



Director: Dr Deb Gilbertson CNZM
117 Stratton St, Lower Hutt, New Zealand 5010
A Windeaters & Victoria University of Wellington Project
United Nations AOC Intercultural Innovation Award Winner
deb@windeaters.co.nz | www.geebiz.org | Phone: +64 22 589 5011

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TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Erneste Izere Neza of University of Rwanda, Rwanda successfully competed in the 2026 Global Enterprise Experience as a co-leader of his global team. Each of the 125 teams in the contest had eight members from both developed and developing countries, working across different time zones, cultures and world views, with English as a first or second language.

Izere's team included members from Azerbaijan, Indonesia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Pakistan, and Rwanda. Over three weeks they connected virtually, built a team culture, generated creative ideas, selected a project, conducted research, and produced a high-quality business proposal covering strategy, marketing, economic evaluation, financing, and implementation. The challenge was to design "a profitable venture that fosters a United Nations Sustainable Development Goal using limited capital". Teams collaborated entirely online using a wide range of communication technologies. More information about the challenge is available at www.geebiz.org.

For 22 years my innovation consultancy, Windeaters, has run the Global Enterprise Experience in partnership with Victoria University of Wellington, touching the lives of 20,000 participants across 140 countries. The contest won a United Nations Alliance of Civilizations and BMW Group Intercultural Innovation Award for its global impact on developing leaders capable of address the UN SDGs (<https://interculturalinnovation.org/global-enterprise-experience>).

I was delighted to see Izere grow his skills in peer leadership, cross-cultural management, and social entrepreneurship in a digitally connected world. I was particularly impressed that Izere's team successfully navigated the real-world challenges of drawing together the collective wisdom of colleagues living in both cities and remote villages around the globe. Their project, "DriftSafe", demonstrated creative thinking and a commitment to using business innovation to address a societal issue. It was clear they learned far more than could ever be achieved through textbook-based study alone.

My congratulations to Erneste Izere Neza for his effective contribution to the Global Enterprise Experience – and my very best for his successful career.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Deb Gilbertson", written over a light blue horizontal line.

Dr Deb Gilbertson CNZM
Programme Director – Global Enterprise Experience
Teaching Fellow - Victoria University of Wellington
Managing Director - Windeaters