



CHANGEMAKERSLAB

Changemakers Lab (CML) is a social innovation lab based on the Greek island of Lesbos, which brings together private and public actors, civil society, social entrepreneurs and citizens to co-create and test public policies and tech-driven solutions for inclusive and sustainable local economic development across Europe.

Acceleration programme for social impact start-ups

CML provides a bespoke scaling support service to start-ups specialized in tech-driven education and healthcare solutions that benefit underserved or marginalized populations and the communities around them. Eight start-ups are selected annually to participate in a three-month programme, during which their solution can be tested, evaluated, and iterated on Lesbos with the help of a dedicated technical team, and by leveraging CML's strategic partners on the island. Three start-ups and their solutions are selected at the end of the programme. They are given the opportunity to pitch to impact investors during the annual Changemakers Summit. They also receive technical and strategic market access support from CML and its international network of partners to scale up their solutions at the European level and beyond.

Skills development for young people and refugees

CML equips young people and refugees on Lesbos with in-demand skills such as programming, blockchain, design thinking, and social impact measurement through blended learning courses. CML graduates team up and are assigned to one of the start-ups participating in the acceleration programme to provide technical support, such as for user testing, improving UX/UI design, evaluations, and impact assessments. The strength of these teams lies not just in their technical capacity, but also in their local knowledge and diversity of backgrounds and experiences. Team members consolidate their skills and gain hands-on experience while working with the start-ups – and have the possibility of being employed to implement the proposed solutions as they are scaled up through the acceleration programme. CML thereby acts as a pipeline, skilling and connecting local talent with start-ups that are ready to scale.

Why Lesbos?

It is no coincidence that CML is based on Lesbos. At the forefront of Europe's refugee and migrant crisis and the complex debates it has ignited, the island has had a leading role in the creation of new humanitarian solutions and practices through the collaboration of its local community, asylum-seekers and refugees, local government and NGOs. CML believes that the story of Lesbos is a story of resilience and hope, of European values – inclusion, tolerance, and solidarity – and the innovative and collaborative thinking necessary to address the social challenges of our times.

Changemakers Lab – a snapshot

- [Our year in review \(2017\)](#)
- [Feature by Global Geneva](#)
- [Forbes article on EdTech for refugees and CML](#)
- [TheBirds: connecting cities, cultures and people through art](#)

Social innovation lab: building a community of practice

CML is not only about helping start-ups scale up their social impact, promoting the socio-economic inclusion of refugees, or preparing young people for the future of work through skills development: it is about bringing together all stakeholders – public and private actors, civil society, social entrepreneurs and citizens at the local, regional and international levels – as a community of practice to imagine, innovate and co-create solutions for an inclusive, sustainable and prosperous future for Europe. As such, CML organizes events on Lesbos and abroad to foster collaboration and promote dialogues about topical subjects, such as: the Fourth Industrial Revolution and the future of work; asylum, migration and integration in Europe; accelerating the 2030 agenda and the global goals; and using technology, art, and culture for social change.

Partner with CML

CML is always looking to expand its network of strategic, technical, education, media, and funding partners on Lesbos, in Europe and internationally. Partnership opportunities exist for the start-up acceleration programme, the related skills development courses, the Changemakers Summit, and the European network of co-working spaces.

Changemakers Summit

CML's flagship event is the Changemakers Summit, which takes place on Lesbos annually on Europe Day (the 9th of May) to host policy dialogues and workshops, share best practices, and celebrate changemakers – including by showcasing the three solutions selected through CML's acceleration programme.

A European network

Ultimately, the goal of CML is to expand and reinforce its community of practice through a European network of co-working spaces, which will likewise act as platforms for the participatory innovation of public policies and tech-driven solutions to Europe's most pressing challenges. CML and its network will become conduits for a social movement which aspires to a future for Europe that is shaped through the principles of community, collaboration and social entrepreneurship.