



PRESS RELEASE

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## The "Hacking Covid-19 Africa" hackathon by HEC Paris engages the African youth

HEC Paris announced on Tuesday 23rd June, 2020 the results of the Hacking Covid-19 Africa, an event entirely dedicated to the African continent organised from 19th to 21st June 2020.

Led by students and young graduates from HEC Paris, supported by HEC Paris' IDEA center, the school's communication and international development departments, it brought together more than 400 participants from 43 countries and 165 schools around 106 projects. After a vote by the participants, 50 of them were presented to the jury.

Five projects were rewarded by the Jury, composed of professors and managers from HEC Paris, as well as representatives of the academic partners (Mohammed VI Polytechnic University in Morocco) and private groups (Huawei Northern Africa, Orange Côte d'Ivoire and Mentor-X Africa).

During 3 days, mentors, partners and participants were connected online to reflect together on new initiatives responding to the priority issues of the African continent: health (19 projects), economy (11 projects), communities (7 projects), education (7 projects), governance (4 projects) and environment (2 projects).

The 1st Prize was awarded to the **OTECH** project, an artificial ventilation solution called OTECHAIR developed for Africa to treat Covid-19 patients. It has been designed to operate in the most difficult conditions and is equipped with a dynamic and easy to use interface. The 14-person team won a 5,000 euro grant from Huawei Northern Africa, a three-month support from the HEC Paris incubator and the support of Kamix to develop a web application, up to a value of 10,000 euros.

*"We are very happy, after more than 48 hours spent finalizing this project, to receive the first prize of the Hacking Covid-19 Africa! There are many initiatives on the African continent and thanks to platforms like this hackathon, we can highlight them and find the energy and the push needed to finalize and realize these innovative projects. OTECHAIR was born above all from our willingness to participate, in our own way, to help the African continent face the health crisis that has been growing for several months"* said the OTECH team's spokesperson.



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The 2nd Prize was awarded to the "**Breathing for Africa**" project, which proposes a fan to relieve Covid-19 patients. The team won 3,000 euros awarded by Orange Côte d'Ivoire and six months of business start-up support with KPMG. The 3rd Prize was earned by **NETA**, which developed a virtual reality application enabling practicum in chemistry, physics, mechanics, medicine and biology, due to the lack of financial resources to set up practicum rooms. The team will receive a 1,500 euros cheque from Orange Côte d'Ivoire and will benefit from 3 months of mentoring by Mentor-X Africa.

HEC Paris has also given its "Coup de Coeur" prize – an online training programme, *Innovation Management & Entrepreneurship Certificate* – to the **N'DAIFAI** team, which wants to create FrikaFood, an e-commerce agency enabling households to have food products delivered to them despite health constraints. Finally, a special prize was awarded by the Mohammed VI Polytechnic University in Morocco to the "**Innovation in the face of COVID-19**" team, which presented a UVC-based disinfection device (bacteriological and virological), ensuring the decontamination of work tools to fight against the spread of the virus.

*"I am very proud to have represented HEC Paris at this exceptional event, entirely online, where the ideas and solutions presented by our 50 teams all rivalled in innovation and originality. The energy deployed by these young people in Africa makes me confident about the future. They have learned to dare, and I now hope, on behalf of the entire HEC Paris organising team, that they will be able to realise their project!"* expressed with enthusiasm Alexis John Ahyee, Director of the HEC Paris Office for West and Central Africa based in Abidjan.

*"Entrepreneurship and innovation play an important role in these turbulent times. The Hackathon's participants are the players of change for the future,"* concluded Inge Kerkloh-Devif, Senior Executive Director, HEC Paris IDEA Center.

The Hackathon has benefited from the support of partner universities as well as companies that were keen to mobilize for the African continent: Huawei Northern Africa, Orange Côte d'Ivoire, KPMG, VISA, Mentor-X Africa, Agorize and Kamix.

More information on the winning projects [here](#).

### About HEC Paris

Specializing in education and research in management sciences, HEC Paris offers a complete and unique range of academic programs for the leaders of tomorrow: the Grande Ecole program, Specialized Masters and MSc, Summer School programs, the MBA, Executive MBA and TRIUM Global Executive MBA programs, the Ph.D. program and a wide range of programs for executives and managers.





Founded in 1881 by the Paris Chamber of Commerce and Industry, HEC Paris has a full-time faculty of 140 professors, 4,500 students and 8,000 managers in executive education programs every year.

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