

# **AFRICA MAKERSPACE GATHERING 2021 REPORT**

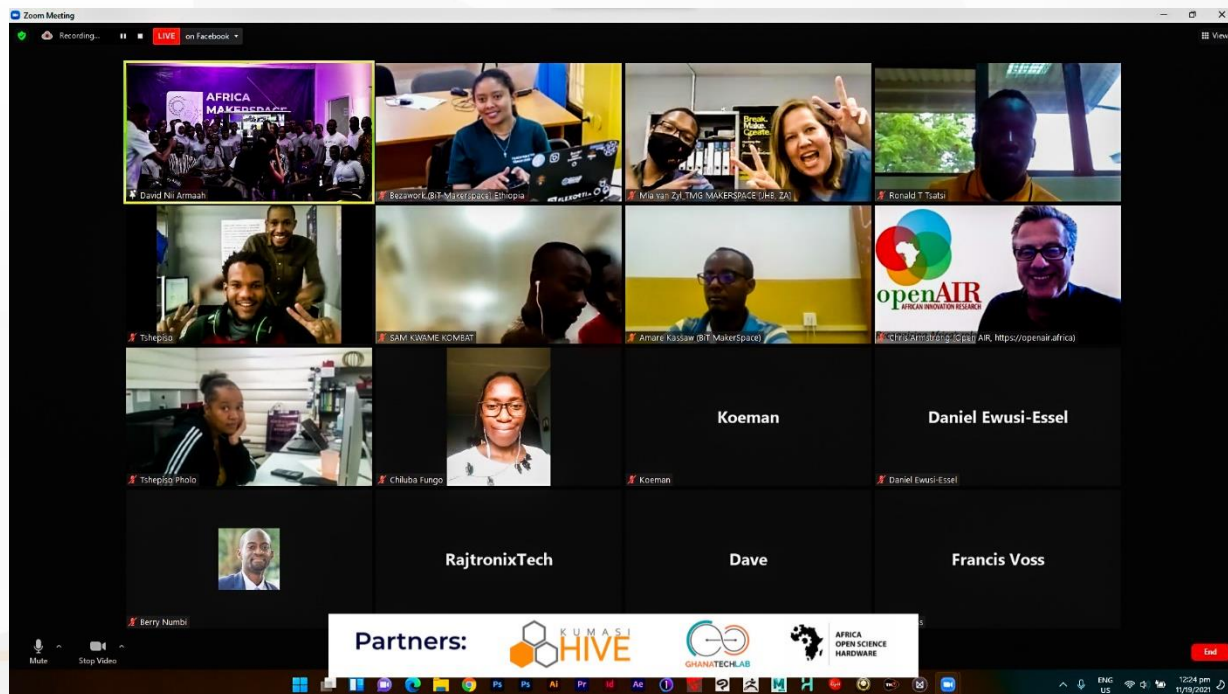


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## Summary

The Africa Makerspace Gathering, a signature program of the Africa Makerspace Network serves the purpose of increasing inter-makerspace collaboration. The 3rd edition of the program was held on 18th and 19th November, 2021 physically and virtually. It was centered on the theme; Thriving as Makerspaces. The hybrid event was physically hosted in Accra, Ghana and had participants from across the world join via zoom.

On the first day of the program, a total of 93 participants joined virtually in addition to 27 physical participants. On the second day of the program, 63 people participated virtually while 33 people were in physical attendance. Therefore, the total number of people who participated in the 2021 Africa Makerspace Gathering on day one and two were 120 and 96 respectively.



## Day One

The first session of the 2021 of the Africa Makerspace Gathering began with a welcome address from Baaba Simpson of Ghana Tech Lab after which there was a presentation by Selorm Tito of Africa Makerspace Network detailing the activities the network undertook in 2021. During the

2021 in Review activity, Selorm read out the AMN Manifesto drawn out from the maiden edition of the AMG in 2019. He also made mention of the AMN Study Week and Practical Week programs which were introduced in the second and third quarter of the year respectively in light of capacity building of makers.

The 2021 in Review activity was followed by an exposition on the theme which was undertaken by Mia Van Zyl of TMG Makerspace in South Africa. Mia in her presentation, highlighted that, makerspaces need focus on knowledge acquisition by means of accessibility, connectivity, learning and unlearning; collaboration by means of connectedness and resources by means of funds, tools and strategic partnerships to thrive.

Next was the maker-fair activity which served the purpose of showcasing the makerspaces in our network to world. A total of seven makerspaces from six countries participated in this activity. They are; Gearbox in Kenya, iZonehub in Zimbabwe, TMG Makerspace in South Africa, Twende Social Innovation Center in Tanzania, BiT Makerspace in Ethiopia and finally, Hive Biolab and GTL Makerspace in Ghana. Each of the participants gave a tour of their facility and highlighted the activities they undertake.

Moving on from the maker-fair, there was a pre-launch of the African Maker by Gertrude Goh of the Africa Makerspace Network. She introduced the The African Maker as an e-magazine by the Africa Makerspace Network in collaboration with Digital Times Africa. The magazine would serve the purpose of highlighting makerspaces in the network, and to present to the world happenings in engineering, industrialization, STEM and its related fields.

Thereafter, there was a board profiling activity through which the members of the AMN board were introduced to the audience. The current board consists of representatives of the core founding partners of the network. These partners are Kumasi Hive, Ghana Tech Lab and African Open Science Hardware.



Next was a brief talk on social media publicity of makerspaces by Koeman Tekpeh of Kumasi Hive. His talk centered on the need for makerspaces in the network to make the most use of AMN's social media channels for growth.

Afterwards, the breakout discussion topics and leads for day two of the program were introduced to the audience. Participants chose the topics they would like to discuss and got acquainted with their leads and other group participants.

Lastly, the program moderator in the person of Daniel Ewusi-Essel of Africa Makerspace Network gave the closing remarks, after which participants engaged in a physical exhibition carried out by the GTL Makerspace.



## Day Two

The second session of the 3rd edition of the Africa Makerspace Gathering took off with a welcome note from Baaba Simpson. Right after, breakout discussions were held both physically and

virtually on the topics; fostering open knowledge acquisition and its benefits, fostering collaboration among makerspaces and its benefits, channels of raising funds as makerspaces. The physical discussions were led by Gameli Adzaho of Just One Giant Lab, Prince Samoh of the Hive Biolab and Gideon Mensah of GTL Makerspace respectively. The virtual sessions were led by Ronald Tsatsi of iZonehub, Berry Numbi of Centre d'innovation de Lubumbashi and Oluwatosin Alasiri Grace of Prikkle Academy. Below are some key takeaways from the breakout discussions.

### **Fostering open knowledge acquisition and its benefits.**

#### **Key take aways.**

- Designing thinking workshops for entrepreneurs and makers.
- Creating a platform for makerspaces to share knowledge.

### **Fostering collaboration among makerspaces and its benefits.**

#### **Key take aways.**

- Finding a common purpose (through similar activities) to work together.
- Organization of conferences to bring together makerspaces to share other stories and problems.

### **Channels of raising funds as makerspaces.**

#### **Key take aways.**

- Delivering training services.
- Implementing membership fees.
- Organizing exhibitions to show industry people the capabilities of makerspaces for them to contribute to projects.

After the discussion and presentation there was a presentation from Prosper Torny of Youth Opportunity and Transformation Africa (YOTA) on youth development, collaboration and access to ecosystem support for technical and entrepreneurial skills development. Prosper highlighted how increasing youth capacity can be complimented by technological skills. That was followed by the Makerspaces Excellence Awards (MEA) Launch which was undertaken by Gertrude Goh. She disclosed that the awards were being introduced to recognize well performing makerspaces and motivate makerspaces to do better. MEA has five categories namely; Makerspace of the Year,



Makerspace Consultancy of the Year, Makerspace Initiative of the Year, Makerspace Manager of the Year and Makerspace Product of the Year.

Thereafter, Selorm Tito presented on the network's activities for year 2022. He indicated AMN would start year 2022 with the launch of The African Maker Magazine and end with the 4th Africa Makerspace Gathering. To draw down the curtain on the 3rd edition of the Africa Makerspace Gathering, all participants were acknowledged and thanked after which a photo session and physical exhibition took place.



### **Activity Summary**

In summary, the two-day program had therein an exposition on the theme, a presentation on 2021 in review, seven virtual exhibitions from makerspaces in Kenya, South Africa, Ethiopia, Ghana, Zimbabwe and Tanzania. Also, there was one physical exhibition from a makerspace in Ghana, a presentation on activities for 2022, pre-launch of The African Maker, launch of the Makerspaces Excellence Awards, breakout discussions and presentations.



## Conclusion

Overall, the 2021 Africa Makerspace Gathering was a success. Activities saw a satisfactory turnout in participation. We however expected a higher attendance overall, and do hope that subsequent gatherings will have these expected numbers. The success of the program as a hybrid for the second time proved the lessons from the previous hybrid event were learnt.

## Addendum

[Breakout Discussion Notes](#)

[Day 1 Gallery](#)

[Day 2 Gallery](#)