

Westminster IBM Students Collaborate on Tech Solutions in Sri Lanka

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Ten MSc International Business and Management (IBM) students from the University of Westminster recently embarked on a unique learning experience in Sri Lanka. Funded by the Quintin Hogg Trust, their five-day visit involved a collaborative project focused on technology and branding challenges faced by businesses in the Global South.

The project, titled “Co-Creating and Presenting an Innovative App-Based Solution to Solve the Problem of Invisibility of the Global South Brands,” was led by Dr. Deborah Rose, Dr. Sumita Ketkar (Director of Teaching, Learning and Quality), and Dr. Rebecca Wang (Assistant Head of School). Building on a longstanding partnership with the Informatics Institute of Technology (IIT) in Sri Lanka, the project aimed to explore how technology and branding can address barriers to visibility and success for businesses in the developing world.

During the trip, Westminster IBM students joined forces with Computer Science and Software Engineering students from IIT, forming interdisciplinary teams. These teams tackled the challenge of developing business-to-business (B2B) apps focused on branding for organic honey and fresh coffee. This collaborative effort provided valuable experience in working across cultures and educational backgrounds, fostering communication, employability, and cross-cultural skills.

The project kicked off with icebreaker activities and project briefings. Teams delved into customer profiles, sketched app plans, and received feedback from the Dean of the School of Computing at IIT. Within a condensed timeframe, teams delivered presentations covering the entire project journey, from logo design and branding to transparency and product validation. Additionally, they showcased their app prototypes and proposed future development strategies.

Beyond the project, students had the opportunity to immerse themselves in Sri Lankan culture and traditions, including a tour of the capital, Colombo. Reflecting on the experience, student Zaminhussain Munjee highlighted the employability benefits: “From an employability standpoint, this collaboration offered profound insights into real-world dynamics, fostering efficient cooperation with international counterparts and underscoring the significance of cultivating professional relationships expeditiously. Our time at IIT Colombo was inspiring, marked by a spirit of creativity, innovation, and a shared dedication to effecting positive change. Collaborating with talented individuals from diverse backgrounds reaffirmed my belief in the potency of collective creativity and cooperation.”

A Multifaceted Success Story

Dr Rebecca Wang said: “This project significantly contributed to the University of Westminster’s [Global Engagement](#) priorities, experiential learning and employability strategies. The success of the study trip not only reflects the excellent ongoing collaboration developed between the University of Westminster and IIT, but also the collective efforts of a wide range of faculty and the commitment and enthusiasm of a fantastic group of students.”

Deborah Rose said: “It was wonderful to witness the collaboration between students and staff as they uncovered app-based solutions for products from the Global South striving to establish themselves as recognisable brands. Students experienced a transformative shift in mindset and saw their skillsets expand as they managed and developed a working app prototype. We eagerly anticipate sharing their app demo and the next steps in this exciting project.”

The study trip directly supports the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 4: Quality Education, 10: Reduced Inequalities, and 17: Partnerships for the Goals. The University of Westminster utilises the SDGs framework to empower students and staff to contribute to a more sustainable, equitable, and healthy society.