

IDOIA ORTIZ DE ARTINANO GONI: So my name is Idoia. I've been working with Anjali Sastry for a year now. In two independent studies, actually, I did two. I am in the class of the Sloan Fellows '18. I just graduated two weeks ago.

So when I came here to Sloan, I was interested, and I was super focused on working in intersection of government, technology, innovation, and entrepreneurship. When I started doing my research, I realized that there was a super interesting space, that it's about the startups doing work in selling to governments to improve the service delivery. So my research, my independent study, has been focused on this space.

So to narrow the topic of my independent study, the key was the work that I did with Anjali. Actually, she helped me a lot. And when you come here to the university, you have a lot of interests. And everything is super broad. You want to do everything, and you can't in this kind of independent study. So having these kind of conversations every week, several hours per week, helped me a lot.

So what I wanted to do with my independent study was a combination of research to see which was the academic or these research papers already made in the market, in this market, or in this specific space, but also see and take advantage of the connections that you have here at MIT to see what was going on in the market. So with Anjali, we decided to create what we call Public Tech at MIT Series of speakers, that it was a good excuse for us to go out there, say, OK, I'm doing this research. I'm doing these lines of research about these, these, and these things. But I want to know what you are doing in this space. So please, can you come here to MIT and explain us what you are doing?

And I mean, that was amazing. I don't think that no one is coming nowhere if you as a student go. But if you go and you say, I'm studying what you are doing here at MIT. They come.

So with this excuse, we had several people, super level people doing super interesting stuff, that came here to explain us what they were doing. And afterwards, we had the opportunity, of course, to take all that experience and all that information to put it, in my case, in my research paper. And that was amazing.

Here in Sloan, you come, and suddenly, you have an entire ecosystem for you. The challenge here is to understand the ecosystem and to know where is your tribe of people that are

interested in the same things that you are interested in and to be super efficient with your time. Because at the end of the day, you have so many things to do. So that combination of good classes-- I mean like the state of the art of many things in these classes-- and this ecosystem on opportunities to do and action learning and to have this kind of interaction and debates and conversations with people that are already doing these kind of things, it's amazing. I don't think that you will have these in many other universities.

Well, I learned many things during this process, especially because I was interested in something super, super specific and not necessarily very common in this school. So I was coming from the public sector. This is a business school. But it still is a business and administration school, right? So in Australia, you have also in the government.

So what I had the chance with this independent study was like to focus on a specifically this space that maybe I didn't have too many chances or too many opportunities to work on in other classes or in another events or whatever that they had in the school.

So the structure, the work, in independent study is kind of complicated. I think that it's the most challenging thing. Why? Because at the end of the day, you have a lot of classes with a lot of a homework and assignments due tomorrow or yesterday. So when you have these independent studies that you know that you have the whole term to do it, you are always having other kind of priorities.

So for me, it was key to create an outline from the beginning and create a schedule for that outline. So at least I knew, and I was tracking my performance and my development. And that helped a lot. It's true that at the end of the day you take this last week that you have at the end of the term to focus or to create, to edit, or to make it the substantial thing of the independent study, but I think that I did a very good job of doing these all these research and everything before. I would say in the first part of the term.

Talking about the challenges that I had when working my independent study, I would say that maybe in my second independent study that it was about, as I said before, taking a case, a real case, and use the research and the academic content that I was studying, apply it, and see what could happen. And so I started with, let's say, with an idea, thinking that that was the right thing to do and that it could work in that specific context. For a specific example there, I was studying in Peru. And when I went through all the research, I was realizing that it was not going to work.

And that's super complicated because it's a real case. It's real people working with a lot of engagement and a lot of ideas or are super positive about doing something like that. And I was seen studying different cases, studying the research done, studying all the information that I could get from the MIT, that thing that they were doing. And I was studying. It was not going to work.

So for me, it was kind of struggling in the process because I didn't want to tell them that, but I could not do it. So I remember that I went through all the process of writing everything. And at the end of the day, at the end of the process, I said, I need to put down my recommendations and hard recommendations. Like saying, OK, so there are some baselines that you are taking from random that are not OK-- blah, blah, blah, this kind of things that it was kind of--

And I had a conversation with them. It was hard. But you can see there the real value of the independent study and the process that you are doing, right? At least I guess that-- I don't think that they are doing any more this project because the conversation that we had because the research that I did. And that has value. But it was hard.