion future, and we are scoping new work in this space.

Recommendation:

Invest in field-building to enable multi-layer collaborations towards a regenerative future across all layers of the system: between trailblazers operating at the micro layer and established institutions within the regime layer.

Reflective questions

Funders and investors:

- How could you enable, support or broker connection between actors who operate at different layers of the same system?
- Does your portfolio include equitable initiatives that level the participation and collaboration field for interventions operating at different layers of the system - big or small, new or established?
- How might you complement financial support with non-financial assets such as access to networks, meeting space and technology that emerging fields so often require?

Convening organisations (including the RSA!):

- How might you develop existing convening activity across the fashion system to reach new domains, and connect people and players who may not otherwise meet?
- What role could you play in enabling pre and non-competitive spaces and new multi-layer collaborations?
- How can you use and share the power you hold as convenors to mobilise and distribute resources, create trusting relationships and share power in healthy ways?

People working to change systems across different parts of the landscape:

- How might you see yourself as a part of a wider field? Where do you see potential to grow, connect and amplify people and organisations involved in creating change across the whole landscape?

[9] This framework was created by Frank Geels and further developed and adapted by others, including Forum for the Future and Alt/Now

③ Accelerate field-building through multi-layer collaborations

Explore further...

- The Multilevel Perspective Framework – see Figure 3.
- [‘Building the Field?’](#) (2018) article by Cassie Robinson.
- Social Innovation Generation: [Field Building](#).
- School of System Change [Multi-level perspective facilitators pack](#).
- [‘Building Better Systems: A green paper on system Innovation’](#) (2020) by Jennie Winhall and Charles Leadbeater.
- [System Innovation: Why now, why you?](#) (2020) webinar by Jennie Winhall and Charles Leadbeater.
- [‘How Field Catalysts Galvanize Social Change’](#) (2018) article by Taz Hussein, Matt Plummer & Bill Breen.
- [Co-opting the guild for good](#) (2021) – Alexa Clay on the RSA’s Good Work Guild – running from September 2021 this diverse, global community of practitioners are coming together to shape policies, practices and markets to ensure everyone can pursue good work in an age of technological change.
- UCL IIPP [Mission-Oriented Innovation Network](#).
- [Catalyst network](#).

Macro
The **‘landscape’**: shared social and economic values, ideologies, mega trends

Meso
The **‘regime’**: frameworks, rules and norms embedded in infrastructure, institutions and markets

Micro
‘Niche’ innovations: new practices, technologies and lifestyles

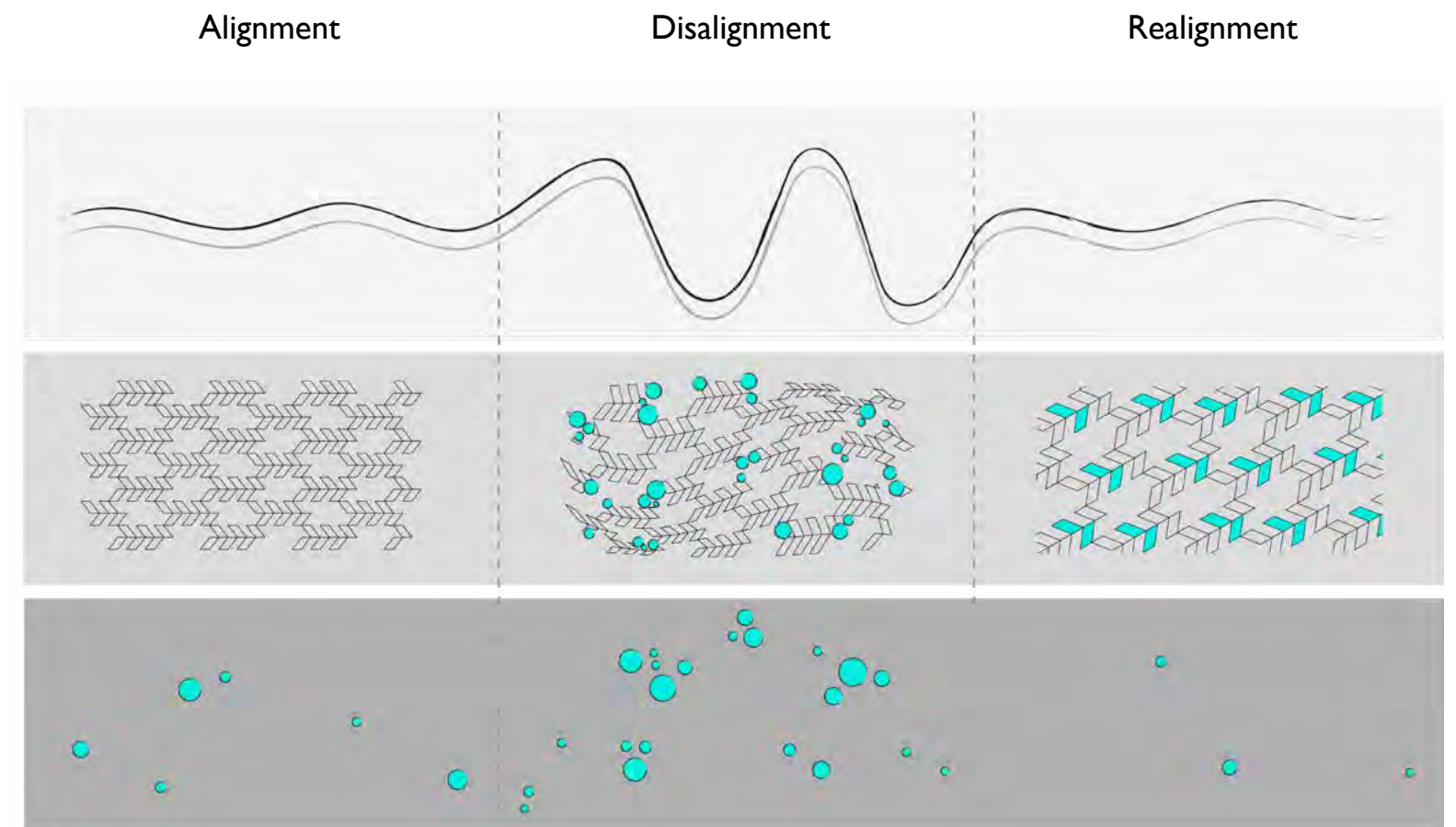


Figure 3: Multi-level Perspective Framework

Adapted from Geels' Multi-level Perspective Framework on Systems Transition.

④ Unlock the power of collective imagining for a hopeful future

Learnings

To realise a future which is regenerative we need to think and act for the long term. But if we cannot imagine radically hopeful futures, how can we move towards them? Being able to envisage a hopeful future is a core capacity for changemakers because it enables people to look beyond current barriers and set a long-term direction which then guides practical steps forward today. This is more powerful than focusing solely on day-to-day challenges which can quickly stifle radical transformation. It moves the emphasis from challenges of the past, the 'what was', beyond today's issues, the 'what is' and into the territory of the 'what if', and along with this it unlocks will, energy and commitment for doing the work that is needed in the present.

This shift in energy was evident in the Rethink Fashion cohort when we co-created a collective future vision for fashion in 2050. We facilitated a collective imagining process to create a dream vision, then drew threads back from the vision to today, mapping the intersecting roles and potential within the cohort to create change towards the vision now. Members recall this stage in the journey as an 'aha!' moment. The collective vision became a 'North Star' guiding the group, marked a powerful shift in the process, and illuminated new opportunities to grow, connect and amplify seeds of the future that already exist. This became the foundation for the next part of the journey in which we designed new

strategic interventions. The Rethink Fashion showcase event opened with Besma Whayeb inviting the public audience of 300 guests to imagine travelling forwards through time. She shared the group's vision for 2030, accompanied by live visual scribing to capture this new, hopeful future for fashion.

The RSA has a growing portfolio of projects using participatory futures approaches, and Rethink Fashion demonstrated again how essential it is to imagine hopeful futures in order to enable collective action towards them. This is important not only for trailblazers, but for all communities, organisations and parts of the system.

Recommendation:

Whatever your role in the system, consider how you can access and help cultivate and resource the mindsets, spaces and practices to collectively imagine a regenerative future.

Reflective questions

Funders and convenors:

- How might we encourage, grow and fund the work of people and organisations building and supporting collective imagination capacity now?
- What if we created the conditions for everyone – across the fashion system and beyond – to think and act hopefully for the long term?
- What if we unlocked the power of collective imagination in organisations and communities?

Educators and learning providers:

- Imagine if 'future dreaming' capacity building was a core component of education?
- How can we spread the methods and approaches that already exist, make them accessible to all, and create spaces for practice, learning and application?

④ Unlock the power of collective imagining for a hopeful future

Explore further...

- Rethink Fashion Collective 2050 Vision – see Figure 4.
- RSA research [‘A stitch in time: Realising the value of futures and foresight’](#).
- [‘Who Gets to Imagine the Future?’](#) and [RSA Oceania ‘Reclaiming the Future’](#) event series.
- [Demos Helsinki & UCL’s research on The Imaginary Crisis](#) - and how we might quicken social and public imagination.
- [H3Uni and Bill Sharpe’s book ‘Three Horizons: The Patterning of Hope’](#).
- [Rob Hopkins’ work](#) on ‘From What Is to What If’.
- The National Lottery Community Fund’s [Emerging Futures Fund toolkit](#) and work on [Imagination Infrastructuring](#).
- Sitra’s [Futuremaker’s Tool Box](#).
- The Institute for the Future’s [Equitable Futures Toolkit](#).
- [The Long Time Project](#) and [The Long Time Tools](#).
- Nesta’s work on [participatory futures](#) and [Top Ten Futures Toolkits](#).

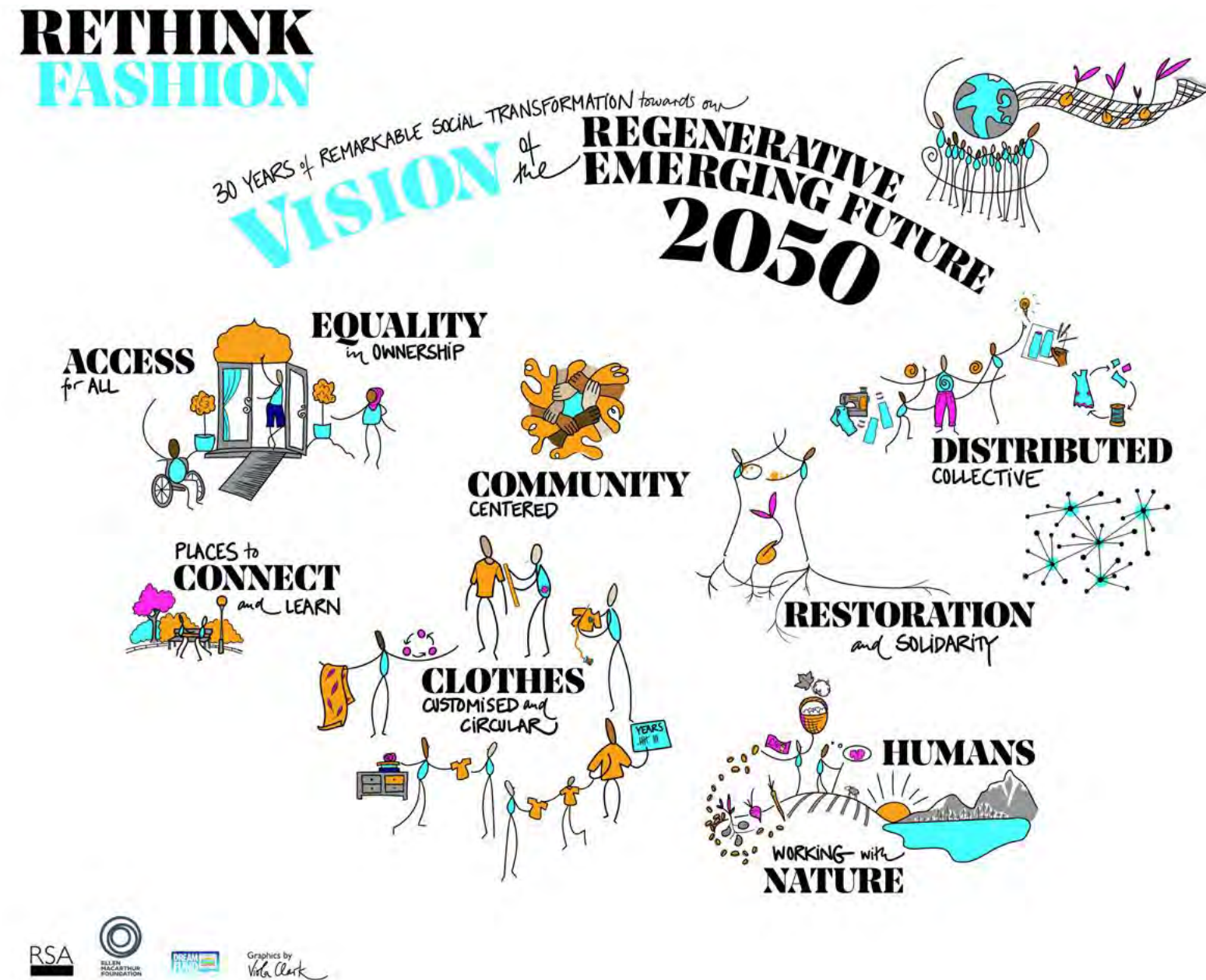


Figure 4: Rethink Fashion Collective 2050 Vision

Visual overview of the Rethink Fashion cohort’s vision of a future where fashion is in service of a regenerative world.

⑤ Attend to the ‘how’ of transformative facilitation

Learnings

How can the way we facilitate collaborative experiences like Rethink Fashion – as well as the content, outputs and outcomes – contribute to transformation towards a regenerative future? There can be a tendency to focus on the outputs and outcomes of projects, without paying as much attention or attributing as much value to the process design and facilitation of the projects as key routes to transformative outcomes and impact. If we are aiming to build new capacity and collaborations for change and ultimately shift systems, then creating the enabling conditions for this through the ways we organise, design and facilitate processes (in addition to delivering the enabling content) is crucial.

Our intention was to create a generative space for the cohort, where they could learn, adapt and grow together. We knew this would require developing trusting relationships, embracing conflict as well as connection, and working with emergence. We used various practices and tools with the cohort to help with this (for example movement, meditation, circle work). We facilitated collaborative ways of working and co-design processes, as well as embedding specific rituals (such as ‘I / We / World’ learning portfolios, peer feedback mechanisms and gratitude sharing) to support reflective learning. As a project team leading Rethink Fashion, we have reflected on how important it was that we were living and breathing these practices ourselves.

We paid attention to our roles, ways of working and relational dynamics as a team of facilitators throughout the project. We were committed to practicing ongoing reflection and adaptation throughout. As a team, we navigated some tensions, alongside many joys, that come with the messy reality of this work - and we learned a lot. At our final retrospective, we noted that bringing consciousness to the way we were showing up, designing and holding the process – as individuals, and as a team – felt crucial and was a significant factor in the change and impact we can see through the project. We were active ingredients in the dynamics we were trying to change. While some facilitators and project teams are very aware of this, we observe that it is not the norm to bring consciousness to the practice of how processes and spaces are facilitated, even though this holds the potential to create transformative impact.

Recommendation:

Bring awareness and investment to the ‘how’ – the roles, relational dynamics, and enabling conditions – when designing and facilitating collaborative change processes.

Reflective questions

Facilitators and people working to create change:

- How might you facilitate processes and spaces for collaboration towards change in a way that is co-creative and generative – that shifts relational dynamics and creates the conditions for people to encounter each other differently?
- How will you stay accountable to the values, processes and practices that you are building capacity in?
- As a facilitator, how can you see yourself as an active ingredient in the systems you are trying to change?
- What if you truly embodied regenerative principles in your ways of thinking, acting and being?

Facilitators and people working to create change:

- How could your resourcing approaches evolve to create additional capacity for generative process design and facilitation?
- How might you further support emergent ways of working, and the practices (such as ongoing reflection and developmental evaluation) that support reflective learning and adaptation?

5 Attend to the 'how' of transformative facilitation

Explore further...

- [The School of System Change 'Domains of facilitation practice'](#) developed by Anna Birney – see Figure 5.
- [Facilitation: an essential systemic practice](#) (2021) article by Anna Birney.
- ['Holding Change'](#) (2021) book by Adrienne Maree Brown.
- [Facilitating Breakthrough](#) (2021) book by Adam Kahane.
- [The Change handbook](#) (2007) book by Peggy Holman, Tom Devane, Steven Cady.
- [Facilitator's Guide to Participatory Decision-Making](#) (2014) book by Sam Kaner et al.
- [Huddlecraft: a field guide to pollinating peer groups](#) (2020) by Enrol Yourself.
- [Beehive Productions](#) learning spaces.
- [The Presencing Institute](#).
- [The Art of Hosting](#) community.
- [SessionLab](#) methods library (includes Liberating Structures and Hyper Island tools),

Domains of facilitation practice

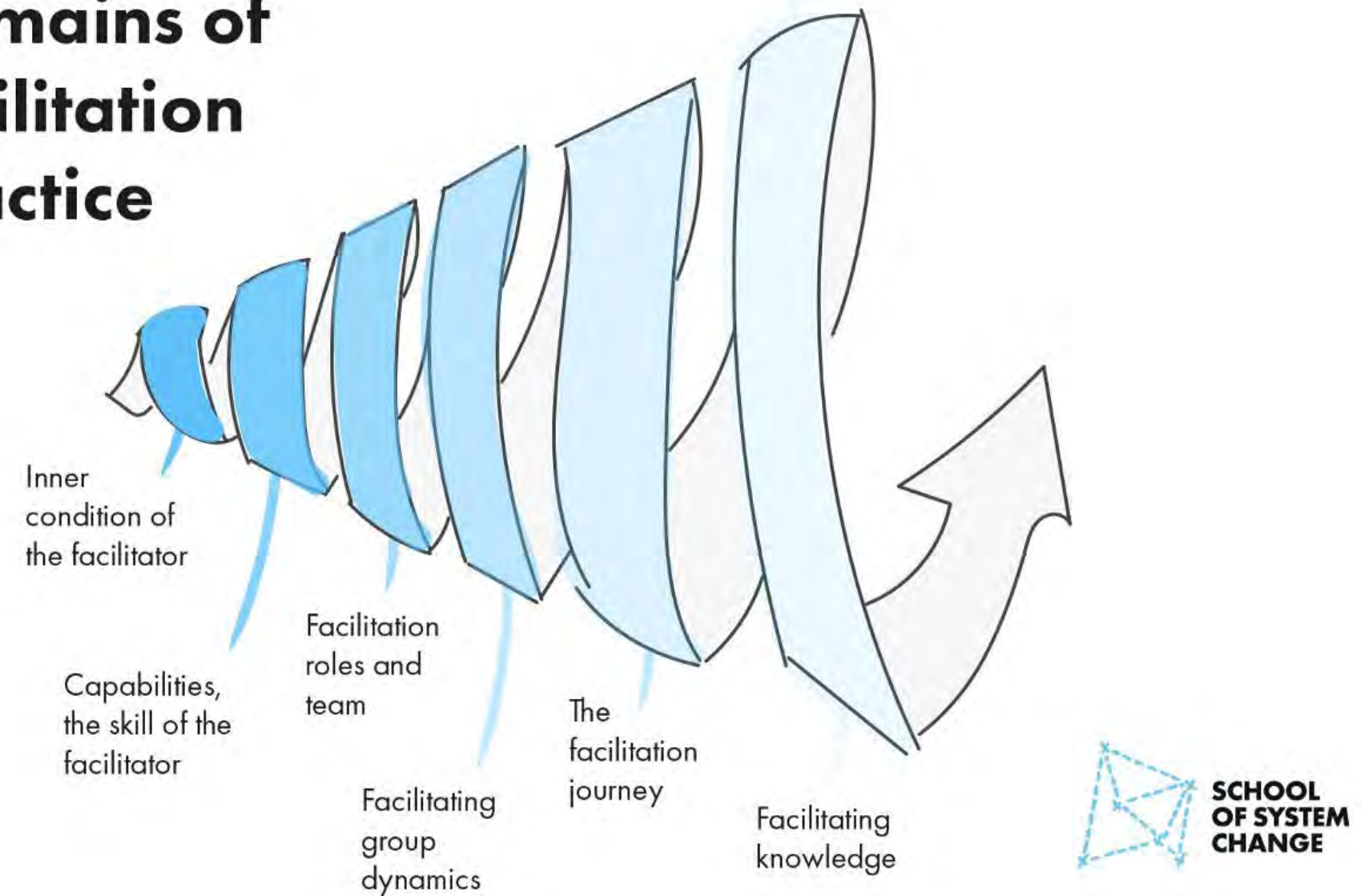


Figure 5: Domains of facilitation practice

Developed by Anna Birney, Director of the [School of System Change](#).

RETHINK FASHION

ACCELERATING the TRANSITION to a CIRCULAR FUTURE for FASHION

How can we look with NEW EYES?

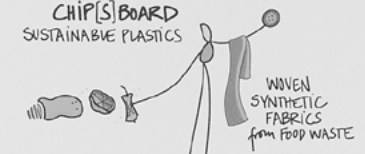
Besma
CONSCIOUSLY CONSCIOUS SUSTAINABLE LIFESTYLE BLOG ETHICAL INFLUENCERS



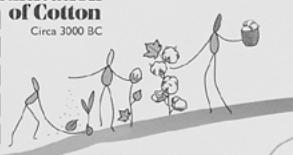
Nat
VEGAN PINEAPPLE WOOL



Rob
CHIP(S)BOARD SUSTAINABLE PLASTICS



Cultivation of Cotton
Circa 3000 BC



STORY OF FASHION

WHAT IS MISSING?

Alice
SMALL SUPPLY CHAINS IN HARMONY WITH NATURE



Intentional Collaboration
STRENGTHENING CONNECTIONS CREATING SPACE FOR CONVERSATION



Intersection of many different COMMUNITIES INDUSTRIES MINDSETS



Links connective tissue MISSING VOICES? of 60% of LIFE, VICES



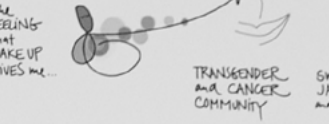
INTERVENTIONS?



Mairi
COMMUNITY APPROACH TO SYSTEMS CHANGE



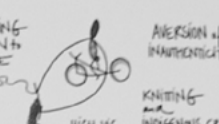
Trishna
Kohl Kreatives



Nina
Kalopsia



Comet
GLOW



TELLING our STORIES

RSA



ELLEN MACARTHUR FOUNDATION

Sophie
S. HAWKINS LTD.



Adam
Kalopsia



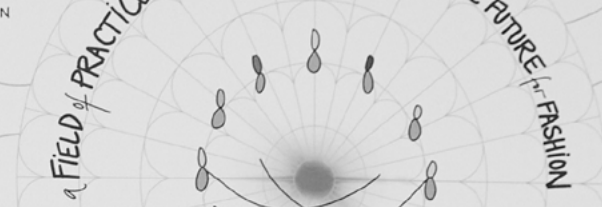
Sara
Sustainable Leather



Layla
The Seam



SYNERGIES CONNECTIONS and PATTERNS



CIRCULAR ECONOMY PRINCIPLES:
• DESIGN OUT WASTE and POLLUTION
• KEEP PRODUCTS and MATERIALS in USE
• REGENERATE NATURAL SYSTEMS

GATHERED around a CENTRE, what are WE GOING TO CREATE?

What MINDSET does the STORY come from?

'EXPLORING' the WORLD

EXPLOITATION of PEOPLE and PLANET

Zero Waste Design

SHIFTING from TAKING ADVANTAGE to RESPECT

Externalised Cost

Value Shift?



GET INVOLVED

More about the RSA's Regenerative Futures Programme

Rethink Fashion is part of Regenerative Futures, an RSA impact programme exploring how we can shape a world where people and planet flourish together in the long term. Our approach is multidisciplinary and collaborative. We are bringing together people and ideas to explore five interconnected entry points into systemic change:






Alongside fashion, the Regenerative Futures programme is using these lenses to explore challenges facing other industries including the built environment and plastics. Stay up to date, access our latest research and discover opportunities to get involved by registering for updates: www.thersa.org/regenerative-futures

Inspire and discover new perspectives by joining our 30,000 Fellowship as part of our community of changemakers: www.thersa.org/fellowship

Ways we can work together

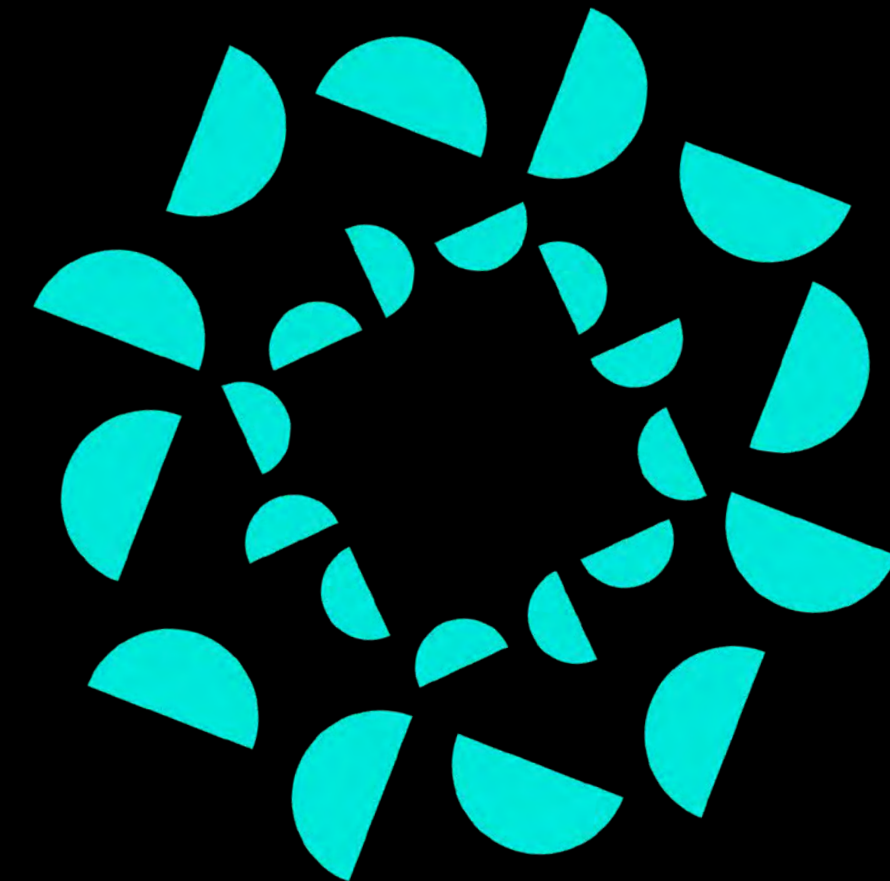
We are always open to hearing from potential partners who share the RSA's mission and those curious about building their own capabilities in regenerative practice.

Get in touch with partnerships@rsa.org.uk to find out more about:

-  Capability and capacity building experiences tailored to your organisation, network or community
-  Collaborating to conduct research and develop demonstrator projects which serve a regenerative future – within and beyond the fashion system
-  Convening or sponsoring events, awards or networks to amplify knowledge and debate on regenerative futures for a range of audiences

Join the Re-generation

www.thersa.org/



THE STEPS

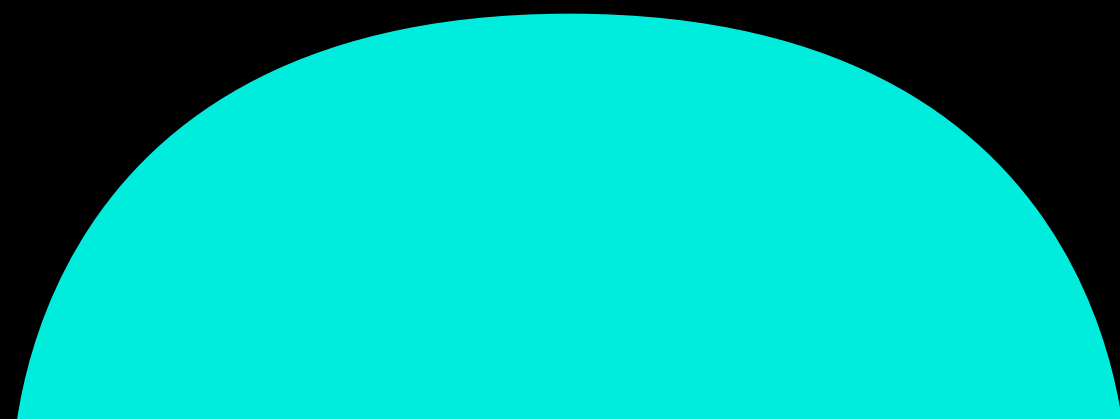


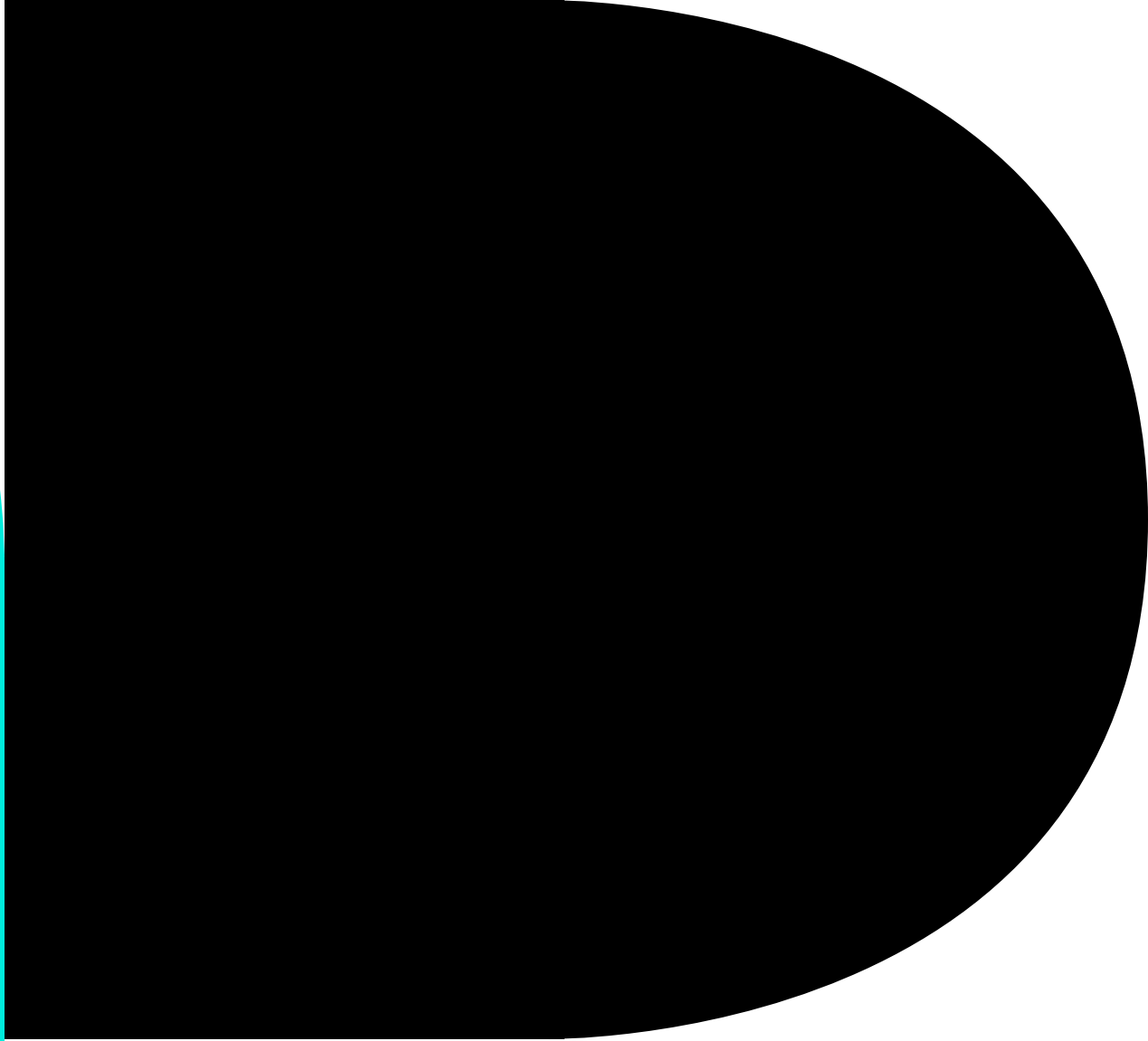
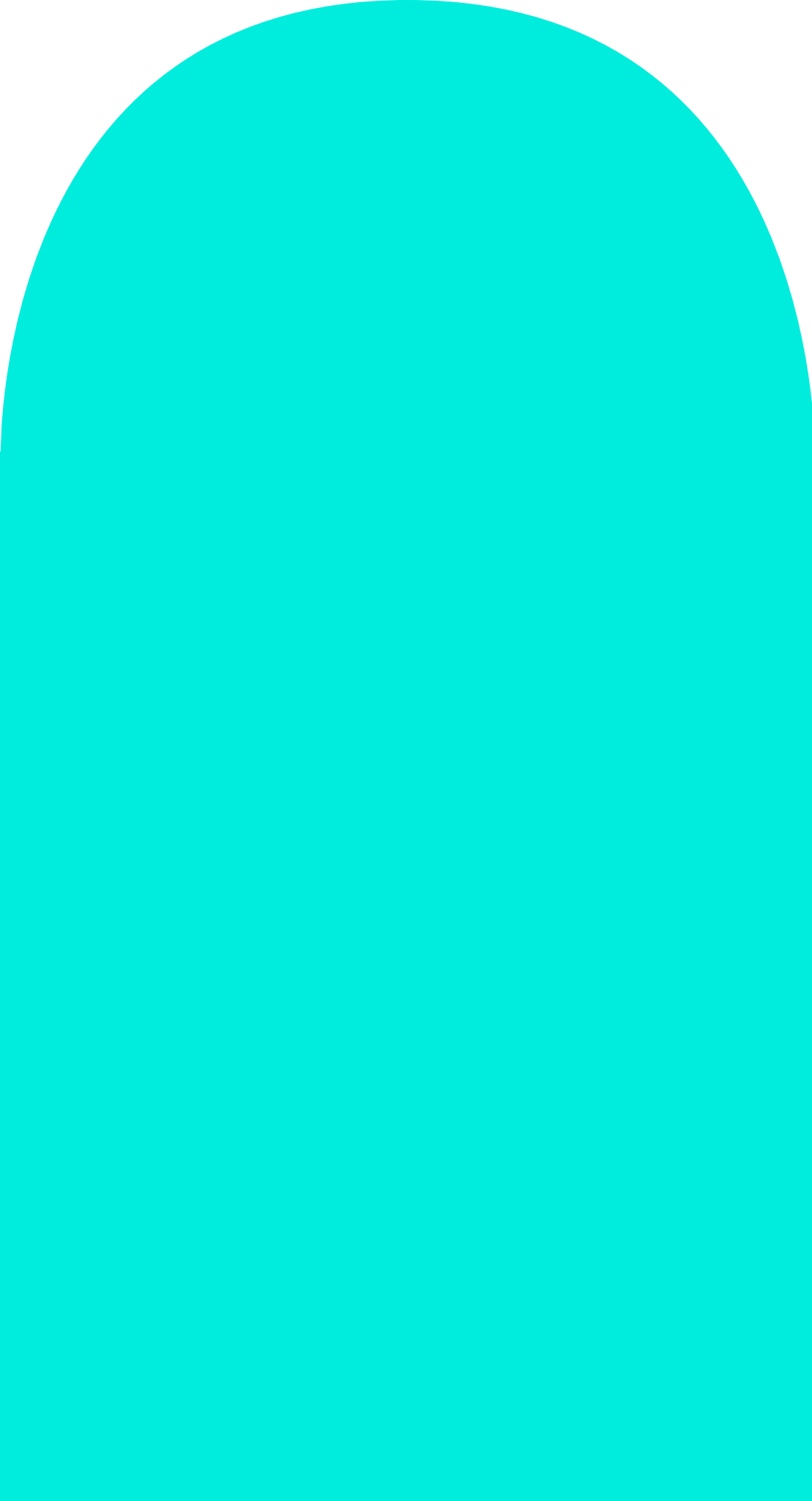
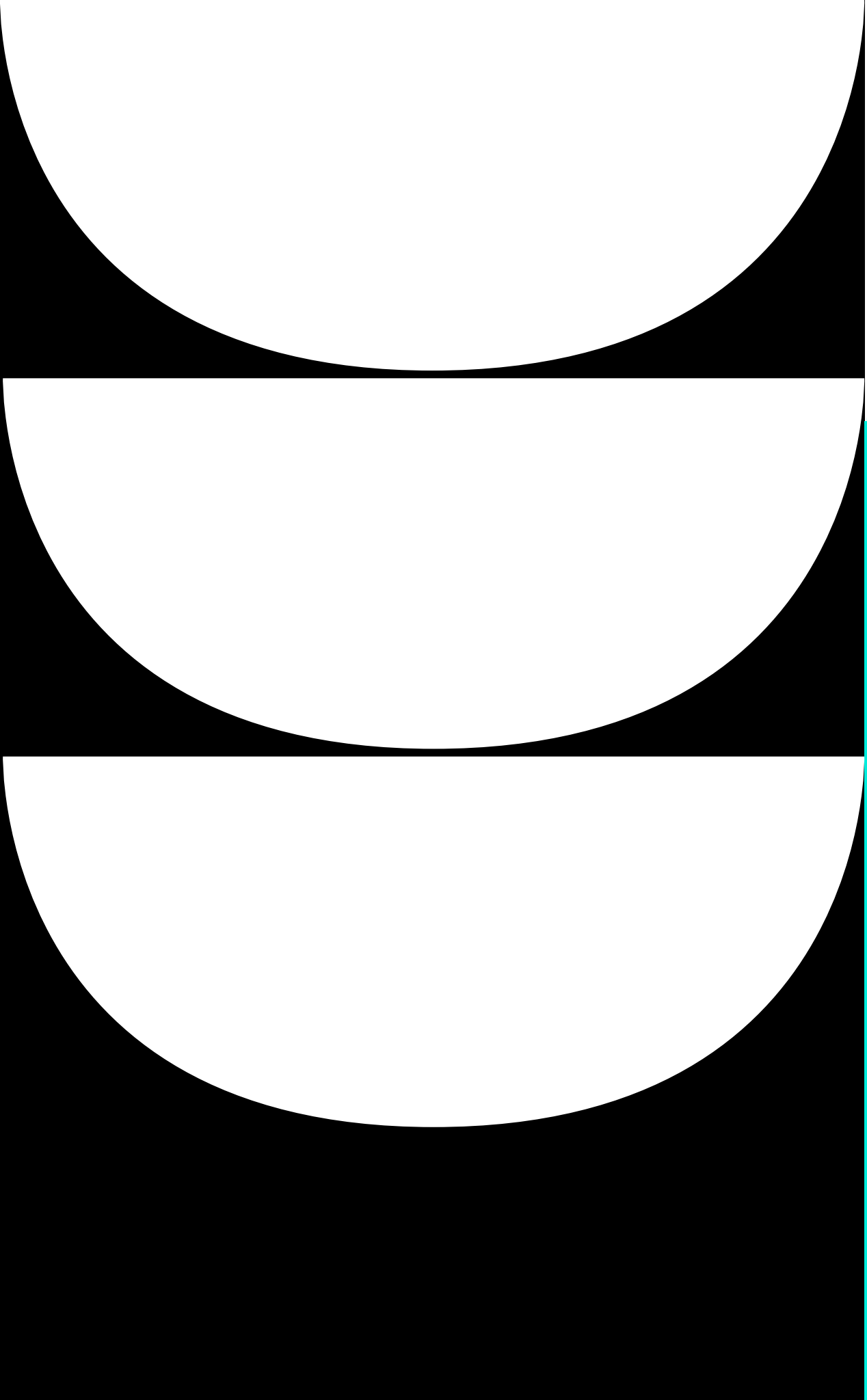
Rob, Alice, Layla, Sophie, Mairi, Trishna and Besma at our September 2021 reunion at the RSA

REMAKE

REWORK

RETHINK





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