

## Chairman's Award - Team 5553

<b>Team Number</b>
5553
<b>Team Name, Corporate/University Sponsors</b>
Wattway by COLAS/Groupe NOËL/SDRA/Philippe Cochet, Député du Rhône/Région Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes/APMG/APEL Notre Dame de Bellegarde/Concept & Impression/CPE École d'ingénieurs en Chimie, Physique et Electronique/IDRAC Business School/Domadoo/KMH &Notre Dame de Bellegarde
<b>Briefly describe the impact of the FIRST program on team participants with special emphasis on the 2016/2017 year and the preceding two to five years</b>
Numerous impacts: French Baccalaureate results with distinction, a new outlook on the direction to take in both higher education as well as in career choice, and increased acceptances to elite universities. In short, the impact on the students' career choices has been considerable. Furthermore, the graduates remain active in the FIRST project as mentors. Participants have benefited from working in groups, gaining confidence in public speaking and acquired a multitude of new technical skills.
<b>Describe the impact of the FIRST program on your community with special emphasis on the 2016/2017 year and the preceding two to five years</b>
The students'choice to come to our high school thanks to FIRST. We managed to influence politicians to allocate funds in order to support technical education. Participation in Innrobo, the largest European robotics event. After many requests to local authorities and other influential players in French robotics, we have contributed to the establishment of a support network that will be able to help create, select and support new teams as they participate in robotics competitions such as FIRST.
<b>Team's innovative or creative method to spread the FIRST message</b>
Several articles in the Planète Robot n°1 in France.1200 Twitter followers.5000 Facebook followers.8000 viewed on YouTube. More than 13000visits in our web site.A newspaper, updates their readers, at their request,about our team.3French TV stations requested to interview us this year.The youngest high school graduate in France, a member of our team, was invited on the most famous talk show in France. We have been in contact with the most followed blogger in order to pass on the message of FIRST
<b>Describe examples of how your team members act as role models and inspire other FIRST team members to emulate</b>
We are devoted to this principle. Since 2014 we worked with and inspired Les Compagnons du Devoir and financed various costs, which led to the creation of their new team T-Frogs. Our alumni communicate the importance of participating in the FIRST project. We work with other teams to establish training manuals in French. For the past year, we have been working on an organizational and financial level to establish a regional competition in Lyon for 2020. We already have some confirmed partners.
<b>Describe the team's initiatives to help start or form other FRC teams</b>
We contacted over 1000 French academic institutions to present FIRST. We set up a follow-up and reminder procedure to keep contact with these schools. We invited schools in our region to follow our progress, to set the example for their future initiatives. We've contacted many French schools to solicit their help in this endeavor and many have expressed interest in starting their own teams. We have visited many schools in Morocco which has resulted in the founding of the new team, Robot Maroc.
<b>Describe the team's initiatives to help start or form other FIRST teams (including Jr.FLL, FLL, &amp; FTC)</b>
Our enthusiasm for FIRST has continued to intensify with the establishment of Lego workshops whose objective is to create a team. In keeping with our principles of transmission and sustainability, we wanted to integrate into our school a Junior Lego and a Lego First team. We collaborated with the lower and middle school heads to launch this. There is now a specialized trainer in Lego robotics who introduces the concept to children. Our team finances the registration fees of the recruited teams.

**Describe the team's initiatives on assisting other FIRST teams (including Jr.FLL, FLL, FTC, & FRC) with progressing through the FIRST program**

After having helped create the Robot Maroc team, our team has made numerous trips to Morocco in order to assist their team in efficiently setting up their structure and organizing the communication and sponsoring crews as well as mentoring them in the values of FIRST. Furthermore, for the past two years, we have participated in a three-day exchange with other European robotics teams. Finally, we also participate in many Skype discussions with other teams.

**Describe how your team works with other FIRST teams to serve as mentors to younger or less experienced FIRST teams (includes Jr.FLL, FLL, FTC, & FRC teams)**

We have daily communication with the team in Morocco. We also invite all French schools wishing to set up a FIRST team to follow us in our weekly meetings. For two years, we have helped in the establishment of the T-Frogs. Finally, during the 2015-2016 season, we integrated two students from nearby high schools into our own team with the hopes that, afterwards, they would help set up their own teams in their respective high schools.

**Describe your Corporate/University Sponsors**

We have many kinds of sponsors with a great variety of specialties in order to give us a suitable network base, thus adding to the proper operation and balance of our team. Notable sponsors include: technical partners with cutting-edge innovation, local and regional governmental structures, universities and engineering schools, business clusters, and local and national ambassadors.

**Describe the strength of your partnership with your sponsors with special emphasis on the 2016/2017 year and the preceding two to five years**

We have chosen to work with financial partners who make a 3-year commitment. They are also actively engaged members of our team due to their technical and entrepreneurial expertise. They advise and guide our students. Our school is our primary sponsor ensuring the students' academic education. Being able to integrate schools into this program is a real advantage in our quest to improve our system of education, particularly in technology, which has been nearly nonexistent in our high schools.

**Describe how your team would explain what FIRST is to someone who has never heard of it**

FIRST is a coopertition. It teaches young people the importance of collaboration and compassion in a robotics challenge and prepares students to become future leaders in the STEM fields and in entrepreneurial careers. It's the only educational project that is able to incite students to go to school on weekends. In this Robolution movement, this is an opportunity for students to acquire the skills to be competitive in tomorrow's world. FIRST combines the spirit of competition with our parents' values

**Briefly describe other matters of interest to the FIRST judges, if any**

In less than three years, we have managed to form a solid team with a long-term action plan. Taking advantage of our increasing visibility, and being concerned with the less fortunate, we help others by donating money earned through our fund-raising events. We try to use all the available means to promote this competition to as many people as possible. We have turned our weaknesses linked to the French education system into a strength by obtaining the support to advance STEM subjects in our country

**Team Captain/Student Representative that has double-checked this submission.**

Andy Valla

**Essay**

28 months ago we entered this program somewhat by chance thanks to one of our students who went to study in the United States for a year. He was so enthusiastic about his incredible experience of participating in the robotics club and the FIRST competition. Upon his return, he quickly convinced the headmaster of our school to create the first team in France and since then, we have constantly been sharing our passion for robotics with as many people as possible.

"The only way to offer hope for a better future for mankind is through cooperation and partnership" (Kofi Annan). There are no better words to express what we have been experiencing for the past 3 seasons! By 2025 robotics will be the number 1 market in the world. Currently, France is far behind the times in this sector with its limited equipment and material. Collectively we fear that the competition will be a real threat to our future. Large French companies have a great deal of difficulty making the changeover. Only the start-ups are truly innovative and can break into the international market.

For the past three years, we have been striving to overcome this ambivalence, and the best way that we have found for making the most of the opportunities that have presented themselves is this awesome adventure. Coming together is a beginning. Staying together is progress. Working together is success. Such is our motto driving us to pursue success on a collective manner.

The FIRST program has been a real springboard for us, enabling the group to discover the science of new technologies, teamwork including mutual support between both students and mentors, inspiration, what lies beyond our personal limits, self-confidence and others, contact with the working world even at a very young age, and the spirit of collaboration in competition. However, this is not the only benefit. This experience also enable robotics to be more popular throughout our country and is allowing us to raise the awareness of our elected officials to the science of tomorrow. So, it is with this in mind that we are working hard and focus to develop our team's strength and move forward with our goals, as the true measure of a team's success is to ensure its competitiveness over time.

Furthermore, being the best ambassador possible for the FIRST in France as well as on an international scale is of utmost importance for us. Knowing that creativity is contagious, we want to share it with as many people as possible. We realize that 2025 will be upon us in no time, and in order to keep up with this, we have had to put all of our energy into this heralded "ROBOLUTION". For this, we have used both internal and external leverages. If our first year was a period of adaptation, we are focused since then on the progress and the sustainability of the team. We are also very busy to expand our relationships and communicate with the wider and greater community, concentrating on countries facing the same technological disadvantages as us and who don't have yet any team participating in the FIRST's competition.

Even though we are in competition, we have contacted over 1000 academic institutions in France where we have given an overall presentation of the FIRST, sharing our experience and explaining all the amazing advantages that come with participating in such an adventure. We are very proud and delighted for sharing with you that all of these efforts led to the creation of the first team in Africa as well as having fostered the creation of a second team in France.

During our first visit to Morocco in last September, we were fully motivated to convince at least one school to join the FIRST program. In one week's time, we were able to visit many schools in a variety of cities including Marrakesh, Casablanca, Rabat and Meknes, in addition to meeting with representatives at the embassies. Then, the concretisation came during our second trip to Morocco 1 month later when Robot Maroc was founded and entered into the FIRST competition. Thanks to our contacts with the French embassy in Morocco, we have been collaborating with at least two French schools that also wish to integrate the program next year. Other contacts have been made in parallel with the Minister of Education Marwan Hamadeh in Lebanon and Maymouna Sawwaf who is in charge of all French schools in Saudi Arabia.

For the past two years, we have been in contact with all of the institutions of higher learning which correspond best with the skill sets needed in the field of robotics in order to set up partnerships and to acquire sponsors. These partners have helped us to create technology workshops in our school. For example, Epitech, a school of innovation and technology, as well as CPE The School of Chemistry, Physics and Electronics have helped us set up a "coding club". Numerous training courses in the fields of 3D modelling, programming, the use of Autodesk Inventor software, and an introduction to mechanical systems have also been added to our school's curriculum.

In order to guarantee these training sessions to be successful, a pre-season project was organized by the team, with the aim to build a robot based on the 2013 Game « Ultimate Ascent » and allowing us to estimate/validate the members' newly learned skills.

## Essay - page 2

All these training programs led the school director to take a decision to create a new teaching position and recruit a high school robotics teacher. The objective is to make robotics more popular and accepted by the board of education.

We have also set up training sessions for the business unit with lessons in public speaking lead by a lawyer, cold calling techniques to develop a sponsorship process, as well as workshops on Photoshop, Final Cut Pro and Adobe Illustrator. All these trainings being crucial in our communication with the community, they enabled us to take steps with BNI, a professional network based on mutual recommendation. Additionally, we set up a support system for the Robotics competition, helping to increase all our sponsors' loyalty. And, thanks to these modules, our robot is in constant evolution from an engineering, design and performance point of view.

We use our team's reputation and the FIRST program to carry out multiple humanitarian actions within our community. We have raised money for the association called, "Thelma for Anna", which helps a family whose eldest daughter died

and who supported her mentally handicapped sister on a daily basis. We organized a "Petanque" fundraising contest for the association called "Maillon Fort". This association was created for a young woman who was heavily handicapped after a car accident at the age of 15. She unfortunately had to abandon her dreams of competing with the French ski team. Our participation is helping her overcome her handicap and ski with the French Paralympics team. Each year we donate to the Telethon, the world's largest fundraiser that subsidizes research projects for genetic diseases. This year we signed a partnership with the association called "Le Secours Populaire Française", a major national cause fighting poverty, which consists of collecting funds and food.

Each year, as part of the association "Terre Solidaire", our students participate in the Christmas Party, which consists in organizing a meal for people who are less fortunate and/or alone for the Christmas season in order to share a little human warmth. We have also been working on the development of science kits with the FRC team 1902 for the world and especially for developing countries. Thanks to the FIRST we have been able to create links with many other teams in other countries with different cultures. It has been an enriching experience for all of us.

Practice matches with the real competition conditions are organized with other European teams before the robot is sealed. Last year we were really happy to have been invited by Team 4481 in Holland to participate. This year we proposed to organize this event in France. It is in itself a first step in our prospect of organizing a regional meeting in France by 2020. We are working on a survey to know if the First teams are interested in participating in a competition that we plan to organize in France. It will be our pleasure to present the results of this survey to the judges in March. More than simply focusing on the progress of our team, we are actively working on the creation of this event. We have already obtained the necessary institutional supports for this, namely from the region (province), other local authorities and the largest French companies in the robotics sector. By organizing this competition in France, we will offer the opportunity and encourage other European teams to be constituted and join in on the fun. The financial and organizational constraints that exist due to the distance from the American continent will then no longer be an issue. Our determination to inspire others will continue and turn our disability into a strength. Convincing is the glorious art of cooperation, so conviction has become our dominant leitmotif.

The greatest pleasures undoubtedly result from hard work carried out in cooperation. Every new feat proves this to be true. These challenges allow us to stay young and they make life definitively more interesting and funny. Overcoming them makes it all meaningful. Creativity is contagious so it has to be shared widely. Thank you for this program that has changed our lives forever, and that we will endeavor to keep alive. This is just the beginning and we all feel responsible to make it even more funny and attractive for others !