



## Weston Hankins

### Mentor

#### How do you define yourself?

I am a brutally honest kind of mentor with a touch of sympathy – measured and unbiased. Building businesses is tough and getting right down to core challenges is important to me. I believe focus and passion are keys to success.

#### Why do you mentor tech start-ups?

Ideas have sex – they merge and breed and form new ideas, mesmerizing and unique, sometimes genius. This awes and inspires me. It also pushes my limits. Being close to other start-ups is like running 40km: it is much easier when you're in a crowd running together. It is the spirit of being on the same boat and supporting each other that boosts my energy and creativity.

#### Why did you become part of the Young Innovators Competition?

For the past six years I have been working consciously toward making this world a better place to live in. When I read about the six Global Challenges, what stood out the most to me was the acknowledgement that success in entrepreneurship is not only measured by the dollar value you create, but also, and importantly, by the difference you make.

Weston Hankins, originally from Mexico, started his career at DaimlerChrysler in Germany, programmed at Microsoft in Redmond, USA, and then quit to obtain his degree (in Computer Engineering) and travel the world. He joined CouchSurfing, serving as CTO for over 4 years and helping to turn it into the world's largest travel community. Later, Weston moved to Berlin and took on the CTO role at 9flats.com. Weston has now founded Footstep Ventures and, together with a small team, is creating a next-generation city guide. He also mentors other start-ups in Germany and Singapore.