Global Enterprise Experience Personal Reflection

What was I thinking? Did´nt I already have enough on my plate? Volunteering full-time at the United Nations “Global Festival of Action” to promote the SDG´s, scouting job applications, preparing my move from Germany to Tanzania for a clinical internship, all while sleeping on friends and families couches to safe every penny I could. With all that going on, I now also wanted to take part in an intensive, three week long, international contest without having a decent idea about a business proposal or knowing any of the other seven team members?

As my right index finger circled over the sending button of my official application for the Global Enterprise Experience, I had a short vision of all the other fun things I could do instead and which I would probably miss out on. Then I remembered one of my friends once say to me: “You don´t do normal, do you?” I started grinning from ear to ear and pressed send.

Any challenges in the meantime? The first few days into the challenge and the group was amazingly relaxed. Every day one or two E-Mails from the other participants started pouring in and suddenly the geographic and cultural distance between New Zealand, China, the Netherlands, South Africa and Germany seem to have become a bit smaller. It didn´t feel like a contest, and definitely not like a contest with a deadline. Then the challenges started to grow. Internet connection failures, time differences and lack of a common ground for communication platforms hampered a solid and consistent communication between all team members. With the tight deadline approaching closer and closer, the stress level rose to a high. However the dedication towards our common goal helped us through and probably even assisted us to surpass all the previous challenges and excel in our project.

Did I change at all? Three weeks can hardly change someone, right? Not entirely, for sure. However sometimes it is the tiny changes, which are only recognized, when you have a closer look at yourself. In many previous projects, in terms of team productivity, I was not always the straight-forward type of person, nor the leader of a group. However during this project, I had the feeling, things were moving to slow and suddenly I was in the position of proposing ideas and creating content to discuss upon. I took initiative to get the project started and tried to get the other members involved. It was fun to see the final idea for the proposal evolving, through the valuable input from the others.

Though I had different business ideas in my mind, I appreciated the communal thought process of the team and the final outcome of business idea and liked the way of decision making among us all. However I would have also liked to see some more commitment of some team members in terms of content and outcome, as some members did not participate at all, despite efforts to communicate and include them. I tried to give valuable feedback to other team leaders, in order to create a sound and complete business proposal and was also open for alternative ideas and feedback from others. Not only did I tried my best to help others succeed, I also challenged myself day by day to succeed and step up to being a global leader.

What else is to say? People are constantly praising our interconnected world, the most advanced technologies of communication the world has ever seen and despite all that, so many of us feel lonely and less connected than ever. And suddenly there are a few people scattered around the globe, communicating with people they have never met, from cultures they have maybe just heard of and with world views leaving their mouths open in awe. All these people suddenly and unquestionably working together towards a common goal. Or better to say, towards 17 common goals, the sustainable development goals, to create a better world in which we all want to live in.

I wonder how many great ideas did evolve in those last three weeks. Many more than the ones which finally end up on the paper in the business proposals. But maybe it´s not so much about the ideas which made it or made it not into the contest, but it´s rather about the creation of hundreds and hundreds of small sparks, which were created in each and every one of us during that time, and which keep on lighting in all of us, and maybe one day, will light up somewhere in the world and will set us all on fire.