

Startagree: A voice for big challenges like climate change, built by talent young and younger

A team of four has created a tool to build general consensus for big challenges like climate change. They did in 48 hours, collaborating globally across three cities. And their ages range from 14 to 26.

Startagree is a web-based app that uses social media voting to give people a voice for influencing governments, policy makers and corporations. The team came together as part of Geeklist #hack4good 0.6, the planet's largest hackathon for climate change.

On Friday evening 12th September, Myron Koster (23), Koen Bonenkamp (26) and Quellijn Knuvelde (37) attended the hackathon's Amsterdam kick-off, hosted by [Rockstart](#). The three formed a team when they were inspired by one of the hackathon challenges - ***International Negotiations: What tools might we build to better facilitate effective international negotiations towards creating strong international agreements and commitment?***

"We saw a lot of potential to make negotiations go smoother," Myron said. "But after having a good night of sleep, Koen and I found out Quellijn couldn't join us anymore. We were not sure if two was enough and planned to join another hackathon team instead."

Fortunately, hackathon organiser [Camiel R. Verschoor](#) introduced them to Josh de Kock (14), attending the hackathon in Southampton, UK. At the same time, Geeklist's CEO Reuben Katz helped by putting out a call for a front-end designer, and Matthew

Rothenberg (24), in San Francisco, answered the call. The project team was complete.

For the rest of weekend, they worked to design, develop and launch startagree.com, presenting it to the global #hack4good 0.6 participants, who numbered more than 1,000 in 40+ cities and online. The hackathon united teams with NGOs, leading technologists, environmental organizations, subject matter experts, and governments. Teams built apps, products and technologies to solve [15 key climate and environment challenges](#) facing the world, from climate awareness challenges to adaptation to action.

Despite his age, it wasn't Josh's first #hack4good hackathon, having joined Geeklist #hack4good 0.5 in February. Josh found the event exciting and was amongst the youngest hackers globally, working with a team that created [games4good](#) for the charity [Learning through Landscapes](#) - for which they won the local best project award.

Josh said "At #hack4good 0.6, I attended the Southampton Centre but due to lack of people, there weren't any projects that I found interesting. I messaged some people in the HipChat and [Camiel](#) approached me with a team needing a coder. I happened to like their idea as it involved working with a lot of data. So I contacted them and we started hacking!"

The young talents pitched and demonstrated startagree to a panel of judges on Sunday evening. The audience had an opportunity to try out the application and experience the results live. The judges thought startagree showed great promise for

real world applications and awarded them with second place, which puts them through to the global judging on Wednesday 17 September.

Meet the startagree project team

- Myron Koster (23) - Master student strategic product design at the TU Delft
[Twitter: https://twitter.com/MyronKoster](https://twitter.com/MyronKoster)
- Koen Bonenkamp (26) - (Master Degree in Artificial Intelligence) Young professional (KLM/Air France)
[Twitter: https://twitter.com/kbonenkamp](https://twitter.com/kbonenkamp)
- Josh de Kock (14) - Scholar and winner of Young Rewired State "Best in Show" 2014 with #YouDraw
[Twitter: https://twitter.com/eintw1ck](https://twitter.com/eintw1ck)
- Matthew Rothenberg (24) - Product designer at Pivotal Labs in San Francisco, CA
[Twitter: https://twitter.com/mattrothenberg](https://twitter.com/mattrothenberg)

About Rockstart

The Amsterdam hosts, [Rockstart](#), are an accelerator company with a passion for startups. Karin van Soest, *Rockstart Accelerator Smart Energy Associate*, said "We decided to partner with #Hack4Good and Geeklist because we share the same principle: that technology and entrepreneurship lead to endless possibilities for those ready to grasp them."

Before and during the hackathon [Karin van Soest](#) put a lot of time and effort into helping coordinate the #hack4good Amsterdam and global event. Rockstart also provided a team of mentors from their network to help hackathon teams in all areas from idea creation, team building, business strategy, UX/UI & innovation to artificial intelligence.

After #Hack4Good 0.6, Rockstart is offering the winning team of the **energy challenge** the opportunity to take their project beyond the hackathon and transform it into a sustainable business. They'll be offered a wildcard to Rockstart's last round of its [Smart Energy accelerator 2015 program](#) - the Selection Days, in Amsterdam the first week of November 2014. There they'll meet with Rockstart mentors and pitch to a large industry crowd at [European Utility Week 2014](#) in Amsterdam.

Note: [Interested teams can already apply for Rockstart Smart Energy Accelerator 2015 until October 5.](#)

About #hack4good

The [Geeklist #hack4good](#) mission is to create technology-based innovations to address and make a real-world impact on climate change, its impacts and related issues.

Challenges for #hack4good 0.6 were set by organizations and field workers including: Fauna and Flora International, WWF, 350.org, UK Department of Energy & Climate Change, Friends of the Earth, WeForest, Save the Children, Project 1%, Lead International and the World Resources Institute, along with participation from countless experts working at the forefront of climate change. The event took place in every time zone across 40 cities, made possible by JustGiving, Rackspace and local sponsors in every city.

To get involved, become an ambassador, volunteer or add challenges as an NGO:

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