

REPORT

Lessons from the 4th Global Business Anthropology Summit

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This was not a typical summit. It was an extraordinary event that offered a unique and immersive experience. Diverging from traditional conferences, the organizers crafted alternative participation formats, engaging activities, and inspiring venues. This report has been co-written with contributing thoughts from members of the Global Business Anthropology Summit (GBAS) Mexico 2023 organizing committee and activity coordinators. We aimed to capture experiences and knowledge, challenging conventional publishing styles by blending the voices of those who actively participated in the summit. The result is a polyphonic text interwoven with visual sketches and photographs taken by the participants.

GBAS 2023 was intended to reactivate face-to-face events after three years of uncertainty caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. After this challenging time, the summit offered the opportunity to bring together attendees from throughout Mexico and around the world to exchange ideas, broaden perspectives, bridge disciplinary understandings, and

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JBA 12(2): 238-271
Fall 2023

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ISSN 2245-4217

www.cbs.dk/jba

DOI:
<https://doi.org/10.22439/jba.v12i2.7063>



Image 1: Sketch from Tlacuilo's collective, artist Andrea Tumbas.

foster fruitful dialogues among academia, businesses, and the community of practitioners. We believe that it was an unforgettable gathering that reimaged the future of business and offered a platform for innovative ideas and meaningful connections.

Anthropologists, designers, entrepreneurs, independent researchers, activists, business leaders, academics, and students converged at Universidad Iberoamericana in Mexico City to explore the construction of conscious futures where transdisciplinary and multi-professional trajectories prevailed. Over the course of three days, almost 200 attendees came together, mostly from different parts of Mexico, Latin America, and the United States, but also from Europe and even China. We enjoyed three keynote speakers and engaged in 34 activities, including ludic workshops, world cafés, salons, and impro-narratives. The aim was to foster an atmosphere of encounters, dialogue, and exchange with the goal of co-creating knowledge and bridging the gap between “experts” and “learners.”

Furthermore, there was a collaborative exchange with various companies that have embraced anthropology as a powerful tool for understanding the future from the perspective of key stakeholders and by listening to consumers, building a conscious and sustainable vision, as well as balancing co-existence among humans, non-humans, virtuality, the Earth, and the challenges ahead. Internationally influential companies such as Accenture Song and Altazor Intelligence were not only present as sponsors, but also as active participants.

Mexico was a perfect host for this event. Recognized for its vibrant and forward-thinking culture, its seamless blend of modernity and ancient traditions provided an ideal backdrop for discussions on the future of business anthropology. The setting was a potent catalyst for innovation, bridging the gap between customary and contemporary practices and inspiring fresh approaches to business, including business anthropology. The summit embraced both cosmopolitan and indigenous perspectives, encouraging a “glocal” approach to creative problem-solving. Lessons from the Global South offered possibilities to significantly enhance creative solutions in economic exchange while prioritizing sustainable resource management and inclusivity.

The summit’s logo drew inspiration from Mayan textiles, reflecting a deeply rooted view of the universe as a dynamic, ever-changing fabric of living energies. This perspective underscored the idea that the universe is a conscious entity, a holistic continuum of creative spiritual forces, manifesting as a vast ocean of life’s wonders. The vibrant and colorful palette used in the summit’s design mirrored the joy and kindness inherent in Mexican culture and its practices. Each of the summit’s themes was symbolized by a spiral pattern reminiscent of pre-Hispanic temple architecture: aqua turquoise represented awareness,



Image 2: GBAS Logo.

pink magenta embodied connections, and purple symbolized uncertainty. The small accent points intersecting the spiral paths represented the ongoing journey of individual humanity: developing awareness of the environment, fostering connections with all living beings, and preparing to embrace uncertainty in the future.

This year, something remarkably special about GBAS was the presence of visual scribes from the collective Tlacuilos, who were in charge of visually documenting the entire conference. Scribes use sketchnotes as a language to connect content and aid insight. As Kelvy Bird says in his book *Generative Scribing: A Social Art of the 21st Century* (2018): “It’s essentially a language that weaves words and pictures to facilitate group learning and cultural memory.” We have included some of their work to illustrate special moments from the summit.

To get to know Mexico beyond the venue, on the last day of the event, attendees travelled to southern Mexico City to visit Xochimilco, which once provided produce and flowers for the capital of the Great Aztec Empire. Immersed in the system of canals and man-made islands, or *chinampas*, the Olintlalli cooperative hosted this final activity to share other productive and associative possibilities for growing crops in an innovative and conscious way, considering the relevance of preserving nature harmoniously.

The following pages provide a summary of this summit’s experiences, reflections, and insights. The first section recaps highlights from the keynote speakers. The second explores the scope of the different formats, assessing their qualities, strengths, and areas for potential improvement. In the sections that follow, coordinators and organizers interlace their lessons and outcomes with an in-depth analysis of the overarching themes that guided the discussions: awareness, connections, and uncertainty. Finally, we conclude with the event’s most important lessons to give visibility to emerging possibilities in the multifaceted sphere of business anthropology and to inspire and stimulate career paths for a conscious future.

Keynote Speakers

After the opening ceremony, our first keynote speaker – anthropologist Matt Artz, creator and host of the *Anthropology in Business* podcast, and head of product and user experience at Artmatcher – spoke about “The Future of Anthropology in Business.” Artz encouraged us to embrace the digital turn by finding new ways to use artificial intelligence and other digital tools, not only as a point of study and critique, but also to find solutions and learn to communicate better. He emphasized the need to connect our responsibility to build anthropological knowledge for the future of human society and the importance of rethinking the relationship we share with machines as a way to navigate this evolving landscape.

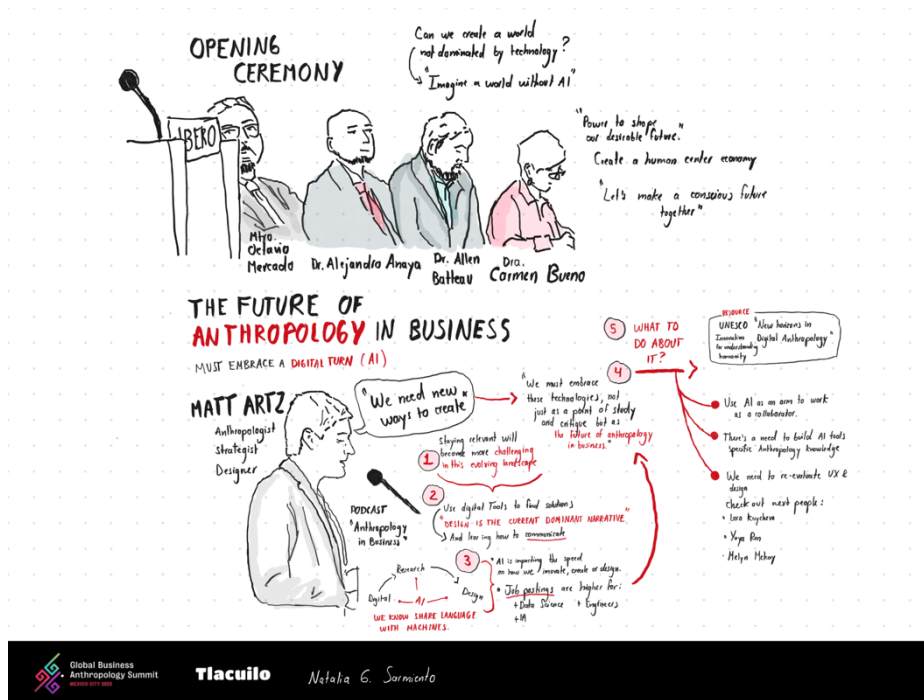


Image 3: Sketchnote of inauguration and Matt Artz from Tlacuilo's collective, artist Natalia Sarmiento.

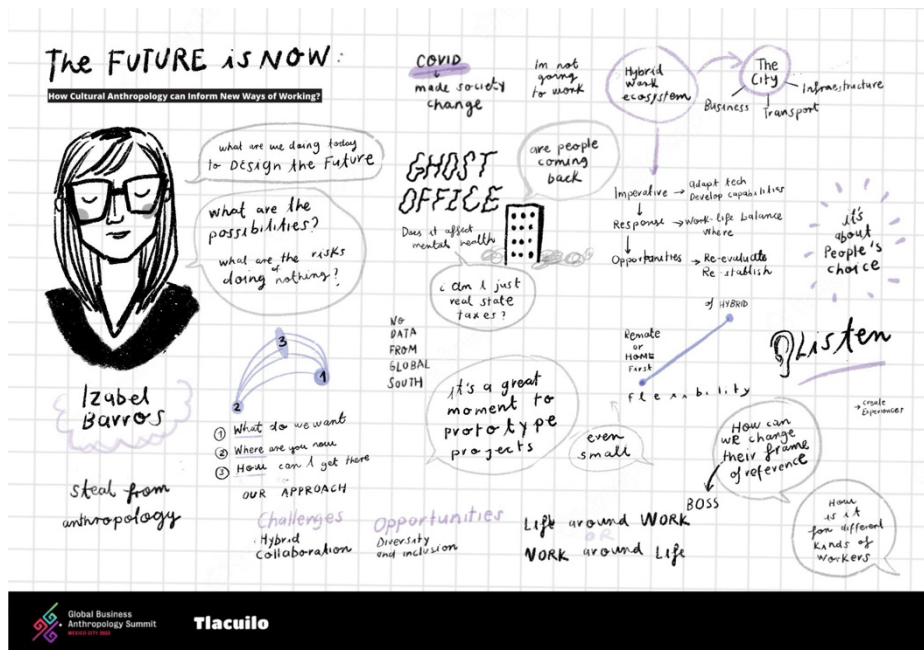


Image 4: Sketchnote of Izabel Barros collective, artist Andrea Tumbas.

On the second day, Brazilian designer Izabel Barros, senior partner at FBR Consulting, addressed the question “How Can Cultural Anthropology Inform New Ways of Working?” She walked us through the challenges of hybrid collaboration and opportunities for embracing diversity and inclusion. In addition, she shared examples of how we can change our frame of reference and presented a prototype project aimed at rethinking the models of “life around work” and “work around life.”

Our third keynote speaker was Juan Francisco Salazar, professor at Western Sydney University in Australia. During his presentation entitled “Futurities: Anthropological Orientations and Interventions,” he used futurities as a method and illustrated his points with examples from science fiction. Through this exploration, he warned against the possible negative outcomes of treating “space” solely as an economic entity, highlighting the intricate complexities that emerge when we attach economic significance to the concept of space. He brought diverse global orientations to the conversation along with approaches that are fostering critical interventions for socio-ecological transformation.

Finally, our closing panel, “What Does Conscious Future Mean?” featured Luis Arnal and Patricia Medina from Accenture Song in Mexico, Lucia Laurent Neva from Visual Signo in the UK, and Inga Treitler from Anthropology Imagination in Germany and the US, and it was mediated by Bruno Gandlgruber from UAM Cuajimalpa in Mexico City. Conversations were sparked by our central theme of creating conscious futures, from a Latin American perspective and considering their implications for society and the environment. The panelists reflected on topics of inclusion and

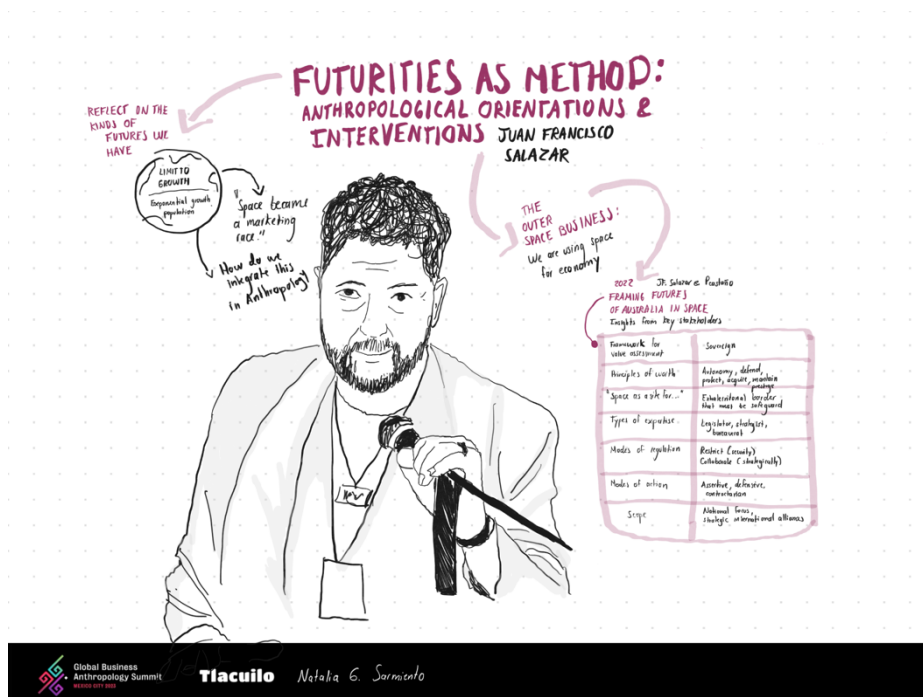


Image 5: Sketchnote of Juan Francisco Salazar from Tlacuilos collective, artist Natalia Sarmiento.

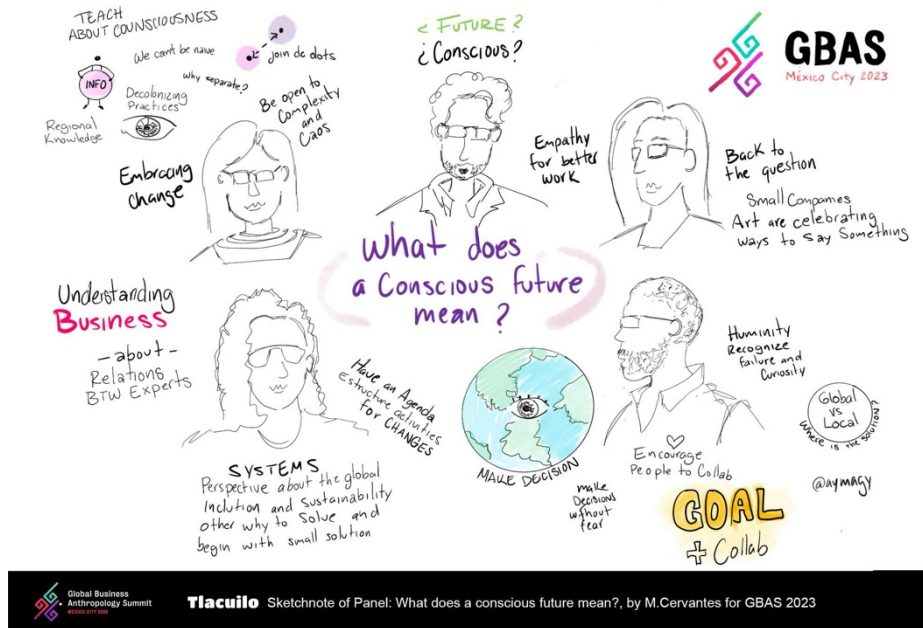


Image 6: Sketchnote of the closing panel from Tlacuilo's collective, artist Magy Cervantes.

sustainability as well as approaches based on small solutions and curiosity, encouraging collaboration and the embracing of change and chaos to make decisions without fear.¹

Participation Formats

Anthropological summits traditionally have passive set-ups featuring keynote speakers and panel discussions. However, without disregarding the relevance of these formats, the GBAS organizers prioritized immersive, interpersonal activities to foster networking and active co-creation of collective knowledge, especially as a way to celebrate being together again after the pandemic. With this in mind, the summit's program was carefully crafted to offer two days of impro-narratives, ludic workshops, salons, and world cafés that culminated with a visit to Xochimilco.

The “impro-narratives” took inspiration from the well-known PechaKucha format, but were condensed to 18 slides of 20 seconds each, challenging participants to tell a compelling story in six minutes. The summit's 14 impro-narratives were grouped into four blocks according to their subject matter: new kinds of organizations, collaboration and social, the power of possibility, and freedom and inclusion. The sketchnote below provides a glimpse of their content.

¹ Access sketchnotes and video recordings at: https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVMBQug5o=/?share_link_id=742524502538

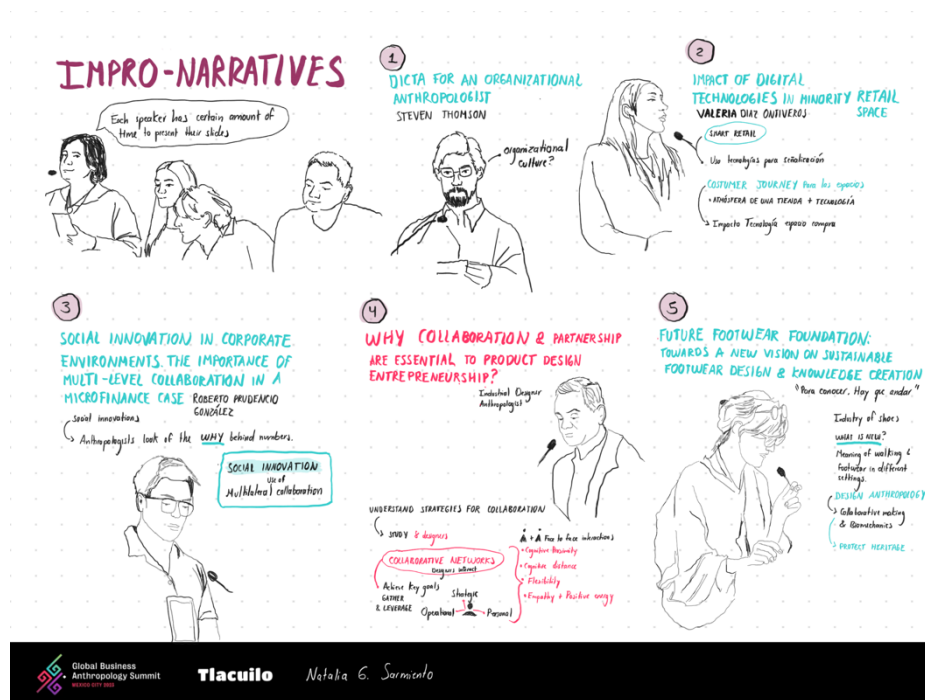


Image 7: Sketchnotes of the first two sessions of *Impro-Narratives*: “New Kinds of Organizations” and “Collaboration and Social.”

“Ludic workshops” used creative techniques and gamification to teach participants new skills and expand their knowledge. The 10 workshops covered a wide range of topics, including using LEGO bricks to create conflict stories and face the challenge of building a business on Mars in different near-future scenarios. There was also a social presencing theater session that pondered an environmental situation and a workshop for tangibly visualizing organizational infrastructures that highlighted the power of performing and manipulating materials to understand and solve problems.

The “salons” were 90-minute conversations in which a moderator asked stimulating questions about a topic to facilitate an insightful discussion. Then, participants shared their reactions based on their knowledge and experience of each topic. There was a total of seven salons covering topics such as the future of work, anthropology’s role in business, and the intersection of anthropology and technology.

At the “world cafés,” participants rotated between tables, using this proven methodology to cross-pollinate ideas with people from different backgrounds and disciplines in meaningful conversations on a variety of topics. There was a total of ten 90-minute sessions, each with a different focus.

The innovative formats used at GBAS Mexico 2023 successfully promoted interpersonal relationships and active co-creation. The participants appreciated the opportunity to learn from each other, share their own ideas, and collaborate on new projects. These formats also helped create a more inclusive and welcoming environment that fostered

learning, growing, and connecting. As such, it is an example of how to rethink anthropological summits to be more engaging and immersive, which contributes to gathering new collective knowledge to build a more conscious future.

Awareness of the Past, Present, and Future in Business Anthropology

The first theme of awareness was addressed by our keynote speaker, Matt Artz. He challenged us to be aware of the technological advancements that are shaping our world today. He pointed out that traditional ethnography and other conventional methods used by business anthropology might soon become obsolete due to the widespread adoption of digital technologies. Even anthropology is losing relevance: In a deep web search, Artz found that “design anthropology” is more distinctive and taking on greater appeal. How do we stay relevant in a digitalized world where humans and living organisms are not the only ones with intelligence? That was among the challenging questions that Artz asked, reflecting on our discipline’s past, present, and future. He proposed blending AI, data sciences, and ethnography to develop new mixed method approaches. We need to prepare for the coming revolution by adopting all these technologies, but we should also be critical of them, aware of privacy, and careful of bias. As Artz stated:

We have to develop new theories and methods that will help us navigate in an AI-first society where humans are no longer the only generators and creators of knowledge [...] We need AI anthropology tools for humanistic innovation, prototyping a humanistic understanding.

We should push towards this transformation with a commitment to making conscious futures.

This theme was further explored using the summit’s participation formats. In the ludic workshops, “Pure Game: Design and Gender” played with gender roles to raise awareness of what they do to organizations and how we can place them at the center of any design. Meanwhile, in “Visualizing Organizational Infrastructures,” participants created tangible expressions of organizational infrastructures that helped them be aware of today’s infrastructure challenges. “Approaching, Understanding, and Applying Basic UX Research Concepts” offered a safe and fun space to learn the basic concepts of user experience (UX) research and apply them in a case study: a new tool that anthropologists need to learn to use and keep in their toolbox to approach, understand, and re-design organizations. Also, in “How to Make a Conscious Business Model for the Future,” the participants speculated about sustainable business models based on a circular economy.

Meanwhile, the improv-narrative format was used to present a case study of Accenture Song's successful gender inclusion strategy under the title "Heteronormativity Is Not Today's Thing." In addition, "Smart TV Used by Elders: Difficulties and Opportunities Identified Using Story-Life Methods" portrayed the clash between past practices and future technologies, demonstrating the importance of redesigning *new* technologies for *past* generations from an anthropological approach. Other impro-narratives also helped in gaining awareness of dynamic transformations and continuous resignification in a challenging world. This was the case of "Dressing Emotions: Resignification and Consumption of Second-Hand and Vintage Clothes in Mexico." Moreover, "Freedom of Identity in the Metaverse" was an excellent example of a new generation of anthropologists and designers making the future of anthropology by walking in the new virtual territories with methods and tools that are performed in the making.

Additionally, world cafés posed questions such as "What Is Social Innovation for a Multinational Company (MNC)?," urging practitioners to consider the emergent practices of MNCs. "Ethical Implications of Confidentiality in Digital Platforms" opened a space to discuss a major transformation currently taking place in business anthropology: the digitalization of methods. The participants thought together about the implications of using information that is readily available on the internet in anthropological research. In the world café entitled "Anticipating the Future of Sustainable Markets," colleagues from diverse disciplines discussed how to detach from present cognitive constraints to convey novel visions of future scenarios in which society develops sustainable relationships between products and waste.

Lastly, the salon format also allowed us to take on a poignant topic of our discipline's past and present in "Understanding and Addressing the Anti-Business Bias among Anthropology Students." Building on classroom experiences, we managed to collaboratively develop strategies for addressing bias in the classroom and shaping the new generations of business – or design – anthropologists.

Below, we invited the organizers of the awareness theme to present some of their experiences and the lessons they learned.

Pure Game: Design and Gender (Ludic Workshop)

Coordinators: Cinthia Carolina Alba Guzmán, Ileana Jalil Kentros, Edward Bermúdez Macías, Mariam Bujalil Palafox, and Laura Camila Ramírez Bonilla.²

² Universidad Iberoamericana, Mexico City, Mexico.



Image 8: Ludic workshop "Pure Game: Design and Gender."

The "Pure Game" workshop focused on awareness about the ubiquity of design and its relationship with gender. Design has a constant presence in everything that we do and mediates all our everyday activities in such a way that it becomes invisible. Design is never neutral; it always has an ideological, social, and cultural charge. Whether intentional or not, by reinforcing gender stereotypes, promoting violence or discrimination or, to the contrary, by advocating emancipation and resistance, most design has a gender bias. Playing this game made design visible while also encouraging reflection on gender relationships and possible design interventions.

The Pure Game is a creative approach to the problematic relationship between design and gender that uses a Mobius strip board to shift the players' concentration away from trying to win and onto the activity itself and the interactions it prompts. Each game box calls for a dynamic or thought-provoking activity, such as role playing, drawing, or selecting cards. As a result, the players go through an intellectual process of reflection mediated by a fun and spontaneous action that leads to writing a business proposal on an index card complemented by drawings and considering the collective comments from each discussion round.

The game promotes lateral and creative thinking, resulting in spontaneous and innovative outcomes contrasting from those of a slow, intellectual, and rational process. The surprise factor stimulates spontaneity, leaving little room for imposture, and fun fosters collaboration even when results have yet to be imagined. This playful activity demands concrete business outcomes, where a mixture of fun, emotions, and pragmatic approaches become products, services, and experiences.

Those who signed up for this workshop knew that they were coming to play, so there was already willingness and openness. From trying to draw without knowing how, to carrying a plastic baby and

pretending to be its parent, the activities produced positive reactions. Some boxes inspired laughter while others sparked serious and controversial conversations. There was an enriching diversity among the people at each table, as their ages, genders, professions, and countries of origin all varied, contributing to contrasting opinions, backgrounds, and lifestyles. All the participants were deeply involved and played with a cheerful and honest disposition, promoting interesting ideas, listening to others, and building new ideas.

Their final comments expressed excitement, interest, and continuity, reflecting not only on the subject of gender and design, but on the game itself. Record cards with results, comments from each group, and general collective reflections at the end provided three output levels. The game also allowed us to get to know the participants and continue the conversation openly. Several of them considered this methodology as an option to implement in other professional and academic activities.

Heteronormativity Is Not Today's Thing (Impro-Narrative)

Coordinator: Graciela Ixchel Barreiro Reyes.³

Heteronormativity within companies needs to be addressed. We often take the gender identity, expression, and sexual orientation of those around us for granted, unaware of our assumptions and preconceived notions which are inspired by stereotypes and dictated by society. Shedding light on these behaviors starts a conversation. It can give a voice to individuals who have suffered from heteronormativity in their workplaces, leading them to feel that they do not belong or have the freedom to be who they are, thus limiting their happiness.

To prepare for this improv-narrative's monologue, we employed the double diamond methodology to explore themes and gather data. Our approach initially identified overarching themes and then narrowed them down to focus on one in particular. Starting with the broad topic of LGBT+ discrimination, our research highlighted subjects central to the ongoing fight for LGBT+ rights, including societal heteronormativity. Focusing on this issue, we examined heteronormativity within workplaces. This exploration drew from my personal experience as a Mexican lesbian woman as well as insights from transgender and homosexual colleagues to offer a well-rounded perspective.

We shared this improv-narrative with a diverse audience of around 20 individuals. An interactive Q&A session followed, providing a platform for attendees to express their viewpoints. Tackling the subject of heteronormativity within corporate environments often means venturing into uncharted territory. This is understandable, as not everyone has

³ Accenture Song, Mexico.

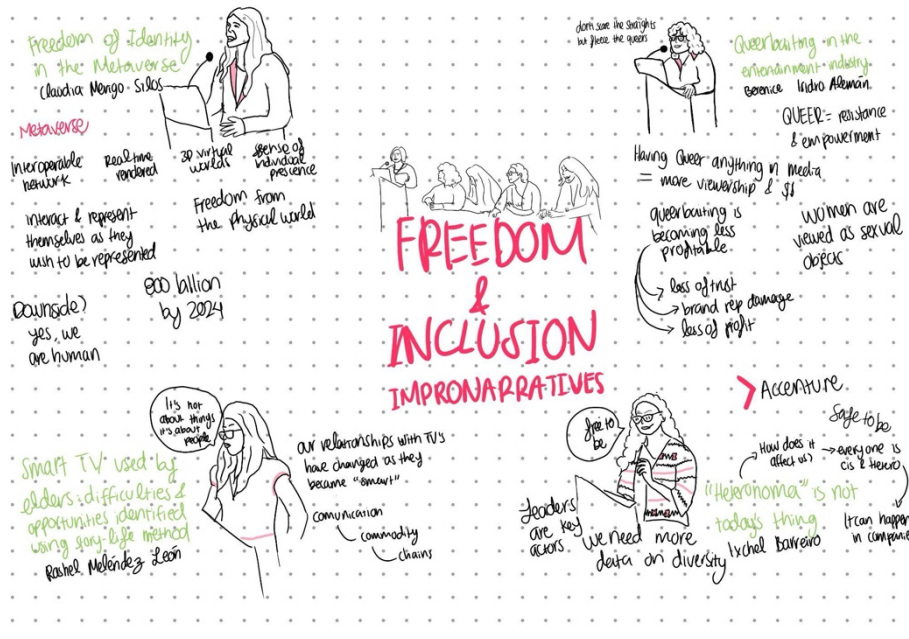


Image 9: Sketchnotes of Impro-Narratives second day sessions: "Freedom & Inclusion" from Tlacuilo's collective artist Sara Bustamante.

first-hand experience with this form of discrimination. With this in mind, the experience proved enlightening. Despite the topic's novelty, a substantial number of attendees showed empathy and actively strategized to counter such biases within their professional settings. One participant shared an experience of heteronormativity in their workplace, underscoring the tangible impact on productivity and interpersonal relationships with colleagues, which demonstrated the far-reaching implications of such biases.

As the activity concluded, the participants continued the conversation, resulting in a slew of innovative ideas on how to mitigate heteronormativity. Numerous participants shared varied life experiences, both personal and professional, sparking questions about whether past occurrences could have been addressed or averted and what vital tools are needed to circumvent such situations. This inclusive dialogue emphasized the significance of relinquishing assumptions about conformity with cisgender heterosexual norms and exemplified the importance of addressing heteronormativity to foster a more diverse and equitable corporate landscape.

Now that these matters are somewhat more visible in the world, it is easy to compare the present to the past and see how we may not have taken the necessary preventive steps before. Yet, by exchange ideas, we concluded that being aware of the issue and knowing how to respond to unacceptable attitudes are the first substantial strides that we can take towards tangible change.

Visualizing Organizational Infrastructures (Ludic Workshop)

Coordinator: Alexandra Mack.⁴

This activity focused on making organizational infrastructures visible and tangible in order to visualize the barriers that they may create in our work and to better understand how to work with them and around them. This awareness helps us both understand and strategize how we might work through (or around) infrastructure challenges and provide artifacts that can engage organizational stakeholders in change.

The workshop began with an introduction to the theories of infrastructuring as well as work done on tangible representations as boundary objects, examples of tangibles, and some metaphors as thought starters. Then, in groups of three or four, the participants collaboratively created tangible representations of the organizational infrastructures that they worked with or within using paper, scissors, tape, and pipe cleaners as materials. While doing this, they discussed their organizations, which spanned a diverse range in terms of both size and industry and also covered multiple countries and experience levels. Most of the workshop consisted of the participants working in these small groups. They also shared their tangibles and lessons with each other at the end with the intention of focusing learning on their interactions.

Two comments from the participants were really striking. They were reflecting on how, almost unconsciously, they started playing with the materials as they told their stories to each other and then built their representation out of the idea that they had been forming, describing it as a somatic activity: “Our bodies know things before our minds do.”

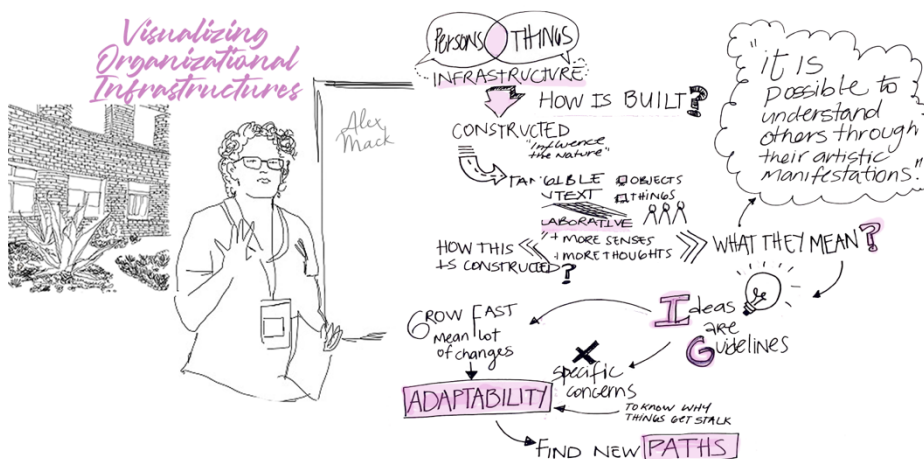


Image 10: Sketchnotes of Visualizing Organizational Infrastructures from Tlacuilos collective.

⁴ Ad Hoc, USA.

Someone else called it “distributed cognition using your body as a resource.”

What Is Social Innovation for a Multinational Company? (World Café)

Coordinator: Roberto Prudencio González.⁵

During this World Café session, participants debated the ways in which multinational companies in Mexico promote philanthropy, social responsibility, and social innovation. The discussion was based on five case studies featuring active participation from multinational corporations. The main objective was to gain a comprehensive understanding of each initiative's multifaceted dimensions. The conversation focused on discerning the intricacies of these endeavors and exploring how anthropology's perspectives and methodologies can significantly enhance and refine social innovation efforts within corporate frameworks. This activity was particularly relevant to the theme of awareness because it was a direct opportunity for anthropological knowledge to be applied to develop more profitable outcomes for stakeholders.

Since world cafés have a uniform structure characterized by their participatory dynamics that promote collective learning and knowledge sharing, we selected this format to foster a rich and diverse exchange of perspectives and experiences among the participants, who were experts or practitioners of social innovation. The group was heterogeneous with varying levels of interest and expertise in the topic. They included:

- Subject experts, such as academics, researchers, consultants, and managers, who have studied or implemented social innovation initiatives in various contexts and sectors.
- Undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in social sciences programs or directly involved in business with an interest in learning more about the theory and practice of social innovation.
- Activists and small business owners involved in social movements or entrepreneurial ventures that aimed to address social problems in their communities.

The activity consisted of three rounds of small group conversations followed by a plenary session where the main insights and outcomes were shared. The conversation rounds explored the aforementioned concepts, examples from participants' experiences, and the challenges that multinational companies encounter with social innovation. While we faced reactionary and non-participative attitudes at first, mainly from the most senior participants and experts, they did

⁵ Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Mexico.

respond positively and enthusiastically to the conversations and debates that arose from our discussion points. They expressed their opinions, questions, doubts, experiences, and suggestions on the topic, achieving the kind of exchange that we had intended. Discussing the similarities and differences between philanthropy, social responsibility, and social innovation for multinational companies and highlighting the advantages and disadvantages of each was particularly interesting.

Based on this discussion, the concept of human-centered design became a pivotal aspect for successful social innovation, which led to enhancing anthropology's role to find insights on human-centered perspectives. We also appreciated the complexity of social innovation for multinational companies, recognizing that, rather than a one-size-fits-all solution, there are multiple approaches and possibilities that depend on various factors and contexts. Lastly, we moved past the idea of multinational corporations being homogeneous entities, acknowledging instead the agency of those who work within each company. This cultivated an understanding for reasons why an enterprise might actively participate in social causes, such as personal values, professional goals, organizational culture, or external pressure.

Connections for a Conscious Future

The summit's second analytical theme was *connections*. In forums on this topic, the organizers and the participants had critical and proactive attitudes toward approaches to improving social engagement. Good examples were presented at three ludic workshops: "Sketching in Your Way: A New Addition to the Anthropology Toolkit" and "Social Presence Theatre Session: Embodied Exploration of the Emerging Future Facing Socio-Ecological Challenges," as well as "Hackathon in a Box: LEGO Experience (Innovation in a Complex World)." This was also true of the impro-narrative "Risography as a Way to Promote a Horizontal Dialogue between Institutions and Communities." Many of these activities started by exposing social discontent and sources of friction that inspired the audience to come up with ideas for transformative solutions. The common visions surrounding this topic coincided in their understanding of the complexity of addressing diversity, asymmetry, and exclusion in social relations. These were the main questions: How can principles and orientations be aligned in a world that is characterized by intensified global connections where transformations are experienced at an accelerated pace? What opportunities are there for reinventing or building new productive institutions for a better future, taking into account the value of connections?

Highly diverse lines of business were presented, from marketing, media, real state, and urban developers to tech firms, including renewable energy technologies as well as social investment companies and collective

enterprises located in marginal areas. Common problems and concerns were identified in the different activities, the most outstanding being that regional particularities seem to be overlooked by standardized universal perspectives in a global milieu that disregards contextual responses when envisioning future scenarios. The difficulties of having agile and comprehensive interactions where inequalities and hierarchies are part of the equation were discussion topics in the ludic workshop “Leveraging Immersive Techniques in Business Research to Promote a Better Understanding of Indigenous Peoples and Afro-Latinos in Current Concepts of Latinidad in the U.S.A.” and also in the salon entitled “Perspectives on Public Perception and Social Acceptance of Renewable Energy Technologies (RET) Projects.” The participants commented that stakeholders typically react to collaborations with prefigured stereotypes and stigmas that undermine the possibilities of co-creating future visions. This concern was discussed in the salon “The Significance of Trust in the Long-Term Viability of Social Enterprise Projects.”

To understand and value differences, ethical issues were pointed out. Importance was given to media and advertising as disseminators of responsible and inclusive information for different audiences. For example, there was a focus on children in the world café “Children, Awareness, and Publicity,” on visually impaired people in the world café “Visual Centrism in News and Disabling Practices,” and on LGBTI+ populations in the impro-narrative “Queerbaiting in the Entertainment Industry.” There was also great concern about imaginaries of fashion, trends, and “wellbeing” that emulate hegemonic consumption and disregard sustainability along with the hidden social and economic costs of mirroring cosmopolitan lifestyles. The purpose of this awareness was to create conscious communication strategies and accountable advertising practices. Anthropology occupies a strategic role regarding this concern because it can contribute to the replacement of ambiguous representations that generate mistaken visibility with perspectives that connect diversity and promote a better understanding of the richness of the pluriverse.

Transnational connections and local singularities resulted from mapping different stakeholders, resources, actions, and imaginaries, and sharing meanings and concerns added richness to the proposals presented. This was the topic of an impro-narrative “Drawing a Map of Uncharted Latin American Anthropological Knowledge.” All the topics were immersed in global contexts that merge the need for social belonging and, simultaneously, the attraction to cosmopolitan tastes that intertwine habits, desires, fears, visions, and many other cultural aspects that make interactions and disruptions a central inquiry that can only be acknowledged by “being there.”

A myriad of proposals emerged that challenged previous problems and aimed to refine the mechanisms contributing to a

responsible proximity with consumers and society by connecting with difference and discovering convergences of values, purposes, interests, and preferences that inspire common actions as illustrated in the ludic workshop “Circles of Purpose: The Dialogic and Iterative Emergence of a Shared Vision.” These proposals sought to recognize the usefulness of incorporating different insights as a means of creating opportunities for equitable connections among diverse stakeholders as well as with communities to inspire and propel collective aspirations. They propose substituting vertical relations with a multi-actor approach where equitable conditions for dialogue stimulate active cooperation, reciprocity, and more democratic governance along with enhancing trust.

Attendees also posed concerns about reassessing technology’s potential to facilitate human connections, ideas for improved livelihoods, and forecasts for a greener, more harmonious and responsible future for life on Earth. Utopic proposals were also developed, exploring the need to create new institutional forms that respond to a post-technological society and more inclusive urban design and planning, as explored in the world café “Business Opportunities in a Post-Technological Society.” A notably interesting analysis was presented in the world café “Utopias in Global Times: Urban Design and Life Styles” and in the ludic workshop “Designing Joint Answers for Broken Cities: About Tenkuä, the Participatory Foresight and Planning Experience.”

In the different activities, there was a consensus that the most important contribution of organizational anthropology is its inductive approach. An understanding of diversity is a result of deep immersion in the context where action takes place. It was clear that context integrates a complex amalgamation of local-global, on-site, and virtual social fields. Nonetheless, at this summit, we were able to ascertain that creativity and innovation in the forecasting of future scenarios can only be improved through transdisciplinary collaboration. Regarding connections, there were considerable convergencies between design, art, and contemplative disciplines as seen in one of the impro-narratives “Why Collaboration and Partnership Are Essential to Product Design and Entrepreneurship.”

Below, we present some of the outcomes of the activities to illustrate their contributions to the topic of connections.

Social Presence Theatre Session: Embodied Exploration of the Emerging Future Facing Socio-Ecological Challenges (Ludic Workshop)

Coordinators: Blanca Miedes Ugarte⁶ and Nora Morales Zaragoza.⁷

⁶ Universidad de Huelva, Spain.

⁷ Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, Mexico.



Image 11: Session of Social Presence Theatre.

As a society, we are facing serious social-ecological challenges in a world overloaded with partial and biased information and analysis. From a business perspective, there is a desperate need to overcome vulnerability and navigate uncertain, complex, and ambiguous paths. Traditional tools based on purely mental approaches such as systems thinking are insufficient. It is necessary to broaden our modes of perception and cultivate systemic awareness by integrating the body into more intuitive cognitive capacities. To cultivate our organizations' awareness of the present moment and think about the future, we need experiences that draw from a diversity of practices and values to adopt a transcendent level of connection and activate deep listening to the system's current state and emerging future.

For our workshop activity, we adapted Social Presencing Theater (SPT), a performative practice with a set of tools created by Arawana Hayashi of the Presencing Institute, which is based on non-verbal art methods and aims to activate individual and collective personal consciousness. SPT does not intend to intellectually answer a specific question or overcome a challenge, but to create the possibility for each participant to intuit possible collective responses and get a glimpse of possibilities for change. By focusing on one's own bodily sensations and the feeling of being part of a dynamic social body, participants created a 4D mapping sculpture to represent and share their social field. The theme that we used for the exercise was: "A common situation that consulting firms face as a socio-ecological challenge."

36 participants attended the two-hour workshop session. They brought together a wide range of professionals from consulting firms of large technology and social innovation companies, academics from different disciplines, and Mexican students. After initial warm-up

exercises and meditation practices, some volunteers were asked to perform a 4D mapping sculpture while the others watched. For the first stage, the collective sculpture needed to represent the current stuck system. The participants were invited to verbally express how they felt about their respective roles in one sentence. Then, they were asked to represent another collective sculpture that showed the transition towards a better future and express themselves. For this performance, we deliberately chose eight roles. The changes of movement and attitudes observed during these two stages are summarized in the table below:

	Stuck System	Better Future
Earth	Keep going	I'm waking up
Indigenous girl	I can't say anything	I need help
The best possible future	Help please	There is a way
Shareholders	I can't see	I want to share
Employee consultancy	Advise	Support
Citizen activist	Hang in there	Together
Public regulators	Let's listen	Pay attention
Media	I won't see	I listen to everyone and everything

We can conclude that there was a change of quality in the social field between the first sculpture and the second one: from a feeling of impotence to possibility, from closure to openness.

The collective body of participants showed that the session had been meaningful to them. Provided that an SPT performance can be analyzed based on the collective sculpture's morphology and expressed content, we concluded that there was a difference in the quality of perception: an amplification of the sense of collective presence and a change from a cognitive state toward a relational one, from discordance to harmony. Moreover, some participants sparked their own curiosity and sense of connection with this session, approaching us later to suggest including these types of practices in the world of business anthropology on a regular basis.

Hackathon in a Box: LEGO Experience (Ludic Workshop)

Coordinator: Alejandro Taboada Martínez.⁸

The main focus of this workshop was to creatively optimize a problem's solution using innovative solutions with social impact. It employed serious game activities to work on innovation and swiftly and easily connect possibilities for problem-solving, focusing on elements of the system surrounding the problem and quickly proposing scenarios to help connect key points and focus on possible solutions.

To facilitate the workshop, I first focused on the hackathon format, an innovation technique used to solve complex problems effectively in a short amount of time; in this case, it was a matter of hours. We also used a mixture of tools and methodologies to achieve the objective, selecting Blackbot Innovation Cards to concentrate on an innovative approach to the problem's previously provided solution. Then, we worked with Decode the Future cards, which propose a scenario in a practical and simple way. Finally, we concluded with the proposal development using LEGO Serious Play, which let us visualize and play with possibilities within the suggested scenario.

The group of participants was diverse, including social researchers, entrepreneurs, and people who had experience working with users. They had great curiosity about the experience and kept an open mind to the challenge, openly collaborating with the people on their team. The activity made participants focus on the tasks and solve the problem effectively. They had to concentrate on developing ideas and applying them immediately. At the end, they presented feasible proposals with good chances of producing real results.

In the first case, we met the main objective, which was to create a scenario with a viable solution to a problem with a social focus. From there, we were guided by the following instructions: collaborate effectively, communicate ideas clearly, propose solutions, quickly develop a concise scenario, and propose solution paths for the given problem. When presenting their results, the participants were surprised to discover all the possibilities of their scenarios and how "hard fun" allowed them to focus on the challenge and not on time.

Perspectives on Public Perception and Social Acceptance of Renewable Energy Technologies (RET) Projects (Salon)

Coordinators: Silke Mehr and Jorge Iván Contreras Cardeño.⁹

⁸ Universidad Marista, Mexico.

⁹ DBI Group, Denmark.

As a result of increasing climate change, an intensive focus is being placed on renewable energy technologies as a solution to this global crisis. But with new technology comes new uncertainties, which also applies to safety. Fear, injustice, and lack of communication are some of the themes that local people experience in relation to wind turbines, solar cells, Power to X (P2X) plants, etc. In the worst-case scenario, these green projects are canceled, which is both a cost for the companies involved and a strain on the climate in addition to creating a misleading “not in my backyard” (NIMBY) narrative about the local population.

As a techno-anthropologist and an ethnology student representing the Danish Institute of Fire and Security Technologies (DBI), we are working on the human-centered aspects of developing fire safety technology. Our research has shown that communities are more likely to resist the projects that have been forced upon them compared to projects that they feel part of and personally invested in. Therefore, our salon was centered on the dilemma of connecting communities and companies by co-creating solutions that would benefit both sides.

There were 14 participants representing diverse business sectors, each with significant influence. Some of the summit organizers were among them, and the rest held prominent positions in large corporations. We successfully caught the interest of these notable actors by creating a captivating teaser video before the event, which was shared on the GBAS’s social media platforms. During the salon, we took a similar approach by showing the participants a video that we produced to capture the subject’s urgency and significance. This storytelling technique effectively stimulated their interest and engagement, as evidenced by their enthusiastic questions both during and after the salon.

While the participants did not necessarily have prior experience with renewable energy technologies or citizen involvement, they were all familiar with resolving conflicts, handling complexity, or challenging the status quo. We made that clear early in the salon by doing an icebreaker that helped the participants realize the relevance of their individual points of view. After presenting the challenge, the salon unfolded as a group discussion. All participants found the problem highly relevant and had varying perspectives. Their main contribution was identifying the need for a neutral third party to mediate the interests of both the community and the companies. They highlighted the importance of companies making a new strategy, but recognized that, for this to happen, they need an impartial actor to inform them of potential consequences.

As the discussion evolved, the possibility of DBI being the neutral third party arose. As an approved technological service provider institute, we are required to develop technological services for state-financed Danish businesses. Therefore, DBI is precisely the kind of impartial institute that the participants requested. To this end, the participants

offered useful advice and reminders, such as the significance of calculating the fragmentation and diversity of communities along with concerns about the companies losing integrity. Overall, our salon was very successful and served to meet new people and create connections across national borders and fields of interest.

The Significance of Trust in the Long-Term Viability of Social Enterprise Projects (Salon)

Coordinators: Iván Escoto Mora and Diego Orozco Fernández.¹⁰

In our salon, we aimed to share insights on how trust affects two different business projects related to lime production in underprivileged areas of southwest Mexico. Our main question was: "Why is trust crucial for the success of social enterprise projects?" The cases we chose to start the discussion reveal that trust is complex and involves many actors intertwined in large network systems. This is why we believed that trust would be better understood within the theme of connections.

We employed a case discussion strategy to frame the topic. The first case involved the participation of a university and focused on empowering local actors through their contributions and perspectives. The second case entailed a special investment fund aiming to improve the lives of rural people around the Papaloapan basin. They achieved this by involving them in a predetermined business model designed from a top-down perspective. At the end of the session, we used padlet.com as a tool to gather insights from the participants on some key questions.

There were three segments of participants: full-time academic researchers, practitioners who work as consultants, and part-time scholars and graduate students. Presented here are the main insights drawn from their participation:

1. **Community Attachment:** Building trust and gaining local support in projects requires fostering a sense of attachment within communities.
2. **Community Involvement:** Including communities in project processes and decision-making is essential for improving trust.
3. **Collaboration:** Collaboration between local government, private funders, and academics is crucial for project success.
4. **Shared Value:** Projects should aim for shared value and cultivate win-win relationships.
5. **Trust Building:** Trust can be developed in local social enterprise projects even when starting from a place of mistrust.

¹⁰ Universidad Iberoamericana, Mexico City, Mexico.

Understanding diverse perspectives and maintaining open, honest, and transparent communication with local actors as well as intermediaries is key.

6. **Start Small, Stay Transparent:** Starting small, celebrating small moments of success, and maintaining open dialogue, transparency, and clear expectations all contribute to trust-building efforts.
7. **Role of Personal Relationships:** Trust is often based on personal relationships, while distrust typically arises in hierarchical institutional relations.
8. **Monitoring and Assessment:** Tracking and evaluating trust are crucial for ensuring the sustainability of social enterprise projects. This includes reaching a consensus on quantitative and qualitative measurement methods and involving diverse perspectives to enhance trust-building efforts.

This activity taught us many important lessons, including the following:

- A lack of trust in underprivileged areas of southwest Mexico often arises from previous negative experiences with government initiatives or private companies. Trust depends significantly on how the project takes different stakeholders into consideration, such as communities, universities, and financial institutions.
- Granting local actors a voice and voting privileges not only encourages their active participation in social enterprise projects, but also shares responsibility for the project's future. This is crucial for establishing trust.
- Eroding trust may lead to local producers distancing themselves from the project, and they may explore new business routes independently.

Circles of Purpose: The Dialogic and Iterative Emergence of a Shared Vision

Coordinators: Allan Bahroun, and Zhu Lin,¹¹ and Carmen Bueno Castellanos¹²

Circles of purpose are powerful tools that contribute to envisioning sustainable opportunities for institution-building. The active participation of diverse stakeholders provides meaningful and critical thinking. The basic premise of this activity is that business is based on the unity of individuals and society; therefore, firms are integrated into the

¹¹ Delect Consulting, Shanghai.

¹² Universidad Iberoamericana, Mexico City, Mexico.

complexity of local-global social contexts where a myriad of values, norms, rules, and future visions are exposed and contested.

Three circles and their interrelations are designed to stimulate a dialogic and iterative co-creation of compatible and/or conflicting visions. The question is: How might a brand reach a strategic choice that benefits the organization and its collaborators and stakeholders in the complexity of today's society and shape tomorrow's sustainable future?

A case study was selected: a Mexican firm producing mezcal for the global market in the southern state of Oaxaca. This firm has a strong commitment to local producers and implements programs to reduce its carbon footprint. The central challenge was to find a way to build and maintain a sustainable purpose while strengthening the brand's position in the face of both local and global market competition.

The Circles of Purpose integrate three interwoven circles. The first circle represents the institution (business as a "company"), the second refers to the people who work at the institution (business as its "talent"), and the third integrates different external stakeholders (service providers, consumers). The participants work on the overlapping areas between these three circles, allowing them to see the business' cultural and sociological facets, which shines a light on the different expressions of its purpose.

The participants were organized into small, four-member groups, in which they shared their perspectives on our specific case study. At the end of the discussion, each group had to write arising thoughts as one sentence – a challenging task to reach consensus through dialogue. Ideas rotated among groups and different stations posed questions to illustrate the intersections of the circles:

- "Craft" (People and Stakeholders): How does mezcal consumption bring meaning to users?
- "Ecosystem" (People and Institutions): How are the business activities meaningful to teams and employees?
- "Impact" (Institutions and Stakeholders): How does the relationship between the organization and society create new meanings beyond business?

The three circles were strategically selected to reflect the unity between individuals and society.

This was a crowded workshop where consultants, academics, students, and business people participated enthusiastically. They were many Latin Americans, especially Mexicans, as well as people from Europe and the United States who shared their concrete experiences and principles that could shine light on different expressions of their purposes. This diverse audience understood the value of aligning varied

perspectives in contextually framed conversations, creatively envisioning a more sustainable future.

A strong value arose from the quest for identity, not only as a sense of belonging (*la mexicanidad*), but also as a way of engaging (*a la mexicana*). Some testimonies illustrated the centrality of this: “Mezcal makes us proud of our roots.” “Mezcal brands are the guardians of tradition.” “It’s shared heritage.” “It’s a taste of identity.” “Mexico in our blood and pride in our hands.” “Preserving and spreading Mexico’s cultural treasure to create intergenerational continuity.” We can also add that, from the viewpoint of international participants, global mezcal consumption alludes to the vivid roots of Mexican culture.

Finally, centering the exercise on an alcohol brand exposed moral concerns and social obligations that involved legal backing for ethical consumption, especially for under-aged populations, and the producer’s responsibility to avoid predatory techniques surrounding water use and soil degradation. These were some of the contrasting points of view. On the one hand, an economic perspective was: “Businesses should be aware of the narratives at play in advertisements, especially for products that are in high demand and have become trendy.” On the other hand, an opposing perspective was expressed in the following holistic statement: “The Earth has a special way of celebrating life. Time brings all its best as it does through mezcal.”

Decoding, Unraveling, and Reshaping Uncertainty

In the dynamic and ever-changing business world, a pressing question arises: How can we transform uncertainty from a limitation into a canvas brimming with new opportunities? This was the captivating challenge of the third theme of GBAS Mexico 2023, which inspired the participants to explore the complex relationship between uncertainty and business anthropology.

The summit promoted the fundamental belief that the future is not a singular, predetermined trajectory, but rather a multitude of potential scenarios, each encompassing distinct uncertainties. For some, uncertainty permeates their lives, creating a difficult environment of unpredictability. Others see it as a state of turbulence, and still others view it as a driving force behind inspiration and innovation. Akin to a captivating symphony filled with complexity, uncertainty’s diverse and intricate nature is our inspiration. In this elaborate landscape, one aspect remains: constant change.

Through the lens of business anthropology, we discovered how to turn unpredictability into a source of growth, innovation, and conscientious, responsible business strategies where organizations do not merely survive amid the unknown, but thrive, harnessing the dynamic

terrain as a boundless source of fresh opportunities. In today's world, anthropologists and forward-thinkers are on a mission to navigate this uncertainty and its tensions, recognizing that it is not a monolithic entity, but a complex multifaceted prism that refracts and reflects light in countless directions, unveiling unprecedented avenues and prospects. They are exploring responsible decision-making practices that can encourage individuals and organizations to seek opportunities within unpredictable circumstances and also understand the lasting impact that their choices have on the future. With the right mindset and tools that recognize the value of on-going learning and adaptability, an intimidating challenge of uncertainty can shift into a wellspring of creativity, innovation, and positive transformation.

The summit's various immersive formats provided us with exceptional opportunities to delve into this theme while also serving as a platform to showcase the transformative power of anthropological insights, acting as a catalyst for innovation. For instance, the importance of cultural sensitivity and adaptability when tackling global societal challenges was exemplified by our colleagues in the world café "The Future of Design Futures for the Global South" and the exhibition "Futurology of Water." Using the same format, "Investing in Unknown Contexts: Challenges for International Clinical Analysis Laboratory" placed anthropology at the forefront of guiding businesses and investors through uncertain international ventures. The salon "Lessons Learned from the Pandemic to Transform Organizational Culture" emphasized adapting to new working conditions, focusing on reconfiguring human resource support systems and fostering flexible and adaptive organizational cultures. Additionally, the ludic workshop "Why Worry When You Can Learn? Turning Uncertainties into Opportunities with Anthropology" illuminated anthropology's transformative potential and provided useful tools. In another ludic workshop, "How to Build a Business on Mars," the participants were led into an imaginative and innovative Martian setting to think within uncertainty. By exploring alternative scenarios, they learned that uncertainty can serve as a catalyst for creatively developing sustainable business proposals.

Below, we present the insights and lessons learned from the organizers of activities related to the theme of uncertainty.

The Future of Design Futures for the Global South (World Café)

Coordinators: Sofia Lorena López Zendeja, Mayra Álvarez Tovar, Rodrigo Rico Cardona, and Patricia Alvarado Portillo.¹³

¹³ Accenture Song, Mexico.

Over its history, the design futures practice has utilized various methodologies and tools to address global societal challenges. While aiming for universal applicability, a northern cultural perspective has sometimes limited its effectiveness in the Global South. We believe that practitioners need to conscientiously evaluate their tools, detecting biases and cultural nuances. Considering cultural and economic differences, adaptation – or alternative approaches – is essential to make long-term thinking more effective across diverse regions. Thus, we proposed the importance of tailored, culturally sensitive design practices.

A world café session was crafted along with a lecture to clarify fundamental future concepts and delve into the intricacies of envisioning futures, which was guided by four thought-provoking questions. We hosted a group of 30 people in an enthusiastic session, including experts from diverse areas of anthropology and future-focused practices as well as students and researchers from various countries.

The discussions covered topics such as cultural divergences in time perception to the “wicked problems” that challenge societies. Moreover, the constraints and limitations of future-oriented methodologies were addressed, particularly in the context of the Global South. The session culminated in an exploration of the essential variables required to design more inclusive, context-aware approaches to the future. Conversations on what “future” means, who created it, and how were very passionate. We also reflected on the complexity of social relations. Since this was one of the summit’s first sessions, it helped set the mood for the rest of the GBAS activities.

The following 12 critical “variables” for design futures practitioners were identified:

1. Clear objectives
2. Tailored methodologies
3. Dimensions of the future
4. Unintended consequences
5. Replicability for individual futures
6. Evolution of needs
7. Resources (human, financial, ecological)
8. Context (political, economic, etc.)
9. Stakeholders
10. Cultural agency over the future
11. Social and civic organization
12. Human-centered design

These variables enhance the contextual impact and adaptability of future-oriented practices, ensuring they align with diverse realities. Brimming with uncertainties and possibilities, the future beckons as a goal and a catalyst, shaped by hope, fear, and the conscientious navigation of these variables. This perspective could improve its design from the present.

Investing in Unknown Context: Challenges for International Clinical Analysis Laboratory (World Café)

Coordinators: José Olvera Cruz¹⁴ and Ilse Sosa.¹⁵

The main topic of this activity was the challenges that international investors face in the business of technology supplies for clinical analysis laboratories. We used the following questions to interact with the participants: What does it mean to invest in Mexico? What is the unknown context for an investor in healthcare technology in a Latin American country? Why is it important for investors to be familiar with patients' imaginations and lifestyles before investing a lot of money and time? What is the key challenge for business anthropologists who are consultants or advisors for an international company that they are not familiar with? What was the central problem in this particular case?

A large international firm, in total confidentiality, decided to hire our consulting firm to approach the clinical sector of laboratories specialized in testing. The activity focused on the patients' imaginations, needs, and aspects which investors must take into account before acquiring a medical business in an unknown context. It was relevant for the theme of uncertainty because it showed how anthropology can help create new opportunities in the future.

We showed the audience how we prepare a comparative analysis based on fieldwork and focused on exploring behavior and lifestyle. We concentrated on narrative study results, patient imagination, institutional communication with patients, and technology use. We also brainstormed, sharing ideas and viewpoints based on previous experiences. Then, participants broke up into three teams. We gave them different colored paper and boards so they could classify the questions and present answers and conclusions from each representative. Afterwards, we compared their conclusions to our ethnographical participative research.

The participants included international researchers, business coaches, academics, and students as well as members of consulting firms. One participant from the consulting firms expressed enthusiasm for applying anthropological research to address the challenges presented in

¹⁴ Business Anthropology Consulting.

¹⁵ Universidad Iberoamericana Ciudad de Mexico, Mexico.

this case. Given the complexity of these topics, researchers recognize the importance of handling them with care and sensitivity and emphasize the need for a serious and professional approach. The subsequent discussion explored the role of anthropology in market research for private companies and its broader implications.

There was uncertainty in the client's imaginations, created by an unknown context, and researchers must be objective and focused on the narratives surrounding the principal social actors. They must observe in expansive, panoramic vision and be sensitive to reading the symbolic and cultural points and sharing them with clients.

Why Worry When You Can Learn? Embracing Uncertainty as a Business Strategy (Ludic Workshop)

Coordinators: Julia Gluesing,¹⁶ Carten Claus,¹⁷ Dominique Desjeux,¹⁸ and Lucia Laurent-Neva.

A dynamic and diverse group of 12 participants – including anthropologists, strategists, engineers, and designers – attended this workshop. The audience was highly engaged and curious about the concept of uncertainty, which we presented in a way that allowed for transforming uncertainties into opportunities using anthropological methods. Throughout the session, we guided the participants on a conceptual journey, gradually transitioning towards more tangible models that provided a clearer understanding of uncertainties.

The mixture of students, professionals, and anthropology practitioners created a diverse audience, fostering a rich and multi-dimensional exchange of ideas. This blend of different backgrounds and perspectives led to a comprehensive exploration of the topic, ensuring the activity was educational and engaging for all attendees. During the presentation, we evaluated the audience's response to our tools and frameworks, observing potential usage patterns. Several innovative concepts were proposed regarding the tool's application, such as creating digital applications to facilitate the planning process for uncertain scenarios. Audience members left with a practical tool (Karl Weick's word-wheel) that they could incorporate into their own work. At the end of the workshop, discussions surfaced among attendees regarding original ways to apply this tool, which surpassed our initial expectations.

Uncertainty is an abstract yet real phenomenon that permeates our lives. Its impacts are felt by everyone, regardless of background or

¹⁶ Cultural Connections, Inc., USA.

¹⁷ Overkorn, Germany.

¹⁸ Paris V, Sorbonne, France.

circumstance. Adopting a fresh perspective on uncertainty and implementing effective strategies can transform it into a more tangible and manageable concept. Equipping ourselves with a reliable “tool” for comprehending uncertainty and fostering innovation within its realm can prove invaluable. Uncertainty thrives at the core of the human experience, serving as a constant companion in our journey through life. It resides in the realm of the unknown, where transitions and changes take place, creating a dance in the liminal spaces where reality undergoes rearrangement.

Anthropology serves as a guiding light in the darkness, enabling us to navigate and comprehend the uncertainties that lie ahead. As a vital tool, it illuminates the path towards understanding and mapping the future. As we journey into unfamiliar worlds and encounter untold cultures, we discover new insights into what we call exotic futures. Our knowledge and the frameworks that we share lighten the burden of uncertainty. We must comprehend both the positives and negatives to maintain equilibrium amid the ever-changing scales of change while navigating transitions.

Lessons Learned and Future Perspectives

During GBAS Mexico 2023, we had the opportunity to confirm that anthropology provides a unique perspective on human behavior, societal dynamics, and cultural nuances. It helps businesses understand the multifaceted nature of human experiences and societal shifts. There was a consensus that, by integrating anthropological insights, organizations can gain a deep understanding of diverse consumer behaviors, adapt to shifting cultural paradigms, and make culturally informed decisions.

Anthropology helps surpass “business as usual.” The complicated and complex situations that the Earth is experiencing urge humans to react responsibly, and cultural sensitivity and adaptability are crucial when addressing these challenges. Collaboration between anthropology and other disciplines in the business world fosters the creation of conscientious, responsible strategies and prepares organizations and individuals to thrive in the face of change and uncertainty.

In our interconnected world, navigating between global and local perspectives is crucial. The global outlook is a bird’s-eye view that helps us understand the complex web of international trends, cultural shifts, and economic forces that shape our world. This knowledge equips businesses and individuals to respond effectively to global challenges. The local perspective is a magnifying glass, allowing businesses to explore the unique intricacies, cultural nuances, and challenges of specific communities and regions. It empowers businesses to tailor their strategies, products, and services to address the specific needs and preferences of local contexts. When these perspectives converge, they

create a synergy that drives innovation, fosters sustainable development, and enables us to respond to global crises while making a meaningful impact at the community level. Harmonization of global and local perspectives acts as a compass, providing a balanced and holistic approach to address the future's multifaceted challenges.

The summit also gave us the opportunity to warn about the ethical implications of radical change in a society where humans and other living organisms are not the only intelligent beings. AI technologies share different and similar degrees of intelligence with us: iconic, indexical, symbolic, and the ones that are still emerging. We also cautioned about the control created by data management and its reappraisal and reuse, in which the right for privacy is being questioned.

This report is evidence that the business anthropology community is demonstrating seeds of change. While enjoying a playful and creative environment over the three days of the event, we were able to demonstrate that ethnography is pressing for more profound change by merging physical and digital realities; incorporating active technologies for co-creating new visions and novel conceptual frames to understand social and cultural spheres; and migrating from register tools to co-ethnographers who produce knowledge with different stakeholders. Consequently, new methods for approaching multi-disciplines, multi-species, multi-modal, and multi-technological organizations must be developed for the future of business anthropology.

Carmen Bueno is a passionate social anthropologist who recognizes the virtuous links between research, teaching and practical application of knowledge. She has had the opportunity to develop pioneering research for the Mexican anthropology in business organizations and labor relations, considering the multiple economic interconnections worldwide and their impact on global production and consumption. She has maintained a strong interest in praxis, opening spaces for reflection and practical application of innovations and technological developments that redirect the course of change towards a social and environmental committed citizenship and business models.

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Patricia Alvarado has been part of the Design Research team of Accenture Song, Mexico, since January 2022. She has a Bachelor's Degree in Economics (2008, UMSNH), a Master's Degree in Geography (2015, UNAM), and a PhD in Social Anthropology (2021, UIA-CDMX). As a design researcher, she has been collaborating with technology companies developing qualitative research, strategic planning, coordination and team management capacities. She is also trained in user experience, business and design anthropology, and digital ethnography.

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Consuelo González is a linguistics from the National University of Colombia with a Master's in Communication from FLACSO Ecuador. She is currently immersed in her doctoral studies in Social Anthropology at the Universidad Iberoamericana in Mexico City. Consuelo has taught courses on social theory of fashion and semiotics, and also hosted a radio program on the social history and poetics of tango. She has conducted research on fashion in traditional markets. Currently, she explores second-hand and vintage clothing markets, focusing on the redefinition of pre-loved fashion within the realms of these economic and entrepreneurial endeavors.

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Lucía Laurent-Neva collaborates with British and global clients, specializing in cultivating culturally nuanced business practices and cultural and design strategies for diverse audiences. Her work enhances cross-cultural understanding, anticipates cultural shifts, and facilitates design innovations across continents. Leading anthropological and semiotic projects worldwide, Lucia has worked across Europe, the US, and emerging economies in South and East Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, and Latin America. As founder of Visual Signo (UK), she continues to drive cultural insights and design innovations for organizations globally. Lucia is also co-founder of Semiofest and Board member of GBAS.

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Maximino Matus is a Zapotec indigenous scholar and consultant. As a consultant, he has worked for the public and private sectors, developing qualitative research for evaluating and innovating products, services, and public policy in México, the US, and Latin America. Max has published numerous books and articles in the field of cultural anthropology and topics related to the intersection of technology and anthropology – or what he and his colleagues named as Techno-Anthropology. Currently, Max is a researcher at the Cultural Studies Department at El Colef, Mexico.

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