

CRE8® Europe across borders

Reflections written by the students from INN (Norway) after a workshop organized at Evenstad in January 2020.

During this project, we have acquired useful knowledge about cultural differences, communication skills, and personal development. Working as problem-solvers for foreign companies has given us tools to see problems from different perspectives. This makes us more prepared and adapted to work with different nationalities and cross-field cooperation later on.

CRE8® Europe is a project that started up in Karlstad, Sweden. In this project, twenty students from four different countries collaborate within groups solving an assignment given by a company. We have a restricted time of three hours to come up with a solution for the assignment before we present it for a jury from the company. After the presentation the jury can ask questions, to get a better understanding of the solution. The main purpose of this project is to challenge our mindset, using no external tools.

Starting in Karlstad we were presented with nineteen new people. The first day, we focused on team building and how we could work effectively within groups. We were given tools to present our pitch in a more professional matter, and how we could incorporate these tools in our presentation technique. The participants in the project come from different study programs and countries, which gives us different entries into problem-solving. However having participants in different study programs gives the project more depth, seeing the problem from different perspectives.

Moving the project to Sibiu, Romania made it clear that there are cultural differences in Europe. Starting with the first company we had to adapt our perception to the Romanian consumer. The bakery presenting the first task wanted healthy options for breakfast, but still wanted pastry in the meal. That came as a cultural curiosity but was a valuable insight into Romanian culture.

Learning from these experiences we have gained valuable knowledge about culture, presenting techniques and personal development. Considering we get new groups for each assignment, we have to communicate clearly and adapt to new group dynamics. Given the challenges that come with each project, we have to work as a group to feel confident in the solution we present. We think that our solutions also will gain the given companies, to get different perspectives on their organizational problems.

Further on in the project, we are going to Spain in March, before the other students come to Norway in May. In Spain, we hope to further develop our communication skills and learn more about Spanish culture, the Spanish consumer, and Spanish organization culture. Meaning that we have to approach the problems differently in Spain, than what we would in Norway. We are using this applied knowledge further in our field of studies.

When the other students come to Norway, we are curious about how they will react to the culture and the Norwegian mindset. Having countries with such differences, fulfill the challenges of the project. We are also excited to show the other students the core values of Norwegian society, and how they appear in the daily operations of companies.

We hope our participation in this project will give us future possibilities for cooperation across borders, and social boundaries. Our connections and networking gained during this project will help us contribute to our careers with knowledge of international cooperation. Further we think that our speaking-skills and open-mindedness have improved during this project to help us understand international relations better.