

The World Makers Foundation

Annual Report 2023

1. Social [Distancing] Fabric

The project “Social [Distancing] Fabric” is a collaborative embroidery project, started in March 2020 in response to the COVID-19 lockdown. With the rhythm of our days so monotonous, we wanted to offer a creative and collective experience, from home—at a distance. We sent each participant a needle and thread, along with a hand-made drawing on fabric by Karim Adduchi, a Moroccan fashion designer known for reinventing traditional crafts in contemporary designs. We asked people to complete the embroidery at home, and send it back to us. Then, upon receiving the finished embroidered works, we stitched them together, fashioning the separate pieces into a singular “Social Fabric.”

Those who joined were people from different cultural backgrounds and virtually all age groups. No selection process was applied; we felt strongly that absolutely everyone should have the opportunity to take part in our Social Fabric. So, we simply accepted the first 200 names on the list. That said, we did take care to reach out to vulnerable people, those on the margins. Fortunately, some participants had the same idea; they reached out to others as well. Mothers embroidered with daughters; fathers joined, too. Friends and colleagues stitched together. Younger people collaborated with elderly neighbors.

We acknowledged that the moment the fabric left our hands, we wouldn't be able to influence the process of making, the colors chosen, the techniques used. We purposefully chose to do so, to reflect the lack of control we have all been experiencing. In the final stage of the process, we worked with all of the embroideries that had been returned to us—regardless of their state of completion.





Social [Distancing] Fabric products: The book, Cups of Stories and embroidery kits

In 2022 we produced a book, coffee cups and embroidery kits based on the Social [Distancing] Fabric. These continued to be sold on our website in 2023.

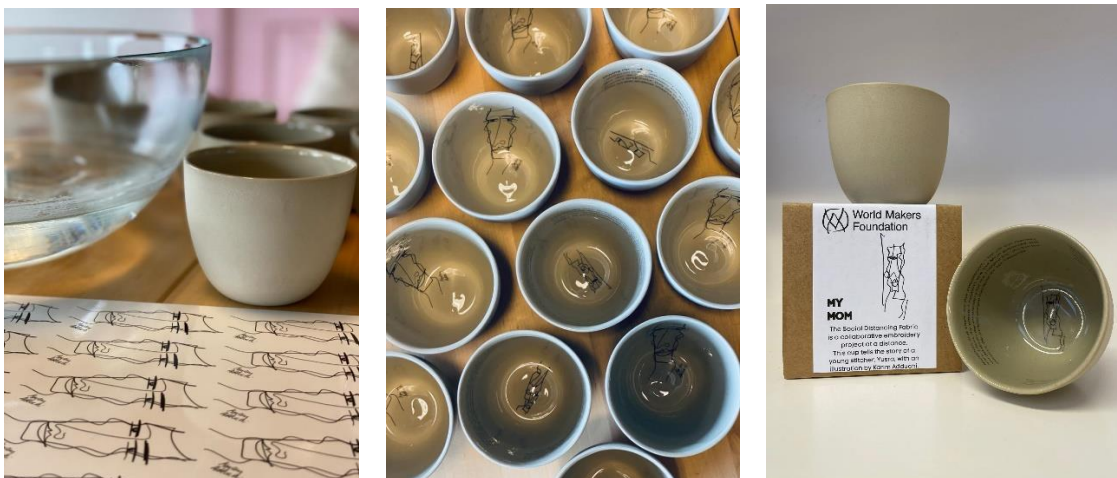
Social [Distancing] Fabric Book: We asked makers to share with us their experiences during lockdown. People sent stories about sewing face masks for the homeless, about the first time they embroidered with their mother or grandmother. They confided stories about losing jobs and about illness. They wrote about their hopes and dreams for the future.

In this book, we display both embroideries and stories. The first part contains the 200 embroideries, the second part the stories. Each piece of embroidery is numbered and corresponds to the maker's story. Some embroideries were lost: we make their absence present through blank pages. We've chosen to simply list all participants' names—without mentioning who made, or said, what—in the back of the book. After all, the events people wrote about are recognizable, universal: these are the experiences of so many others.

The Social [Distancing] Fabric publication was made with the generous support from Stimuleringsfonds, Bylandtstichting and Prins Bernhard Cultuurfonds.



Cups of Stories: We received so many wonderful stories from the participants of Social [Distancing] Fabric, we wanted to share them with the world. Hence, we teamed up with [Global Storytellers](#) to whom everyday objects are just a wonderful excuse to share an unusual story. Together we've made coffee cups with on the inside a "small moment" story from a Social [Distancing] Fabric participant on their experience of stitching during Covid lockdown, and a drawing by Karim Adduchi. The cups are made by [Cor Unum](#) out of left-over clay.



Embroidery kits: We made a limited edition embroidery kit in collaboration with Karim Adduchi. Each kit has a unique handmade drawing by designer Karim Adduchi, embroidery floss and needles. Even the box itself contains a drawing which you can frame. People ordered it to embroider it to brighten their house or send it to a loved one as a reminder of love and connection.

The Social [Distancing] Fabric embroidery kit was made with the generous support from the Stimuleringsfonds.



Exhibitions

The [Social \[Distancing\] Fabric](#) was shown in the exhibition [Continue This Thread](#) (17 Feb-3 Sept) at the Amsterdam Museum from 17 Feb-3 Sept 2023. The exhibition, curated by Karim Adduchi and Tess van Zalinge, showed how embroidery, knitting and crochet connects, empowers and helps people express their emotions in difficult times.

2. Project Enter: The Hub

Enter: The Hub is a [three-year project](#) (2020-2023) to develop a hub to support refugee-entrepreneurs. The project has a transnational framework with partners from The Netherlands, France, Germany and Ireland. In spring 2021 a prototype hub was tested in France, with all partners providing input and being present for the evaluation. All other partners will roll out their hub based on French prototype in 2021- 2022.

In The Netherlands the main partner is Newest Art Organization (NAO). The World Makers provides expertise on systemic change, organises workshops for a community of creative entrepreneurs with a refugee-background, as well as roundtable meeting with support organizations on collaboration.

In 2023 we concluded the project Enter: The Hub. We organised workshops on various aspects of creative entrepreneurship, as well as a final pitch for participants. We also organised two meetings with partner organisations and the Amsterdam Municipality. WMF also participated in the final conference of the project, organised by the German partners. The final steps consisted of the narrative and financial reporting to Interreg North-West Europe and other funders.

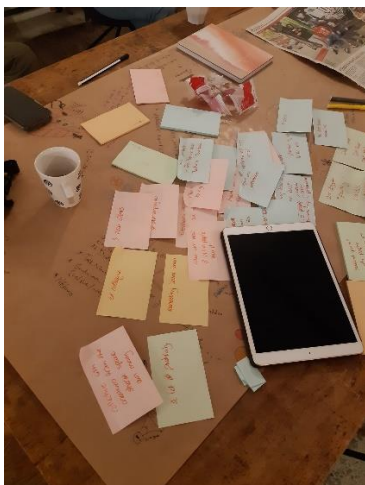
The project is developed with the generous support from Interreg North-Western Europe, VSB Fonds, Stichting GAK and the Oranjefonds.

Workshops

In 2023 we organized more workshops for creative entrepreneurs:

- Business assignment preparation
- Business model canvas
- Branding and communications
- Storytelling

The workshops were given by PR Mansion, the storytelling workshop was provided by Arjen Barel from Stichting Storytelling Centre.



We visited the Art Fair Rotterdam in February 2023 on invitation of Lumen Travo Gallery. It provided an opportunity for participants to see the latest trends, meet gallery owners and other artists.



The digital social hub

We set up a simple whatsapp-group. This was a place where people could help each other, share opportunities, celebrate each other successes. The low-threshold platform was a good way to meet, invite each other to exhibitions, share calls of entry for competition and for project proposals, share documents and ask for advice – everything was shared in the group.

Successes of participants

Some of the participants have received subsidy, participated in competitions (and won), and participated in exhibitions. Others found jobs to sustain them financially while working on their artistic career.



Pyama Art Party

The Pyama Art Party on 10 March 2023 was our way of putting together a more informal pitch, combined with storytelling was a distillation of our mix of entrepreneurship and community/ belonging. We questioned the values of the entrepreneurial world and made space for the values of importance to creatives with a migration/ refugee experience: art as activism, art as expression of (persecuted) identity, as consolation in times of

uncertainty. This was part of our two-way integration, something refugee-entrepreneurs can contribute to entrepreneurship.

The Pyama Art Party took place at Sexyland, during twilight, an inbetween space for people in an inbetween phase. All visitors were invited to come in pyjama (and they did). Participants showed their work from a very low stage, with family and friends next to them to support them, or holding their stuffed animal. They told openly about their artistic journey and showed the development in their work. It was a very successful evening with about 80 visitors, despite the snow.

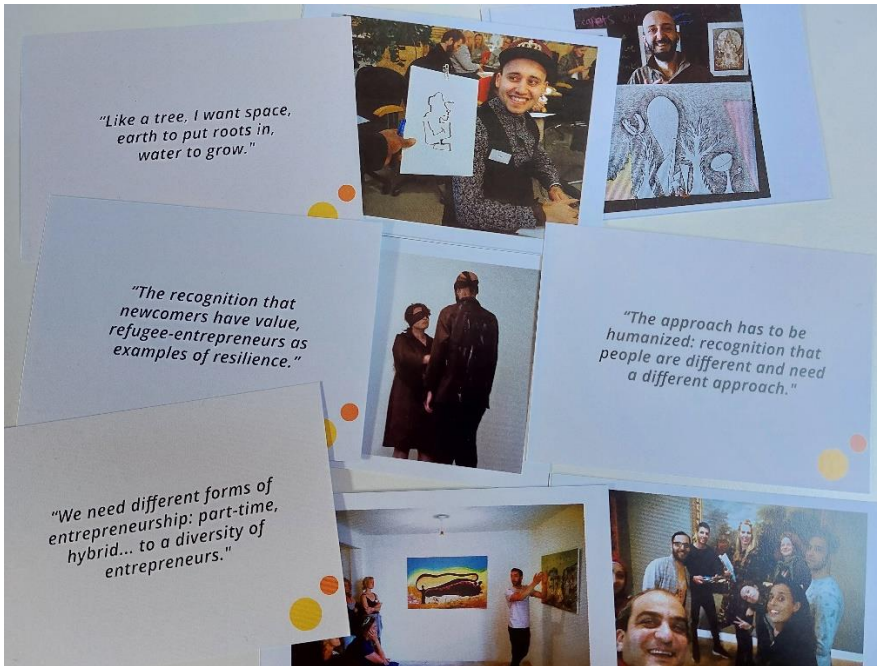
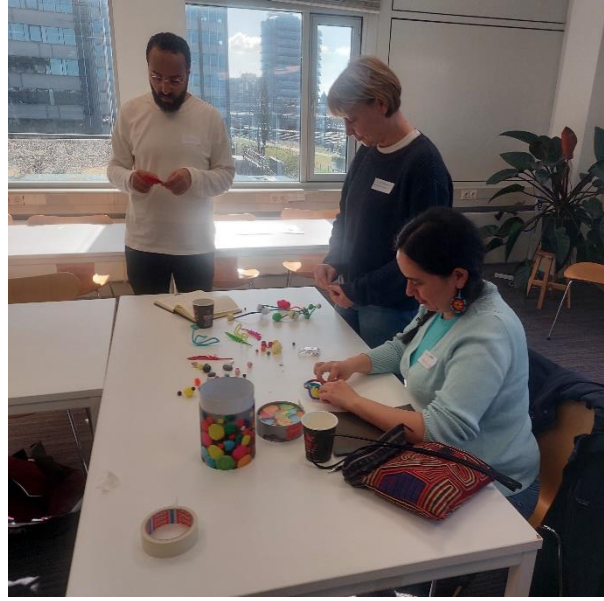


Podcasts on refugee-entrepreneurship

We have produced three podcasts/ vlogs on refugee-entrepreneurship. One podcast was made in collaboration with Pangeae support organisation and one of their starting entrepreneurs, Nardos from Eritrea. Two podcasts were produced by Hub-Member, journalist and podcast-maker Jermain Ndhlovu. He talked to Karijn Nijhoff, academic and researcher on the refugee- and collaborative entrepreneurship, and Ann Cassano from the World Makers. In a second podcast he talked with prof Klaas Molenaar and Ismae Idrissy (Enterstart, The Hague) on financial inclusion. All podcasts can be found online: [The World Makers - YouTube](#)

Round table meetings with other support organisations

On 15 March and 10 May 2023 we organised two meetings with other Amsterdam support organisations and with refugee-entrepreneurs to discuss how we can collaborate instead of compete. These meetings were organised together with Start Your Business from the municipality Amsterdam. We discussed the different needs of refugee-entrepreneurs based on the personas we developed, which organisations focus on which personas and for whom support is still missing.



Quotes from refugee-entrepreneurs functioned as a polestar in our work, and were included in workshops with other entrepreneur support organizations.

Closing conference Enter The Hub

The final meeting of Enter The Hub took place in Dortmund, Germany, on 21 and 22 February 2023 together with the partners from Germany, Ireland and France. The conference organised by the German partners took place online with mostly academics attending.



3. Y/our Archive, Y/our Story

We collaborated with the Dutch Institute of Sound and Vision and Mahalle Art & Kultur on the project Y/OUR ARCHIVE, Y/OUR STORY.

Sound & Vision is an institute for all residents of the Netherlands and a preserver of its (audiovisual) heritage. They noticed there are stories and perspectives lacking. Inviting artists to reflect on their collection creates room for new interpretations and an opening for adding new stories and histories. This will be achieved by documenting and adding the interpretations and results of the research and projects to the collection of Sound & Vision, resulting in a more complete and/or conscious archive.

Y/OUR ARCHIVE, Y/OUR STORY is a micro grant designed for filmmakers and media artists with a refugee background. Artists with different backgrounds and perspectives were invited to engage with the Dutch audiovisual heritage stored at Sound & Vision. At the same time, the project creates possibilities and shares knowledge with artists who find themselves in unfamiliar territory, so that they will be able to redefine their artistic prac

tice in the Netherlands and will be able to keep creating and presenting new work.

The grants were awarded to Syrian actor and film maker Yazan and Kurdish filmmaker Felat.