

## **INDIVIDUAL REACTION**

Even though I am not a political science major, I decided to remain in this class because I was very impressed with Fiona's promises (that the class would integrate the community service project into the curriculum, and in essence, the tsunami project would continually reinforce the principles of Comparative Politics). Also, I am very passionate about community service projects; I enjoy volunteering with various groups, and I appreciate any opportunity to be involved with international projects. There are several ideas with which I found myself in agreement. However, there are definitely some rough obstacles that must be addressed before a project such as this is repeated.

In theory, our group should be able to find enough local donors to produce impressive, eye-catching advertisements on expensive glossy paper to distribute around the community. In reality, Kinkos and KU Printing Services may be sensitive to natural disasters, but both businesses stress the "hard spot" they're in to decide which groups to help out or not – thus, they decide they can't do such volunteer activities...but they wish us luck. What I'm saying here is that, if we don't have the money and the time to negotiate and be persistent with these businesses, then we won't be getting the free advertisements that look professional and legitimate. We're all very busy students, and we did come up with a nice request letter with a watermark, etc. and we were sure of our plans, but that didn't guarantee access to printing services (in this instance).

Also, the pressure to have a group right away, without being able to get a feel for one another in class is a bad formula for groups. I've had good and bad experiences with groups, and it is always better when people have more time to get to know one another before splitting up into groups – especially when there is such a huge project at stake. We would have had plenty of time if we had two more weeks to decide, because the project could have culminated two weeks later in April, with this final collection of papers due by finals.

It was obvious the disparity between groups – the people with tshirts, and nice posters obviously had connections and money (via fraternities, whatever, etc.) and it illustrates my point exactly, that we were prepared – with cover letters, with articulate plans, with passion and yet we didn't have the inside contact nor the money to access services that would have boosted our project so much. We had some great ideas in the beginning but were restricted too much. Our idea to have a date auction downtown some weeknight or weekend at a local club or dormitory would have made much more money – and they are safe because dormitories have these auctions annually.

Again, I'm not a person to dislike community service projects – but there are some changes necessary as well as recognition of the different places students are at socially, monetarily and time-wise.