

Dennis Muchiri Wambui, Kenya, Global Enterprise Experience (GEE) Journal

I enrolled in GEE at a time when memories of Kenya's post election violence were fresh in my mind. But hopes for a better tomorrow now flourish in the same mind, trust you me. I wish to state that although this violence wore a political garment, it also took the dimension of haves against have-nots, a battle between the apex and the bottom of the pyramid (BoP). The aftermath of this violence is a more frustrated poor Kenyans. And writing a business proposal addressing BoP's plight is probably one of the most gratifying moments of my life.

It is 0400 hours in Kenya, 0300 hours in Italy, 0530 hours in Iran, and 1300 hours in New Zealand but 'Synergy' is determined to beat the odds of time, culture and geographical differences. Synergy is my team in the Global Enterprise Experience. This high-spirited team comprising of Chelsa Cher (Singapore), Hoda Edraki (Iran), George Gakungu (Kenya), Elina Heinola (Finland / New Zealand), Wong King Lui (Hong Kong) and myself (Kenya). We are discussing about making a difference at the bottom of the pyramid.

We have been working together for the last 21 days on a business proposal. We started by knowing well about each other, thanks to our personal bios. We exchanged email addresses, Chat details and became each others 'Facebook' friends. Elina proposed that we come up with a teams name and I remember everyone nodded a yes to my suggestion. That's when the real journey of living up to our name 'Synergy' started. Number one task was to come up with a business idea and we were all engaged in a brainstorming session. At some point there was need for us to communicate real time on Chat, but this had its fair share of challenges. It was hard for us to be online at the same time. But this did not stop us as we decided to channel all our thoughts and ideas through the Basecamp's communication tools. What a better way of communication that was! Every one of us posted/read messages and uploaded/downloaded reading materials at our conveniences. In the second week we voted for an idea to pursue among many others that we had come up with. And today, we have our proposal thoughtfully and well done. It is about an Internet-based market place.

Our diversity was our greatest strength. Every expressed thought received a lot of constructive viewpoints. It was such an experience reading different perspectives which were largely influenced by our backgrounds, I guess. It was amazing to find that despite our differences, we had many shared ideologies. While some were verbose, others were straight to the point, some were ingenious, and others came out as good implementers. But in all these, there was harmony. For me, it was an orchestra; different tunes, one song.

I can proudly profess that this experience has taught me a number of invaluable lessons. I've learnt more of how to approach issues with an open mind; thinking outside the box. My understanding of people from other parts of the world has improved. I felt encouraged when all of us became passionate about elevating the BoP. It was insightful to find out how much value that people, groups, nations can marshal through collaborative effort. In the next GEE, expect more Kenyan participants. It is a gospel I will have to spread.

As we dotted our i's and crossed our t's in our proposal, I was convinced that we had a great concept, the whole was bigger than the sum of our parts. As I look forward to be part of the winning team, I borrow the words of Isaac Newton that 'if I have seen a little further, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants'. My giants were my team members. Thanks to GEE.