

ENSCITE CASE STUDY



European Union
European Regional
Development Fund



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Kakou is a social enterprise looking to identify and remove barriers that exclude the disabled from accessing mainstream music and creative arts participation.

They design and manufacture innovative products, offering mainstream features that are inclusive and accessible to all, without the need for special adaptation.

Kakou wanted to design a range of inclusive audio products for the creative arts industry e.g. for use with disabilities such as impaired vision or hearing.

They had experience of working within large company research and development departments where the focus had been on manufacturing quickly and cheaply but Kakou wanted to focus on sustainability; to identify new environmentally friendly materials; and to use environmentally friendly manufacturing processes.

Kakou contacted the ENSCITE programme for assistance, through the University of Derby.

The University of Derby carried out research reviewing current sustainable materials on the market and agreed to deliver a small number of demonstrators to the client focused on the use of the multi-material and colour 3D printer at their site in Chesterfield. These demonstrators resembled a product or a suitable feature of the product enclosure to demonstrate how braille text and a capacitive type sensor could be incorporated in the product casing.

Sid Siddiq from the University of Derby said: “We communicated with the client about any specific features they would like on the casing. From the feedback, we built in a braille dots edit on feature and could produce this due to the good production equipment we have access to”

Ann Fomukong-Boden from Kakou Technologies said: "We have a thorough understanding of the materials on the market. We have identified 3D Printing as a potential method for mass producing our products. We have demonstrators that we can test with target market users.

The cost to test these ideas would have been prohibitive without the Institute for Innovation in Sustainable Engineering's input, ERDF funding and the University of Derby's expertise."

Kakou will use the demonstrators with their target market users and aim to mass produce three prototypes using the 3D printing method which will be more cost effective and sustainable.

"As a start-up business the testing of ideas would cost a lot of money. The ERDF fully funded input allowed us to progress the development of the casing and provided us with demonstrators which we can test with target market users.

It's been great to have access to the expertise of the University of Derby in terms of researching the materials on the market, accessing the equipment and technology to progress the development, and accessing expertise to turn our idea into a format that could then be 3D printed.

Communication has been nice and smooth and there have been no hold ups from initial meeting to generating the demonstrators".

ENSCITE offer a range of expert and holistic support services to help Small to Medium Sized Enterprises win and grow business.

To find out more: www.enscite.co.uk

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The project has received funding from the England European Regional Development Fund as part of the European Structural and Investment Funds Growth Programme 2014-2020. The Department for Communities and Local Government (and in London the intermediate body Greater London Authority) is the Managing Authority for European Regional Development Fund. Established by the European Union, the European Regional Development Fund helps local areas stimulate their economic development by investing in projects which will support innovation, businesses, create jobs and local community regenerations.

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