

Celebrating 10 Years of Designing & Building Collective Liberation

Slow Factory

Good for the Earth, Good for the People

**Climate Justice | Human Rights
2022 - 2023 Prospectus & Impact Report**

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

We are an environmental & social justice nonprofit organization.

Since 2012, Slow Factory has worked at the intersections of climate and culture to build partnerships and community to advance climate-positive global movements through the lens of human rights, science, technology, and fashion.

We redesign socially & environmentally harmful systems – we want what’s good for the Earth & good for people.

Slow Factory empowers people of the global majority to advance climate justice and social equity through educational programming, regenerative design, and materials innovation.

Our Approach

Slow Factory believes in educating and empowering communities to create climate change solutions using a liberatory framework centered in sustainability literacy and culture. Our unique approach to addressing the urgent and complex climate crisis is by design – we understand that building an equitable, climate-positive society will ultimately lead to systemic change.



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Our Theory of Change

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

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

Open Education

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

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

Systems Design

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

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

Our Theory of Change

Narrative Change

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

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

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

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

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

Our Theory of Change

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

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

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



Letter from the Leadership Collective

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

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

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

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

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

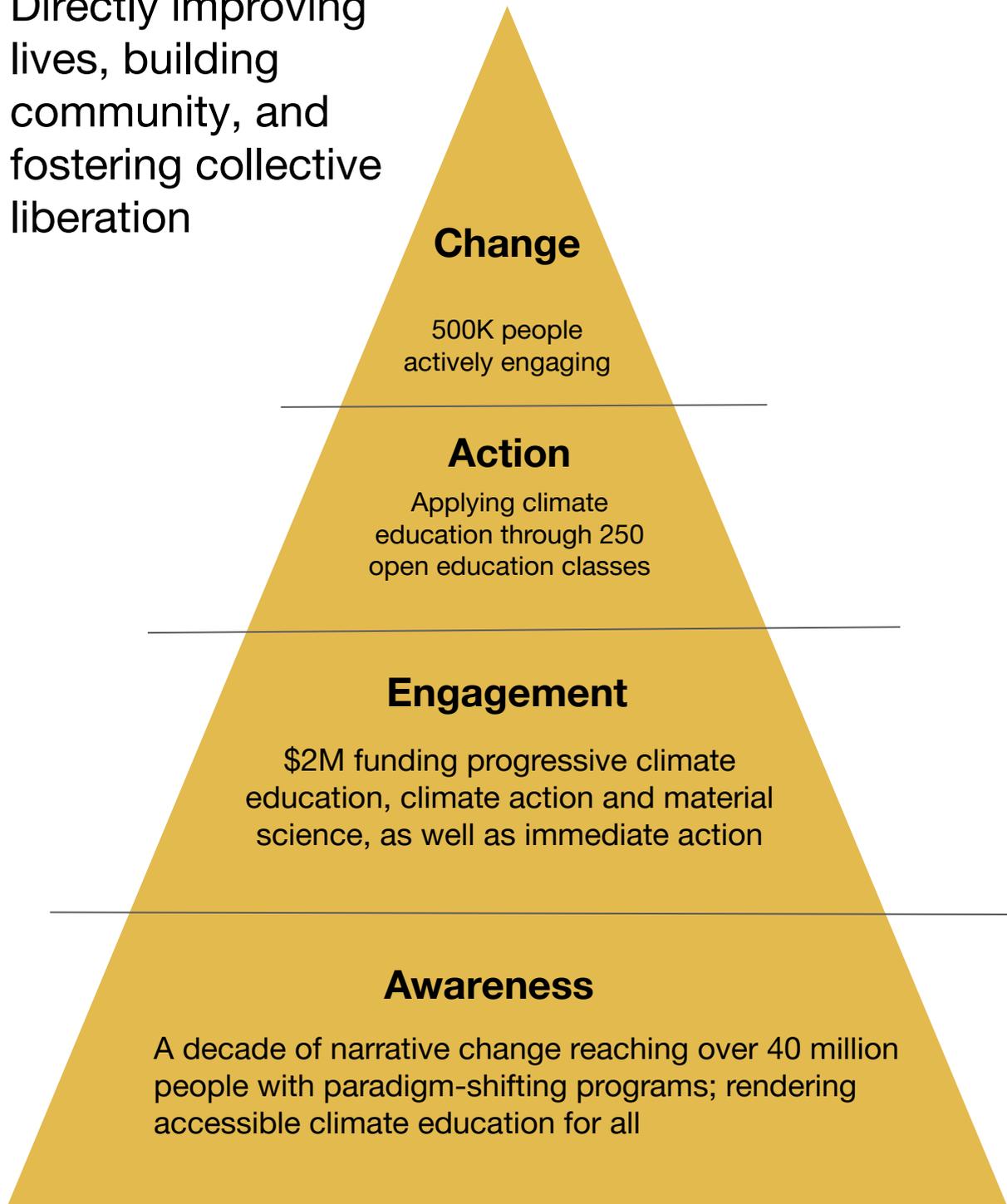
From the first anti-colonial inclusive climate conference in the Fashion Industry to the first science incubator in fashion to the groundbreaking free open education body of work that has allowed 28,000 people to evolve in their careers with applicable climate justice knowledge to their industry, Slow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

– Céline & the Leadership Collective



Pyramid of Change

Directly improving lives, building community, and fostering collective liberation



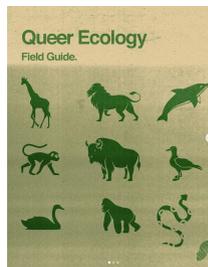
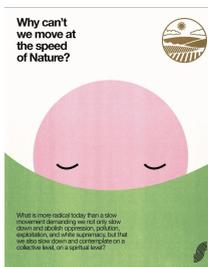
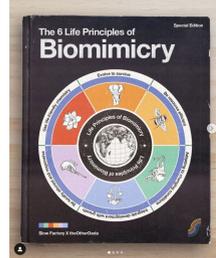
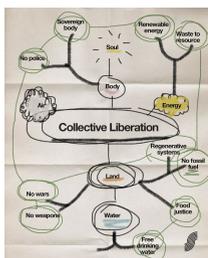
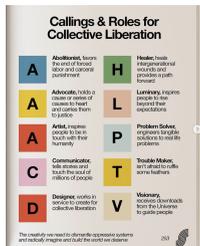
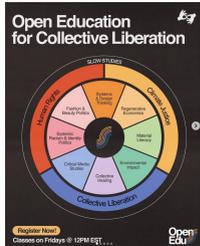
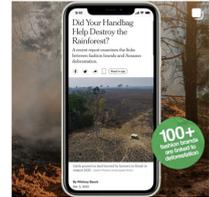
Strategic Narrative Change

100+

Campaigns

6M

Impression & Reach



Strategic Narrative Change

10

Years of
community-
accessible
programming

100

Programs for Social &
Environmental Justice

Open Education

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

WM Design Challenge

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

Landfills As Museums

**“Slow Factory is the education
Harvard won't give you.”**

— Harvard University

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

Strategic Narrative Change

10

Years of
community-
accessible
programming

2M

People impacted

I Really Love This Song

- Art
- Music
- Cultural Change
- Behavioral Change
- Video Prompts
- Interactive Arts
- Storytelling

The Revolution is a School

- Art Installation
- Workshops
- Upcycling
- Planting
- Open Learning
- Design for accessibility
- Collaboration

Study Hall Conference

- Open Lectures
- Free Education
- Convening
- Networking
- Solution-Driven
- Art Installations
- Collaborations
- Dinner Series

“Slow Factory is making the climate revolution accessible and inviting to all. We feel like we have a role to play in the movement and that brings a lot of hope to my heart.”

— MoMA PS1 Visitor

Systemic Regenerative Design

\$1.5M

Funds raised for innovative & sustainable solutions

Amazon Rainforest

- Campaign Reporting on Deforestation
- Accessibility Justice for Community
- Indigenous-centered Knowledge
- Regenerative System Design

One X One Program

- Material Science
- Incubator
- Partnerships & Collaborations
- Waste-led Design
- Waste to Resource
- Sustainable Manufacturing

Slow Factory Labs

- Plant-based Material
- Waste-led Design
- Material Science
- Food Waste to New Material
- Plastic-free Solutions
- Biodegradable Solutions / Circular Solutions

The Slow Factory is always seeking collaborative partnerships to support our strategic and systemic approach to environmental justice. Join us in this important work that's good for the earth and good for the people!

A Decade of Solutions

10

Years of Climate Innovation

2012

Slow Factory launches! Our work begins with our Changing Narratives programming and introducing the concept of fashion activism to broader audiences.

2013

Slow Factory partners with NASA for its first collaboration. Over \$25K donations directly benefit human rights groups.

2014

Slow Factory partners with the World Wildlife Fund which results in \$250K raised for climate justice.

2015

Slow Factory's narrative change within the Fashion Industry "Fast Fashion is a feminist issue" goes mainstream.

2016

MIT Media Lab recognizes Slow Factory's founder Céline Semaan as a Director's Fellow. Slow Factory's "Fashion Activism" goes mainstream.

2017

Slow Factory hosts its first inclusive climate conference centered on Fashion Sustainability.

2018

Slow Factory begins its partnership with the UN to bring international awareness to the fashion- climate crisis resulting in industry pledges towards sustainability.

2019

Slow Factory partners with Swarovski to create Fashion's first science incubator!

A Decade of Solutions

10

Years of Climate Innovation

2020

Slow Factory granted \$250K to scientists in communities working on material science solutions. Slow Factory donates \$150K immediate action in human rights to Lebanon. Open Education enrolls 28,000 students to advance sustainability literacy and create climate change solutions.

2021

Slow Factory begins partnership with NYC's Department of Economic Development. Slow Factory donates \$25k to young designers through WM partnership. Slow Factory donates over \$100k to Lebanon to provide urgent relief funds and development of long-term climate solutions.

**Raising \$5M to
Support Climate
Justice &
Human Rights**

2023

Slow Factory celebrates its 10th Anniversary with the launch of **the Slow Factory Institute**, a school and lab dedicated to advancing climate justice and social equity in communities through open education. The Institute will implement many of same approaches we use as knowledge partners with Parsons School of Design and Central Saint Martins of the University of the Arts London to diversify their climate studies. **Harvard University recently awarded Slow Factory for Innovation in Education.**

Slow Factory Institute

A center of excellence focused on driving fashion sustainability and racial equity through workforce development and training, community outreach and events, and research and development.



Slow Factory Institute's goal is to leverage its climate-positive education and training programs to stimulate sustainable economic development and create pathways for employment opportunities to empower marginalized communities.

The Institute's facilities will include classrooms, a theater and community space, as well as manufacturing facilities for educational and production purposes. The space will also house Slow Factory Labs' lab-grown plant-based leather (Slowhide™) production facility, which uses a plastic-free green chemistry process to transform bio-fabricated SCOBY nanocellulose into a biodegradable luxury textile. Slow Factory Institute uses fashion to shape culture, because we know that culture inspires action.

our Community



Community Care

is Climate Action



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

our Community



88%

Global Majority



90%

Success rate: promising career path after taking Open Edu



500K

Community active members



100+

Classes
Events / Year



5K

Young leaders
empowered

Industry Impact

International Solidarity Matters

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

— **Céline Semaan, Fast Company**

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

— **Forbes**

“Through Open Edu, Slow Factory has democratised education.”

— **Vestiaire Collective**

“Many people credit the organisation — and Semaan — with raising popular awareness of longstanding issues such as climate justice and decolonisation, and this, in turn, has propelled it to the attention of big fashion brands.”

— **Vogue**

“What [Slow Factory] is doing feels very participatory and inclusive.”

— **ANERA [nonprofit partner]**

“We are thrilled to partner with the UN Office for Partnerships and Slow Factory Foundation on the One X One Conscious Design Initiative, to empower our brilliant young participants, through the guidance and mentorship of our esteemed advisors, to create and realize products and services catering to the SDGs, contributing to a better world.”

— **Nadja Swarovski, Swarovski Foundation**

Media & Press

Forbes

ARTS

Slow Factory Teams With Adidas And Stella McCartney On Paid Apprenticeships With Free Online BIPOC Course

Cassell Ferere Contributor @ Fashion and sustainability dress me to photography and design. [Follow](#)

See 10, 2020, 09:00am EDT

Listen to article 7 minutes



Slow Factory Foundation is opening admission for a free, online educational program. This ... [1] Slow Factory Foundation.

September 10th, 2020, the Slow Factory Foundation is opening admission for a free, online educational program. This Open Education opportunity will be taught by Black, Brown, Indigenous, and Minority Ethnic teachers for BIPOC students.

VOGUE BRITAIN [SUBSCRIBE](#)

FASHION BEAUTY ARTS & LIFESTYLE RUNWAY SHOPPING N

SUSTAINABILITY

Is Your Leather Bag Causing Deforestation In The Amazon Rainforest?

BY EMILY CHAN
11 December 2021

[f](#) [t](#) [p](#)



FASTCOMPANY LOGIN

12-03-21

Brands like Nike, Coach, and Gap are destroying the Amazon with their leather products

A new report links dozens of top fashion brands to the destruction of the Amazon rainforest.



[Images: courtesy Slow Factory]

Connecting...

VOGUE [SUBSCRIBE](#)

EVERLANE INTRODUCING: The Summer Shop

RUNWAY

"Fashion Creates Culture, and Culture Creates Action": Céline Semaan on the Industry's Role in Times of Crisis

BY EMILY FARRA
April 23, 2020

[f](#) [t](#) [p](#) [b](#)



Forbes

ARTS

A Lesson On Sustainable Luxury: Slow Factory Teams With Vestiaire Collective For Open Edu Summer Camp

Cassell Ferere Contributor @ Fashion and sustainability dress me to photography and design. [Follow](#)

Aug 6, 2021, 07:42pm EDT

Listen to article 4 minutes



Open Edu Summer Camp presented by Slow Factory Foundation and Vestiaire Collective. SLOW FACTORY FOUNDATION

Slow Factory Foundation educates willing participants on sustainable fashion and circular processes, whether for purely sartorial reasons or for social and political prowess. Opening another session of its Open Edu education institute for the summer, the 501(c)3 public organization is creating a curriculum with the vintage luxury reseller - "Maison de White" Vestiaire Collective, the leading global app for "one loved"

FASTCOMPANY LOGIN



[Photo: Jon Brown for One x One]

Microbial Bioleather

Theanne Schiros and Public School for One x One




Our Partners

Leaders in Environmental Justice & Climate Change

NASA

Narrative change /
climate action

Anera

Human rights /
Refugee rights

Stand.Earth

Campaigning /
mobilizing

MIT Media Lab

Lecture series Material science

World Wildlife Fund

Climate action / Campaigning

ACLU

Immigration rights /
advocacy

WM

Circular design
Waste-led design

adidas

Open
Education

United Nations

Advocacy / Systemic change

Clean Creatives

Campaigning / mobilizing

Our Partners

Leaders in Environmental Justice & Climate Change

Parsons

Non-degree certification

Columbia

Lecture series and IP plant-based leather

Bolt Thread

Material science & Open Education

Swarovski

First science incubator in Fashion, Granting innovators

Natura

Open Education program

Vestiaire

Open Education program

Live Arts

Curation and programming in climate justice

MoMA PS2

Curation & programming, Open Education program

The Other Dada

Biomimicry

Fibershed

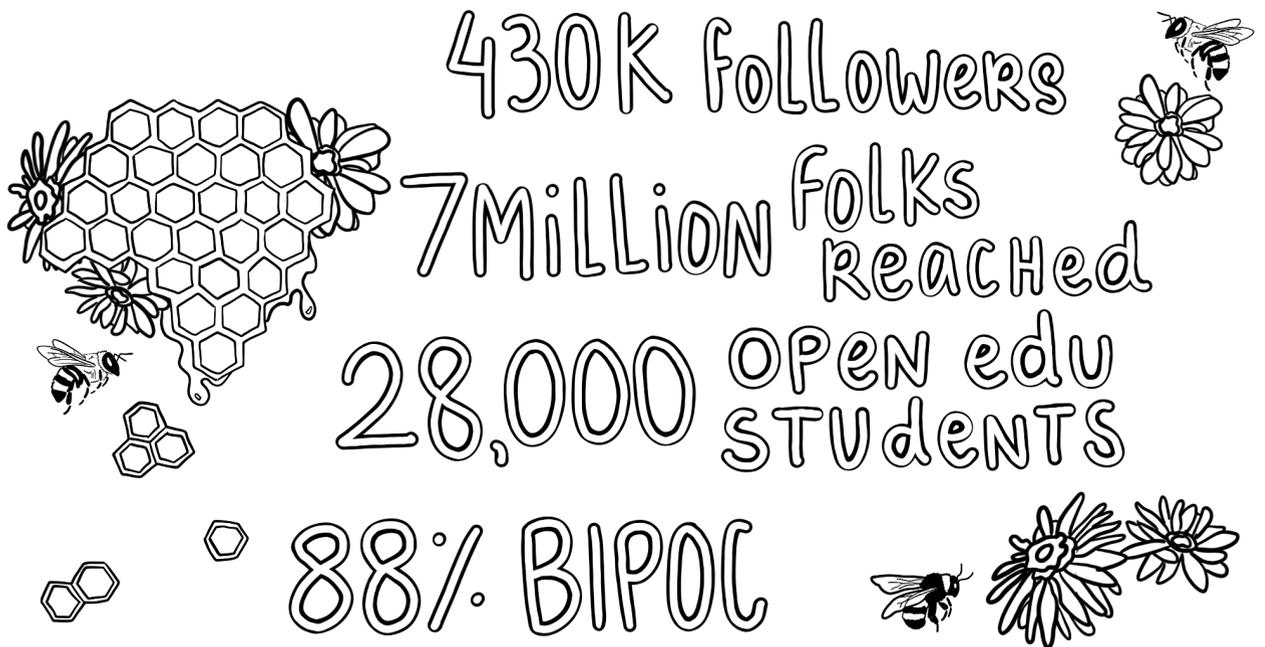
Campaigning / mobilizing, Open Education program

Our Planet

Everything you make returns to the Earth as either food or poison.



Climate Impact



\$3M

Funding Received for Climate Justice & Human Rights

\$700K

Free Open Education Opportunities for Communities

\$450K

Grants Awarded to Empower & Educate Communities

\$375K

Donated for Immediate Humanitarian Response & Relief

\$200K

Provided for Accessibility & Disability Justice

our Numbers

430K Followers

7 MILLION folks reached

28,000 OPEN edu STUDENTS

88% BIPOC



Impact by the Numbers

People	No.	Programs	Reach	Impact	Reach
Team	15	Science	+1.5M	Human Rights	1.5M
Fellows	6	Education	3M	Feminism	7M
Teachers	55	Culture	2.5M	Land-Rights	2M
Partners	18+	Art	1.5M	Indigenous Sovereignty	1.3M
Grantees	20	Grants	100K	Climate Justice	8M
Scientists	5	Design	2M	Material Innovation	1.2M

Programs by the Numbers

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

Our Leadership



Slow Factory Team

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



Céline Semaan
Leadership Collective,
Creative



Anja Tyson
Leadership
Collective,
Development



Paloma Rae
Community &
Design



Kima Cooper
Director of
Strategy



Colin Vernon
Leadership Collective,
Technology



Joshua Potash
Analyst &
Education Lead



Nicole Nimri
Project Lead



Seung Won Bail
Video Editor

Board of Directors



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



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



Christine Platt, MA, JD
Author, advocate, & strategist with a focus on environmental justice and sustainable living



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



Amber Valletta, Actor, model & sustainable fashion activist



Marni Majorelle, Environmentalist, urban horticulturist & community organizer

“We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children.” – African Proverb

We Support UN Sustainable Development Goals



“Sustainability is a culture we must all invest in.”

—Slow Factory Founder, Céline Semaan

Make a bigger impact by joining us

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

join@slowfactory.com



ABOLITION

LIBERATION

JOY

