

We grow not when things are easy but when they are difficult for us. That is why amidst hectic semester schedule with two academic research writings and mounting pressure due to internship, I enrolled myself in Geebiz for the third time with much anticipation, enthusiasm and aspiration. I had realized with my past GEE experiences that we tend to think Business Plan first which would solve a problem. I realized that focusing on a problem to solve would be more productive. Therefore, this year instead of brainstorming business ideas, I had suggested my team to bring in problems of their countries to first agree on a problem we would like to target so that we could narrow down our search for business idea.

Life on the other hand had different plans for us Nepalese. No sooner had the competition started, my country was struck with a mega earthquake of 7.8 magnitudes devastating our nation and disrupting our lives. We were terrified to stay in our houses and had to stay under tarps in fields. I lost my grandmother and four other close relatives in the quake. Since all the elder members of my family were in mourning, which lasts for several days here in Nepal, the responsibility of looking after my family came down to me. I was disconnected from my team for several days due to intermittent power supply and internet service. Nevertheless, once the telecommunications started to work for certain times in a day, I stayed connected with our team leader Hamish through Facebook messenger. I used my mobile phone to chat with Hamish when I was alone, which was only when I was cooking for my family.

One day I received a call from one of my relatives in village who had also lost her home complaining about lack of drinking water after the earthquake. It was at that moment I also remembered that Jajarkot district in western Nepal had recently had water related outbreak that took lives of many. People of rural Nepal do not have access to safe drinking water. Thereof, I started researching innovations in water purification system that could be easily adopted in developing countries. It was then I read the article on benefits of ceramic filters. This would be a great venture to pursue here in Nepal because the Bhaktapur district of Nepal has been famous for clay products since centuries. On more research we found some Nepalese environmentalists also developing models on similar ideas. I was glad that my team members later agreed this as our team's business proposal. I now realize business ideas are all around us; they need not be complicated or miraculous inventions. They may have been in practice and been overlooked for centuries. They may as well lie in our local resources.

I was a tad bit disappointed when there wasn't active discussion from our team members initially. Many members started responding only a week after the team leader contacted us. And there weren't many problems or ideas discussed. I was glad when Hamish then started talking and working with individual team members personally and forwarded all the important discussions on our Facebook group. In fact I am really grateful towards Hamish and Leif, my fellow team members, who were always supportive and empathetic towards me. Most of the times, I had to send them offline messages in Facebook because of time differences and they always made a point to reply all of my concerns. Unfortunately, I couldn't have the opportunity to get to know other team members other than them very well and I really regret that.

The world today indeed has divisions: some are wealthy, some are not; some struggle for survival while some have moved on towards struggling for more luxuries. Our cultures vary greatly, but, in the end, despite all the diversities, humanity unites us all. Globalization and instant communication technologies have strengthened this feeling even more. My team members expressed their concerns towards my country and my safety even before I had a chance to explain my situation. It was very encouraging and made me even more determined towards fulfilling my commitment to the team. Global partnership is a burning issue today. It is indeed a wonderful step because sharing each other's competencies creates a synergy across cultures around the world. In order to achieve this, countries should concentrate their efforts on improving and bringing transparency in communication. After all, "communication leads to community, that is, to understanding, intimacy and mutual valuing."

I must say I had valid reasons for not continuing Geebiz. My personal loss and the situation in the country were heartbreaking. I was also busy preparing relief programs to the quake victims, but the belief that it is in time of crisis like this that I shouldn't give up the normalcy of my student life that kept me going. Life could give us both negatives and positives but it is in low times that we should keep our chins up and move ahead with commitment. Ever since the earthquake I was also in a dilemma as to where I should concentrate my efforts towards helping my people because we had so many problems at once. The proposed venture of our team is a good start to focus my energy on. Participating in Geebiz may not have directly influenced my decisions, but it has definitely helped me overcome the fear that this disaster had struck in our hearts.