**Describe an example of your leadership experience in which you have positively influenced others, helped resolve disputes, or contributed to group efforts over time. (350 words)**

I’m the President of Misi Gizi, a CAS Project to organize a food bank for more than 650 people. The biggest challenge was being forced to lead a big group of 60 people in ten divisions remotely due to the pandemic. The whole cohort couldn’t meet in person until the actual day of our service. Not being able to directly meet each other hampered the working ability of the whole organization. Members were demotivated since there wasn’t a sense of togetherness; It was hard to supervise each student's work; Disagreements between peers became more burdensome as issues couldn’t be resolved quickly. As a result, tasks were completed longer, and the whole project was harder to accomplish.

First, I tried to make the online working environment more effective through the use of collaborative apps like Google Docs, Sheets, and Meet. However, it was still hard to get everybody online since there was nothing pushing them to do so. So, then I tried to improve motivation by encouraging each head to divide the workload among their members to give each additional responsibility. In the beginning, work was still slow, but as their responsibility grew over time, each member’s sense of pride made them put in more effort in completing their tasks to showcase their competency, and it successfully boosted our output. I understood how disagreements can damage solidarity in the organization, but also how they can lead to growth. Even though slight disagreements may occur, I encouraged members to share inputs with their leaders. This sparked up valuable discussions that lead to innovative ideas, which helped me strategize the project’s direction.

Through this experience, I realized the true extent of my leadership capabilities. Every leadership experience has its own difficulties, especially when working with new groups of people. It is up to a leader to adjust their leadership style, which I did by putting more trust in my team members rather than leading autocratically. The trust in my leadership inspired me to change from being a passive person to one with a burning desire to lead and make an impact on others.

**Every person has a creative side, and it can be expressed in many ways: problem solving, original and innovative thinking, and artistically, to name a few. Describe how you express your creative side.**

I’ve expressed my identity, ideas, and creativity through my food blog, Stuck With Foods. It is a digital food blog on Instagram featuring 12+ recipes from different cuisines that caught my interest. Curating the food blog allowed me to explore my passion for food, which was a hobby I always experimented with. However, it was tough at the beginning considering I had no experience in cooking, or even creating a food blog.

Watching cooking tutorial videos on YouTube, and observing my mom cook daily helped me understand the versatility of food. Researching different cuisines for my blog exposed me to different cultures and different techniques in cooking. I experimented with cooking Indonesian, Korean, and Japanese cuisines among many others that helped me decide which dishes would be featured. In creating the 12 recipes for each dish, I tried different combinations of ingredients and their quantities to achieve the desired flavors. When I first tried cooking my version of a Kimchi Stew, I put an equal amount of kimchi and chili paste to achieve a balance of sourness and savor. However, the flavor wasn’t as umami as I desired. Turns out, I decided to add sugar which was an ingredient rarely used in this dish. The combination of sugar’s sweetness, kimchi’s sourness, and the chili paste’s savoriness created the perfect umami flavor unique to my rendition.

To attract users, the content on the feed had to be eye-catching. Achieving it involved me combining different color schemes and different layouts. After researching color psychology, I settled on red, yellow, and orange as the primary color scheme as the most appetizing and inviting colors out of all the ones I tried. Another part of my food blog was creating cooking tutorial videos for each dish. In my videos, I varied the shooting angles of each video to give them their own identity unique from each other. In the process of editing my videos, I realized the visual blandness of a usual step-by-step cooking tutorial. Hence, I recorded additional footage of cooking processes that were made into time lapses, transitions, and fillers to be inserted in between cooking clips to enhance each video visually. In this experience, my creativity helped transform my passion for making food content into reality.

**What have you done to make your school or your community a better place?**

Digital literacy is having the skills to thrive in a society highly integrated with digital technologies. Indonesia’s condition is concerning, where 40% of the population is digitally illiterate even though 70% is connected to the Internet. The inability to navigate through social media safely, use computers, and perform basic digital tasks will limit the future generation to thrive in the approaching digital age. With an NGO called GenDigital Academy, I help spread digital literacy to people from all over Indonesia. In one particular church community, we taught a group of elementary students aged 7-13, who had zero knowledge about the digital world.

As the Head of Curriculum, I’m in charge of designing the topics and developing the materials we teach the children each week. I designed the curriculum to present the topics from general first to then specific ones. I designed it in this way so they can understand correlated topics easier after learning the basics first. In addition, I made sure that the vocabulary we used is simple enough for kids to understand. At first, we started with lectures about Digital Safety & Etiquette in order to help them understand how to protect themselves on the Internet, and it soon became clear that they weren’t absorbing any of the material due to being bored. Understanding the presence of digital footprints and creating secure passwords were important in order to make sure they don’t spread hate or get scammed online, so it was concerning. To keep sessions interesting and engaging, I maximized the interactiveness of each topic through the use of games, questions, and presentations. Hence, we were able to teach them effectively about data types, variables, input/output, and many more in Python.

Week by week, I’m glad to see the improvements in the kids’ coding ability and logic, even though they struggled at first. From not being able to program a single line of code, they can now declare variables, modify their value, and output them all without my help. Not only one community, but I also hope I can spread digital literacy to many more in the future.

**Describe the most significant challenge you have faced and the steps you have taken to overcome this challenge. How has this challenge affected your academic achievement?**

Learning back-end programming was a significant challenge in high school. To pass my Computer Science class, we needed to create a working web application. I decided to create an order management system for AHAS Partshop, a spare parts shop. It needed complete full-stack development. The front-end programming was quite easy. However, to get the application to function, it needed back-end programming which I lacked experience in.

When I encountered problems in creating algorithms with looping, conditionals, or a mix of both, I learned to always separate the code into sections in case of syntax misinputs, which was usually the problem. Over time, I assumed back-end programming just needed logic and everything was smooth-sailing until I needed to integrate sorting and searching into the application. I tried different sorts of algorithms but everything failed. There were five times when my code didn’t work after spending hours working on it, leaving me so discouraged to the point where I considered abandoning the application and giving up. I researched further about its mechanism and the process of checking each value led me to diagnose that the problem was in mixing up the order of the looping. Seeing how each instance of failure helped me become a better programmer, I pushed through burning with motivation. Now, I can create back-end programming in Python or Java which is really beneficial in completing my web application development.

Experiencing this challenge highlighted the immense perseverance that I have developed. In school, I’m always less discouraged whenever challenging topics come or tough assessments occur, clearing my mind and helping me improve my 6s into 7s in my Computer Science, Economics, and other subjects. My programming skills have also improved, as I am more careful and precise in making code. In leading projects or even creating my own food blog, I can calmly diagnose problems in times of facing obstacles. As a result, the new confidence I have in leadership roles has allowed me to be promoted to the Head of Curriculum in GenDigital Academy, as my peers trust that I am not afraid in face of obstacles.