Four winning projects as part of the Orange Foundation's International Solidarity FabLabs Challenge

Elizabeth Tchoungui, the Orange Group's Executive Director for CSR, Diversity and Philanthropy, and Deputy Chair of the Orange Foundation, and Alioune Ndiaye, CEO of Orange Middle East and Africa, have revealed the winners of the Orange Foundation's fourth International Solidarity FabLabs Challenge.

Thirteen teams of young people on integration programmes from three European countries (Spain, Poland and France) and four African countries (Cameroon, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Senegal and Tunisia) took on the challenge of using digital technology to make creations for the worlds of fashion, design and the arts.

The jury made up of professionals in culture and digital manufacturing and members of the Orange Foundation as well as web users rewarded four projects in total.

Web Users' Prize: "Fashion through recycling" project by the Lisungi Solidarity FabLab in Kinshasa (Democratic Republic of the Congo)

Three women aged 19 to 23, who been forced to abandon their studies, trained in the FabLab, where they designed a line of clothing and accessories made from recycled materials such as thread, bottle tops, waste wood, bags and thrown-away fabric. Helped by a stylist, they made dresses, jackets, jewellery and more with digital tools (PCs with modelling software, embroidery machines, cutters, 3D printers, etc.). The next steps in their project involve developing partnerships with economic actors in the city to raise awareness of recycling and the creation of a startup.

Jury's Prize: "Sculpture in hand" project by the GarageLab Ortzadar Solidarity FabLab in San Sebastian (Spain)

The 16 to 18-year-old students at the 2nd Chance School made sculpture accessible to the blind or visually impaired by reproducing works on a small scale. Supervised by FabManagers and assisted by the main Spanish institution for visually impaired people, they used digital printing, laser/vinyl cutting and an Arduino to make 2D mock-ups and then 3D replicas of sculptures by local artist Jorge Oteiza. The youngsters, who are no longer in mainstream schooling, also made Braille captions.

Two projects won the Orange Foundation's Favourite Prize: the "Mobile photo studio" project by the Montreuil Solidarity FabLab (France) and the "Designer lighting" project by the Mourenx Solidarity FabLab (France):

The "Mobile photo studio" project by the Solidarity FabLab in Montreuil (France)

This project is inspired by the work of contemporary photographers, themselves inspired by African photo studios of the 1950s. The young participants in the Solidarity FabLab, aged 19 to 25, reinvented the photo studio concept to produce images of the residents of their neighbourhood. The team, supported by a photographic artist, designed and made engraved stamps and stencils to paint the studio's various backdrop fabrics at the FabLab.

The "Designer lighting" project by the Solidarity FabLab in Mourenx (France)

The team at the Mourenx Solidarity FabLab designed and created designer lights (mood board, 2D and 3D design, 3D printing, cutting, prototyping). Today the team is working on a business model and a marketing strategy with a view to start making its first few series. Each creator also works on selling the creations online.

The Orange Foundation will provide each of these teams with €10,000 in financial support to help them develop their projects. By showcasing the 13 creations in its challenge, the Orange Foundation wishes to demonstrate to the general public and professionals the potential of this training in digital manufacturing for young people who have dropped out of conventional education.

This challenge is part of the training programme created by the Orange Foundation in 2014 with its Solidarity FabLabs (there are now 130 in 20 countries): **digital manufacturing courses that the Orange Foundation provides free-of-charge to unemployed young people**, to help them become more professional by teaching them digital manufacturing skills, as well as how to work as a team and on a project.

For more information about the Solidarity FabLabs challenge, click here.