

**Name: Lawer Akrofi    Country: Ghana    First Language: English    ID: law3r**

The first of my interactions with my project mates began on a bright sunny Wednesday afternoon when I uploaded my biography. After reading the interesting bios of my team mates, I was pumped up and ready to go. However my enthusiasm plummeted as the days rolled on and the strain took its toll.

First week was reserved for getting the introductions out of the way. The cultural diversity of the group was evident in our conversations from the get-go and this was highlighted in detail in the initial proposals we discussed concerning our business ideas and target indigenous populations.

Our group leader made a timetable streamlined to the needs of our project and on the surface made the work appear much easier. However differences in time zones and opinions stalled progress and negated the impact of a rather good plan. Nevertheless the common resolve of the group was without doubt the completion of the project before the 13<sup>th</sup> of April.

The cultural diversity of the group meant we all had something different and unique to bring to the table. Bouncing ideas off each other was no problem and I suppose this was our biggest strength as a group.

Second week and all the seriousness kicked in. I was struggling to get my research done and uploaded in light of a very slow internet connection. To say that it was a manageable situation would have been mere flattery. My house was located downhill and my Iburst internet modem did me no favours. I had to improvise, hoisting up my modem against a long pole by the outer wall of the house. The implication was that, to use the internet I had to literally carry my work outside with me which meant sharing the same space as a swarm of unfriendly mosquitoes. It wasn't so bad as long as I had my swatter which I employed with finesse and precision. On occasion, I would get a decent signal enough to send an email or access a search engine. At times I would go days without the internet which frustrated my work and made me struggle to keep up.

The second major challenge was the frequent power outages in my country which certainly made this past few days interesting. The power was cut so many times that at night; it was reminiscent of a disco light show without music and dancing. Online communication for me was more of a challenge given the above circumstances. Internet cafes saved my neck but same cannot be said about my finances.

On the third week, these issues were overcome by sheer determination and hard work as the days rolled on and the deadline drew closer and closer. Also with the help of my twin brother who I paired with on the project, we were able to present our individual researches and proposals on time.

On an educational level, being on this programme exposed me to some level of foreign culture and practices of indigenous societies. In the course of our work, we researched groups like the Arhuaco and Wayuu, both of Colombia, the Maori of New Zealand and the Adangbe's of Ghana to determine the viability of our project in their regions. It was startling to note some similarities in the cultures such as their livelihood, crafts, farming methods, fishing etc. In all cases, we also found some level of resistance to change and it was amazing the extent they would go to preserve their rich culture.

On the whole this was a great experience for me allowing me practical insight into joint initiatives and collaborations with internationals from all over the world. It's a shame we only had three weeks to be acquainted with each other.

I hope my time on this project will help me write proposals that will also serve the interests of my community in future. This is my first time in the competition and I am glad GEE has provided this platform for myself and other participants to gain valuable experiences. I also want to thank my team mates for making this a worthwhile experience.

The Global Enterprise Experience is beyond just a competition and I hope to be part of future leadership programmes of the enterprise.