

The “Makers in Residency” – Programme Sparks Innovation and Collaboration between African and European Makers

The Makers in Residency (MiR) programme has successfully connected African and European makers, fostering a unique blend of knowledge sharing and collaborative innovation. In 2024, the MiR programme supported four emerging hardware innovators from Egypt, Tanzania, and Rwanda, providing a one-month residency in European makerspaces. Each maker worked on ground-breaking projects while benefiting from direct mentorship, access to advanced equipment, and an inspiring environment.

“This initiative aims to break down barriers, create new ideas, and build essential networks between continents.”

---- Fabienne Kirchhof, GreenTec Capital Africa Foundation ----



Martine, a maker from Rwanda hosted in Belgium, focused on a sustainable solution to reduce material costs for makers by recycling plastic bottles to create affordable 3D printer filament.

“The timeline was tight, but with the Liege team’s support, we combined our efforts to make it happen.” --- Martine Basaninyage, Makerspace Westerwelle Startup Haus Kigali, Rwanda ---

Martine’s hosts witnessed her dedication and ingenuity,
“We learned so much from her resourcefulness and resilience — she’s building amazing solutions with far fewer resources than we’re used to.”
--- Loic, Hackerspace Liege, Belgium ---



Asem, a maker from Egypt hosted in France, brought a sense of international community to La Bricothèque Fablab, engaging with local members and sharing his project’s vision and knowledge.

“Asem’s openness to share his work and life experiences made our Fablab feel part of a global network. We saw a natural exchange of ideas and cultural understanding”
--- Olivier, La Bricothèque, France ---

“My impression about this program is positive and eye opening, as someone who has never been to Europe it was amazing seeing such cool places like the textile lab”.
--- Asem Kamal, maker and content creator, Egypt ---



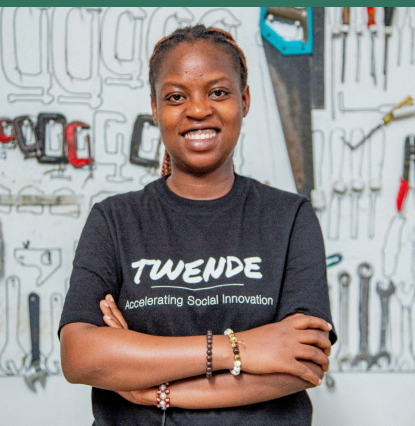
Meanwhile, Leonard, a maker from Tanzania hosted in Spain, pursued his vision to build a nano-satellite prototype to inspire African students and makers in STEM. During his residency at Fablab Barcelona, Leonard expanded his network and honed his technical skills with new equipment.

"This programme brought me closer to new knowledge, and I had hands-on experience with different machines that sparked ideas on how I can bring similar technology to Tanzania,"

--- Leonard Shayo, founder of the aerospace startup Olspace ---

His host, Santi from Fablab Barcelona, was equally inspired, noting Leonard's unstoppable drive: *"He came in saying, 'I have to learn as much as I can; I want to send a rocket to the moon!' His determination was infectious."*

--- Santi, Fablab Barcelona ---



Witness, a Tanzanian maker hosted in France, reflected on how the residency inspired her project management approach and technical work.

"I have been impressed by the makerspace, the organization, the workshops and overall management. This creates a truly inspiring environment for anyone to get creative."

--- Witness Shingali, Twende Social Innovation Center, Tanzania ---

Although she felt that one month was limited for a complex prototype, Witness returned to Tanzania with a strong foundation, sketches, and collaborative documentation to drive her project forward. This residency programme has not only equipped African makers with new tools and skills but also brought fresh perspectives and cultural insights to the European hosts.

"We documented everything to support Witness's ongoing work in Tanzania. The collaboration doesn't end here; we'll stay connected to help her team scale up."

--- Matthieu, Ecocentre, France ---

"Through these transformative exchanges, the MiR programme has strengthened a global network of makers committed to using their skills to address real-world challenges, demonstrating the powerful impact of cross-continental collaboration in the maker community."

--- Kirstin Wiedow, Global Innovation Gathering ---

Further information on makeafricaeu.org

