Our Team Experience at the NICCoLLA Project

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If you are reading this blog entry it's because somehow you know about the NICCoLLa project, so let us talk about what this experience was for our group.

There are students from every part of Europe: Netherlands, Finland, Spain and so on, and it has been a cool experience. Being able to take part in a project with people of different countries and cultures is what university should be about!

We were presented to a set of eight challenges, each one of them easy in some aspects and quite difficult in others. We decided to work on challenge 8, which was about prototyping a solution able to enhance the physical and mental abilities of elderly people.

One of our members of the team found this challenge particularly exciting because some years ago they had to take care of their grandfather almost on their own and they wished that they had known about something which could have helped them. Every day we had a couple of interesting presentations from the coordinators of the project, and after that we were split into groups and started to think about our project.

One of the most challenging parts about developing a solution has been to think about the user person's feeling. The target group we focused on was elderly people who need rehabilitation and they have a whole different perspective of technology than our group so it was challenging to put ourselves on their shoes.

Our PIPO System is a combination of Health and Technology. It's a device that works with voice and motion recognition to help the elderly people recover from a mental or physical illness. The idea of using motion and voice recognition introduced the problem of privacy, and this itself made us worry about the users not wanting to rely on these unfamiliar technologies

Even we, that are accustomed to technology, tend to be wary of them. So, if we don't completely trust technology ourselves, how can we make it so elderly people trust their rehabilitation to a device? This is a question we have tried to answer during these two weeks, and even now we are not sure if we have done a good job; but at least we are satisfied to know we tried and made progress during it.

The NICCoLLa has been a weird experience but it has been a good opportunity to know people from other countries and have a different vision of how they work.

Some of us have had poor experiences with other team projects, so the good chemistry with one another was a relief. Taking on a project that's not part of the subjects we're studying has been very interesting, and together we have developed what we think it's a good project.

One of the most interesting parts was the research. The coordinators gave us a new point of view on how to work as a team despite our different backgrounds. It was a great opportunity to know how to work with different ideas and rule out some of them to reach a common goal.

We have laughed a lot and, to resume our experience, it has been so much fun!