

PRESS RELEASE

**SKEMA students innovate to save the planet**



*Photo: The winning team of the 2020 SKEMA Hackathon pose for a photo.*

The new academic year kicked off in September with a “committed player” approach, which was the main theme of the 2020 intercampus Hackathon. SKEMA’s first-year Programme Grande Ecole students had to design projects that would contribute to saving the planet. The student team that won the intercampus challenge pitched the concept of an urban farm based on permaculture and organic farming on SKEMA campuses.

Divided into 172 teams, students from SKEMA’s Lille, Paris and Sophia Antipolis campuses worked for an entire week from 21 to 25 September, with on-site coaching from experts and conferences in interconnected multiplexes.

The intercampus grand final was won by a team in Lille, consisting of Anissa Benamara, Clara Cantiget, Sarah Daniel, Charles Chevalier and Charles-Emmanuel Arabian, with a project entitled “Starden” (a mix of “student” and “garden”).

Their idea was to use all the free space on the roofs and terraces of SKEMA’s campuses to create a real urban farm: the students’ garden.

“We started with three observations: firstly, the monthly budget students can devote to food is not always conducive to a balanced diet. In addition, long goods circuits increase pollution, and the cost of raw materials is constantly rising. We had the idea of creating a project that could change things at our

level, so that students could benefit directly. We planned to utilise unoccupied campus spaces like terraces and rooftops to grow fruits and vegetables using permaculture,” say the students who conceptualised Starden.

“Starden was unanimously chosen from the three finalist projects\* by the jury because of its potential for simple, immediate roll-out, its roots in real life and the fact that it is not expensive. It could also be deployed digitally in the future. This urban farm project is all the more inspiring because it turns those involved into ‘committed players’ from the very start of their academic life at SKEMA,” said Marine Hadengue, president of the jury and a SKEMA professor specialising in innovation and social entrepreneurship issues.

Divided into 172 teams on the Lille, Paris and Sophia Antipolis campuses, SKEMA students worked together for a week on devising ethical, innovative solutions to fight climate change by exploring the societal, positive and sustainable impact of their actions. The fight against climate change was approached from the food and cookery angle.

The students were inspired by the shared experiences of several trailblazers in the food sector, including Jean Montagard (a pioneer in organic vegetarian cuisine), Daniel Le Blay (a town councillor in Mouans-Sartoux, a pioneer municipality that has introduced organic meals at its school canteens), Daniel Bartement (a geographer at the University of Montpellier 3 and a biodynamic wine pioneer) and Diego Pani, a young, innovative chef at the Marco Polo Restaurant in Ventimiglia.

“This edition was rather different, with all the constraints of social distancing: the students participated in online conferences organised via Team Live Events, and several experts were able to connect with us from different parts of the world. We enjoyed some fascinating discussions between Eric Brun (secretary general of the National Observatory on the effects of global warming), François-Marie Bréon (a climatologist at the IPSL Climate and Environmental Sciences Laboratory) in Paris, and Arnaud Boulay (a SKEMA graduate and Time for the Planet ambassador), who spoke from Singapore. We also set aside physical rooms on the three campuses throughout the week so that students could work together face-to-face, independently or with their coaches. “To make us all ‘Committed Players’ as a group, and to replace the traditional thank-you gifts for our speakers, we have financed the planting of 100 trees on the sustainable platform [ReforestAction](#). – this represents 15 metric tons of stored CO<sub>2</sub>, 300 safe places for animals and 100 hours of work,” said Diego Zunino, the 2020 SKEMA Hackathon manager.

With Marine Hadengue as president, the projects were assessed by a jury of SKEMA graduates involved in sustainable entrepreneurship projects, including Anne-Sophie Grivon, founder of the organic cosmetic brand CHO Nature; Pauline Gane, founder of Easy V and now manager of SKEMA Ventures at the Paris campus, and Romain Massina, co-founder of the Odysway travel agency for immersive, responsible tourism.

*\*The two other finalist projects at the campuses: **Drivert**: a project from the Sophia Antipolis campus for the construction of a waste recycling and recovery drive in Nice & **Montée des eaux (or Great Plastic Island)**: a project from the Paris campus, involving the creation of a futuristic city on water from recovered plastics, to meet the challenges of rising seas and the pollution caused by plastic in the oceans.*

#### **About SKEMA Business School:**

With 9,000 students of 120 nationalities and 48,000 graduates in 145 countries, SKEMA Business School is a global school which, through its research, its 50 teaching programmes, its international multi-site structure trains and educates the talents that 21st century businesses need. The school is now present on 7 sites: 3 campuses in France (Lille, Sophia Antipolis, Paris), 1 in China (Suzhou), 1 in the United States (Raleigh), 1 in Brazil (Belo Horizonte) and 1 in South Africa (Cape Town -

Stellenbosch). In September 2019, the school announced the establishment in Montreal of SKEMA GLOBAL LAB in Augmented Intelligence, its augmented intelligence research laboratory and its new R&D center: SKEMA Quantum Studio. SKEMA is multi-accredited - Equis, AACSB and EFMD Accredited EMBA. Its programmes are recognized in France (Visa, Master Degree, RNCP, CGE label), as well as in the United States (licensing), Brazil (certificação) and China. [www.skema.edu](http://www.skema.edu).  
Follow us on twitter: @SKEMA\_BS

**Press contact:** Christine Cassabois, Tel.: +33 (0) 627 493 659, [christine.cassabois@skema.edu](mailto:christine.cassabois@skema.edu)