

## Changing the world as an entrepreneur in Rotterdam

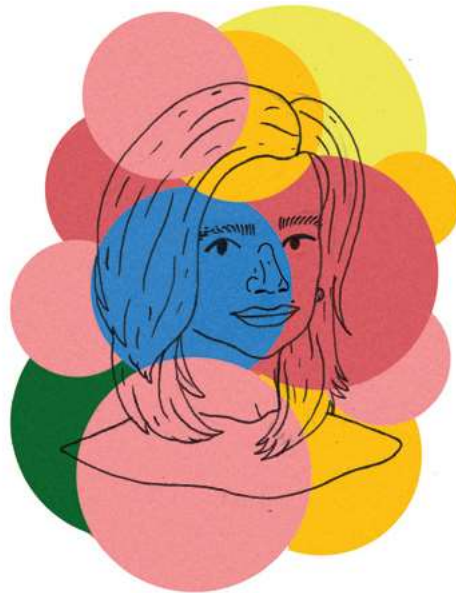
Being the melting pot it is, Rotterdam is likely one of the best places to create both local and global impact. Christina Moreno, Tom Dogger and Peter Paul van Voorst are three entrepreneurs, who - although working in completely different fields - have proven that impact knows no borders.

Christina is the founder of SheMatters, a social enterprise that aims to empower refugee and migrant women to build their social and economic capital and become leaders in their homes, businesses and communities.

Having overcome poverty as a teenage mother herself, Christina has worked long and hard for the milestones in her life, including becoming a successful International Law practitioner. It was this “fascinating work”, as she puts it, that brought her to the Netherlands several years ago.

Yet, as accomplished as she was, there was a time when even the job she loved so much was not fulfilling enough. “I was at a point in my life where I wanted to give back,” she says.

Starting SheMatters was her way of doing just that.



Christina Moreno

### Training and technology create impact at home and abroad

It all started when Christina met a couple of migrant women for a cup of coffee and asked them about their dream. “I want to get a job,” they all said.

She was taken aback but soon realized how deep the problem ran. For refugees and migrants in the Netherlands, finding employment is nothing short of challenging, as there is often a mismatch between the skills they have and the skills that the market demands. SheMatters was founded to help women develop those sought-after skills through workshops, traineeships and by connecting them to companies looking for talent.

For Tom, impact revolves around refugees as well, but abroad rather than at home in the Netherlands. As the founder of Notilyze, a data analytics company that helps small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to better understand and leverage their data, he did not expect to be creating social impact in Africa. Yet, there he is.

After winning the Humanitarian Action Challenge of the International



Tom Dogger

Organization for Migration (IOM) in mid-2018, Tom and his team were offered the opportunity to help a refugee camp in Ethiopia with optimizing their data and keeping track of their resources.

“The challenge is that not much is digitized at the moment, so our job is to do that and organize the data. The refugee camp can then use it to track how much food they buy,

**“Humanitarian aid is new for us, but resource planning is old.”**



The Team of SKOON

how many blankets, and more,” Tom says. “Humanitarian aid is new for us, but resource planning is old.” While Tom and his team may have entered the field of humanitarian aid somewhat coincidentally, they are determined to continue adding unique value to it.

“Our vision is to make big data available to everyone and working with the refugee camp in Ethiopia is completely in line with that.” It is the first of many steps to come for the young entrepreneurs.

#### Creating impact in a new market

Just like Tom and his team, Peter Paul was working on something else before he found inspiration for his current business idea. The

founder of SKOON, he has come up with a solution to remotely charge vessels with the help of battery containers.

“For a class at the TU Delft, I was working on how to minimize the vibrations of diesel engines on ships,” he says. “So I thought, if I took out the diesel engines, I would take out the vibrations. It would also make ships a lot greener.”

It might sound like a rather ambitious idea, but Peter Paul went straight for it.

He developed the concept of the SKOON box, which is essentially a portable, container-sized battery. So-called swapping stations make it possible to swap batteries and

### *At the end of the day, providing access and new opportunities is what Peter Paul, Tom and Christina are all working towards.*

have them recharged so no time is wasted in the port.

Peter Paul considers the software to be the real unique selling point (USP) of SKOON. “The batteries generate a lot of data and with our software, we can make sense of it for our customers. We can tell them how efficient they’ve been or how much CO2 they’ve saved.”

“What we do need is more competition on the hardware side, so we can grow the solution together,” he says.

In the long run, the goal is to become the Airbnb for portable batteries, Peter Paul adds. He and his team want to encourage large companies to rent out their batteries when they don’t need them, as they can also be used at building sites or festivals. “Our goal is to make the batteries - and by extension clean energy - more accessible through our platform.”

At the end of the day, providing

access and new opportunities is what Peter Paul, Tom and Christina are all working towards. Whether it is clean energy, gender-specific training and education, or finding an out-of-the-box application for a new technology, it is all about making the lives of others around us better.

“It is about the little moments,” Christina concludes. “It is about seeing the joy in the eyes of those you’ve been able to help. Every now and again I stop and I take it all in.”

#### Colin Nugteren

