

I had never heard of the Global Enterprise Experience before and was very excited when our professor told us, participating in the GEE would be part of our final grade. At my university in Germany I had already worked in some intercultural teams before, but always in the same city, so practically in walking distance from one another and with unlimited access to all the wonders of modern communication like cell phones, internet and for the proximity even face to face communication. So this time it should be a whole lot of different.

Our professor advised us before, to take a good look at the different time zones in order to maybe avoid early morning meetings at 3am and so I did my research a couple of days before the competition started. I thought, I was well prepared and to my surprise, when looking into BaseCamp on April 26th in Colombia, the fun already had started for the 17 hours of time difference. It was the first time I realized how difficult it in reality is, to talk about time with people from all over the world involved. After the first irritation and doubts about my time-calculating skills I realized: Hey, so we can start right away, great. And I replied immediately to the first post of our group leader. The next four days I felt really alone because nobody else replied and started to doubt again: Was my internet not working, had I missed some important information? But on the fifth day finally the others answered. Now it could really begin. We scheduled our first meeting for Skype and on the actual day, we had a really multicultural conversation with people from totally different parts of the world. Talking to Raj, the guy from India who actually was studying in Toronto, Zainab who neither was from Canada, but living there for already more than 15 years, Laura, the girl from Spain, making her exchange semester in Medellín, like me, and Nick from New Zealand, was such a refreshing and inspiring experience, I sincerely felt a connection to all of them from the beginning. The first hour we only got to know each other and when Raj noticed, that we were all drinking coffee or tea and eating cookies, we had a first big, already kind of familiar laugh together. It also became some kind of tradition to show each meeting some local cookie or pastry and describing the taste to the others. After that we started to talk about the ideas, everyone already had brainstormed in preparation for the meeting. All my previous doubts were gone and I was motivated to get started on further researching the ideas we had discussed. We had all different kinds of ideas because the topic let us enough freedom to be really creative and evaluate every kind of business. The next meeting was kind of chaotic, because the internet connection was not the best that day and so we had some difficulties communicating. Of course that didn't stop us and so we chatted, created a facebook group and now had enough platforms to stay in touch. Time was flying by and we had to decide which idea we would pursue and in our next meeting, we actually threw the list of our previous ideas over board and collectively voted for the "underdog" idea, trading refuse in Nigeria, which just had come up a couple of hours before the meeting. The communication between the five people that were there from the beginning worked without problems and we started to work out the different parts. Now we experienced some difficulties: showing the different parts to the others and collecting them was harder and more chaotic than I thought. For my next intercultural team work I will look at better ways to organize that. The last 4 days were pure stress and a little chaotic as I had several exams and other papers to submit and everyone seemed to be working 20 hours each day. Finally, right on time we had all the parts united and after a last spell-check we sent the final version on its way and I have to admit, I felt some kind of relief. The business plan was really good in my opinion and I can absolutely support it.

I would like to compare the experience of the last three weeks to a good movie: it was entertaining, interesting, funny, educating, exciting, compelling and something new for me. It was a great experience and despite some difficulties, or maybe exactly because of the difficulties, it was so special. I am sure now that I still want to work in international project teams because all the diversity makes each experience special and now a lived could finally experience that personally. I want to thank all of the persons who made this exceptional experience possible, all the organizers, of course my team mates and everyone involved. In my opinion, through this kind of experience, young people are inspired to think "outside the box" and their entrepreneurial senses are activated. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to participate and learning so much in a practical way.