

National Headlines

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Winners of DESIGN TO NURTURE THE PLANET competition and their projects in support of the UN SDGs

by Emily Graham



The international expert jury of the “Design to Nurture the Planet” student competition organised by BE OPEN in support of the United Nations SDG Programme, has selected the winners of the three core prizes – the awardees of the First, Second and Third Prizes.

BE OPEN's latest competition aimed to bring the talent and creativity of the global community to focus on SDG2: Zero Hunger. Under the umbrella of zero hunger, SDG2 is not only about ending hunger but also about achieving food security and improved nutrition and promoting sustainable agriculture.

The competition called for innovative solutions that can contribute to how we transform our food systems to end food insecurity and create better conditions for an equitable and environmentally prosperous world. The Zero Hunger actions are an emergency, as Martin Griffiths, the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs explains, “when famine finally opens the door, it goes viral in a way that other threats don't.”

The objective of the competition is to recognize and promote top design projects developed by the younger creative generation that can tackle the tasks set by the United Nations' SDG Programme; to produce new ideas with the potential for true impact.

All the eligible submissions have been evaluated by the international jury comprised of BE OPEN Community members: representatives of global academia and business, experts in design, sustainability, economy and environmental studies. By the combination of criteria, such as viability, feasibility and desirability of the design, evidence of comprehensive research and the level of awareness, the creative value of the solution proposed, the jury members have distributed the prizes the following way:

- First Prize of €5,000 goes to Helena Markus from Tallinn, Estonia, who developed Sys-Stem, a blockchain-based system of food production and distribution. Blockchain as a data technology can help address challenges of the food supply by fixing data faults in the producer – supplier- consumer chain, raising the efficiency at each stage. Transparency of processes, sustainability, quicker feedback and regulation are only a few advantages of blockchain technologies that the food industry can benefit from.

- Second Prize of €3,000 goes to Riccardo Mirarchi from Milan, Italy for his Urban Gardens project that encourages repurposing available urban spaces into sustainable food-producing spots to be run by communities of neighbours. The project offers insight into sustainable food cultivation, relevant technologies and materials, offers practical instruction that allows urban dwellers to cultivate their fresh food, support local biodiversity, and repurpose and recycle waste.

- Third Prize of €2,000 goes to Marina Balash from Basel, Switzerland for the interactive online platform Seed Sync. which aims to engage people in co-cultivating fresh food and co-farming in general by providing them with a platform for finding new friends, uniting efforts, sharing experiences, know-how, materials, seeds, etc. The platform allows for sponsorships, charitable activities, community initiatives, etc.

BE OPEN Founder Elena Baturina congratulated the three winners and added: “This competition aims not simply to award the selected projects, but to reveal and celebrate all the creative potential that humanity has to offer to solve the sustainable development issues globally and locally. All of the submissions have been designed around the principles and aims of the United Nations’ SDGs, and focus on making the world a better place for all of us. We are grateful to our participants and hope to see their ideas make an actual change soon. BE OPEN shall continue developing programmes aimed at supporting young creative talent worldwide.”

This is year three of BE OPEN’s involvement with running competition programmes that collect ideas and projects to advance the United Nations’ Sustainable Goals (SDG).

