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Team 39

Journal

I am glad I took part in the Global Enterprise Experience. When our teacher in Internationalization Strategy told us about it, I immediately thought of it as something challenging and stimulating at the same time. I could already foresee the advantages of taking part in it: it would help me to develop cross-cultural skills and to work across different time zones, besides giving me the chance to develop my knowledge in a business topic. And in fact it did.

I think my experience started the day I enrolled. I was very anxious and curious to know what kind of people I would be matched with, and from what countries. Well, of course I knew my Italian partner (Lucia) and I knew that at least one person would be from New Zealand, but I knew nothing about the other members. On March 23 I learned that two members were from Uganda and two from Nigeria. I thought this to be even more motivating: my grandparents live in Zambia and I have often been there, therefore through the years of my life I have developed a special interest for Africa and its people.

I was amazed by one of the African members' commitment to the project. Samuel, one of the members from Uganda, told us of how many difficulties he was facing in order to actively participate in the competition: for example, besides the fact that he had to reach an Internet Point every time he needed access to the Internet, sometimes the electricity was missing since Uganda is currently experiencing many black-outs! Nevertheless, he participated to our group's work as if he was having no problems! On the contrary, with an almost 24-hour access to the Internet, my commitment to the project was not so strong all the time. I learned from Samuel's behaviour that even though we might have some hardships to overcome, our commitment is crucial for achieving our goals.

I was happy to also have Thomas, the member from New Zealand, in our group. He has been the group's leader: he was the one setting deadlines and having an eye on the project's overall coherence. It is so important to have someone take on this role, especially when working at a distance, in order to ensure the necessary coordination of people carrying out their jobs in different places and at different times.

Lucia, my friend from Italy, also played an important role from the perspective of my personal contribution. She is an ambitious person, who has confidence in her skills and believes that a strong-willed person can go where he or she wants. By working with her I have learned never to give up, no matter how many commitments we might have, to have more confidence in myself, and never to underestimate my capabilities.

Overall, I have gained a lot from this experience. Working across different cultures and time zones involves a lot of open-mindedness and willingness to make compromises (even simply to decide on the topic of the proposal!). I think the "social" skills I have gained will be very useful in the future.