Hi! I'm Youssef. Today I want to start by telling you a story:

How a blog post led me to write a Rails app for the UN

Yes, *that* UN.

I started my career as an energy modeling researcher. My lab worked on questions like: "how much electricity will South America need in 2040?" and "what would be the cost of achieving full access to electricity in Burkina Faso?". Though I liked the subject, I ultimately realized that research was not for me, discovered Rails and decided to make it my full time job.

Fast forward a couple years, I had lunch with some old colleagues and one person mentioned that her energy models grew so large that they now took hours to compute instead of minutes. Her computations also needed hundreds of gigabytes of memory, so she was constrained to using the workstations available at the lab instead of her laptop. This was hurting her productivity and she had a deadline to make.

On my walk back from lunch, I kept thinking about her problem: would it be possible to run these models on high powered EC2 instances? This would allow not only running large models possibly faster, but also multiple models in parallel. A week later, I had a proof-of-concept ready, helped my friend make her deadline and wrote [a blog post describing the process](#).

The post spread in the energy modeling community and I started getting emails from researchers asking me to help them run their large models in the cloud. One of these emails was from division of the UN dedicated to energy modeling, who asked if I could make a web interface to automate the process so they can use it internally.

This is now a tool used by decision makers around the world to set sustainable energy policies for entire countries.

I wanted to tell this story because it illustrates two core values I believe in:

The first is that **good things often come from combining ideas from different fields**. Ideas that seem unrelated at first, until that one connection emerges and makes you go "*oooh!*". From my experience, the most reliable way to get these connections to happen is to cultivate curiosity. Hire curious engineers.

The second is that **good software empowers people**. With the right tools, tasks that used to take days can take minutes. I keep this in mind whenever I work on software

products, from choosing which features to work on to details like button color and placement.

Wait… who are you again?
Right, back to me. I grew up in sunny Morocco, lived in France for a couple years and am now based in not-so-sunny Stockholm, Sweden.

I like [photography](#), video games, [books](#), history, physics and mathematics, cooking food and eating food. The flip side of the curiosity coin is that there are so many great things to discover out there, yet so little time.

I like asking questions, especially ones starting with "why". Understanding the fundamentals of a system and thinking from first principles is how I ensure I make informed decisions, in software and in life.

Why Basecamp?
I want to work on tools that empower people. Basecamp empowers its users, and so does HEY.

I want to work with curious colleagues, and use our knowledge in different areas to make our ideas and products better.

I want to work in an environment that encourages and pushes for first principles thinking, in software and in management.

I want to grow with you and challenge you. I want to learn from old mistakes and make new ones together. Let's talk.

Youssef

Examples of open source and community work:
- I once accidentally [caused a gem to be officially deprecated](#) and I [updated the rails documentation](#) accordingly.
- I recently submitted a [PR for a feature that wasn't accepted](#), but inspired the author to come up with an alternative solution to the problem.
- The most "out there" commit: [debugging C++ header files](#) when sassc failed to build its native extension one morning.
- I participated in various ruby community events, such as [coaching at a Rails girls event](#).
- If you're curious about my previous life, getting a peer-reviewed [scientific paper published](#) was certainly a highlight!