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Group 32: 'Microfinance - means against poverty'



Wow! The last three weeks were exciting and I cannot believe that it is already over. I cannot believe that in only three weeks we had great talks with other people from other countries, learned management and communication skills, and had to solve all these 'real' problems. I cannot believe that a whole business idea came up, was structured and developed, and is now ready to get transferred into reality. I cannot believe that all this is over now. And overall I cannot believe that we have to return to the daily life of university soon.

GEE was an extraordinary learning experience and I would like to describe 'a little bit' of this to you. I say -by purpose- 'a little bit' since all these experiences and learning processes are impossible to display on a A4 size page without any spoken words. I also believe that a lot of the learning process is not yet complete. It will take a couple of weeks, maybe months to realise what I have gained from this personally. It will also take some practical work experiences in international teams or environments to realise what I learned from this cross-cultural project.

From the perspective of a German student doing his undergraduate degree in New Zealand I am stunned by the cultural diversity GEE brought to all of us. Our team consisted of two Poles from Warsaw, a Chinese girl studying in Germany, two Nigerians, and a German mate studying in New Zealand as well. This diversity and funny combination of individuals from every corner of the planet indicates how interconnected today's world is. For me 'GEE' shows how interconnected our globalised world is already and especially how the young generation can do so much to bring countries and people closer together. We have to use this chance for globalisation in the right way to get positive outcomes for the whole planet. Even wars and ethnic conflicts could be seen in different ways through the eyes of informed people that communicate via the internet. And imagine how easy it could be nowadays to make people aware of topics such as global warming or using energy efficiently. It is all about using the forces of globalisation in the right way. When we were chatting or talking on Skype in our team – especially with the Poles – it was almost as if they were just around the next corner or even closer. The distance of 17,000 kilometres was just not in our minds.

Especially for me as a German it is moving and wonderful that projects such as GEE are so successful. That people all around the globe treat each other with respect and tolerance. No doubt in our group there were members who were not always that reliable and one did not even sign in on yahoo groups. For a German whose people are often described as organised and punctual this was a challenge. However, is this not a lesson all of us should learn? That people are different and that we should try to accept them the way they are? Beside all the other outcomes which I have learned from these three weeks, the following seems to be the most important and most lasting one: Treat other people with respect and sympathy.