



# **Students Learning with Communities Reflective Essay by Get Baked**

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# **Table of Contents**

Introduction.....	1
Learning Outcomes.....	1
Individual task.....	2
What did the group learned.....	4
Changes that can be applied.....	5
Improvement.....	5
Civic Engagement.....	6
Conclusion.....	7

### **Introduction:**

The experiences done by “Get Baked” will be now be back on the tables to see what was accomplished, and what could be done differently. This includes how this benefits the members as college students or even when they plan to work (or are working already). The group, despite doing well, could have be better, or it could have been a disaster. The events that have happened in the fundraiser events leading up to the actual fundraiser itself and the paper documentation could have been entirely different, depending on the choices the group has made and continue to make. The group can only say they are thankful for majority of the decisions taken. The group is not perfect, as some of the topics that will be discussed will highlight some of these factors that made the group do slightly worse than it could have done. What was successful was the combination of teamwork, communication, organisation, project management, problem solving and research skills being demonstrated to a degree of a certain standard.

One thing that should be reflected is why are we doing this project, and does this benefit us? The answer to the first question is to help the country of Malawi. This is a country where the families of Malawi cannot afford to send multiple children to school and even struggle to survive on the daily basis. This mainly impacts the girls due to the generations of practise of the girl being the housekeeper of the house, why the father gets the work outside the home. The charity offers one basic need for every person on the planet, which is clean water. Thanks to this, communities are transformed from seemed hopeless ton thriving in comparison to before the charity got involved in the country’s needs. How do we benefit? If not feeling proud of helping another nation is enough, workplace look for people who have volunteered to do extra work outside of their interest.

So overall this project will reveal the good, bad, and ugly. Who has done what and how this impacted everyone on the team who are also doing this type of work as well.

### **Learning Outcomes:**

After we accomplished everything in the project Wells for Zoe, the team Get Backed realized that in order to achieve a goal in life, it requires hard work, willpower and ambition. This project was very helpful for our group, since there we made new friends and built relationships. At the begging we barely knew each other and did not know what opinions and ideas each member of the group had. After the first time we met, we began to know each other and we started to share ideas and opinions about the project that we were going to raise money for a charity purpose. We shared different ideas and discussed the role that each member was going to have in this project and what we had to do to gather a significant amount of money. This helped us to develop and improve certain skills such as teamwork and communication skills. Since communication is a very important role in teamwork but also in everyday life, this is a great skill to achieve. When we were communicating with the group members we realized that each member had a different personality and a different style of thinking, which makes communication more difficult, but also the most effective. Only when we can communicate properly with each other, we can see the success of teamwork in what

has happened in our group. All group members have come up with different ideas and opinions, and we chose together the best ideas, so in the end we had appreciation and personal fulfilment.

Teamwork also involves trust, cooperation, respect and communication between members, factors that lead to efficient use of tact, and it also brings an extra value to the organization. Teamwork pays off only when the group operates as a whole, all group members Backed Get had a common goal and every significant effort to achieve this goal.

Get Backed have reached to an agreement to sell cakes in the annex building as it is always a populated area and this was important in order to collect an important sum of money for Wells for Zoe. Each member of the group had to cook a number of cakes of different types such as eclairs and brownies. We have sold all the cake with a special price for a noble cause. One member had the job to handle the entire project organization including the place where the cake sale was going to happen, on what day the sale was on and at what time it was going to happen. Cooking these different cakes, we have developed the ability to cook and to do the best cakes, becoming a true master chef, and at the end receiving exceptional feedback.

From the organizational point of view, we think the overall organization could be much better since we started to sell cakes in the annex building around half one, which decreased our chances to make a large amount of money because students spending their money buying lunch or other things, no longer having money for our cakes. But at the end with our skills as a real businessman, we managed to collect a significant amount of money and sell all cakes.

Overall the group Get Backed did an excellent job due to their ambition and dedication, followed the idea to sell cakes from the start until the completion of the project without changing our mind. The group communication was also greatly improved by a frequent group meeting inside the college, but also by creating an online page in trello where each member added his ideas and opinions on the organization, planning, and when and where our project will take place. All of these things on this project helped each member of the group to improve specific skills such as teamwork, communication skills, time management, advertising skills, and business skills as well.

### **Individual Tasks:**

Everyone had team-worker as a common role between them all. Iosif and Michael did very similar role with each other. Michael baked brownies for the bake sale. He also written on the group Reflective, Academic essay and Interim Report. Michael did state he will speak for the presentation. For the bake sale itself, he designed three kinds of poster. One about the brownies, one about the charity itself and one about whom the charity is for. Everyone decided the price of the products on the day. He stood behind the tables waiting for people to approach for his brownies and the other products to be sold, alongside Aron, Iosif and Davis. Michael did organise one meeting where we discussed on the topics on the reflective

essay and the presentation on students learning with communities. Michael roles were Baker, Writers, Speaker, organiser and designer.

Iosif baked eclairs for the bake sale. He also written a big proportion of the Group Academic essay, Reflective essay and the Interim Report. In the selling of the bake sale Iosif, along with the rest of the team, decided the price of the products. For majority of the bake sale, Iosif, Michael, Davis and Aron stood behind the tables, serving those who came to the bake sale for goods. They also contributed to the proposal form. Iosif, as part of organising done by Michael, booked the room in the library. Iosif roles were Baker, Writers, and Speakers for the project for the charity "Wells for Zoe".

Davis baked cookies for the bake sale, then went upstairs to the Snackery to continue to sell the products that were being sold, along with William and Aron. He then helped count the money afterwards the change was left with him to change into cheque form to hand to Leslie. Davis written on the Interim Report and contributed to the proposal form. Davis also contributed to the Reflective and Academic essay. Roles were Baker, writers and financial dealer.

Aron baked eclairs and a coffee cake for the bake sale, then went upstairs to the Snackery to continue to sell the products that were being sold, along with William and Davis He then helped count the money afterwards. Aron written on the Interim Report, group reflective essay, group academic essay and contributed to the proposal form. Roles were Baker, Writer and financial dealer.

William did quite a lot. He contacted DITSU and the building manager, who told William he had to fill in a risk assessment and send it to Yvonne. The risk assessment was given to William by Yvonne, which both went through it to clarify any issues and misunderstandings about the document. He then edited the risk assessment and sent it to Yvonne for approval. He also written a proportion of the essays, the interim report and the proposal form. He created the poster for the bake sale. If it came to misunderstanding on any topic, William contacted Leslie for assistance on any issue.

Apart from one meeting, William contacted all the team members for work to be done, such as due dates etc, and organised all but one meeting, on the interim report, the academic essay. William figured the format, per the documents given, and what should be in each document (or presentation). Coming up to the bake sale, William made sure the porters were aware of the event. DITSU put William's name down on the diary list as DITSU were not doing anything that day in the lobby. William also spoke for the presentation. For the bake sale, William demonstrated excellent customer service when he called out to people to make them aware of the bake sale and the charity it is for. He begged for money on the same time as the bake sale, so there would be for the charity. William also brought in the buckets for the fundraiser. Roles: Organiser, Chairperson, customer service, financial dealer, writer and designer.

Overall, working as a team is great when you have everyone co-operating in doing what they need to do. This is like a dream. In real life you will come across people who you rather not work with, who could make your life a misery in different ways possible. The assignment we just did is an example, where we worked with our friends in one part of the assignment and other classmates in another part, so we got a taste of working with different set of people and different attitudes, so we got a variation of what different teams could demand.

Between all five of us, all the skills were not in the best format. Communication between all the members of the group was not the best, especially in the latter stages of the assignment. However, some communication that was done between the few of us were good, as some work were coming up to some standard we had wanted, if not the highest possible standard. For example, three of us in the latter stages were able to do some work because we are compromising for each other. One person has told why he couldn't make it, due to family reasons. However, the other didn't even bother. When we demonstrated good communication, we were able to project our assignment and show good group work, problem solving and organisation skills. As part of our communication, the necessary research was done to make sure our information is correct. That being said, overall every skill has been moderately demonstrated which shows we should have cooperated more efficient.

### **What has the group learned:**

The team has learned that group work is essential for harder work to be successful. Through group work, we learned that we needed to be respective towards the other opinion, strengths, and weakness within the group work. We learned that as part of a group, we progress as a team, and put other people's needs before our interest. We support each other, try to balance each other's work while at the same time making sure no member is burdened with too much work.

This can only be successful by making sure we plan right. This means contacting each and making sure we can be contacted, all part of communication skills.

By planning we get work done at a must more efficient way. We also make sure the work done is not already being covered by someone else. This is where communication in combination with planning comes in very useful. Planning is not necessary restricted to our modules but is applied to all aspects of life, no matter where you go or what you do. Proper planning usually leads to success, depending what you want to do. To proper plan normally requires co-operation with several people. That is what the group learned about planning.

This can be applied in future group work in college as everyone continues to develop in learning environment, when we have more group work to do in a study environment, we know the type of people to work with to get the maximum result from doing the current group work. To get the best results from the group work involved, each member must compromise in our time to put forward their work for the maximum result. You are better off getting experience from bad co-workers in college than real life, as you will get the experience and be able to deal with it with someone who knows a lot themselves. In other words, teach and learn as a group by communicating with each other.

### **Changes that can be applied as a group:**

This can be applied to future computing industry as you will be working with several other people on a project or even a machine that contained a function that had taken months or even years to complete. In a working environment, everyone would be doing a piece that is assigned to them, which they are expected to do. The team will consist of vary members that will have their ideas on how to approach a certain part of a function. However, it will more likely turn out okay and the project will be brilliant in its function. Therefore, planning and communication is essential in group work.

I think in every group or individual project there always are changes that can be made because this is regardless to human nature. It does not matter if throughout the project everything was done as planned, there are always things in people`s mind saying, I wish we had done more, we should have change that part or we were not supposed to do that, etc.

### **Improvement:**

If we were to repeat this assignment again, we believe that the major changes and most important ones that we would make in this project is communication with all the member from the group. These skills completely lacked in our group, and we saw that throughout the entire project, we did not have strong communication skills as a group, that would have leaded us to a well-planned organisation for this assessment. In our case this situation for the group Get Baked had created a disadvantage throughout the entire project, which resulted in a bad organization in selling cakes.

Another thing that can be improved if we have to repeat the assignment again, is to set up more group meetings regardless to the organization of the entire project. This is another factor that was missing in our group due to the fact that we meet very rarely. There were few group meetings where we spent very little time in planning and organizing the project. We have tried to set up many group meetings, but when it came to have a group meeting, one member said he could not attend the meeting, another member did not respond and so on. The only time when we had a chance to meet and discuss about the project was only during the lecture hours so that we could meet. We managed and stetted up what role each member of the group will have and given a specific task, such as who will cook and what kind of cakes and cookies, who will take care of the organization, where it will be the place for selling cakes, posters to do commercials and so on. Only during lecture hours, we found ourselves time for talking about the project, otherwise it was very difficult. Things that again we believe has led the group Get Baked to a not so good organization and planning.

In our case we believe that our major change that could have been made is prioritising communication, this skill was definitely missing in our group. Lack of communication in our group has led to another change that could have been achieved if we were discussing more about the project such as cooking more cakes to collect a larger amount of money for a charity purpose which was very important. If we were to repeat the project again communication, and highlighting the important things that should be accomplished through communication will be a priority. This is very important in a team as the full participation of each member by discussing different ideas and opinions is key in achieving the best outcomes. I believe we

failed at this skill and this was the main reason why we did not reach to the standards we planned to.

The project could have been greatly improved if we increased our level of advertisement for the event. We as a group did not take into consideration the importance of advertising the event beforehand and in this way, people who would have been willing to buy from us were not aware of the event.

In terms of our actual food produced, some desserts sold better than others. The thirty brownies that were brought in proved to be too few in number as they sold out very quickly, while the coffee cake, had almost no demand among the students. To salvage the situation, we increased the price of the brownies by a euro and decreased the price of the coffee cake by fifty-cent.

We also found that we lacked communication skills and this certainly inhibited our ability to organise time for our essays and presentations. When we booked the library to write our essays we found that we had not provided ample time to ensure that every member in the group could attend. This ended up wasting a great deal of time as only a few of the group members attended and as a direct result we could not get any work done.

#### **Civic Engagement:**

Civic engagement was without a doubt a key factor which pushed every member in the group to get involved in the event. This was most evident when we held the bake sale as everyone had not only amassed a great deal of food, but when we began to see that few people were coming, we moved into the snakery and attempted to sell our goods to everyone who would listen. I am very doubtful that we as a group would have tackled this task with such enthusiasm and self-initiated behaviour if this had been an individual task.

In this way, the group assignment gave us a better appreciation for how a community functions and the responsibility that is unquestionably entangled within said community. This sense of responsibility allowed for a healthy engagement with our group which allowed us to surpass what any of us would have accomplished in an individual assignment.

Of course, when examining a topic such as civic engagement, we must take a look at the interdependence within communities. I am certain that we have all developed a much richer understanding of how we and communities mutually rely on each other. For example, I was reluctant to consider the importance of communities within my social dynamic, I, nor any group member to my knowledge, did not understand how deeply we relied on communities, or how deeply they relied on us. But with this assignment we seen how we relied on each other to prepare everything and then how we relied on the students to but what we produced.



**Conclusion:**

In conclusion, we found this assignment to contain a steep learning curve. In working together as a group we learned a great deal about each other and more importantly how to effectively communicate and work together. We found our ability to delegate tasks was one of our strongest as we were able to consistently split up every job into we had into equal sections. The most surprising aspect in our assignment was the level of civic engagement that was acquired in each member of the group which was vital to our successful completion of the assignment. This rings true in multiple aspects of the work that was required in this assignment. As Elizabeth Gorham once said, "Civic engagement is very important as we all live together and therefore we must be able to rely on each other".