Simplon.co raises €12 million from its pool of impact investors in order to accelerate its growth

Montreuil, April 1st, 2019 - Less than two years after having raised €4.75 million during its first fundraising campaign and on the eve of its 6th anniversary, Simplon.co has raised €12 million from its pool of Social and Solidarity Economy (ESS) investors in order to continue the growth of its social impact in France and abroad.

Amundi (through its fund Amundi Finance et Solidarité), Aviva Impact Investing, Banque des territoires, Esfin Gestion, France Active Investissement, INCO, Mirova (Natixis Group) and Phitrust Partenaires Europe formalized the arrangement for Simplon’s new fundraising campaign on March 21st. A total of €12 million raised by Simplon.co SAS (simplified joint-stock company) is made up of equity, quasi-equity and debt.

Simplon, a Social Purpose Organization (created in 2013) is the number one network of tuition-free training centers labeled “Grande École du Numérique”. It is the most inclusive and internationally deployed network of its kind. It is also a training organization that has the most certified trainings on digital technical skills (web/mobile/software programming, Artificial Intelligence, Data, Cyber security, Fundamental digital skills, Wordpress, agility).

These last two years, as the demand for digital skills remains very high, Simplon.co quadrupled its social impact and provided digital trainings to 4268 people worldwide, with a 75% rate of positive outcomes (6 months after the training). Simplon’s target audiences are women (31% of trainees), young people (41%) and people with an A-level diploma or lower at the beginning of training (51%) — those which are a priority of the professional training reform adopted in August 2018.

Today, Simplon.co is present in 15 countries and is continuing its international expansion in Europe (Belgium, Spain, Switzerland), West Africa and the Maghreb, and, more recently, in Jordan and India. The symbolic milestone of 1000 people trained abroad was reached at the end of 2018.

This fundraising campaign will enable Simplon.co to:
- Continue its efforts to attract people not in employment or training (NEETs) living in vulnerable areas (priority neighborhoods, rural areas, French overseas territories), and in particular those considered as “socially invisible” who are “off the radar” of recruiters;
- Develop exemplary and emblematic flagship-type training locations;
- Reinforce its network of partners;
- Invest in the creation of new training plans in line with the needs of companies;
- Deploy new training approaches (blended learning, multiple training sessions per year, apprenticeship) and create a training center for apprentices (CFA);
- Facilitate the improvement and certification of participants’ skills by using efficient digital tools — like Simplonline, which is the first active e-learning platform on the market.
Thanks to this transaction, Simplon.co will also be able to **develop its digital services with a social impact through its two “sister” activities:**

- **Simplon Corp:** support for the professional transition and re-training of employees that have been left out of the digital transformation, or those who are highly impacted by the digitalization of their company;
- **Simplon Prod:** continuation of work-based trainings for the learners and strengthening their professional integration through locally embedded web agencies.

Thanks to this transaction, **Simplon.co is going to continue its development in order to reach its goal of 10,000 people trained per year by 2023.**

Mathieu Azzouz, Manager of the **FCP Amundi Finance et Solidarité pour Amundi** mutual funds emphasized: “**Simplon.co is fully in line with the policy of selecting social purpose organizations supported by Amundi. As a partner of Simplon.co since 2017, we are delighted to accompany them in their growth in order to reach the objective of training 10,000 people per year by 2023 for the jobs of the future. ”**

Antoine Troesch, Director of Investments at **Banque des territoires** welcomed this renewed support - which reached €1,5 million - after having participated in the first fundraising campaign in 2017: “**the support of the Banque des territoires demonstrates its long-term commitment to the actors of the Social and Solidarity Economy and its contribution to the adaptation and development of skills for more attractive and inclusive regions.**”

Jean-Marc Altwegg, President of **France Active Investissement** welcomed Simplon’s fundraising, which “**is fully in line with the logic of our investments, both in terms of the development of the most vulnerable areas and in terms of digital inclusion**, stating that his organization was “**proud to be once again associated with a logic of transformation that confirmed the relevance of our first investments.**”

“**Mirova is investing in companies with strong impact, in particular social impact, whose economic model is sustainable. This is the case of Simplon.co, since by training unprivileged people for the jobs of tomorrow and by supporting them in their return to work, society responds to long term social and economic needs. As a leading management company investing in the Social and Solidarity Economy, we are delighted to take part in this new fundraising campaign and to become a long-term partner of Simplon.co, ”** emphasized Herve Guez, Head of Research and of Equity and Fixed Income Management at **Mirova**.

For his part, Xavier Thauron, Associate Director at Phitrust is “**delighted to once again participate in the financing of Simplon’s development, and is especially thankful to his teams for their commitment to generating a strong social impact by responding more effectively to the digital divide, as well as to the issue of youth employment, while still maintaining a good economic balance in order to multiply this impact.**”

These funds were received from the following partners*
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About

Simplon.co
Labeled French Tech, La France s’Engage, Ashoka, EPIC and being the biggest and most inclusive of the “Grande Ecole du Numérique” network, Simplon.co offers free intensive trainings for digital professions in high demand to talented people who are unemployed or are living in priority areas. In 5 years, 4268 people have been trained. Currently present in 54 cities in France and in 15 countries abroad, Simplon.co continues to develop its social impact.

FCP Amundi Finance et Solidarité
With an outstanding balance of €220 million at the end of December 2018, Amundi Finance et Solidarité is the most important social impact fund in France. It supports the development of companies within the Social and Solidarity Economy (ESS) and aims to meet the essential needs of people that fall within these 5 categories: accessing decent accommodation, getting recognized work, having access to healthcare and training, living in a safe and preserved environment, and promoting entrepreneurship. The fund is currently supporting 34 enterprises. It is meant to grow substantially in the coming years.
Since its launch, the fund has created or preserved nearly 16,000 jobs, housed more than 1,600 people, provided care to more than 13,000 beneficiaries, preserved 800 hectares of agricultural land, recycled 14,000 tons of waste, helped to prevent 3,700 cases of bankruptcy and financed more than 200 farmers.

Aviva Impact Investing
Aviva Impact Investing France (AIIF) is fully funded by Aviva France. Aviva France, an insurer and responsible investor, participates in the development of social entrepreneurship, a particularly innovative sector that creates viable economic solutions to address important social issues facing our society. Aviva France also wishes to demonstrate that the actors within the Social and Solidarity Economy can meet reasonable profitability requirements, and thus attract other players from the financial world to this sector. AIIF is managed by INCO.

Banque des Territoires
Founded in 2018, Banque des territoires embodies one of the five missions of the Caisse des Dépôts. It brings together, within the same structure, many types of internal expertise to serve various regions. It offers tailor-made advisory and financing solutions (loans and investment) in order to meet the needs of local communities, social housing organizations, local public enterprises and legal professionals. It is in contact with all the regions, from rural areas to metropolitan areas with the aim of combating social and regional inequalities. Banque des Territoires is deployed in 16 regional branches of Caisse des Dépôts and in 35 territorial branches in order to be better identified by its clients and to be closer to them.
Banque des territoires is for more attractive, inclusive, sustainable and connected territories.

**ESFIN Gestion**
ESFIN Gestion is a management company specialized in the financing of Social and Solidarity Economy (ESS) organisations with equity and quasi-equity capital for over 35 years. Putting people and the projects that drive them above everything else, ESFIN Gestion is active covers the entirety of the French territory. ESFIN Gestion manages many investment vehicles for a total of €195 million, which, in particular, focus on encouraging the scale-up of ESS enterprises by supporting their development or their transfer, in cooperative form, to employees. ESFIN Gestion is a part of Groupe Crédit Coopératif.

**France Active Investissement**
France Active Investissement, the leading solidarity investment company in France, enables France Active to collect socially responsible savings in order to invest it in Social and Solidarity Economy (ESS) projects that have an important social, regional or environmental impact. To carry out its mission, France Active Investissement can rely on the scale and strength of France Active’s network: 42 regional associations with 130 reception points. Strongly rooted in their territories, investment officers are able to identify the committed entrepreneurs of tomorrow and support the transformation of the pioneers of the Social and Solidarity Economy (ESS). France Active insures and provides financing to more than 7,400 entrepreneurs every year through its 3 financing companies (France Active Investissement, France Active Garantie, France Active Financement). Every day, France Active works to develop a more inclusive and a more sustainable economy.

**INCO**
INCO is the global accelerator of the new economy, whose mission is to provide support to all the high-impact start-ups at any stage of development. INCO disposes of more than €150 million in assets under management, and accompanies more than 500 start-ups every year worldwide. By incorporating all its activities in a single accelerator model – identification of entrepreneurs via bootcamps, support for 3 to 9 months, and capital investment at any stage of development – INCO multiplies the success of enterprises with social and environmental impacts that make the world more inclusive and sustainable.

**Mirova (Natixis Group)**
Mirova, an affiliate of Natixis Investment Managers, is a management company dedicated to sustainable investment. Thanks to its philosophy, Mirova aims to combine long-term value creation and sustainable development. Pioneers in many areas of sustainable finance, Mirova’s talented team has an ambition to continue to innovate in order to offer their clients high-impact solutions adapted to their needs.

**Phitrust**
Phitrust Partenaires Europe is Phitrust’s second social impact investment fund. Launched in 2016 in partnership with the European Investment Fund, it is reinvesting - for a second time - in a high social impact project with Simplon. This European fund maintains the same strategy as Phitrust Partenaires, a pioneering fund created in 2005 that gives priority to social impact, and has since been joined by institutions like BNP Paribas and Banque des Territoires, which are involved in supporting social entrepreneurs.