



**How can we foster compassion,
competence, and courage?**

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A NOTE from the founder



Dear Friends,

Our journey began in 2009 with the assumption that one of the root causes of poverty in Bangladesh is a lack of competent leadership. We have spent the past five years experimenting with this simple theory of change: if young people from diverse backgrounds are brought together, equipped with leadership skills, and engaged in service, we can create a more inclusive, just, and tolerant society.

Tolerance, as we have seen throughout national events in 2013, is still a collective challenge for our society. The youth uprisings in Shahbagh and Shapla Chattar brought to the fore the polarization that exists in our country today. We believe that the main reason for this divide among the young generation is the differences engendered in their mindsets by our divergent education system. Our signature Building Bridges through Leadership Training (BBLT) program, which has been uniting youth from English, Bangla, and Madrassa medium backgrounds for the past five years, is an original response to this challenge.

So far, we have provided leadership training to more than 1400 students, through 10 BBLT programs, 6 BBLT-Junior programs, 5 Art and Practice of Leadership programs, 2 Youth Leadership Summits, and 1 Youth Leadership Bootcamp. Measuring the impact of leadership programs is never simple, but as we neared our five-year milestone the time was ripe to take a critical look at our approach and make mid-course corrections before forging ahead. Last year, we commissioned a study with the Research and Evaluation Division (RED) of BRAC, the world's largest NGO, to do an impact assessment of our signature leadership program. Early indicators of the study show that there is a significant improvement in the inclusive mindset of the students who underwent our program compared to students in the control group who did not. This encourages us to believe that the work we are doing is making a significant difference in Bangladesh.

The past year was also a year of reflection for us during which we probed the larger question of how to translate the leadership education of young people into a systemic

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change in leadership for the nation. Many of our graduates go on to start new organizations and initiatives for social change, but are unable to sustain or expand them. An example close to home was the launch of the BYLC Graduate Network (BGN) which took a much longer time to become functional than expected. One of the core skills we advocate at BYLC is 'learning-by-doing' and initially, the entire responsibility of building the network was handed off to our alumni. We felt the struggles of launching a new organization would enrich our graduates with optimal learning.

However, we realized that we had pitted them against too many challenges without adequate support, which was why BGN struggled to take off even after a year. As an organization, we needed to provide the right balance of challenge and support for our graduates. We did so by letting them use our office space and helping them advertise and organize events through our facilities. This has given the alumni network the right platform to grow. Recently, BGN partnered with a private sector organization to organize a winter clothes drive in a village in Pirjog district in northern Bangladesh where the Hindu community has been a target of communal violence.

The importance of providing ongoing support ties in closely with our desire to create systemic change in the quality of leadership at the national level. With faculty from MIT Sloan School of Management, we have developed a systems map whereby we aspire to provide this support in two ways: 1) ongoing training of alumni and 2) innovating practices in leadership tailored to the context of Bangladesh. The L-Lab of BYLC, a design lab for leadership innovation set to be launched in the third quarter of 2014, will serve as a creative space where our graduates can experiment without fear of failure. It is our next step towards preparing our youth for high-impact roles in public, private, and civil sectors and towards accomplishing the BYLC vision: a poverty-free Bangladesh.

A significant achievement in 2013 was BYLC's partnership with the Ministry of Youth and Sports. The Memorandum of Understanding signed between BYLC and the Ministry of Youth and Sports is the beginning of the systemic change that BYLC strives to accomplish.

By equipping the trainers of the ministry with leadership skills, this collaboration will make a significant impact at the grassroots level. BYLC firmly believes in multi-stakeholder partnerships to advance leadership development in Bangladesh. BYLC will be a center of excellence for leadership education, and as such, we hope to disseminate our knowledge to other channels and partners for greater, long-lasting impact in society.

As we reflect on our journey so far, we are humbled and filled with gratitude for all our supporters, friends, partners, and students who understand how important building one's leadership skills are, and well-wishers, including our donors. Thank you so much for being with us. We are indebted to you for your commitment to our cause and look forward to your continued support. As BYLC steps into its sixth year, I am more hopeful, more excited, and more positive about the kind of work we are doing. In the pages that follow, I invite you to learn more about our work, the stories of our graduates, and the terrific things that they are accomplishing, both for themselves and for Bangladesh.

Sincerely,



Ejaj Ahmad
Founder & President

Our vision is to create a poverty-free Bangladesh driven by the next generation of home-grown leaders.

WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

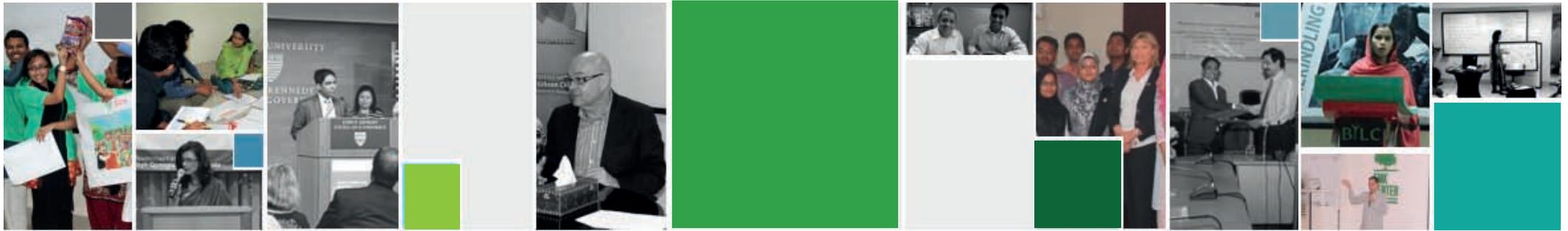
Bangladesh Youth Leadership Center (BYLC), the first leadership institute in Bangladesh, operates on the belief that with the right training and cultivation, the current generation of Bangladeshi youth can become the next generation of home-grown leaders, have high impact in private, public and civil sectors, and create a poverty-free Bangladesh. Conceptualized at Harvard University and MIT in 2008 and established in Bangladesh in 2009, BYLC has brought the best of global leadership education, adapted it to suit the learning needs of Bangladeshi youth, and made it available and pertinent to youth who would otherwise not have had the opportunity to receive such an education.

In Bangladesh, young people between the ages of 10-24 years constitute about 32% of the population. According to a recent ILO study, around 1.8 million young people in Bangladesh enter the job market every year and there are

only 200,000 job openings in the formal sector. BYLC has a series of programs aimed at youth of different ages, with focus on different facets of public service and leadership. We teach our program participants to comprehend leadership as an activity or process, not as a position of authority. When we look at leadership as an activity that mobilizes a group to make progress on a common challenge, this shift in mindsets opens up new and exciting opportunities for participatory development processes.

“BYLC’s work of creating an inclusive, tolerant, and just society by uniting youth from English, Bengali, and Madrassa medium backgrounds is much needed in our society. To take our country forward, we need our youth to lead with courage and patriotism, and to perform their duties from their respective positions.”

- Lt. Col. (Rtd.) Quazi Saijad Ali Zahir, Birprotik



January

5th, BYLC Graduate Network (BGN) celebrated BYLC's fourth anniversary in Chittagong.

6th, Building Bridges through Leadership Training Junior 5 and 6 (BBLT-J 5 and 6) start in Dhaka and Chittagong respectively.

February

7th, BBLT-J 5 and 6 concluded.

March

2nd, BYLC Graduate Network (BGN) was launched at BRAC Center Inn, Dhaka. More than 400 guests attended, and Lt. Col. (Rtd.) Quazi Saijad Ali Zahir, Birprotik was the keynote speaker.

15th-17th, BYLC's launched its first Leadership Workshop for Media Professionals.

31st, Viraj M. LeBailly (director of the American Center) and Ms. Nicole Chulick (deputy director of the U.S. State Department's Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs) joined BYLC graduates in a discussion to learn more about their vision for Bangladesh.

May

11th, Ejaj Ahmad (founder of BYLC) received the Harvard Kennedy School Rising Star Award 2013 in recognition for his work with BYLC.

18th, BYLC hosted the first of a two-part introductory workshop on leadership skills for aspiring young entrepreneurs and innovators.

June

6th, His Excellency Robert W. Gibson (British High Commissioner to Bangladesh) and guest speakers Dr. Fahima Aziz (vice chancellor of the Asian University for Women) and Rosemary Arnott (director of the British Council) participated in a panel discussion with BYLC graduates.

12th, Arsalan Ni (regional ventures coordinator at IFC, World Bank Group) visited BYLC to discuss funding strategies and management skills for entrepreneurs.

8th, BYLC hosted the second introductory workshop on leadership skills for aspiring young entrepreneurs and innovators.

15th, BYLC organized The Art and Practice of Leadership 2 (APL 2) at the EMK Center.

September

14th-16th, BYLC organized The Art and Practice of Leadership 3 (APL 3) at the EMK Center.

October

5th-7th, BYLC organized its first Youth Leadership Bootcamp in Chittagong.

November

2nd, BYLC hosted a conversation with Her Excellency Anneli Lindahl Kenny (Swedish Ambassador to Bangladesh) on "Reflections on the Importance of Young Leadership."

6th BYLC signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Youth and Sports, whereby the two organizations will jointly design and deliver leadership programs for rural youth.

15th, BGN facilitated an event at BYLC Headquarters to support 22 families affected by the Savar Rana Plaza collapse. The graduates distributed cash and sewing machines worth Taka 360,000 to the victims and their families.

19th, BYLC held a Career Planning Workshop for APL graduates.

December

9th, A U.S. State Department delegation visited BYLC to learn about our innovative approach to youth development.

13-15th BYLC's organized its second Leadership Workshop for Media Professionals.

20th, BYLC hosted a strategy retreat with board members, management, and alumni.

30th, BRAC organized a workshop at BRAC's Research and Evaluation Division to finalize methodology for BYLC's upcoming impact assessment report on the BBLT program.

A YEAR IN REVIEW

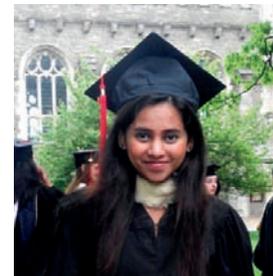
OUR GRADUATES

“The initial attention that we got after the tragedy has faded and many of us feel that we have been forgotten. However, our sorrow continues as many of the victims in this room are still struggling to get back to workplace. I thank the graduates of BYLC for remembering us.”

- Arjuna Akter, a victim of the Savar Rana Plaza collapse speaking at a BGN event



Marjuk Ahmad (BBLT 2 graduate) and Fahim Aziz (BBLT 3 graduate) participated in the Model United Nations conference in New York from March 17-21, 2013.



Tonima Tasnim Annana (BBLT 2 graduate) received a full scholarship to pursue a PhD in physics at Yale University.



Shuddha Chowdury (BBLT 8 graduate) received a full post-graduate scholarship and research assistantship at the University of Idaho in USA, to study Electrical and Computer Engineering.



Gazi Md. Ibrahim Kholil (APL 2 graduate) won the “Business Idea Execution Competition” at the National Entrepreneur Summit in July in Dhaka. Ibrahim’s team presented an idea on generating sufficient gas from food wastage through their “SmartGas” plant for the household.

“BYLC taught me that it’s not necessary to work under a banner to make a difference, and that you don’t have to work on every issue plaguing the country—you need to work on the issues you feel most passionately about because you will approach those with the most conviction.”

- Tonima Tasnim Ananna, PhD candidate at Yale University, BBLT 2 graduate and BBLT-J 1 project coordinator



Osama Bin Noor (BBLT 5 graduate), General Secretary for Volunteer for Bangladesh and on the founding board of BGN, was awarded the Kafka Youth Icon’s “International Youth Icon” award.



Syeda Lammin Ahad (BBLT 3 graduate), Rimu Byadya (BBLT 4 graduate), and Kazi Mikutil Islam (BBLT 6 graduate) were selected for the Study of the US Institute (SUSI) for Public Policy and Government Leadership program.



BBLT 9 graduates Indira Rahman, Md. Zahidur Rahman, Munzurul Hasan, and Sadi Mohammad Tarif received a \$1,000 grant from Meridian International Center for the continuation of their Road to School (R2S) project, which they set up during their BBLT program. They have continued to support the initiative independently over the past one-and-a-half years.



42 PARTICIPANTS IN EACH PROGRAM

370+ GRADUATES

10 PROGRAMS

25,000+ HOURS OF COMMUNITY SERVICE

ORGANIZED IN DHAKA AND CHITTAGONG

Building Bridges through Leadership Training (BBLT)

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Building Bridges through Leadership Training (BBLT) is BYLC's two-and-a-half month long signature leadership training program designed for students between the ages of 17 and 22. It enrolls 42 students from three different educational mediums, namely English medium, Bengali medium, and Madrassa medium, in equal numbers based on a competitive selection process.

The program is divided into two phases:

Phase 1: Participants undergo an intensive six-week program on leadership. Classes are scheduled five-days a week, three hours per day. Teaching methodologies include a combination of lectures, large class discussions, small group peer consultations, reflection exercises, and teambuilding exercises.

Phase 2: After learning about leadership for the first six weeks of the program, participants spend the remaining four weeks in local communities, putting into practice what they have learned in the classroom. They design small but realistic, measurable, and result-driven projects to serve an impoverished community. While implementing the projects, the participants step out of their comfort zone to make a difference in the lives of others. The action-based leadership experience often inspires our participants to continue with their community service even after the program ends. Many of our graduates remain engaged in the community through other volunteer

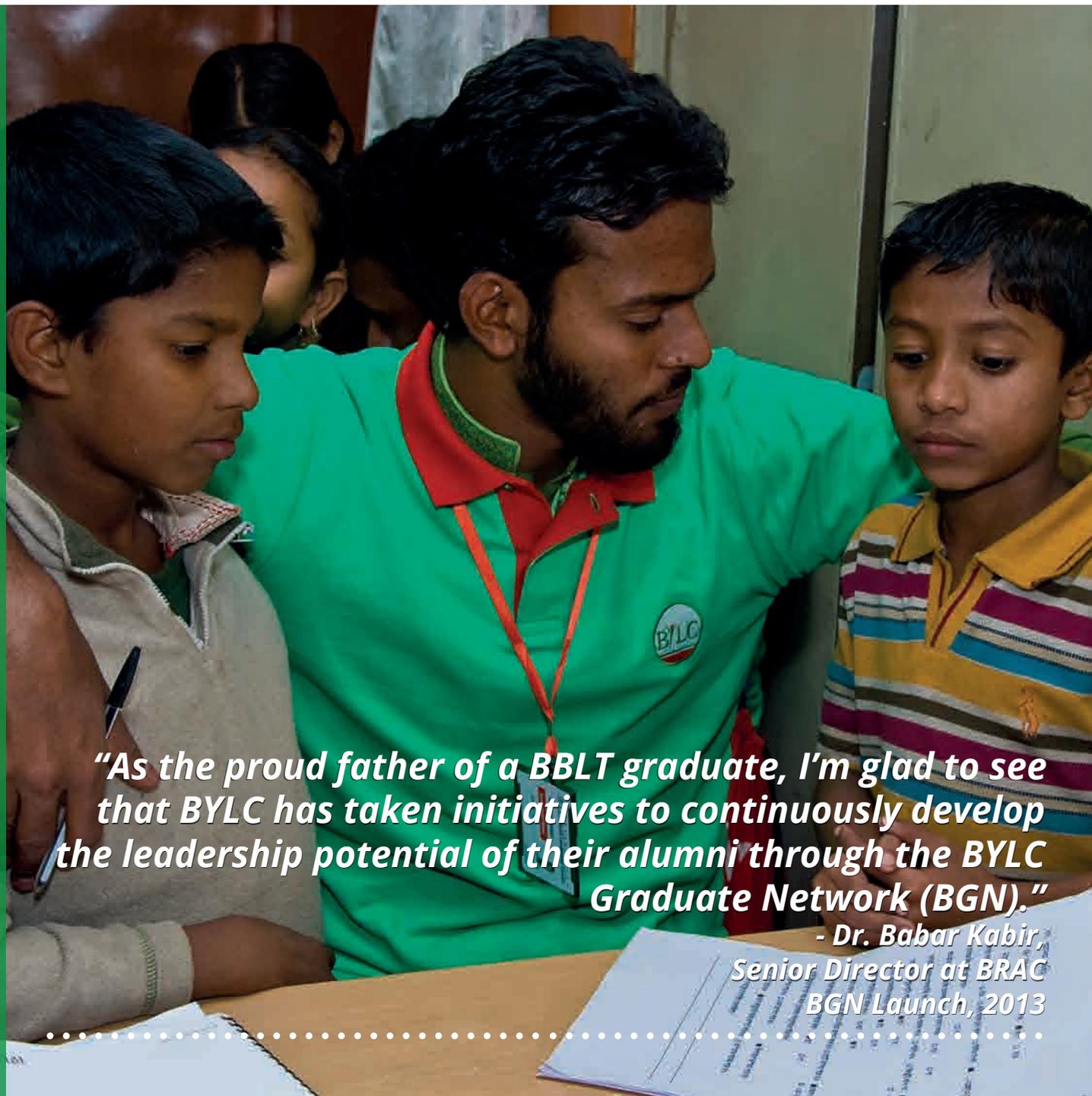
organizations while some even choose to launch their own initiatives.

The curriculum for this program draws heavily on leadership courses taught at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government. The intense pace of the program, coupled with an experiential learning model, makes the coursework engaging for the participants. The classroom is where students run experiments, take risks, and question their deeply held assumptions, and the community service projects are where they put their learning into action.

Building Bridges through Leadership Training (BBLT) is BYLC's two-and-a-half month long signature leadership training program designed for students between the ages of 17 and 22. It enrolls 42 students from three

Objective

- To create a space where students from diverse educational and socio-economic backgrounds can engage in dialogue and work together to foster tolerance and pluralism
- To develop their leadership, critical thinking, problem solving and communications skills
- To engage them in active citizenship and public service



“As the proud father of a BBLT graduate, I’m glad to see that BYLC has taken initiatives to continuously develop the leadership potential of their alumni through the BYLC Graduate Network (BGN).”

***- Dr. Babar Kabir,
Senior Director at BRAC
BGN Launch, 2013***



Building Bridges through Leadership Training Junior (BBLT-J)

BBLT-J is a month-long program designed for secondary school students in grades 6 to 10. Modeled after BYLC's four-month long BBLT program, BBLT-J follows the same selection criteria and classroom training, but focuses on sensitizing a younger audience on values of ethics, teamwork, community service, and socio-environmental issues.

Although its broad objectives and curriculum remain the same as that of BBLT, the BBLT-J program is adapted to suit the learning needs and maturity of students aged between 12 and 16. BBLT-J, introduced in 2010, is an initiative of BBLT graduates, who act as facilitators and mentors to younger students and instill in them values of leadership, active citizenship, and tolerance. In 2013, BYLC implemented BBLT-J 5 and BBLT-J 6 in Dhaka and Chittagong, respectively.

Objective

- To provide BBLT graduates with an opportunity to engage in peer mentoring and teaching
- To sensitive secondary school students to concepts of responsible citizenship, ethics, and leadership
- To foster tolerance in society by creating a platform that facilitates dialogue among youth from diverse socio-economic, educational, and religious backgrounds.



2 PROGRAMS IN 2013

1 MONTH LONG AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM FOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

6 PROGRAMS ORGANIZED IN DHAKA AND CHITTAGONG

180+ GRADUATES

IN 2013, SOME OF THE SPEAKERS INCLUDED:
ELITA KARIM (FEATURE EDITOR AT THE DAILY STAR; WRITER,
SINGER)

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“With the leadership skills I have learned from BYLC and my work experience at Volunteer for Bangladesh, I want to contribute to the development of education in the Madrassa stream. I plan on arranging workshops and lessons under various organizations like British Council where Madrassa students can learn English.”

- Osama Bin Noor, BBLT 5 graduate

HEAR FROM OUR GRADUATES

I was a BBLT-J participant in January 2013, and the experience really altered my perspective. For me, the term ‘leadership’ holds more than just political connotations—‘leadership’ is now a process, an integrated aspect of my normal life. BBLT-J didn’t make me the “smartest,” but I believe it made me a leader.

BYLC was my first step towards experiencing teamwork with different types of people. I was exposed to the views of students from English, Bengali, and Madrassa mediums, and when we generated ideas, I discovered their thinking patterns, learned a lot from them, and was very surprised by the variety of solutions we came up with to tackle the same problem.

BBLT-J was a wonderful chance to step out of my comfort zone and create links with students outside of my immediate school circle. I admit that before BYLC I never actually knew what students from Madrassa medium were like. But after interacting with them, observing them, and hearing different perspectives from them, I discovered they were not all that different.

I can say that being with people from different mediums was a great privilege for me. In BYLC, the people around are not just from our own schools, but from many different places. However, we all face the same problems. Now I know that leadership is not about working with just your own people, but also reaching out to people from other backgrounds and beliefs and coming together with a common goal.

Ayesha Abrar,
BBLT-J 5 graduate
(International Turkish Hope School)

A woman with her hair in a braid, wearing a floral patterned top, is seen from the back, speaking into a microphone. She is addressing a group of people seated in a room. The background is softly blurred, showing the audience members. The overall lighting is warm and yellowish.

The Art and Practice of Leadership (APL)

APL is a three-day national workshop designed for third and fourth year university students. Participants undergo a transformative journey as they learn how to apply the concepts of leadership in both their personal and professional lives. The program provides an opportunity for participants to objectively discuss their career options with professionals who have recently transitioned from academic to professional life.

Objectives

- To encourage participants to put leadership theories into practice
- To boost their confidence and improve their communication skills
- To sensitize participants to the realities of the workplace

In 2013, some of the speakers included:

Asif Zahir (MBA candidate at Harvard Business School and director at Ananta Group)
Arif Shahriar (COO & Group Head of Human Resource, Rahimafrooz Bangladesh Limited)
Kamran Bakr (Chairman and Managing Director, Unilever Bangladesh)

HEAR FROM OUR GRADUATES

As a budding entrepreneur in the e-commerce sector, I was clueless as to how to start my career and did not have an end goal in sight. I doubted whether I could make it. I feared failure. What would happen if I failed? Could I deal with the consequences? Negativity occupied my mind. I had many false starts.

After looking at the obstacles I was facing, I discovered that lack of leadership skills was my main challenge. That's when I came to learn about BYLC, and APL. From the start, my experience at APL was different. I found myself surrounded by fifty talented young people from diverse backgrounds—they were from all over the country. I learned the difference between leadership and authority, something that cleared my previous misconceptions about leadership. I was taught that leadership could be taught and learned through practice.

I found the small group case consultations, with cases picked from real experiences, to be effective and practical. It changed my outlook. It taught my teammates and I to consider different perspectives, as well as how to

work together. Presenting our work in front of a large audience was a tough experience, but I learned how to effectively convey my message to others. By the time the program ended, we came away with a lot of learning, experience, and invaluable friendships—all this, in just three days!

Ever since, I've applied my learning from APL to real life, and now I'm approaching the last phase of launching my own e-commerce site. I am grateful to BYLC for giving me the push I needed to start my own venture.

Gazi Md. Ibrahim Kholil
APL 2 graduate
(Management Studies, University of Dhaka)

2 PROGRAMS IN 2013

3 DAY WORKSHOP FOR THIRD AND FOURTH YEAR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

50 PARTICIPANTS IN EACH PROGRAM

130+ GRADUATES



Next Generation of Media Professionals (NGMP)

Next generation of Media Professionals is a three-day workshop that brings together students or recent graduates who aspire to have a career in journalism and media. Participants are encouraged to think about the application of leadership in journalism and media and reminded of the importance of being courageous and ethical in a profession that greatly influences the opinions of others. They emerge from the program with a stronger sense of purpose and more aware of their role and responsibility in society.

Objectives

- To build leadership capacity of aspiring media professionals and equip them with analytical skills to effectively observe, interpret and intervene in any social setting
- To foster a network among the next generation of media professionals from different educational and socio-economic backgrounds
- To instill in them values of leadership, courage and ethical standards of journalism

In 2013, some of the speakers included:

Zafar Sobhan (Founding board member of BYLC and editor of Dhaka Tribune)
Rishi Datta (Resident director at the National Democratic Institute in Bangladesh)

1 PROGRAMS IN 2013
3 DAY WORKSHOP FOR ASPIRING MEDIA PROFESSIONALS
50 GRADUATES

HEAR FROM OUR GRADUATES

BYLC's Leadership Development for the Next Generation of Media Professionals workshop was a personally and professionally meaningful experience, a great use of time, energy, and intellectual resources. I've emerged from it with better, more specific ideas about how I can meaningfully contribute to and shape the journalism of tomorrow. The three-day workshop has, to a great extent, cultivated my perspectives on the value of critical thinking and practicing leadership. What I learned from the workshop is leadership cannot be practiced through force, rather it means building consensus and uniting people with a shared vision.

Today, leadership to me is synonymous with a an activity or process that can be applied to everyday life through critical thinking. During the workshop, I discovered a correlation between leadership practice and journalism. The thought patterns of a leader can be applied to the work ethic of a journalist. A journalist who strives for excellence can play a vital role in creating an impact on readers, society, and the country through practicing leadership in his/her every assignment. The

workshop has taught me to think critically while working on the field and enhanced my teamwork, public speaking, and presentation skills—qualities as important for a journalist as for a leader. Or indeed, anyone. I have learned how to address problems, dismantle obstacles, and figure out proper solutions, something that can be invaluable in every sphere of life—personal and professional.

Most importantly, this workshop also improved my understanding of the important role of ethics and courage in building a career in media and journalism. A highlight of the workshop was getting to meet new people and building lasting networks with the next generation of media professionals. The friendly environment and my talented and inspiring co-participants have made those three days an extremely memorable event in my life.

Abid Azad, NGMP graduate,
(feature writer at New Age Xtra)



Youth Leadership Bootcamp (YLB)

The Youth Leadership Bootcamp is designed around three central attributes of leadership: exploration, experience, and expression, and their application in personal and professional lives. The program consists of discussions on the practice of leadership, negotiation exercises, team-building games, peer learning activities, visits to leading public, private and non-profit organizations, and network opportunities with like-minded peers and professionals from diverse fields. At the end of the program, participants will not only come out with tangible skills to make them more competitive in their careers, but also gain the skills needed to carve out a more compelling vision for themselves as responsible citizens.

Objectives

- To encourage participants to explore their own unique leadership style
- To allow them to experience real-world challenges and business practices in the private, public, and non-profit sector
- To help them express themselves through concisely and effectively in an increasingly competitive job market

In 2013, some of the speakers included:

Zafar Sobhan (Founding board member of BYLC and editor of Dhaka Tribune)
Rishi Datta (Resident director at the National Democratic Institute in Bangladesh)

LEADERSHIP

is about **MOBILIZING PEOPLE**

COLLECTIVE PURPOSE FOR A SOCIAL GOOD



WE BELIEVE IN **YOUR CAPACITY**



7 BILLION PEOPLE IN THIS WORLD & everybody is DIFFERENT. YOU SHOW YOUR DIFFERENCE -Munir Hassan

EXPLORE

WHAT IS LEADERSHIP?



4 PLAYER MODEL

STEP OUTSIDE YOUR COMFORT ZONE

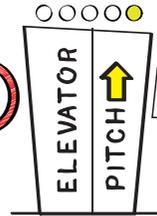
YOU GET WHAT YOU **NEGOTIATE** NOT WHAT YOU DESERVE

NEGOTIATION



4 TYPES OF CONVERSATION

60 SECONDS



THIS CAN!!! BE YOU!!!

WHAT DOES A **RESUME** TELL ABOUT YOU?

★ RELEVANT INDUSTRY EXPERIENCE

★★ LEADERSHIP QUALIFICATION

★★ ABILITY TO PRESENT IMPORTANT INFORMATION EFFECTIVELY

EXPERIENCE

KNOW REAL WORLD CHALLENGES



ATTACK THE PROBLEM NOT THE PEOPLE

GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP



YOU MAYBE QUALIFIED but YOU NEED TO BE **CERTIFIED**

EXPRESS

HAVE A PERSONAL **ACTION PLAN**

ANCHOR YOURSELF

YOUTH LEADERSHIP bootcamp



HEAR FROM OUR GRADUATES

I first saw Youth Leadership Bootcamp poster on the notice board of my university. As I stared at it, I was skeptical; how could there be a program on "leadership training"? Could leadership even be taught? I applied to the program out of curiosity and found it to be a highly competitive process. From the round one interview, it drove me to critically think and look at problems from multiple points of view. When I finally got in, I was thrilled.

The days at the Bootcamp were full of activities. During the exposure visit to the Chittagong Customs House, my teammates and I learned firsthand the basic structure of a government run organization, how it operates, and also the career opportunities in that sector.

I realized that in order to make myself stand out, solid preparation and clear purpose was key. On the third and final day of the Bootcamp, as I prepared my action plan for the next one year, I was driven to think about my role in a larger system. As a part of the youth demographic, I wondered: how would my actions determine the future of my country?

The Bootcamp has definitely been a great learning experience. BYLC has arranged an excellent program, and I eagerly look forward to getting involved with BYLC again.

Maisha Jesmin,
Bootcamp 2013 graduate
(Economics, University of Dhaka)

1 ST YOUTH LEADERSHIP BOOTCAMP

1 ST RESIDENTIAL PROGRAM FOR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

3 DAYS

90+ PARTICIPANTS

1155 APPLICATIONS FROM 188 INSTITUTIONS

DON'T JUST DREAM.

ACT.