Steering Bangladesh in the Right Direction:
A report based on

YOUTH LEADERSHIP SUMMIT 2011
The role of courage in leadership
Steering Bangladesh in the Right Direction: A report based on Youth Leadership Summit 2011 is published by the Bangladesh Youth Leadership Center and funded by the World Bank.

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"Leadership is not possible from a castle. Leaders must come from the grassroots and understand the pain and aspirations of the common man - leaders are created from the earth; from grass; from grief."

ABDULLAH ABU SAYEED, Founder of Bishwa Shahitya Kendra at the Opening Ceremony of Youth Leadership Summit 2011
Bangladesh Youth Leadership Center (BYLC) was founded with the vision of creating a poverty-free Bangladesh, driven by the next generation of homegrown leaders. We believe that fresh and innovative leadership is required to address the complex challenges facing our nation today, and that such conviction in vision and purpose has to come from the young generation.

We are the first leadership institute in the country that is focused solely on the preparation of young people for service and leadership roles in society. Through our signature four-month long leadership program, we work on improving their endurance, character, leadership and organizational capacities and instill in them values of critical thinking, innovation and civic activism. Our work on bringing together high school and college students from three different educational systems and creating a common space for them to work together is unique in the context of Bangladesh. BYLC also draws its strength from an innovative, rigorous and intellectually challenging curriculum that has been developed at Harvard and adapted to meet the learning needs of Bangladeshi youth.

Through our first landmark Summit, we have tried to bridge the intergenerational gap in society by bringing together 50 distinguished experts from diverse fields and 200 student delegates from all across the country. We believe that such exploratory dialogue between both generations is central to driving forward the development agenda of Bangladesh. The Summit provided the delegates an opportunity to learn from industry experts, but also to inject new ideas into some of the pressing problems in our society.

The underlying theme of our first Summit was the role of courage in leadership, because courage stands as one of the fundamental virtues in a good leader. We organized different plenaries and panels on some of the complex challenges facing our nation such as global citizenship, entrepreneurship, human rights and ethics, health, and education.

This breadth of knowledge is especially critical for exercising leadership in the 21st century as many of our problems are interconnected, and hence require multifaceted competence across different disciplines.

This report is a summary of the results of the survey that we undertook among the delegates at the Summit from March 3-5, 2011. It is intended to act as a stimulus for policy-makers and researchers as well as youth organizations, on how young people can contribute to different sectors of society. The report has outlined areas of engagement and development of young people, for example we find as the world becomes increasingly interdependent, more investment is needed in leadership training to develop critical thinking and problem solving skills and to encourage innovation and entrepreneurship among young people. This report is equally intended for college and university students, who are our present and future leaders. They should use this report to find out about what is happening across different sectors in society and more importantly, to explore how they can contribute to our country’s development.

I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the pro bono contributions of pi Strategy Consulting in designing the survey and bringing analytical expertise to extract patterns and meaning from the survey data. My heartfelt gratitude also goes out to our speakers, delegates, sponsors and BYLC team members, who have made it possible for us to organize this landmark event. It is their commitment to change the quality of leadership in Bangladesh that makes our work possible.
Survey Methodology
This survey was conducted with 200 delegates at the BYLC Leadership Summit 2011. There were 50 questions covering 11 themes: global citizenship, leadership, entrepreneurship, climate change and renewable energy, human rights and ethics, media and journalism, education and career, health, politics, innovation and critical thinking, and courage and Liberation War. The questionnaire was jointly developed by BYLC and pi Strategy Consulting. The survey was conducted by BYLC. The development of survey methodology and analysis of the survey findings were done by pi Strategy Consulting.

There were two broad objectives of this survey. The first objective of the survey was to share the ideas that emerged from the intergenerational dialogue between the student delegates and industry experts during the Summit. The second objective was to draw attention to the perspectives of the youth in Bangladesh. This survey met the first objective quite well. However, with regards to the second objective, some limitations exist.

Survey Limitations
Most perception surveys, due to the nature of how they are conducted, have some limitations. This survey has a few constraints primarily resulting from adverse selection of respondents.

Firstly, the sample size of the respondents does not meet the statistical requirements for an accurate reflection of the intended survey population. It is estimated that there are twenty-five million people in the youth segment in Bangladesh. To attain a 95% confidence level with a 2.5% confidence interval, a sample size of 1,537 would be required. This survey had a sample size of 200 respondents.

Secondly, the survey respondents were only those that attended the Summit. From a large pool of applicants, only 200 were selected by BYLC. Among the 200 selected, approximately 40% were from English medium, 40% were from Bangla medium, and 20% were from Madrassa/Arabic medium. Therefore, an equal mix of English, Bangla and Madrassa medium students was not observed.
Thirdly, the questionnaire was in English. Although there were plans of translating the questionnaire into Bangla to overcome language barriers among delegates from various mediums of instruction, this was not possible due to time constraints. Therefore, a respondent’s English language skills (or lack thereof) may have contributed to their comprehension of the questions and may have impacted their answers.

Fourthly, the respondents do not necessarily reflect the sentiments of the youth of Bangladesh at large. The average household income reported by the respondents is approximately 3 times the national average. Therefore, the survey respondents constitute a higher income group. Moreover, BYLC required the Summit applications to be submitted online. This meant those that do not have access to ICT or live in rural communities were at a natural disadvantage. Therefore, the survey had an inherent adverse selection resulting from digital divide and urban-rural divide.

Lastly, the data entry activities for the survey were conducted by BYLC volunteers. It has been assessed through random sampling that about a 10% data entry error exists. Due to time constraints, it was not possible to fix all the errors. However, the impact of the data entry error on the high-level findings from survey is expected to be marginal. For some of the charts in this report, the total percentage may add up to a number slightly higher than 100% due to the fact that decimal values for sub-components of those charts are rounded up when displayed.

**Future Endeavors**
This survey accomplished one important task. It succeeded as a ‘proof of concept’ for similar undertakings in the future. It has shown that the youth of the nation are deeply interested in playing an active role in moving various plans forward.

The perception survey can prove to be an important tool to study the behaviors, perceptions and aspirations of the youth in Bangladesh. A future survey with statistically significant sample size and mechanisms to overcome some of the limitations identified above will go a long way in realizing the goal of informing the youth of relevant topics and engaging them in nation-building activities.
Summit at a Glance

Thursday, March 3, 2011
9:00 AM - 9:45 AM Registration
9:45 AM - 11:00 AM Opening Ceremony
Welcoming Remarks
Ejaj Ahmad, Founder & President, BTLC
Introductory Remarks by the Chair of the Ceremony
Mueenul Alam Guhay, Member, International Advisory Board of BTLC & Foreign Secretary of Bangladesh
Remarks by Professor Abdullah Abu Sayeed, Founder, Bohishtha Shishya Kendra
11:00 AM - 11:30 AM Tea Break
11:30 AM - 1:15 PM Ice Breaking Activities
Facilitated by Quazi M. Ahmed, Lead Consultant & CEO, FutureLeaders
1:15 PM - 2:15 PM Lunch
2:15 PM - 3:15 PM Team Building Activities
3:15 PM - 3:45 PM Tea Break
3:45 PM - 5:00 PM Global Citizenship
Chaired by Faroniq Sobhan, President, Bangladesh Enterprise Institute (BEI)
Panel includes:
Dr. Justin Lee, Lead Economist, The World Bank
Nihad Kabir, Senior Partner, Syed Ishtiaq Ahmed & Associates
Dr. Ananya Raihan, Director of the Human Rights and Entrepreneurship Programme
Asif Saleh, Founder, Drishtipat
Dr. A.K. Azad, Member of Parliament
Dr. Muhammod Abdus Sabur, CEO, ClickDiagnostics Inc.
A.K. Azad, Vice Chancellor, BRAC University
Munawar M. Moin, Managing Director, Malek Spinning Mills Limited

Friday, March 4, 2011
9:00 AM - 9:15 AM Arrival
9:15 AM - 10:30 AM Leading the Times of Uncertainty
Ejaj Ahmad, Founder & President, BTLC
Irfan A.A. Mujib, Director of Youth Leadership Programs, BYLC
Panel includes:
Farah Kabir, County Director, ActionAid
Jamal Ahmed, Chief of Journalism Training & Research Initiatives, BRAC University
Sharifull Islam, Founder, Bangladesh Brand Forum
3:30 PM - 4:00 PM Tea Break
6:00 PM - 7:00 PM Youth Survey Project
Saturday, March 5, 2011
9:00 AM - 9:30 AM Education and Career
Chaired by Dr. Hafiz G. A. Siddiqi, Vice Chancellor, North South University
Panel includes:
Homayara Ahmed, Member, Governing Board of BTLC & Assistant Professor at MA, University of Dhaka
Fahim Musharraf, CEO, IDPcoms.com
Arif Shahriar, CDO and Group Head of HR, Rahimafroz
Qhor Dhannani, Project Leader, The Boston Consulting Group
10:45 AM - 11:15 AM Three Concurrent Sessions
Climate Change and Renewable Energy
Chaired by Dr. Anun.Nishat, Vice Chancellor, BRAC University
Panel includes:
Munawar M. Moin, Managing Director, Rahmatul Renewable Energy Limited
Syeda Rizwana Hasan, Executive Director, Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA)
Dr. M. Aminul Islam, Assistant Country Director for Climate Change, Environment and Disaster Management, USAID
Human Rights and Ethics
Chaired by Sara Hossain, Member, Governing Board of BTLC & Partner, Dr. Kamal Hossain and Associates
Panel includes:
Dr. Ananya Raihan, Executive Director, D Net
Ard Sahak, Founder, Ondiptop
Dr. Fasstina Periera, Director of the Human Rights and Legal Services, BRAC
11:15 AM - 12:30 PM Three Concurrent Sessions
Health
Chaired by Dr. Omar Rahman, Vice Chancellor, Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB)
Panel includes:
Fizza Kabir, Executive Director, SAJIDA Foundation
Moinul Chowdhury, CEO, TDBfinancials.com
Dr. Mohammad Abdul Salau, Public Health Professional
Politics and Leadership
Chaired by Dr. Amana Mahbub, Professor, Department of International Relations, University of Dhaka
Panel includes:
M. Shahtab Alam, Member of Parliament
Mabs B. Chowdhury, former Member of Parliament
Mohammed A. Arifuddin, Lecturer, Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB)
3:00 PM - 3:30 PM Award Giving Ceremony
4:00 PM - 5:00 PM Dinner
"BYLC's most important strength is its inclusiveness. The courage to unite students from English, Bengali and Madrassa backgrounds has given new meaning to youth leadership. Leadership that is inclusive and makes the most of everybody's strength is far more powerful and effective than leadership exercised by one man alone."

MOHAMED MIJARUL QUAYES, Member, International Advisory Board of BYLC & Foreign Secretary of Bangladesh at the Opening Ceremony of Youth Leadership Summit 2011
Speaker line-up of the plenary session on "Global Citizenship". (From left: Sanjay Kathuria, Lead Economist, The World Bank; Farooq Sobhan, President, Bangladesh Enterprise Institute (BEI); Nihad Kabir, Senior Partner, Syed Ishtiaq Ahmed and Associates; Justin Lee, Australian High Commissioner to Bangladesh) Nihad Kabir, Senior Partner, Syed Ishtiaq Ahmed and Associates Sanjay Kathuria, Lead Economist, The World Bank
Global Citizenship

ENGAGING WITH THE WORLD

The term globalization has become a buzzword in the last two decades and is the subject of debate across a range of disciplines. The world is increasingly becoming a smaller place. Events around the world are having a greater impact on Bangladesh as a result of the growing interdependence among nations. As the youth become more aware of global issues and their impact on the country, they will be capable of playing a pivotal role in making better decisions both for themselves as well as their community. However, findings from the survey suggest that young people have varied perspectives on globalization, demonstrating the need for further discussion on the subject.

Globalization is viewed by Bangladeshi youth as the ease of networking with people from around the world

The majority of delegates at the Summit believe that globalization is the death of distance i.e. distance is not a factor in making and maintaining contact with someone else around the world. In other words, Bangladeshi youth relate more to the interpersonal aspect of globalization than other aspects such as the economic and geopolitical implications of globalization. The growing connectivity of the world has provided Bangladeshi youth easier access to academic institutions abroad, and as increasing number of Bangladeshi students are traveling abroad to study, they are quickly adopting information technologies and social networks as global communication tools to stay in touch with their friends and family back home. Moreover, the popularity of networks such as facebook and twitter have also provided today’s youth a greater incentive to learn English, the global language of the 21st century.

The meaning of globalization varies widely among individuals but the majority of respondents think globalization is the death of distance

Please indicate which of the following features describes globalization (a process that involves economic, political, and cultural interaction among nations) in your opinion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The death of distance (distance is not a factor in making and maintaining contact with someone else around the world)</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All nations have equal opportunities in the international market place</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability of professionals to work from anywhere in the world</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growing dependency among nations</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expansion in international trade</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n=191
English is not only a language but an instrument for global connectivity
The modern application of English for practical purposes has transformed it into a ‘technology for globalization’. Nearly eighty percent of the respondents think that English has evolved from a language into a technology for globalization. With increasing internet access and usage among the general population, English language is no longer just the privilege of the upper echelon in our society. English is now deemed a necessary skill for all Bangladeshi youth to keep pace with global trends. International non-governmental organizations, which are deemed lucrative places to work in for the youth, require its personnel to have a strong grasp of English. Even local employers in the country look for proficiency in English when hiring, since most businesses and organizations now work across borders. In a similar vein, SANJAY KATHURIA, World Bank’s Lead Economist for Bangladesh, advised the aspiring global citizens at the Summit to understand and maximize the use of English so that they can compete on a global platform.

Bangladesh has yet to reap the full benefits of international trade
The delegates also expressed concern that Bangladesh is not taking advantage of globalization. Nearly two-third of the survey respondents stated that Bangladesh failed to achieve the full benefits of globalization. In fact, Bangladesh has faced a trade deficit since its independence in 1971, which has impeded progress in the infrastructure and development of various sectors in the country. Responses from the delegates also reflect the frustration some youth feel about the constraints of living in a developing country. Nearly one-third of the respondents think their lives would have been better if they were born in a developed country. This sentiment drives many talented young people to study and settle abroad. Often their grievances are session jams at public universities, traffic and poor law enforcement, which are exacerbated by economic setbacks. To address this brain drain and to improve Bangladesh’s economic prospects, FAROOQ SOBHAN, President of Bangladesh Enterprise Institute (BEI), suggested that Bangladesh should encourage foreign direct investment from neighboring countries in South Asia and diversify its export basket of goods and manage remittances more efficiently as these would contribute significantly to creating more job opportunities for the youth.

"I don't think you are the future, you are the present. Your views matter now. As young people you have different insights and skills than those who are older; views that are no less valid, just different. Your views may change as you gain experience but presently they are an asset and should be utilized and acted upon."

JUSTIN LEE,
Australian High Commissioner to Bangladesh
Bangladeshi youth are worried about losing their cultural identity due to globalization

Despite some of the panelists’ firm advocacy for liberalization and open policies, the youth still perceive globalization as a mixed blessing. While JUSTIN LEE, Australian High Commissioner to Bangladesh, noted that the new generation is well equipped to lead in a changing world because they are least constrained by outdated norms that may be holding the country back, nearly two-third of the respondents are concerned that Bangladesh is losing its cultural heritage due to globalization. This fear may be based on the influx of foreign entertainment, fashion and food chains as well as continued resentment of the colonial rule. Figures like Muhammed Jafar Iqbal, an iconic contemporary writer in Bangla literature, have also been instrumental in raising the youth’s conscience about their culture. Biryani houses continue to be a popular spot among the urban youth but fast food restaurants are becoming trendier. Females are opting to wear Western attire over the traditional sari. Western rock is preferred over traditional Lalon music. The influence of foreign culture is creating gaps between Westernized and traditional factions of society, which is apparent in the interaction between students from different educational systems. NIHAD KABIR, Senior Partner of Syed Ishtiaq Ahmed and Associates, urged delegates to bridge this gap by embracing more of the nation’s rich traditions. Artists and local brands are responding to this identity crisis by fusing Western and local elements in their work to appeal to the eclectic taste of the Bangladeshi youth. For a generation that takes pride in the nation’s language movement but also lives in a highly interconnected world, these competing interests will have to be reconciled.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: Bangladesh is losing its cultural heritage due to the impact of globalization.

- Strongly agree: 20%
- Agree: 41%
- Neither agree nor disagree: 12%
- Tend to disagree: 20%
- Strongly disagree: 8%

n=200

MORSHED thought moving to the West for higher studies would pose few problems given his English medium background. However, his troubles began as soon as he moved to Germany. Greeted by a completely alien culture and language, he found himself unable to communicate effectively. He had wrongly believed that his aptitude in English would be sufficient for cross-cultural interaction. Morshed employed the lessons that he had learnt in the BBLT program on how to navigate successfully through challenging environments. He took it upon himself to learn the language and immersed himself into the local culture so that he could communicate better with his German peers.

Morshed volunteers at a local kindergarten in Halle an der Saale now. He used his training on leadership, community activism and different pedagogical models that he was introduced to at BYLC to help a group of teachers prepare educational models to teach kindergarten students English in a more creative way. His role as a teacher has required Morshed to connect with the children and think of ways to improve their ability to learn. He is also tutoring a group of German students at his university in English.

Morshed’s BBLT experience instilled in him the courage to act independently without relying on authority for direction and to be innovative in bringing about real change, and he ran for student council elections in his very first year at the university. Although he only made it to the waiting list, the platform has helped him find allies in the South Asian Department and now he works alongside them to promote diverse South Asian cultures at his university.

Morshed is convinced that Bangladesh can benefit from the increasing cultural and economic interdependence between countries. He believes that it is imperative to develop knowledge and human capital to allow for the emergence of more innovative and forward-thinking ideas and solutions to some of the pressing problems that confronts Bangladesh and the world today. Morshed thinks that young people are best placed to take advantage of the opportunities presented by globalization and he hopes to be one of those leading the movement for change and progress in Bangladesh.

YOUTH IN ACTION

MINHAZ MORSHED
BBLT 1
University of Halle-Wittenberg
1. Ejaj Ahmad, Founder & President, BYLC
2. Delegates at the plenary session on "Leading in Times of Uncertainty"
3. Ilvdad A. K. Mojlish, Director of Youth Leadership Programs, BYLC
4. A delegate looks up while others focus on the proceedings on stage
Leading in Times of Uncertainty

CHALLENGING THE STATUS QUO

As countries across the world lurch from one crisis to another as a result of deep economic and political uncertainty and dissatisfaction with leaders and systems, the discussion on styles and forms of leadership was paramount at the Summit. What is leadership? What distinguishes good leadership from bad leadership? How do we serve society? The survey showed that leadership was a key concern for young delegates and they believe that values such as honesty and integrity should be central in the evaluation of leaders in the country.

Honesty is at the core of leadership
Fifty percent of the respondents believe that honesty should be the most important quality in the future leaders of Bangladesh. This is a promising finding, especially in the context of Bangladeshi society, where corruption creates ineffective incentive structures and leaders in private and public sectors find it difficult to negotiate these incentives with their moral standing. To change the status quo, EJAJ AHMAD, President of BYLC, urged the delegates to reflect on the purpose and ethics of their leadership. He also advised the delegates to start thinking about the important choices that they will have to make in the future and what the implications of those choices will be for society. He stated that the fulfillment of leadership does not come from degrees, awards, status, or money. These measures of external achievements will mean little in the final analysis of life. The fulfillment of leadership, he noted, will come from the knowledge that people have lived their lives for a worthy cause and that they have made a difference in the lives of others.

Honesty is the most important quality that the respondents would like to see in Bangladesh’s future leaders

What is the most important quality that you would like to see in Bangladesh’s future leaders?

- Honesty: 50%
- Vision: 23%
- Board Education: 8%
- Patriotism: 20%

n=200
Leadership is not the same as authority

Leadership is often confused with authority. The latter is about station or position, whereas the former is about a process that helps to mobilize a group to face a common challenge. Ninety-five percent of the respondents at the Summit believe that there is a difference between position and leadership. This understanding of leadership as an activity can, in part, be attributed to the fact that many of the delegates at the Summit received prior training on leadership at BYLC. If more people in a society learn to draw the distinction between position and leadership, the practice of leadership can be made available to more citizens, regardless of age, gender or position.

IVDAD AHMED KHAN MOJILISH, Director of Youth Leadership Programs at BYLC, demonstrated how young people without formal authority can participate in the process of leadership by citing examples of successful organizations in Bangladesh such as Community Action, BYEI, JAAGO and One Degree Initiative which began through the collective efforts of young adults. He stressed how an important part of leadership was to engender clear and open communication in order to address the pressing issues confronting society. He also encouraged the delegates to develop the force, ability and courage to mobilize different groups in society for the benefit of humanity.

Colleges and universities should introduce courses on leadership

Eighty percent of the respondents thought that poor quality of leadership was the primary obstacle to development in Bangladesh, and more than ninety percent thought it would add value for their personal development if their college or university introduced a course on leadership.

More than eighty percent of the respondents think poor quality of leadership is the biggest obstacle to development of Bangladesh

What do you think is the biggest obstacle to development in Bangladesh?

- Natural disasters: 1%
- Population growth: 19%
- Poor quality of leadership: 81%

n=200

Ninety-five percent of the respondents think there is a difference between leadership and position

Is there a difference between leadership and position?

- Yes: 95%
- No: 5%

n=198

Of the five percent respondents who think leaders are born, nearly eighty percent of them still want leadership course in their class

Do you think leaders are born or made?

- Leaders are born: 5%
- Made: 95%

Do you think it would add value for your personal development if your college/university introduced a course on leadership?

- Both: 60%
- Made: 36%

- Leaders are born: 5%
- No: 22%

n=200
ISLAM is an ambitious young leader with high hopes for Bangladesh. He contends that most young people in Bangladesh wish to contribute to the betterment of their country but lack real opportunities and the proper platform to do so. Islam found his stage and purpose during his training on leadership at BYLC, and has not rested on his laurels since then.

The BBLT program instilled in Islam the passion for community service. Islam conducted various campaigns such as swine flu awareness and prevention campaigns and earthquake awareness campaigns in collaboration with several philanthropic organizations. With a group of friends he has taught 25 underprivileged children at his home. His most recent project aims to provide clothes for 200 street children in Dhaka. Islam has had his share of unsuccessful initiatives, but through disappointments and perseverance, he has gained insight into the complexity of working with different communities and the possibilities engendered by good leadership.

According to Islam, community service alone will not bring any major changes to society. He suggests that the education system of Bangladesh be restructured to include ethics and leadership training early on to help children become upright citizens. Islam, having benefited immensely from his interaction with different groups of young people in the BBLT program, was keen on expanding the scope of the BBLT group. Building on his experience at BYLC, Islam came up with the idea of BBLT Junior (BBLT-J), a more condensed version of BYLC’s signature BBLT program for secondary school students. He acted as a facilitator for the first BBLT-J program and in less than a year’s time has successfully coordinated the second season of BBLT-J. With each step, Islam has evolved into a confident and capable person, who is committed to social service.

Islam believes that there is space for innovation and leadership in the public sector, and believes that incremental steps towards change can make a huge difference. He has dreams of becoming a doctor to serve poor and marginalized communities in Bangladesh.

"Good leadership requires courage and conviction, unity of purpose, action, and a capacity to hear out people whose viewpoints and values may be quite different from yours."

IVDAD AHMED KHAN MOJLISH,
Director of Youth Leadership Programs, BYLC

Students want course on leadership; more than ninety percent of the respondents think it would add value for their personal development if their college/university introduced a course on leadership

Do you think it would add value for your personal development if your college/university introduced a course on leadership?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n=200
Niaz Rahim, Group Director, Rahimafrooz
Speaker line-up of the plenary session on “Entrepreneurship”. (From left: Niaz Rahim, Group Director, Rahimafrooz; Mamun Rashid, former CEO, Citibank NA; A. K. Azad, President, The Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI); Geeteara Safiya Choudhury, Chairman, Adcomm Limited)

Geeteara Safiya Choudhury, Chairman, Adcomm Limited
Mamun Rashid, former CEO, Citibank NA and moderator of the plenary session on “Entrepreneurship”
A. K. Azad, President, The Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI)
With political and economic systems across countries being sluggish and unresponsive to the changes experienced as a result of globalization, it is courageous and ambitious entrepreneurs who are providing more progressive solutions to local, national and global problems.

**The entrepreneurial spirit in the young generation is promising**
The survey indicated a strong entrepreneurial spirit among young people, with more than forty percent wanting to start their own business. This is an encouraging finding for an economy like Bangladesh with high unemployment rate. Launching a new enterprise requires initiative, and MAMUM RASHID, former CEO of Citibank NA, emphasized the role of courage in entrepreneurship to implement innovative ideas. He argued that young entrepreneurs must give back to society and create synergy at the base of the pyramid. It was also felt by both the delegates and the panelists that more intergenerational dialogue was needed to bring in a new dynamism and energy into the entrepreneurial environment. Young people will benefit from the advice and suggestion of experts in the field, who can provide a knowledgeable analysis of how youth can make a valuable contribution.

**Access to finance is critical for the success of a start-up**
The respondents felt that the most important factor to launch a new initiative is money, followed by advice and idea. A.K. AZAD, President of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI), shared useful insights from his federation on how he was collaborating across sectors to promote access to capital for budding entrepreneurs. The collateral

**More than forty percent of the respondents want to start their own business, while most desirable organizations for employment are the INGOs**

If you had the options to work in any one of the following, which one would you pick?

- Entry level position MNCs (Standard Chartered Bank, HSBC)
- Mid-level position in local large companies (ACI, Pran, Square)
- Managerial position in a small business in a peri-urban area
- Start your own business
- Government
- NGO
- INGO (UN, USAID, DFID)

n=199
requirement from financial institutions acts as an impediment for young entrepreneurs to secure the much needed early finance to start a business. As the Bangladesh economy transitions to the service sector, many of the delegates voiced concern over the inadequate capacity for lenders to evaluate intellectual property while assessing the viability of a project. This is particularly relevant to the ICT sector where the intellectual capital is the main asset of a start-up. Business chambers such as the FBCCI, DCCI, MCCI and others may also play a pivotal role in fostering youth entrepreneurship in the country by providing incubation services for start-ups. A major area of initial expense for a start-up is the day-to-day operational costs. Business incubators offering shared office facilities, mentoring and networking opportunities to young people can be effective in increasing the success rate of start-ups.

**Inadequate practical education on entrepreneurship at institutions of higher education**

Fifty percent of the delegates at the Summit said that they have not had lectures on entrepreneurship at their academic institute. Many of the established private and public colleges and universities in Bangladesh were represented at the Summit, and it was widely felt by the respondents that there was a vacuum in their educational institutes of practical courses on entrepreneurship. The curriculum followed even in the undergraduate programs in business administration, a popular degree in both private and public universities, draws mostly on the theoretical aspects of organizational behavior, marketing, finance and general management. In addition to these courses, offering applied courses on writing business plans and setting up an enterprise would go a long way in preparing the youth for entrepreneurial roles in society. A broad education is also critical for success in business in the 21st century and colleges and universities have a major role to play in equipping their students with the necessary skills and knowledge for entrepreneurship. When tested on their understanding of maximizing profit in a business, it was found that over twenty-five percent of them did not know how to maximize profit in a business.

"Success is not always earned through money. For an entrepreneur, true success is in upholding values of integrity and respect. Be resilient and set targets for your business in terms of profits combined with values, and success will follow."

**NIAZ RAHIM, Group Director of Rahimafrooz**
Entrepreneurship

Success in business comes from persistence, creativity and adaptability

GEETEARA SAFIYA CHOUDHURY, Chairman of Adcomm Limited, recounted her own struggles of setting up a business in a male-dominated advertising industry. She urged the delegates to be creative, persistent and adaptive in their entrepreneurial journey. It is important that young people widen the scope of their ambition so that the community and country will benefit from their entrepreneurial spirit. Entrepreneurialism should not be simply limited to profit maximization and other financial derivatives but be driven by the desire to create social change. On a similar vein, NIAZ RAHIM, Group Director of Rahimafrooz, talked about the lessons he had learnt from his father, the founder of Rahimafrooz. He said that the secret to entrepreneurial success in a resource-poor country such as Bangladesh is resilience. The determination to persevere with one’s vision would lead to success. He also underscored the importance for young entrepreneurs to stand up for the right values and to maintain high ethical standards in all their dealings.

Of the forty-one percent respondents that want to start their own business, over one-fourth of them do not know how to maximize profit in a business

If you had the options to work in any one of the following, which one would you pick?
Which of the following will allow you to maximize your profit in a business?

Of the forty-one percent respondents that want to start their own business, over one-fourth of them do not know how to maximize profit in a business

ALAM was confronted with difficulties when applying to the Faculty of Business Studies at the University of Dhaka. For English medium students, the absence of preparation centers combined with the competition for limited seats in prestigious public universities makes it nearly impossible for them to gain access to public higher education. His personal experience deepened his commitment to help other English medium students apply for public universities. In an effort to bridge this gap in the education sector, Alam established BridgeWee, a coaching center that prepares English medium students for admission to public universities in Bangladesh.

BridgeWee began in Alam’s home as an experiment focusing on preparing students for admission to the Faculty of Business Studies in the University of Dhaka (DU). Now in its third year, BridgeWee has expanded to accommodate more students and even includes a curriculum to prepare students for the entrance exam for Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET), the country’s premier university for engineering. The success of BridgeWee did not come easily; Alam recalls his struggle to develop the curriculum, collect funds, and reach out to the target market. He conducted thorough research on the content of the admission test and designed a preparation program to help English medium students in making the transition. The greatest challenge then, and now, is to change the mindsets of English medium students. Students still believe that they are not fit to enter reputed public universities for higher education. The BridgeWee team is working to change this attitude and develop their self-confidence and motivation by employing techniques of adaptive leadership taught in the BBLT program.

Alam, inspired by his time at the BBLT program and the lessons he gained on taking initiative, encourages his peers to start their own companies and become social entrepreneurs. As a budding entrepreneur, Alam believes that the positive impact of BridgeWee on society has made the frustrations and disappointments of establishing the organization worthwhile. Alam contends that the business culture in Bangladesh could make a vital social contribution through reform of employment practices and pro bono work.
1 Munawar M. Moin, Managing Director, Rahimafrooz Renewable Energy Limited
2 Participants at the panel on "Climate Change and Renewable Energy"
3 Ainun Nishat, Vice Chancellor, BRAC University and chair of the panel session on "Climate Change and Renewable Energy" (left); Syeda Rizwana Hasan, Executive Director, Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA)
4 An organizer of the Youth Leadership Summit 2011 coordinating the question and answer session
Bangladesh, a low-lying delta plane, is especially vulnerable to the dangers of climate change. In recent years, the country has experienced abnormal weather patterns and disastrous tropical cyclones. The tidal surges following the cyclone are submerging homes and forcing people to migrate inland.

**Sea level rise is a top concern among young people**

AINUN NISHAT, Vice Chancellor of BRAC University, among many scientists, attributes the irregular weather to climate change. The memory of scenes from Aila and Sidr, which destroyed the infrastructure in the coastal areas, claimed thousands of lives and left survivors stranded in makeshift shelters, are still vivid in the minds of young people in Bangladesh. Stories of these cyclones combined with the gradual shrinking of Bangladesh may explain why majority of respondents think that the top most problem in Bangladesh related to climate change is sea level rise. Nishat mentioned other consequences of sea level rise including the spread of water-borne diseases and the disruption on food production. The least concern among the respondents was pollution i.e. greenhouse gas emission, which is not as acute a problem in Bangladesh as it is in many developed nations.

**Delegates voice an urgency to address climate change**

The role of the media has been pivotal in raising awareness about climate change among the youth. Ninety-six percent of the respondents have come across one or more articles/discussions on climate change in the past year. Popular newspapers like the Daily Star and Prothom Alo have played an important role by covering recent issues surrounding climate change such as
illegal deforestation and climate financing.\footnote{Monsur, Sadman K. “Delivering effective climate finance” The Daily Star. Dec 31, 2011.} What’s more, young people are writing about climate change, organizing conferences and mobilizing nation-wide movements to raise awareness about climate change. The extensive coverage on climate change has also instilled in them a sense of urgency.

Majority of the respondents believe that the government’s top priorities should be preparation for the effects of climate change and renewable energy. These choices supersede less immediate interventions like education and energy efficiency, suggesting the quick need to act. Preparation for climate change includes the set up of embankments, disaster management and the engineering of adaptive crops. AMINUL ISLAM, Assistant Country Director for Climate Change, Environment and Disaster Management at UNDP, provided examples of research on crops being conducted abroad and suggested that scientists in Bangladesh take similar steps to adapt to climate change. Such initiatives will also help to create green jobs for the next generation.

According to MUNAWAR MOIN, Managing Director of Rahimafrooz Renewable Energy Limited, the number of green jobs in Bangladesh is expected to increase significantly although currently, most clean energy projects, including the largest solar home grid, are centered in rural areas.

**Burden of responsibility on the state and citizens of Bangladesh**

One reason renewable energy is not penetrating the city is because there it cannot compete with the economic rates and conveniences of conventional energy sources. Majority of the respondents think developing nations should curtail carbon emission at the cost of economic development. However, Moin and SYEDA RIZWANA HASAN, Executive Director of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA), assert that environmental considerations promote economic development that is sustainable. As an example, Moin cited the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), which allows high-emitting countries to meet their commitment under the Kyoto Protocol by implementing emission-reduction projects in developing countries. Moin explained that this carbon-saving scheme can draw substantial foreign investments into Bangladesh, increase public awareness about climate change and raise the standard of living.

"**Four areas are important to consider when exercising leadership in tackling climate change: science, technology, politics and finance. Knowledge in all these fields is necessary for global leadership."**

AMINUL ISLAM, Assistant Country Director for Climate Change, Environment and Disaster Management at UNDP
CHOWDHURY, a dedicated environmentalist, has observed in his travels the stark contrast between how Bangladesh and other countries have dealt with the environmental consequences of development. He feels that there needs to be more pro-environment policy and action in Bangladesh. The controlled allocation of land for rice fields and homes in Vietnam and the preservation of green forests in Singapore have helped to maintain a healthy economy. On the other hand, unregulated deforestation and urban sprawl in Bangladesh are not only threatening the biodiversity of the country but also endangering its economy.

**Young Bangladeshis exhibit visionary leadership**

As the future generation of a country that will bear the brunt of the effects of climate change, young people in Bangladesh will have to decide how to respond. Already they are taking action. Some are educating communities about cyclones and training themselves in disaster management. Others are taking steps to counter the emission of GHGs by taking part in a nationwide movement to plant trees. Their deep sense of individual responsibility demonstrates that young people in Bangladesh view this issue as a matter of ‘intergenerational trust’. Hasan explained that ‘intergenerational trust’ is the understanding that the current generation may not see the result of their efforts to address climate change in their lifetime, but their actions today may determine the quality of life for future generations.

CHOWDHURY, a dedicated environmentalist, has observed in his travels the stark contrast between how Bangladesh and other countries have dealt with the environmental consequences of development. He feels that there needs to be more pro-environment policy and action in Bangladesh. The controlled allocation of land for rice fields and homes in Vietnam and the preservation of green forests in Singapore have helped to maintain a healthy economy. On the other hand, unregulated deforestation and urban sprawl in Bangladesh are not only threatening the biodiversity of the country but also endangering its economy.

Chowdhury and his family have developed an innovative approach to counter the current trends of forest depletion in Bangladesh. They started a rooftop garden and now it has over 40 species of trees that include mangoes, guavas, five different kinds of lemons, vegetables and flowers like bougainvilleas and doorbells. It has inspired the neighbors and now there are over ten rooftop gardens in his area. Local groups like the Rooftop Garden Association, which provides guidance on how to grow rooftop gardens without damaging the building, have helped to promote this green movement.

From an early age, Chowdhury has worked to raise awareness about the environment in his local community. During his school scout days, he organized a variety of tree planting programs across Bangladesh. Since 2010, he has been working with Bangladesh Youth Environmental Initiative to promote environmental activism among young people. Last October, he participated in a tent-in campaign to raise awareness about carbon emission at various universities in Bangladesh.

Applying the leadership lessons and communication skills he learned at BBLT, Chowdhury has worked on persuading a fairly difficult audience to sacrifice their comforts and shift to a more eco-friendly lifestyle by motivating them to make incremental changes. For him, the impact of such activism is already visible among young people, who are becoming more engaged with environmental issues and choosing careers in the green sector in increasing numbers. Chowdhury, empowered by the BBLT program, is keen on helping to develop more creative solutions to some of the key environmental concerns in Bangladesh.

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Speaker line-up of the panel on "Human Rights and Ethics". (From left: Asif Saleh, Founder, Drishtipat; Faustina Pereira, Director of the Human Rights and Legal Services, BRAC; Sara Hossain, Member, Governing Board of BYLC and Partner, Dr. Kamal Hossain and Associates; Ananya Raihan, Executive Director, D.Net)  

1 Speaker line-up of the panel on "Human Rights and Ethics". (From left: Asif Saleh, Founder, Drishtipat; Faustina Pereira, Director of the Human Rights and Legal Services, BRAC; Sara Hossain, Member, Governing Board of BYLC and Partner, Dr. Kamal Hossain and Associates; Ananya Raihan, Executive Director, D.Net)  

2 Sara Hossain, Member, Governing Board of BYLC; Partner, Dr. Kamal Hossain and Associates and chair of the panel on "Human Rights and Ethics"  

3 The audience at the panel on "Human Rights and Ethics"  

4 Faustina Pereira, Director of the Human Rights and Legal Services, BRAC
After gaining independence from the repressive rule of the Pakistani government, Bengalis and others living in the territories that were to become Bangladesh envisioned a nation where fundamental human rights would be ensured for all its citizens. The Constitution of Bangladesh, which accounted for underrepresented groups such as women, peasants and other disadvantaged groups, was one of the most progressive documents of its time. Despite the comprehensive nature of the Constitution, a proper legal framework for implementing human rights has not yet been developed in Bangladesh. Moreover, some principles in the Constitution, namely secularism, have become a source of contention between liberal and conservative factions of the society.

Non-secular practices inhibit the rights of minorities
The role of religion in public life has been a disputed issue in the Muslim-majority country. This is reflected in the mixed response of the delegates. Proponents of Islam in public life fear a society devoid of values and standards without official recognition of the religion while its opponents see this view as authoritarian and unfair to non-adherents. More than forty percent of the respondents think non-secular views inhibit the rights of minorities. Disputes over the rights of minorities vary in severity from street protests over the leftist National Women Development Policy 2011 to the systematic attacks on Hindu communities following the 2001 general elections.  

FAUSTINA PEREIRA, Director of the Human Rights and Legal Services, BRAC, pointed out that one should be careful to distinguish between incidents that occur due to religious beliefs and those that occur in the name of religion. In many cases, communal violence is incited by politically motivated forces. Non-religious factors also account for the marginalization of minority groups i.e. the forced eviction of indigenous people in the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: Non-secular views inhibit the rights of minorities.

- Strongly disagree: 14%
- Tend to disagree: 14%
- Neither agree nor disagree: 29%
- Tend to agree: 21%
- Strongly agree: 22%

n=192

3 “General strike against new pro-women policy” AsiaNews.it. April 4, 2011.
5 “HR situation in CHT worries NHRC chief” The Independent (Bangladesh) Aug 9, 2011.
Security measures do not justify extra-judicial killing

The presence of strong institutions can help to protect the rights of minorities and to maintain stability but overly powerful ones can also create problems. This is visible in the case of the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB), an elite security force that was formed by the Bangladeshi government in 2004 as part of a counter-terrorism effort. Although the battalion claims to have succeeded in seizing thousands of illegal arms and arresting high-profile militants, it has also been criticized by international as well as local human rights organizations such as Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK) and Odhikar for "crossfire" killings and prisoner abuse. Despite popular demand, there has been no impartial or public inquiry into these alleged killings. Similarly, indiscriminate killings of Bangladeshis reported by India's Border Security Force (BSF) have also angered the public. The majority of the victims are Bangladeshis who cross the border into India to escape poverty and find jobs. Delegates at the Summit expressed their condemnation of these recent events. Nearly two-thirds of the respondents think extra-judicial killing is not a justified mean for maintaining social stability. This demonstrates that young people are sensitive to the need for fair procedures for law enforcement and its implications on human rights.

Counseling is more effective than punishment for countering sexual harassment

The young delegates held a similar view about the procedure to address sexual harassment of women and girls, an issue that resonates deeply with the youth since they come across it more often. Harassment takes different forms, ranging from verbal abuse to abduction, acid-throwing and rape. More concerning is the increasing number of suicide deaths among young women as a result of ‘eve teasing’, a euphemism commonly used for sexual harassment in South Asia. Despite the severity of these cases, the delegates disapprove of punitive measures. Nearly three-fourth of the respondents think counseling offenders is more effective than punishment for countering such harassment. Their perspective may arise from the fact that existing punishments are ineffective. Delegates may also see counseling as a more sustainable and preventative solution than harsh deterrents because this approach is based on knowledge and understanding. Creating more awareness about sexual harassment will also inform young people of their rights and motivate victims to report instead of staying silent in fear of social stigma.

"Bangladesh's birth through the Liberation War emerged from values of justice. Our freedom fighters fought to defend the people's rights. The leadership lesson from our country's birth is bold decision-making without compromising ethics, and we must do the same now, 40 years after our independence, to move the country forward."

ASIF SALEH, Founder of Drishtipat

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Social stigma and cultural norms often determine the extent to which human rights are recognized in a society. Some societies will tolerate human rights violations that other societies will not and these cultural norms become instilled in future generations. For example, even among the delegates, willingness to compromise ethics is observed. About one-third of the respondents think it is fair to allow copyright violation in developing countries. Copyright infringement is especially noticeable in the distribution of school textbooks, software and musical compact discs. It is worth noting that in a densely populated country like Bangladesh, competition and demand for textbooks is fierce but the costs of these textbooks is too high, especially for the children of low-income families in a developing nation. SARA HOSSAIN, Member, Governing Board of BYLC & Partner, Dr. Kamal Hossain and Associates, urged the delegates to take responsibility to identify and defend standards of ethics that will be resilient to political and social tides, and spoke on the controversial decision by the government to remove Dr. Yunus from his post as the managing director of the Grameen Bank.

It is especially challenging to bring these issues to light in a country having limited freedom of speech. Panelists shared innovative ways by which the youth can speak out using the internet. ANANYA RAIHAN, Executive Director of D.NET, is constructing online platforms where ordinary citizens can share stories they have documented using their mobile phones. ASIF SALEH, Founder of Drishtipat, started an expatriate forum for building public opinion on human rights issues and to raise funds for a journalist who was assaulted by a political leader for his bold reporting. The delegates also shared stories of how young people are taking advantage of new media to foster transparency.

BYADYA is proud to be from a country that has been historically lauded for its tolerant culture despite it belonging to a region marred by communalism and violence. However, she is deeply concerned about issues such as the rights of women and minority communities as they form an integral part of her identity.

In Byadya’s daily life, she feels the undercurrent of Hindu-Muslim tensions and regards the violent incidents following the 2001 general election as a testament to the difficulties that minorities face in Bangladesh. Byadya feels that the unease between Hindus and Muslims in Bangladesh is closely linked to the political climate. As Bangladesh wrestles with its Islamic identity, minorities like Byadya feel that more concerted action needs to be taken by civil society and government to protect and promote the human rights of minority communities. Byadya believes that more interfaith education and dialogue should be incorporated into the Bangladeshi school curriculum to bridge the gaps in society. Otherwise, this vacuum in knowledge breeds prejudice and contempt. Based on the BBLT model, she deems it is up to the general population to build tolerance through more interaction among different groups in society.

In Byadya’s view, the rights of women and the issue of domestic abuse also require more attention. She relates the story of one of her cousins from the village whose husband would mistreat her. She would take refuge in her parents’ home and then return, as if nothing ever happened. Byadya believes that the silence of these women stems from low self-esteem and little knowledge of their rights. Having worked closely with a few NGOs, Byadya recommends that independent parties play a greater role in promoting open dialogue about the rights of women.

Byadya, inspired by the impact of the community service component of the BBLT program, has continued to work with Young Power in Social Action (YPSA), a non-profit organization that she came across during her time at BBLT. She continues to help inform women in the slum about their rights. Byada maintains that knowledge coupled with action is the single-most powerful factor behind social change and it is young people like herself who will be critical in healing some of these socially divisive rifts in society.
A question from a delegate posed to speakers on stage during the panel on “Media and Journalism” emphasizing a point.

Zafar Sobhan, Member, Governing Board of BYLC & Independent Media and Communications Consultant and chair of the panel on “Media and Journalism” emphasizing a point.

Speaker line-up of the plenary on “Media and Journalism”. (From left: Shariful Islam, Founder, Bangladesh Brand Forum; Farah Kabir, Country Director, ActionAid; Zafar Sobhan, Member, Governing Board of BYLC & Independent Media and Communications Consultant)
Media and journalism in Bangladesh society has thrived over the past decade, and it has the potential to play a crucial role in holding the powerful and wealthy to account, in exposing injustices and reporting the truth on issues such as human rights, corruption, environment and development.

Newspaper media is controlled by corporations and politics
It is, however, interesting to note that of the forty percent respondents who believe that Bangladesh enjoys press freedom, eighty percent think many newspapers are nothing more than the mouth-pieces of giant corporations and/or political parties. Delegates mentioned that it was the fairly well-established newspapers that reported biased accounts of events, because they were pressurized by political parties to do so. Many well-circulated newspapers are under the ownership of corporations, and therefore, they publish views that favor their parent companies and political parties associated with the parent firms.

The young people believe that impartial, objective and honest media and news reporting is critical for progress and development of Bangladesh. When asked about the risks involved in this field, ZAFAR SOBHAN, Member, Governing Board of BYLC & Independent Media and Communications Consultant, remarked that journalists like him who work for respectable newspapers in Dhaka face few dangers. Rather, the dedicated reporters who work for small, anonymous papers in rural areas with minimal protection from influential bodies face greater risk. He praised the courage and dedication of these local journalists who broke incredibly objective
stories with sincerity and honesty, despite the lack of protection. Their courageous efforts to expose injustices in their communities are helping to curtail abuse of power.

Media can help in holding leaders accountable
Despite delegates' views that news is controlled by firms and political parties, they are hopeful that media can be used to act as an interlocutor between government and civil society, help strengthen political institutions, constructively engage with policy-makers and hold politicians to their pledges. More than ninety percent of the respondents think media can play a major role to make the political leaders/government officials accountable for their actions. Delegates cited the powerful role social media played in the wave of revolts across the Arab region and in the toppling of dictatorships in early 2011. Myriad methods of both traditional and digital media have been powerful tools for development and will help young people to spread the truth and build a more transparent society. FARAH KABIR, Country Director of Actionaid, praised the progression of media in Bangladesh and the youth for already leveraging these technologies to report and share incidents.

New media tools are redefining ethical boundaries
Digital media has provided an outlet for free expression and has facilitated communication that is not monitored by government or corporate houses. There has been an impressive increase in the use of blogs, online polls and other forms of digital media by the youth of Bangladesh to share and discuss current affairs of the world. Moreover, the advent of online communication tools, like Wikileaks, has redefined the ethics of information dissemination. More than eighty percent of the respondents think Wikileaks is a manifestation of people's right to information. Transparency is critical for promoting civic engagement and empowering the ordinary citizen to practice leadership. SHARIFUL ISLAM, Founder of Bangladesh Brand Forum, stated that we are now living in a world where companies, communities, and countries must embrace and demonstrate an expanded definition of self-interest, one that included contributing to the greater good of society. Delegates at the Summit expressed that it was their civic responsibility to connect thought leaders and activists to ordinary citizens so that the network of people willing to take action against injustice would expand.

"It is not possible in our country's context for the government or any administration to provide all the solutions. If an incident raises unanswered questions in your mind, translate these individual concerns into collective action. Take a new initiative or raise awareness of the issue. Don't be afraid to push boundaries."

SHARIFUL ISLAM
Founder of Bangladesh Brand Forum
NOOR is a young man who has consistently worked in the pursuit of truth and justice. He began his career in journalism with Shomotol, a community newspaper and his determination to uncover the truth landed him in several encounters with the police and local authorities. Noor laments that reporters are undervalued in Bangladesh, partly due to inadequate pay and little protection from the state. In fact, his community paper was eventually shut down by the government for their persistent coverage on the failings of national security. Noor believes that the media can play a powerful role in strengthening the social and moral fiber of the country, by holding institutions and individuals accountable but also by promoting progressive values that will take Bangladesh forward, not backward.

Noor, having experienced first-hand impact of social service on the lives of ordinary people through the BBLT program, currently focuses his writing on uplifting stories, particularly on the youth. His aim is to promote active citizenship among young people by exposing them to stories on other youth volunteers. Recently, he wrote a feature on BBLT graduates who are working to empower women through income generating activities. Noor is also spreading his message to his broad international network. Last May, Noor participated in the first South Asian Youth Conference in Bangalore, India. He is now exploring new media to advance his cause. He is a frequent contributor to the blog of Prothom Alo, the country’s leading Bengali newspaper, as well as somewhereinblog.com, the largest Bengali blog community. Unlike newspapers, blogs provide young writers the complete freedom to write and to receive immediate feedback. He notes that today’s youth are embracing social media for addressing causes like blood collection and awareness campaigns. He attributes his propensity to take risks and innovative streaks to his training at BYLC where he learned that coming out of the comfort zone and acting independently of authority are necessary to bring change in the world. Noor believes that a transparent and free press will help promote equality of opportunity and minimize the injustices occurring in the society.

The Bangladeshi youth felt that people no longer wanted to passively watch revolutions; they wanted to participate in them. They believed that technological advances like camera cell phones, and social media networks, coupled with more traditional outlets created platforms for people to unite and connect through shared values and express their solidarity for a common cause.

**The end justifies the means**
Newspapers, radio, television and other forms of media play an essential role in the public perception of daily issues. While the media often perpetuate unhelpful propaganda and report biased accounts, if properly harnessed, it can be used to confront prejudice, inform and create a working dialogue to reform attitudes and behavior. Nearly half of the respondents think that it is okay to manipulate information, if the end impact is justified. They also mentioned, however, that the goal itself has to be worthy and should not violate one’s moral values.

Majority of the respondents think it is okay to manipulate information if the end impact is justified

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: It is okay to manipulate information if the end impact is justified.

- Strongly disagree: 21%
- Strongly agree: 16%
- Tend to disagree: 20%
- Tend to agree: 30%
- Neither agree nor disagree: 13%

n=197
"BYLC is filling in a critical vacuum in the field of development by bringing together young people from different walks of life, some who do not necessarily fill the conventional mold of a leader, to interact and think about how they can be part of the solution. It has successfully injected fresh and original thinking on some of the prevailing problems in Bangladesh."

GOWHER RIZVI,
Member, International Advisory Board of BYLC & Advisor to the Honorable Prime Minister of Bangladesh
at the Closing Ceremony of Youth Leadership Summit 2011
Speaker line-up of the plenary on “Education and Career”. (From left: Homayara Ahmed, Member, Governing Board of BYLC and Assistant Professor at IBA, University of Dhaka; Hafiz G. A. Siddiqui, Vice Chancellor, North South University; Arif Shahriar, COO and Group Head of HR, Rahimafrooz; Fahim Mashroor, CEO, BDjobs.com; Qahir Dhanani, Project Leader, The Boston Consulting Group)
The last two decades have ushered in major changes in the education system in Bangladesh. The introduction of private universities, in particular, was a revolutionary concept in Bangladesh.

One of the pioneers of this new movement in Bangladesh was HAFIZ G. A. SIDDIQI, Vice Chancellor of North South University. He recounted how he and a few colleagues recognized the need for private education and came forward to establish the first private university in Bangladesh. Today, private universities generate majority of the nation’s workforce and are more responsive to the needs of the market than public universities.

**Higher education is getting difficult to afford**
However, responses from the delegates indicate that the cost of private education remains an obstacle, even for those who are financially solvent. The household income of seventy-one percent of the respondents is BDT 20,000 per month or above. Even so, of the forty-five percent respondents that state their family live comfortably on their income, eighty percent of them feel it is difficult to pay for university education. This suggests that those who cannot enter the competitive public universities in Bangladesh and must resort to private universities are struggling to pay for their education.

**Gaps between school curriculum and material tested in university admission tests make it difficult to enter universities**
The delegates indicated that another important factor that makes going to college difficult is passing the admission tests. The admission tests alone
As Bangladesh develops, it is paramount that the youth adapt to changes. We can no longer think of our careers the way our parents and grandparents thought about it. Your ability to adapt and foster new ways of thinking will define your success.

QAHIR DHANANI, Project Leader at the Boston Consulting Group
Youth want more exposure in the real world as part of their education

Conventional schools may also be inadequate with respect to training in ‘life skills’. Of the seventy-one percent respondents who feel ready for the world of work, eighteen percent of them do not feel prepared for life in the real world. The ‘world of work’ generally requires textbook based expertise but the latter requires the ability to confront unforeseen problems that arise in real life. ARIF SHAHRIAR, COO and Group Head of HR at Rahimafroz, advised young people to work on developing skills in presentation, teamwork and leadership through co-curricular activities, which would help them in the job market. These findings imply that practical education needs to be incorporated into curriculums to equip young people for real world challenges.

The current education system in Bangladesh will have to adapt to new trends, keeping in mind the values and cultural norms defining Bangladeshi society. The youth’s outlook on gender roles is important to understand when guiding them through their career. The survey findings reflect mixed views young people have toward the rights and responsibilities of women with career. HOMAYARA AHMED, Member, Governing Board of BYLC & Assistant Professor at IBA, University of Dhaka, related the progression in her own career to manage her shifting roles at work and home and advised the delegates to adopt a flexible approach to career planning. Interestingly, female respondents believe that women should embrace their traditional roles in society. One fourth of the female respondents believe mothers may have careers, but their first duty is to be homemakers. Taking into consideration these perceptions, young people should be given counseling as part of their education so that they can make confident, informed decisions about their careers.

TASNIM was stunned by the standard of education in the Korail community, where she led efforts to promote primary education as part of the BYLC training on leadership. The majority of the children in Korail dropped out after class five because they either failed or opted out of taking the national standardized exam administered at the end of primary education. Their families also felt discouraged by the cost and the complicated admission process for secondary school. Tasnim attributes the major weakness in the present education system to the poor quality of teaching.

She feels that teachers chastise excessively and fail to foster the children’s creative and analytical thinking skills. Partly due to inadequate resources and low incentives, teachers occasionally pass their students in spite of their poor performance. Subsequently, underperforming students advance to class five and drop out after failing the standard exam. Many of the children do not even take the exam; they accept that class five is the end of their academic career. Barely twelve-years old, the boys generally seek jobs and the girls stay at home to assist their mothers.

Seeing the palpable need for improvement and influenced by the emphasis that the BBLT program placed on incremental change and community-based leadership, Tasnim decided to continue her campaign to educate the slum children even after the BBLT program ended. She employed a more positive and innovative teaching methodology derived from her English medium education as well as her BBLT experience. Her aim was to create a learning environment that does not just center on passing the standardized exams but also promotes individual growth. For this reason, she incorporated creative activities in her learning center, including educational games, visual aids and art.

Her BBLT project evolved into a community-based learning center for forty-five children. Recognizing the immense potential of the children in the neighborhood, even in the face of abject poverty, Tasnim firmly believes that given the proper facilities, many promising individuals can emerge from the community and become major contributors to society. Education is one of the key equalizers in society and critical for development. Tasnim is determined to work to make education accessible to more young people in Bangladesh.
Fizza Kabir, Executive Director, SAJIDA Foundation

A delegate addressing the audience from the floor

Omar Rahman, Vice Chancellor, Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB) engaging in discussion with Ejaj Ahmad, Founder & President, BYLC

Muhammod Abdus Sabur, Public Health Professional speaking at the podium, next to the line-up of speakers of the panel on "Health". (From left: Mridul Chowdhury, CEO, ClickDiagnostics Inc.; Omar Rahman, Vice Chancellor, Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB); Fizza Kabir, Executive Director, SAJIDA Foundation)

Mridul Chowdhury, CEO, ClickDiagnostics Inc.
Bangladesh has made impressive progress in the health space during the past few decades. Key health indicators like life expectancy and coverage of immunization have improved significantly while infant mortality, maternal mortality and fertility rates have dropped considerably. Despite these gains, poor access to health care services has continued to impede further improvement. To address the current systemic challenges, the youth will need to play an active role in increasing access to primary health care and improve its quality.

Youth indicate problems in access to healthcare
A disconcerting tendency can be seen in Bangladesh, especially among the affluent: increasing number of patients are seeking healthcare services in other countries like Thailand and India. Not only is this trend taxing for the patients but it also strains the country’s foreign exchange reserves. According to the official record of the Institute of Health Economics at the University of Dhaka, Bangladeshis spend approximately taka five hundred million a year on foreign healthcare services. A better understanding of the deficiencies in the country’s health care system is necessary to address this problem. According to responses of the delegates, lack of medical facilities and medical professionals are major hurdles in healthcare in Bangladesh.

It is also worth considering whether existing facilities are fully utilized. More than half of the respondents of all income groups indicated that access to medical facilities is moderately available, but respondents in the lower income group expressed most strongly that have limited access to medical facilities.

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The delegates also felt that the privatization of health in Bangladesh since the 1980s is partly responsible for putting low income groups at disadvantage.

The panelists shared innovative ways through which they are helping to make health service more accessible to people from low income groups. FIZZA KABIR, Executive Director of SAJIDA Foundation, commented on the work of her organization, one of the leading micro health insurance providers in the country. SAJIDA assists women in the city by providing soft loans so that they can afford proper health care. Vouchers and micro-financing are examples of innovative mechanisms that young people will have to explore to address the problems of unequal access to and underutilization of existing facilities.

Besides facilities, medical professionals are also a vital component of healthcare. A worrisome finding was that about one-fourth of the respondents were unable to see a doctor half the times when there was a need. Despite the vast network of medical training institutes in the country, Bangladesh still faces a shortage in the health workforce. MRIDUL CHOWDHURY, CEO of ClickDiagnostics Inc., shared stories from the field with the delegates on how his company is addressing this crisis in human resource. ClickDiagnostics provides medical expertise to rural communities through a novel mobile phone application, making it easier for underserved clients to gain access to qualified health service.

**Delegates are satisfied with quality of healthcare**

About two-third respondents of all income groups were satisfied with services when they found a doctor. The positive feedback of the delegates, contrary to the gloomy reports on the quality of health care in Bangladesh, may be explained by the youth’s little need for secondary or tertiary care, where high assurance, immediate attention and deep empathy are essential. Patients under such care are likely to judge the health care service in Bangladesh differently.

Although majority of each income group showed satisfaction with health care service, the middle income groups tended to be more dissatisfied than their peers in other income groups.

"*We all have a responsibility to society beyond our professional capacities, and we must have the courage to shoulder this responsibility consciously.*"

MRIDUL CHOWDHURY, CEO of Clickdiagnostics Inc.
OMAR RAHMAN, Vice Chancellor, Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB), sheds light on this issue. He said that middle income families rely on public hospitals which must manage a huge inflow of patients with limited resources on a daily basis. The high-stress working environment may affect the staff’s ability to deliver quality service. Expectations may also vary by income group; low income groups may not have as high expectations as that of middle income groups. This possibly explains their satisfaction with the service they receive.

In addition, the delegates exhibited positive views on the quality of medical facilities. Three-fourth of the respondents think the quality of medical facilities is moderate to good. The same analysis applied to services may be pertinent here. Young people may not have as great a need for sophisticated facilities because they are in the prime stage of their health and rarely need expensive curative care services. The views of the delegates may also reflect the marked improvement in facilities since the advent of private hospitals in Bangladesh.

It can be inferred from the delegates’ responses that improving access to proper health care is a bigger concern than improving the quality of health care. MUHAMMAD ABUS SABUR, Public Health Professional, advocated for community development so that ordinary citizens can make better decisions about their health and lifestyle. Sabur explained that collective rather than individual effort is needed to bring about sustainable improvement in health, citing the example of second-hand smoking. Likewise, young people will have to start thinking beyond conventional methods of medical treatment. They will have to think about efficient governance and community engagement as critical steps to create a more responsive health care delivery system.

SHAHID became interested in the field of health when her mother suffered from a massive heart attack four years ago. The poor quality of service, inadequate resources and unsanitary conditions at the public hospital compelled Shahid’s family to shift her mother to United Hospital, a private hospital in Dhaka. The contrast between the private and public hospital was striking. Public hospitals, which lack the profit-driven incentives to guarantee good service, especially suffer from inadequate facilities and poor management. Shahid’s experience left her determined to improve the health service across Bangladesh.

Shahid became actively involved in health related initiatives following her experience in community service with BYLC. During the three-month assignment in the community, her BBLT team reached out to over 350 families and provided them with free-of-charge medication. Using lessons from leadership training on the benefits of behavioral change, she and her teammates invited doctors to counsel community members on simple ways they can change their lifestyle to prevent severe diseases. Shahid has continued similar work after the completion of her leadership training with BYLC.

Shahid is currently working to dispel misconceptions about NGO hospitals through effective campaigning. While conducting surveys in the slum for a BBLT assignment, she discovered that majority of the people preferred to go to local midwives despite the presence of NGO hospitals. Shahid also runs counseling sessions on healthy living at a local NGO hospital in Chittagong. The sessions cover a range of issues from sanitation and nutrition to the prevention and treatment of infectious diseases like polio and small pox.

Shahid thinks that policy-makers and authorities in the health sector can play an important role in improving the quality of health care in Bangladesh. Despite the number of skilled health professionals and reputable medical schools in the country, the mismanagement of hospitals has slowed progress in the health service sector. In spite of these setbacks, Shahid is hopeful. She suggests that more wide-scale and comprehensive health awareness campaigns will allow for a low-cost, preventative approach to health care.
Pial Islam, Member, Governing Board of BYLC and Managing Partner, pi Strategy Consulting, next to the line-up of speakers of the panel on "Innovation and Critical Thinking". (From left: Sabbir Hasan Nasir, Managing Director, OTOBI Limited; Taufiq Rahim, Visiting Fellow, Dubai School of Government; Nazim Farhan Choudhury, Managing Director, Adcomm Limited) Taufiq Rahim, Visiting Fellow, Dubai School of Government Sabbir Hasan Nasir, Managing Director, OTOBI Limited and chair of the panel on "Innovation and Critical Thinking" Summit organizers and delegates pose for a picture Nazim Farhan Choudhury, Managing Director, Adcomm Limited
In an economy like Bangladesh where resources are limited, it is imperative that we foster a culture of innovation and critical thinking to harness the full potential of our existing resources. Young people can help to advance the country by strengthening their critical thinking skills through thoughtful engagement and reasoned analysis of different issues that affect them and their communities. However, delegates at the Summit exhibited a weak understanding of innovation and critical thinking. This brings to attention the urgent need to incorporate more of these concepts into the intellectual development of young people in Bangladesh.

Youth give less importance to marketability factors of innovation
PIAL ISLAM, Member, Governing Board of BYLC & Managing Partner of pi Strategy Consulting, used the example of iPhones, a popular gadget among the youth, to introduce the concept of innovation. The iPhone fulfilled key benchmarks of innovation, that of creative thinking, distinctiveness and impact. Creative thinking by Apple brought the touch screen to ordinary users at an affordable price. A distinctive feature of iPhones is the combination of music and phone in a single product. Only thirteen percent of the respondents could identify the three important components of innovation. Islam further explained that an idea or product is innovative when it has a measurable impact in improving the lives of ordinary people. This impact factor of innovation distinguishes it from creativity but almost half of the respondents thought creativity is the same as innovation. Even among the thirteen percent who were able to identify all the three components of innovation, forty percent of them said creativity is the same as innovation.
An incomplete understanding of the different facets of innovation can endanger the successful implementation of an idea. NAZIM FARHAN CHAUDHURY, Managing Director of Adcomm Limited, explained from an advertiser's perspective using the example of Duncan’s water bottles. Initially, Bangladeshis overlooked the prospect of a mineral water bottle industry until Duncan, the first water bottle manufacturer in the country, identified the market for it. In spite of their creative thinking, the company failed to address the other components of innovation and gradually faded out from the market. Conversely other manufacturers like Mum and Fresh thrived due to their distinct packaging and pricing strategies.

Responses by the delegates indicate that impact and distinctiveness, which make a product or concept marketable, are less important to young people. Most of the respondents identified creativity as one of the most important components of innovation but only half picked out impact and distinctiveness. This may be the case because the business of innovation is not as discussed or seen positively in Bangladeshi society. Young people in Bangladesh will have to shift away from their linear impression of innovation and learn to link their ideas to the market by considering impact and distinctiveness. A better understanding of innovation will also help them to become a responsive and efficient workforce.

**Need for critical thinking in youth development**

The findings above demonstrates the importance of understanding innovation and critical thinking, which TAUFIQ RAHIM, Visiting Fellow, Dubai School of Government, argued, needs to be nurtured. He presented various cases from around the world where investment in innovative thoughts and processes helped to advance various sectors of society. Results from the survey reveal that Bangladeshi youth require similar attention in their development. The delegates were asked to identify the correct number of squares in a chess board in an attempt to test their critical thinking skills. Three-fourth of the respondents could not identify the correct number. It is also worth noting that of these respondents, about sixty percent did not pick the most obvious answer - which is sixty-four. This suggests that respondents understood the complexity of the question but did not calculate right.

"In critical thinking, allow for anomalies to enter your thought process. Things that don't make sense upfront will allow for the germination of new and innovative ideas."

PIAL ISLAM, Member, Governing Board of BYLC & Managing Partner of pi Strategy Consulting
AYRUANI is a motivated and driven young woman, who is continuously striving to think of ways that she can help lift people out of poverty. Her journey began when she saw the miserable living conditions of slum dwellers near Asad Gate during a community visit as part of the BBLT Junior program. After completing the project, where she interacted closely with the community, she became determined to find a more permanent solution to ease their hardships. Combining her commerce background and interest in handicrafts, Ayruani developed an innovative approach to poverty alleviation.

Ayruani, along with a group of friends, established a new sustainable social business called Torun. Torun's mission is to improve the socio-economic conditions of underprivileged women by providing them an additional source of income alongside their current jobs. The women are trained to construct lamps using newspapers and eco-friendly waste materials. Torun also assists the women to market their products in the city but also allows them to maintain complete ownership and accountability of their work and profits. This way, Ayruani's initiative is empowering women to become self-sufficient entrepreneurs.

Ayruani strongly believes innovation and critical thinking should be encouraged among the youth and should be incorporated into the school curriculum. Although there is no definite method to impart innovation and critical thinking, leadership programs like BBLT can help to cultivate those competencies. Ayruani recounts that the experience of working out solutions with peers under stressful situations during BBLT Junior has sharpened her critical thinking skills. She believes that if young people were trained in critical thinking and leadership skills, it would be possible to create a community of active citizens who are dedicated to finding solutions to some of the endemic problems in Bangladesh.

The delegates’ strength in critical thinking varied with educational background. Fewer madrassa students were able to identify the right answer. Madrassas generally place more emphasis on religious studies and the humanities and less on math and science. Math and science help to sharpen critical thinking skills and ability to reason. Even religious scholars lament that religious education is becoming less knowledge-based. Rahim clarified that though critical thinking is about challenging assumptions, it does not necessarily mean to reject tradition. Rather it is about thinking of new and better alternatives in old dimensions. In a similar vein, SABBIR HASSAN NASIR, Managing Director of Otobi Limited, reminded the delegates the importance of responding to the needs and tastes of the local market in the process of innovative and critical thinking.

The survey findings suggest that developing those competencies is a worthwhile consideration for decision-makers in Bangladesh, especially in the education sector. Currently, there seems to be a dearth in this area. About sixty percent of the respondents did not have any lecture on innovation or critical thinking in their educational institutions. If the huge pool of young people in Bangladesh is better trained to think more critically, they can help come up with creative solutions to complex problems.
Speaker line-up of the panel session on "Politics and Leadership". (From left: Mohammad A. Arafat, Lecturer, Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB); Amena Mohsin, Professor, Department of International Relations, University of Dhaka; M. Shahriar Alam, Member of Parliament; Mahi B. Chowdhury, former Member of Parliament)  2  Mahi B. Chowdhury, former Member of Parliament addressing the delegates  3  Delegates at the panel session on "Politics and Leadership"
Young people have always held a cherished role in the history of Bangladesh. They played an indispensable part in helping the country secure independence and many sacrificed their lives for the nation. However, injustice and corruption have distanced and disenfranchised young people from politics. It has further eroded the spirit of patriotism that is essential to creating a strong political culture. Bangladesh has maintained good relations with other nations but its domestic political state is not as praiseworthy. The recent history of politics in Bangladesh has been marked by coups, strikes and political violence. The political scene in Bangladesh is undoubtedly having an effect on young people and their career choices.

Politics for personal gain
DR. AMENA MOHSIN, Professor, Department of International Relations, University of Dhaka, has seen a waning interest in political science among university students. This trend can be partly attributed to the reputation of student political groups, which are primarily responsible for intra-party violence according to Ain o Salish Kendra, a human rights advocacy group in Bangladesh. Occasionally students from such groups coerce their peers into participating in counterproductive political activities at the expense of their education. For example, Mohsin finds that young people frequently skip classes to participate in street protests, sometimes in fear of losing their dormitory seats, which are controlled by student party leaders. The thuggish practices of youth political groups deter bright students from studying or engaging in politics. Young people have few other options to sharpen their political acumen. However, the world is witnessing a new wave of democratic
politics inspired and driven by young people who are informed, engaged and active at local & national levels and the youth of Bangladesh should see themselves as powerful players who can both demand and create change. Political participation is not simply about voting but about being deeply engaged with issues of rights and responsibilities, rule of law, security, freedom and development. It is important then that young people develop a spirit of patriotism and get involved in their community.

**Integrity, patriotism and commitment to constituents are perceived to be the three most important traits in a politician by the youth**

The majority of the survey respondents believe that values of honesty, public service and patriotism are core qualities that political leaders in Bangladesh should possess. It is also interesting to note that the young generation today are less concerned or attached to any certain political ideology. What is more important to them than the party brand is the individual characteristics of a candidate running for political office. MAHI B. CHOWDHURY, former Member of Parliament, remarked that many Bangladeshi students seek career opportunities abroad because they are disheartened by the petty politics and the problems it creates in their home country. Certainly, disillusionment about the government can weaken nationalist sentiments. The government represents the nation, and it brings all its constituents under one identity. Once people lose confidence in their government, their loyalty to the country it represents may decline as well.

M. SHAHRIAR ALAM, Member of Parliament, maintains that in time the young parliamentary system in Bangladesh will mature and adopt procedures that will aid toward efficient governance. It is important to create a positive experience of politics to strengthen people’s love and belief in their country. On a similar note, MOHAMMED A. ARAFAT, Lecturer, Independent University of Bangladesh (IUB), said that it was important that the youth take up the right path in politics. It is imperative that young people are proactive and courageous in choosing the right people for leadership positions. To initiate positive change in society, he suggested that one must have a thorough understanding of the external realities of Bangladesh and the opinions and aspirations of the people.

“If you keep avoiding politics, someone else will fill up the vacuum in the leadership pipeline. And you will be held accountable if that person does not serve the country properly. This is why you need to join politics in order to take the right lead.”

MOHAMMED A. ARAFAT, Lecturer, Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB)
Political activism did not require membership to a political party; there were multiple avenues for young people to make a real difference to the lives of others in their communities. He believes that if the idealistic and bright youth avoid political participation, then they deprive the country of their talent and allow self-serving people (often recruits from the student political groups) to play those roles. The majority is not decisive but even the mixed responses underscore the youth’s skeptical view toward government decisions and the extent to which they reflect the people’s demands. Alternatively, the response suggests that young people today are not blind followers but vigilant watchdogs of the state. They are aware of the state’s weaknesses and therefore restrain from providing unconditional support.

Another finding from the survey was that nearly one-fifth of the respondents think that it’s foolish to be proud of one’s country because no one chooses his or her country of birth. This perspective of a substantial minority of the Summit delegates is validated by the exodus of bright minds from Bangladesh. Even so, retaining the bright minds and grooming them for political leadership is critical for the development of Bangladesh. Unfortunately, youth have limited scope to engage in political activity except through student politics on university campuses. Attracting more youth to policy-making will require a transformation in the political culture in Bangladesh. Politicians have to become role models for the youth, someone whom they can aspire to be.

GALIB, like most young people on the move, is frustrated by the deteriorating traffic problem in Dhaka. A 15-minute route will generally take two hours due to congested roads. Galib asserts that a more permanent and systemic solution, as opposed to scattered construction projects like flyovers, is necessary to alleviate this growing crisis. This change, he believes, can come only from a unified effort by the country’s policy-makers. For Galib, traffic in Dhaka is one of many examples illustrating the gap between politicians and their constituents.

Galib feels that politicians rarely follow through with their promises made during election campaigns. During the four years in office, the party members are so preoccupied with staying in power and undermining the opposing party that they pay little attention to public welfare. Galib is also concerned by the impact of dynastic politics in Bangladesh. He feels that power is dominated by individuals having family ties to popular leaders from the Liberation War, without leaving much space for minority viewpoints to enter mainstream politics.

In Galib’s view, youth involvement in politics is essential for developing the next generation of political leaders but not in the form of student political leadership seen on university campuses today. Student political leadership is founded on muscle and contacts, rather than merit. There are few channels through which students can engage in constructive political activism or their voices heard.

Galib believes that young people’s political competence should be developed from the grassroots level. Having experienced the benefits and wisdom of the BBLT model, Galib suggests that the grassroots level training should mirror the BBLT program and impart values of inclusion, patriotism and public service to students at an early age. It should be incorporated into mandatory education where leadership is taught as a course. He also recommends that national political parties, along with their student wings, establish a coherent platform and clear criteria for membership to ensure good leadership and accountability. By becoming transparent the political parties can attract able and meritorious young people to serve society through politics.
Delegates look at a framed picture of freedom fighters of the Liberation War in 1971. (From left: Matin Chowdhury, Managing Director, Malek Spinning Mills Limited; Lt. Col. Jafar Imam (retd.), Bir Bikram; Major Didar A. Hossain (retd.), Trustee, Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB); Akku Chowdhury, Trustee, Liberation War Museum)
Bangladesh, previously known as East Pakistan, rebelled against the Pakistani government in 1971 for their repressive treatment of the Bangladeshis. They formed a guerrilla force known as the Mukti Bahini (Freedom Fighters) and defeated the Pakistani forces in December 1971, leading to the establishment of an independent state. However, forty years into independence, several unresolved issues of the past have become a source of conflicting opinions and feelings.

Youth read about the Liberation War
The young generation in Bangladesh takes an interest in the history of its struggle for independence. This is evident in the survey findings. Just in the last year, more than half of the respondents have come across 10 or more articles/discussions on the liberation war of Bangladesh. This is also partly due to the contributions of war veterans like AKKU CHOWDHURY, Trustee, Liberation War Museum. Chowdhury urged the delegates to use lessons from the history of the Liberation War to forge pathways for the future.

Minority of young people are still doubtful about war crimes tribunal
The youth’s fervent interest in the Liberation War also stems from the recent highly politicized war-crimes trial, four decades after the war. The current government has issued the tribunals to bring to account the locals who collaborated with Pakistani forces in the war of 1971. While most young people support this effort, a few delegates have shown reservations about the process.

Of the respondents that felt Liberation War is a thing of the past, over half of those still want the war criminals to be prosecuted

To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statement:
Liberation War is a thing of the past and should not be a factor when deciding terms on bilateral agreements.
Pardoning ’71 war criminals is an option that can be considered by the government.
About one-fourth of the participants think pardoning ’71 war criminals is an option that can be considered by the government. Human rights and international watchdog groups have also expressed doubts about the legitimacy of the prosecution, partly because the accused belong to faith-based political oppositions.

**National identity preferred over religious identity**

Interestingly, English medium students prefer religious identity more than Madrassa and Bangla medium students. The preference for religious identity among English medium students may be a consequence of their privileged access to modern representations of Islam through social media, Youtube and the internet. It is also worth noting that majority of the Summit delegates prefer national identity over religious identity. This very likely mirrors the sentiment of the young population in Bangladesh, who live in a country that was founded on the principle of secularism.

**Nuanced views about the role of war in bilateral talks**

In contrast to the majority preference for national identity, the delegates exhibited mixed views about the role that the Liberation War should play in deciding pressing issues today. Almost half of the respondents agreed to some extent that Liberation War is a thing of the past and should not be a factor when deciding terms on bilateral agreements. The Liberation War continues to influence Bangladesh’s relations with its neighbors, especially India. India contributed generous aid and assisted Bangladesh during the war. Bangladesh, therefore, has a strong allegiance to India but its vulnerability in the region has weakened its leverage with India when entering bilateral talks. These constraints in the face of disputes over common river systems and regular border skirmishes have frustrated the general public in Bangladesh.

It is also worth mentioning that of the respondents that felt Liberation War is a thing of the past, over half of them still want the war criminals to be prosecuted. Delegates feel that the Liberation War is disadvantageous in the context of bilateral negotiations but is important in domestic affairs. The war crimes trial is not simply a reassessment of the past; it is also a historical event that will define the country’s culture and rule of law for future generations.

“When you go back home, tell them that we have sacrificed our present for their future.”

**LT. COL. JAFAR IMAM (RETD.), Bir Bikram**
Opposition to quota system for freedom fighters’ children
Regardless of whether young people believe that the Liberation War is a thing of the past, Bangladesh has been shaped by this historic event of mammoth importance. One of the direct impacts of the war on the youth is the instatement of a quota system in 1972, whereby thirty percent of the positions in government service are reserved for the children of freedom fighters. A similar quota exists in schools. However, about two-third of the respondents oppose the quota system for freedom fighters’ children/grandchildren in universities and government jobs.

Opponents argue that such allowances undermine merit-based recruitment. Some even believe it exploits war nostalgia for political mileage. According to LT. JAFAR IMAM (retd.), Bir Bikram, war veterans are not truly revered in society. The government can rather take steps to improve their condition by enhancing social security and rehabilitation programs.

The country has stabilized significantly over the years but modern-day injustices have become the new battle front. The youth may not know the solution to these new challenges immediately, but they can learn the strategies on how to tackle them. MAJOR DIDAR A. HUSSAIN (retd.), Trustee, Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB) and ABDUL MATIN CHOWDHURY, Managing Director, Malek Spinning Mills Limited, recounted how they joined the war with no prior knowledge on warfare and without proper arms. Similarly, they said, that young people must be ready to stand up when they see injustice in society, even if it requires taking some risks and speaking uncomfortable truths.

YOUTH IN ACTION
HIMEL CHOWDHURY
BBLT 4
CIDER International School

CHOWDHURY discovered the true spirit of patriotism when he worked with the impoverished people of Motjharna community as part of the community service component in BBLT 4. The experience taught him that Bangladesh belonged to the impoverished as much as it did to the wealthy and instilled in him the determination to make a difference in his community.

Chowdhury had always had a passion for history and has taken it upon himself to help his peers be fully aware of the rich past of Bangladesh, lest the next generation forget the contribution of the martyrs of 1971 in creating the country. Chowdhury’s fascination for the Liberation War began when he started looking for more information about the country’s history through the social science texts that his English medium education provided. Dissatisfied, he branched to Bangla medium textbooks but he found the curriculum lacking as well. Consequently, he found that young people who wished to better acquaint themselves with the history of their country were unable to do so because there was a dearth of good historical literature. He realized that it would be difficult to create a patriotic spirit amongst young people in the absence of locally produced knowledge and set out to tackle the problem.

At BYLC, Chowdhury learnt that to exercise effective leadership it is important to reach out to the marginalized factions of society. Chowdhury, representing a religious minority group in Bangladesh, was initially hesitant about raising his voice. Building on his BBLT lessons he confronted his fears and brought forward the issue of raising awareness among his peers and elders who could provide support. An eloquent speaker, Chowdhury arranges discussions to bring people of different outlooks on the same platform.

Chowdhury is in the process of building a library that showcases the history of the Liberation War. He believes that collective efforts by individuals and organizations can enlighten the next generation. However, he cannot gather many historical documents due to political censorship. Chowdhury looks forward to the day when he can portray the true, complete history of the Liberation War to our youth.
Bangladesh Youth Leadership Center (BYLC), the country’s first leadership institute, was founded with the vision of creating a more inclusive, tolerant and just society by training the next generation of home-grown leaders. Originally developed at Harvard University in 2008, BYLC was established in Bangladesh in January 2009.

The signature program of BYLC is the four-month long leadership course, Building Bridges through Leadership Training (BBLT). This program, designed for students aged between 17 and 22, is offered twice a year in Chittagong and Dhaka. Besides the BBLT program, BYLC also conducts month-long leadership programs for secondary school students, Building Bridges through Leadership Training Junior (BBLT-J), and day-long workshops on leadership and entrepreneurship for university students and young professionals.

BYLC has over 400 graduates from 11 different programs, and collectively they have completed more than 18,000 hours of service in underprivileged communities. Over the past three years, BYLC’s innovative approach to leadership development has been recognized by, among others, BRAC, the private sector in Bangladesh, the U.S. State Department, the World Bank Group, the Asia Society, the International Youth Foundation and the Washington Post.

To consolidate the work of its different leadership programs, BYLC organized its first Youth Leadership Summit in March 2011. The Summit brought together 200 delegates from within and outside the BYLC network for three days of knowledge sharing and networking. The second Youth Leadership Summit will be held in Dhaka in April 2012.

In November 2011, BYLC moved to its new training facility and office in Baridhara, Dhaka. In the next few years, the organization intends to scale up its activities nationally and advocate for the introduction of leadership courses in school, college and university curriculum.
pi Strategy Consulting (www.pistrategy.org) is a strategy consulting firm committed to bringing leading edge management thinking to emerging economies, and sharing the best ideas from emerging economies with the rest of the world. The Firm offers consulting services at the confluence of strategy and innovation, and helps its clients develop innovative strategies to attain operational excellence and set long-term strategic directions.

Traditionally organizations in Bangladesh have had a history of seeking external advice on organizational issues relating to advertising, marketing, technology, human resources and finance. However, hardly any firm in Bangladesh seeks external advice on strategy since it is something that organizations tend to keep close to the heart. As a result, there is no consulting firm in the country that exclusively focuses on strategy.

Consequently, on one hand, global strategy consulting firms have not established presence in Bangladesh because of negligible market demand, inability of local organizations to justify the prohibitively expensive consulting fees of global strategy firms, and lack of meaningful local perspectives on the part of global strategy firms. On the other hand, a few local firms that offer secondary level of strategy consulting (in the form of marketing strategy or HR strategy) do not bring in-house capabilities in pure strategy that is at par with global strategy firms.

pi Strategy Consulting strongly believes that there is latent market opportunity for focused strategy consulting in Bangladesh today. And this latent opportunity has the potential to take shape into explicit market demand in a few years. It is with this conviction that the Firm has established a presence as a pioneer in pure strategy consulting in Bangladesh. By combining significant global strategy consulting experience, local perspectives, and human resources with credentials at par with global firms, pi Strategy Consulting creates a compelling value proposition for its clients.

The Firm’s Bangladesh office commenced operation in 2009. It serves as the hub of a network of Partner firms around the world that are involved in emerging market issues. In addition, the Firm brings a collection of thought leadership with a distinguished network of international advisors, called Friends of the Firm, and exposure to practitioners through the Partner firms and Fellows network.

The Firm’s name comes from the Greek character π, which denotes a mathematical constant, 3.14159..., that is also a transcendental number, meaning that no finite sequence of algebraic operation or integers can be equal to its value. The Firm is particularly drawn to this definition of a constant that’s never the same.

pi Strategy Consulting has core competencies in critical thinking and analysis that are built on design thinking principles. The Firm’s Innovation Framework is a construct guided by such design-led thinking. It uses three levers (creative process, distinctiveness and impact) to evaluate and assess the extent of the innovation as measured by many sub-levels of each lever. The framework also informs the analysis of how best to stimulate innovation.

By leveraging the experience of working with top tier clients and employing resources with academic qualifications from top universities around the world, pi Strategy Consulting uses its local and international network to bring global perspectives to its local clients.
"There is no easy path to leadership. You must learn how to communicate your thoughts and dreams for our nation and work together to achieve it. BYLC gives you this privileged platform to work with people from different backgrounds for a shared purpose."

DIPU MONI,
Honorable Foreign Minister of Bangladesh
at the Closing Ceremony of Youth Leadership Summit 2011
Charles Undeland, Senior Governance Advisor, The World Bank, giving acknowledgement to the other speakers at the Closing Ceremony during his remarks.

Delegates singing the national anthem at the beginning of the Ceremony.

Speaker line-up at the Closing Ceremony. (From left: Ejaj Ahmad, Founder & President, BYLC; Dipu Moni, Honorable Foreign Minister of Bangladesh; Gowher Rizvi, Member, International Advisory Board of BYLC & Advisor to the Honorable Prime Minister of Bangladesh; James F. Moriarty, Former U.S. Ambassador to Bangladesh.)

Gala Dinner on the third and last day of the Youth Leadership Summit 2011.

Awards Distribution of BBLT 4 and BBLT 5 graduates at the Closing Ceremony.