



Focus Group Results Synthesis Report

WP3- "Re-Fashionable" e-learning course, T3.1 Organisation of focus groups

Country: Spain, Italy, Hungary, Netherlands, Greece
Partner Responsible: IDEC
Date: April 12, 2024



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1. Introduction

In the framework of the Re-fashionable project, and WP3 (Development of the Learning Course), all partners organised focus groups aiming at gathering input from all target groups and categories of stakeholders, in order to pinpoint their learning needs on the subject of fashion sustainability and the application of circular principles in fashion production and consumption.

The focus groups were conducted through in person and online meetings, and they were investigating two different themes, relevant to the development of the project:

1. The needs of the different target groups on the subject of sustainability in fashion and provide a training course adapted to their needs.
2. The Re-fashionable platform, oriented at the needs and wants of fashion professionals and students: if and how they would use a community platform, their take on collaborations and networking.

The present report provides an overview of the results of all 5 national focus groups.

SPAIN

Two Focus groups were organized,

Place: QSTURA offices, Girona, Spain

Date: 20/02/2024

Participants (*Focus group 1 - 4 participants*): The participants consisted of a fashion professional, a representative from a fashion school, a member of an environmental organization, and a representative from a fashion company.

Place: Online Zoom conference

Date: 06/03/2024

Participants (*Focus group 2 - 4 participants*)

ITALY

Place: Remote using digital tools

Date: 21/02/2024

Participants (7 participants): The participants included 2 students from 'Civitali' vocational fashion school, the creator of a vintage clothing recovery project, a professional in the field of haute couture, a representative from a company specializing in ethically produced products with a focus on environmental sustainability, and the founder of a private fashion and design school.

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NETHERLANDS

Place: Leeuwarden, Friesland province.

Date: March 11, 2024.

The participants came from the following fields: education, non-profit organizations, community centers, foundations, companies, public recycling companies, collectives, museums, events, business networks, learning forums, campaigns, online platforms, and initiatives focused on sustainability in fashion.

HUNGARY

Place: Hungary

Participants (*Focus group 1 - 5 participants*): The participants included the owner of a second-hand store in Szeged, a University adjunct in Design and Art Management, an instructor in Design Marketing, an Economics student, and a Humanities student.

Participants (*Focus group 2 - 6 participants*): The participants were a Marketing master's student, an academic expert, a Finance and Accounting undergraduate student, a professional in the competitive sector, a former PhD student currently a full-time mother, and a University instructor in finance.

GREECE

Place: online Zoom conference

Date: April 10 2024

Moderator and note-taking: IDEC (Eleni Fazaki and Ersi Niaoti)

Participants (6): 3 fashion students, one of them already active as a designer

Owner of a fashion company designing clothes and accessories (jewellery), who also has extensive experience as a fashion journalist in Greece and the UK

2 representatives of a non-profit organization, dedicated into clothes recycling and designing recycled accessories.

2. Focus group results

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The discussion was directed towards sustainability in fashion in general and in particular on the skills needed for a greener fashion sector. Following a grid of questions, the moderators engaged participants into the discussion in order to derive insights and recommendations for the Refashionable training course.

The second theme discussed focussed on the platform that the Re-Fashionable project is set to develop, and the type of communication and community network fashion professionals find more useful.

The key findings from all the reports conducted in various countries provide valuable information about the needs, perspectives, and practices related to sustainability in the fashion industry.

Diverse Networking Channels: Professionals in Spain mentioned the importance of leveraging diverse networking channels, including physical events and social media platforms like Instagram and LinkedIn, to facilitate collaboration and knowledge-sharing. Participants in Greece emphasized the need for promoting local and sustainable providers, promoting local sourcing as a means of reducing ecological footprint and waste of raw materials.

Challenges in Sustainable Practices: Participants in Spain identify challenges such as addressing sustainable fabrics, accessing educational resources, and establishing partnerships. Similar challenges were mentioned in Italy, where focus is placed on practical implementation and teacher training. In Greece, participants mentioned the necessity of education on sustainable sourcing, production, and the overall ecological footprint of fashion, along with the need for feasible, environmentally responsible, and economically viable ideas for stock management.

Interest in Community Platform: There is shared interest among professionals across countries for a community platform facilitating collaboration and networking. This feeling is strengthened by participants from Hungary and the Netherlands, where platforms are seen as opportunities for practical oriented content and community building.

Importance of Education: Both Spain and Italy recognized the importance of education, with participants pointing to the need for complete resources, interactive learning methods and a comprehensive approach that combines theory with practical examples. In Greece, students expressed interest in incorporating lessons on circular economy specific to the fashion industry into their classes, while professionals emphasized the need for reliable information and ideas about permanent issues.

Global networks vs local connections: While participants value global networking, there is also a preference for platforms that serve local connections. The balance between global reach and local importance is crucial to address regional challenges and opportunities (Spain).

Role of the Platform in Promoting Collaboration: Participants in Spain visualize the community platform playing a central role in promoting collaboration and serving as a centre for direct communication between stakeholders.

In conclusion, addressing sustainability training needs in the fashion industry needs a versatile approach, incorporating diverse networking channels, comprehensive educational resources, and interactive community platforms. The insights from Greece emphasize the importance of circular economy integration, consumer awareness campaigns, promotion of local sourcing, and leveraging

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influencers and social media to drive sustainable change. Using this knowledge, training initiatives can help practitioners to adopt more sustainable practices.

3. Best practices

The Focus groups organized in several countries gave an insight into the fashion industry's best practices for promoting sustainability:

SPAIN

-Sustainable Design Principles: Participants mentioned integrating principles like durability, versatility, and recyclability into garment design.

-Transparency and Traceability: The importance of providing consumers with information on source and manufacturing for thoughtful decisions.

-Collaborative Initiatives: Partnerships between brands and suppliers, as well as collaborations with environmental organizations.

-Consumer Education and Engagement: Strategies included raising awareness about fashion's environmental impact and promoting mindful consumption.

-Innovation and Technology: Emerging technologies like blockchain and AI were seen as new options for sustainability.

ITALY

-Reuse of Materials: Examples included customizing knit sweaters, reuse of raw materials for yarns, and initiatives like the Looper Textile Co project, collecting, sorting, and selling used clothing and fabrics to extend their use

-Circular Fashion Promotion: Successful projects included awareness campaigns, sharing platforms, and adopting sustainable strategies.

-Training methodology: Case studies were considered effective for training, together with practical learning experiences.

NETHERLANDS

-Local Initiatives: Successful stories like Cycle-Up HUB highlighting community-driven projects' importance.

-Vocational Training: Focus on practical training in collaboration with local businesses to promote sustainable fashion practices.

HUNGARY

-Clarification of Terminologies: Realizing about the culture dependent interpretations of sustainability concepts.

-Curriculum Development: Involvement of experts, prioritizing practical, individually implementable practices, and highlighting best practices.

-Influencer Engagement: Use influencers for online educational materials due to their significant following among young people.

-Specific Programs: Implementation of sustainable clothing fairs or linking with slow fashion consumer communities for student benefit.

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-Interactive Education Methods: Preference for interactive methods, small group sizes, and incorporation of final exhibitions or student "challenge groups."

-Transparency in Supply Chain: Emphasis on transparency, using examples of both good and bad practices as educational material.

-Personal Stories: Use of personal stories, particularly regarding sweatshop labour, to give voice to the humans behind unsustainable fashion practices.

GREECE

-Circular Economy Integration: Participants stressed the importance of incorporating circular economy principles into fashion education, advocating for courses that teach students how to reuse clothing and appreciate recycled fabrics.

-Consumer Awareness Campaigns: The need for campaigns at both national and European levels to educate consumers on sustainable fashion was highlighted, with an emphasis on promoting understanding rather than charity-based approaches.

-Local Sourcing Promotion: Participants identified local sourcing as a sustainable practice that should be encouraged and promoted to consumers, as it reduces ecological footprints and waste of raw materials.

-Influencer and Social Media Impact: Students discussed the influential role of influencers and social media in promoting sustainable fashion practices, suggesting that their platforms could be leveraged to reach a broader audience and promote circularity.

In short, these practices include sustainable design, transparency, collaboration, consumer education and innovation. Implementing these strategies and promoting collaboration and innovation, participants were optimistic about the progress of sustainability in the fashion industry.

3.1. Training Methodology

During the focus group session, participants provided insights into training methodologies for promoting sustainability within the fashion industry:

Suggested effective sustainability training in the fashion industry involves a balanced approach, integrating theoretical instruction with practical application. This includes analysing case studies of successful sustainability initiatives, utilizing interactive learning games, and working with practical exercises such as group discussions and problem solving activities.

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4. Conclusions and recommendations

Based on the analysis of focus groups findings from various countries, the following topics can be mentioned regarding the training needs for sustainability in the fashion industry: Diverse Networking Channels ,Challenges in Sustainable Practices, Interest in Community Platform, Importance of Education, Global Networks vs. Local Connection, Role of the Platform in Promoting Collaboration. Those areas were also in the core of good practices the participants mentioned as interesting or inspiring during the discussions.

Addressing sustainability training needs in the fashion industry requires a versatile approach, incorporating diverse networking channels, comprehensive educational resources, and interactive community platforms. By leveraging these insights, training initiatives can effectively support professionals in adopting more sustainable practices.

Additionally, best practices identified across countries and focus groups include sustainable design principles, transparency, collaboration, consumer education, innovation, emphasize the importance of circular economy integration, consumer awareness campaigns, promotion of local sourcing, and leveraging influencers and social media to drive sustainable change. Implementing these strategies and promoting both collaboration and innovation can accelerate the progress towards sustainability in the fashion industry.

To conclude, training methodologies should adopt a balanced approach, integrating theoretical instruction with practical application. Case studies, interactive learning games, and practical exercises are welcome by the participants to engage the potential learners and improve knowledge retention among them. By adopting these approaches and incorporating insights from diverse perspectives, the fashion industry can move closer to a more sustainable future.