



ANNUAL REPORT  
2014



B A N G L A D E S H  
Youth Leadership Center



## *VISION*

Bangladesh Youth Leadership Center's (BYLC) vision is to create a poverty-free Bangladesh driven by the next generation of home-grown leaders.

## *MISSION*

BYLC works to bridge gaps in society by uniting youth from diverse backgrounds, equipping them with leadership, problem solving and teamwork skills, and engaging them in community service and active citizenship.



---

Bangladesh Youth Leadership Center (BYLC), a registered nonprofit leadership institute, aims to create an inclusive, tolerant, and just society by training the next generation of home-grown leaders. Conceptualized at Harvard University and MIT in 2008, BYLC has brought the best of global leadership education to Bangladesh. Over the past six years, BYLC has trained more than 2200 high school, college, and university students, who have logged over 30,000 community service hours, and many of whom have gone on to leadership roles across Bangladesh.

---





## A Note from the Founder

Dear Friends,

We began our journey in 2009 with the belief that one of the root causes of poverty in Bangladesh is a lack of inclusive and capable leadership. We spent the past six years experimenting with the simple idea that if young people from diverse backgrounds are brought together—equipped with leadership skills and engaged in service—we can create a more just, tolerant, and inclusive society that can lift people out of poverty.

Despite the many economic and political challenges affecting us every day, we, at Bangladesh Youth Leadership Center (BYLC), are optimistic about the country's future. We believe that in a divided polity, our common identity as Bangladeshis can bring us together as a people, if we emphasize the values that unite us instead of the forces that divide us. We pin our hopes on the youth of Bangladesh, who can bring forth an incredible surge in energy, creativity, and compassion that can transform Bangladesh. We believe that it is our responsibility to harness this energy and to prepare our youth for effective leadership roles in society.

The current education system in Bangladesh, however, is an impediment to preparing youth for leadership roles. Secondary and tertiary level education is reliant on rote memorization and does not foster creativity, critical thinking, and leadership ability. Furthermore, a rise in education inequity across three different streams of education has deepened the fault lines in our social fabric.

BYLC's response to these problems was to bring the best of global leadership education to Bangladesh and adapt it to the Bangladeshi context. Moreover, to foster ideals of tolerance and pluralism among the youth, we try to create inclusive and representative classrooms. We invite students from all mediums of education—English, Bengali, and Madrassa alike—and instill in them values of courageous, compassionate, and competent leadership. This is a unique phenomenon in Bangladesh as students from the three different mediums rarely ever interact because of economic and social barriers. Our classrooms are an embodiment of our principle that leadership cannot happen without diversity.

So far, with the support from our partners, we have been able to disseminate transformative leadership education to over 2,200 high school, college, and university students from all three aforementioned mediums. In 2014, we hosted two Art and Practice of Leadership programs for third and fourth year university students, the eleventh edition of our flagship Building Bridges through Leadership Training program, and our third landmark Youth Leadership Summit, which brought together university students from both Bangladesh and abroad along with a constellation of senior leaders from the world of business, politics, academia, media, and the nonprofit sector.

Our graduates are now represented in leading academic and professional institutions, both at home and abroad. They have undertaken thousands of hours of community service and have founded a number of social initiatives that serve

underprivileged communities. To provide them with continuous learning and growth, we launched an exciting new initiative called the Leadership Lab, which serves as a platform for continuous learning and self-development for BYLC graduates. Through a series of workshops and events, the Leadership Lab disseminates knowledge that helps our graduates succeed in their personal and professional lives.

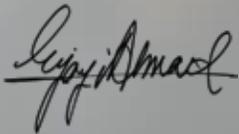
To understand our impact, we commissioned an external impact assessment report from the Research and Evaluation Division of BRAC, the world's largest NGO. The empirical study conducted by BRAC concluded that BYLC graduates are more independent in their thought process, are more adept at working with people from diverse backgrounds, and are more committed to community service activities. The study endorsed the impact of our leadership programs on youth and underscored the importance of increasing our reach to provide opportunities to many more young women and men across Bangladesh.

Encouraged by the impact we have had so far, BYLC has formulated a bold vision for the days ahead. We plan to expand outside of Dhaka and Chittagong to organize more leadership training programs and work closely with the government and civil sector organizations to incorporate leadership into school curriculum. We also plan to continue to invest in our stock of graduates by providing them with further opportunities for learning and experimentation.

Beyond our individual ideologies, we all aspire for a Bangladesh that will make us proud. What the nation will look like 20, 30, or even 50 years from now, is being decided in our classrooms today. Our greatest sense of accomplishment comes from transforming young women and men into the leaders that Bangladesh so desperately needs. We fight for a vision where a new stock of leaders, indomitable in spirit and unshakeable in their commitment to their country, will build a nation that will be a model to the world.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank our partners, supporters, and well-wishers for being with us in our journey. As we forge ahead to shape the future leaders of Bangladesh, we are filled with gratitude towards each one of you for your support. We are indebted to you for your commitment and look forward to your continued engagement. As BYLC steps into its seventh year, I am more hopeful, excited, and optimistic about the work we are doing. In the pages that follow, I invite you to learn more about our work and the accomplishments of our graduates, who justify the effort and energy we put in this humble endeavor.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ejaj Ahmad', written in a cursive style.

Ejaj Ahmad  
Founder and President  
Bangladesh Youth Leadership Center (BYLC)

## PROBLEM 01

Lack of social cohesion in Bangladesh caused by the divergent English, Bengali, and Madrassa mediums of education. The education inequity and ideological disparities that exist among the youth are contributing to widening rifts in society.

## SOLUTION

BYLC addresses this issue by working at the intersection of English, Bengali, and Madrassa mediums of education to provide a common platform for students from various backgrounds. They are encouraged to engage with each other in a collaborative learning environment where they develop a strong sense of mutual respect and understanding.

## PROBLEM 02

The existing educational curriculum based on rote memorization does not foster creativity, critical thinking, and leadership skills. Consequently, students are poorly prepared to transition into work life and rise to the challenges of the real world.

## SOLUTION

BYLC uses a cutting-edge pedagogy that cultivates critical thinking, problem solving, and communication skills. The highly experiential curriculum equips participants with new competencies that are necessary to adapt and thrive in a rapidly changing world.

## PROBLEM 03

There is a common misconception in Bangladesh that leadership can only be exercised by those in authority positions and not by individuals without formal authority. This perception leads to citizens constantly expecting solutions to their own problems to be provided by those in authority positions, whereas in reality, the solutions can be derived through collective ownership and problem solving.

## SOLUTION

BYLC defines leadership as an activity of mobilizing people to work towards positive change in society. We emphasize in our curriculum that leadership is work-centric, not person-centric. Therefore, we also encourage our students to translate this learning into action by proactively taking ownership of solving problems in society. This cultivates an ethos of self-driven leadership—a trait that is largely absent in society today.

# Year in Review

## January

US Ambassador Dan Mozena and a delegation from the US Embassy, Dhaka, visited BYLC to have a conversation with the BYLC team and graduates on the challenges and opportunities for youth leadership in Bangladesh.

BYLC celebrated its fifth year anniversary with the BYLC management team and the BYLC Graduate Network (BGN).

## February

Prosenjit Chakraborty, Senior Manager, International Marketing at Square Pharmaceuticals Limited, shared his perspectives with BYLC graduates at the workshop titled *Impact of Social Media on Personal Branding*.

*Youth Walk Bangladesh*, a BBLT 9 community service project, observed the International Mother Language Day by hosting an art competition and a cultural event with underprivileged children from the Tejgaon industrial community.

BYLC organized a three-day national workshop on the *Art and Practice of Leadership (APL)* at the EMK Center in Dhaka.

## March

BYLC Graduate Network (BGN) organized a daylong workshop called the *School of Life*—a program meant to inspire secondary students to engage in active citizenship in their local communities. The program was supported by the US State Department and the

Meridian International Center.

*The Building Bridges through Leadership Training (BBLT) 11* program was launched at the American Center, Dhaka.

BYLC President Ejaj Ahmad took a four-day long *Masterclass on Leadership* with BBLT facilitators where participants were taught the framework of leadership instruction.

Seven female ambassadors and UN officials in Bangladesh awarded a certificate of recognition to celebrate the achievements of BYLC female staff and graduates.

## June

The BBLT 11 graduation ceremony was held at the Bangladesh Institute of Bank Management (BIBM) Auditorium.

BYLC hosted a three-day *Youth Leadership Summit* titled *Strengthening the Spirit of Public Leadership: A Journey from I to We*. From over 2200 applicants, 500 local and international applicants were selected to participate. The event also hosted dignitaries from the public, private, and civil sectors who engaged in spirited dialogue with the Summit participants.

## August

The new BYLC Graduate Network (BGN) Executive Board members were elected for Dhaka and Chittagong.

## September

The fifth *Art and Practice of Leadership (APL)* program was held at the EMK Center in Dhaka.

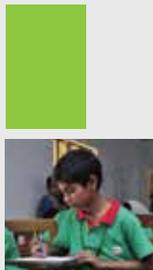
## November

The BYLC Management team along with Executive Board members of the BYLC Graduate Network (BGN) attended a learning session at the residence of the British High Commissioner, Robert Gibson. The session was conducted by Bryan Watters and Colonel Martyn Forgrave, experts in the field of leadership from the UK.

BRAC's Research and Evaluation Division (RED) extended the research study aimed at understanding the impact of the BBLT program. The study will now compare BBLT graduates with staff members of BRAC's Young Professionals Program.

## December

*Leadership Lab (L-Lab)*, a continuous learning platform for BYLC graduates, launched a workshop titled *Demystifying Innovation* with Pial Islam, a Founding Board Member of BYLC and Managing Partner of pi Strategy Consulting.



An abstract graphic on the left side of the page, consisting of several white lines that form overlapping geometric shapes, including triangles and rectangles, against a solid green background. The lines are thin and create a sense of depth and movement.

# Our Programs

# Building Bridges through Leadership Training (BBLT)

Building Bridges through Leadership Training (BBLT) is a 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 the three mediums of education, namely English, Bengali, and Madrassa mediums, in equal numbers based on a competitive selection process.

The curriculum for the program draws heavily from leadership courses taught at Harvard University. The intense pace of the program, coupled with an experiential learning model, makes the coursework engaging for the participants. In the classroom, the students run experiments, take risks, and question their deeply held assumptions. At the end of the program, the students have the opportunity to translate their learning into action by implementing community service projects in underprivileged communities.

The BBLT program is divided into two phases:

Phase 1: Participants undergo an intensive six-week program on leadership. Classes are scheduled for five days a week and three hours each day. Teaching methodologies include a combination of lectures, large class discussions, small group peer consultations, reflection, and team building 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 results-driven projects to serve impoverished communities. The action-based leadership curriculum often inspires the participants to continue with their community service projects even after the program ends.

Objectives:

- To create a space for students from diverse educational and socio-economic backgrounds to engage in meaningful dialogue that fosters tolerance and pluralism
- To develop leadership, critical thinking, problem solving, and communication skills
- To encourage the participants to engage in active citizenship and public service

**414**  
GRADUATES

**11**  
PROGRAMS

**23000+**  
HOURS OF COMMUNITY  
SERVICE



# Building Bridges through Leadership Training - Junior (BBLT-J)

Building Bridges through Leadership Training - Junior (BBLT-J) is a month long program designed for secondary school students in grades 6 to 10. The BBLT-J program follows the same selection criteria and classroom training as the BBLT program, but focuses on sensitizing a younger audience on values of ethics, teamwork, public speaking, and community service. The BBLT-J program 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.

The program is split into two parts. After three weeks of interactive classroom training which incorporates theories of leadership adapted from Harvard University, the participants delve deep into the practical applications of leadership through small group case consultation and public speaking workshops. The participants spend their final week translating their knowledge into action through community service projects in underprivileged communities. While the broad objectives 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 years. BYLC introduced this program in 2010 to inculcate values of leadership and active citizenship among a younger audience.

## Objectives:

- To foster tolerance in society by creating a platform that facilitates dialogue among youth from diverse socio-economic, educational, and religious backgrounds
- To sensitize secondary school students to concepts of responsible citizenship, ethics, and leadership
- To provide BBLT graduates with an opportunity to develop their leadership and mentorship skills

**183**

GRADUATES

**6**

PROGRAMS

**3000+**

HOURS OF  
COMMUNITY SERVICE





# The Art and Practice of Leadership (APL)

The Art and Practice of Leadership (APL) is a three-day national workshop for third and fourth year university students. The workshop provides participants with an exceptional opportunity to learn about leadership, communication, and career development. The participants undergo a stimulating personal journey that develops their leadership potential, promotes active citizenship, and helps them gain new competencies to better compete in the current job market.

Leaders are made, not just born—espousing this vision, every year BYLC organizes the APL workshop. As well as building the leadership capacity of the selected participants and equipping them with analytical skills to effectively observe, interpret, and intervene in any social setting, the APL workshop encourages participants to critically think about their careers and provides a practical orientation of the job market. Furthermore, the workshop develops the participants' confidence and communication skills and prepares them to perform well in a professional job environment. Through this workshop, BYLC motivates young people to become active and engaged citizens regardless of their career aspirations.

#### Objectives:

- To equip participants with the skills and knowledge necessary to exercise leadership in complex and challenging situations
- To offer resources geared towards the professional and analytical skills development of university students and to foster a greater exchange of views between students and seasoned professionals
- To provide the participants with a practical career orientation and guide them on how to stand out in today's tough job market

**235+**  
GRADUATES

**5**  
PROGRAMS

**50**  
PARTICIPANTS IN  
EACH PROGRAM

# Youth Leadership Summit (YLS)

The three-day Youth Leadership Summit (YLS) focuses on core challenges that the youth face while exercising leadership. YLS hosts young delegates in college, university, and professionals at entry level positions and brings them together with distinguished experts, innovators, and leaders in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors for a journey of collective exploration, reflection, and networking. The Summit features a mix of plenaries and concurrent panels on entrepreneurship, citizenship, global citizenship, education and career, climate change, women and leadership, politics, new media and innovation, interspersed with team-building activities and reflection sessions.

During the Summit, discussion focuses on how the youth can play a positive role in engaging institutions to bring about systematic change. In this conversation, the delegates are guided by experts in various fields, who have a deep understanding of policymaking and advocacy.

At the end of the Summit, the delegates are encouraged to initiate their own campaigns to tackle pressing issues in their respective communities. Each delegate is also asked to draft an individual action plan to document their resolutions coming out of the Summit.

#### Objectives:

- To build the capacity of students and young professionals to exercise leadership effectively on behalf of the issues they care about deeply
- To create a network among diverse groups of youth and to facilitate dialogue and mutual understanding across generations
- To empower youth to engage in policy dialogue with experts in diverse fields, and help them articulate their aspirations for the future

**1100+**  
PARTICIPANTS

**3**  
SUMMITS

**150**  
SPEAKERS





# Youth Leadership Bootcamp (YLB)

The Youth Leadership Bootcamp (YLB) is a four-day residential workshop for promising undergraduate students. The workshop is designed to be a transformative personal experience to generate innovative thinking and develop leadership skills. 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 four-day residential program consists of discussions on the practice of leadership, negotiation exercises, team-building games, peer learning activities, visits to leading public, private, and nonprofit organizations, and networking opportunities with like-minded peers from diverse fields. By the end of the program, participants not only develop an array of tangible skills to make them more competitive in their professional lives, but also gain a more insightful vision of how they can lead their lives as responsible citizens in society.

#### Objectives:

- To encourage participants to explore and hone their own unique leadership style
- To sensitize participants to the real-world challenges and business practices in the private, public, and nonprofit sectors through exposure visits
- To provide career counseling to participants and help them better articulate their career aspirations

**100**

PARTICIPANTS

**7**

DISTRICTS  
REPRESENTED BY  
PARTICIPANTS

**5**

INDUSTRY  
PARTNERS

# BYLC Graduate Network (BGN)

BYLC Graduate Network (BGN) is an alumni association of BYLC. BGN is governed by an elected board of BYLC graduates. It aims to create an enabling platform for BYLC graduates to exercise leadership for individual as well as community development. It is a vibrant platform that enables BYLC graduates to connect with and support each other. The platform also fosters personal and professional development and positively impacts social issues through community service and active citizenship.

BGN has successfully organized networking events, speaker series, and sports leagues as part of its outreach activities. Additionally, BGN has also hosted a number of informal learning events for its graduates. Going forward, BGN will work closely with the L-Lab to create more learning opportunities for its members.

## Objectives:

The mission of BGN is to foster the BYLC alumni network and keep the graduates connected to the vision and values of BYLC. BGN serves as the outreach and community building initiative for graduates, friends, and partners of BYLC at home and abroad. Through its different events and activities, BGN also nurtures the leadership potential of BYLC graduates.

**18**

EVENTS HOSTED  
BY BGN

**1350**

BENEFICIARIES  
SERVED

**16**

EXECUTIVE BOARD  
MEMBERS IN DHAKA  
AND CHITTAGONG





# Leadership Lab (L-Lab)

The Leadership Lab (L-Lab) is a continuous learning platform for BYLC graduates aimed at helping them improve their core competencies. The L-Lab was established as a response to the critical need to provide ongoing learning opportunities to our graduates to build their professional, technical, and self-development skills. Currently, the L-Lab disseminates knowledge through workshops and speaker events. Going forward, the L-Lab will endeavor to reach its target audience through new media such as social networking, websites, and mobile applications. The knowledge components will evolve in response to the needs of BYLC graduates through a feedback loop cycle that will continuously inform the curriculum development process.

The learning offerings at the L-Lab will be categorized into four key areas:

**Leadership Development:** will include refresher courses covering BYLC's signature leadership curriculum

**Professional Development:** will constitute of sessions on admissions counseling, career counseling, management techniques, presentation skills, and business etiquette

**Technical Development:** will include topics such as computer programming, graphic design, social media marketing, and financial analysis

**Self Development:** will focus on faculties of emotional intelligence such as self-awareness, social skills, empathy, and motivation

#### Objectives:

- To create a platform for continuous learning and development for BYLC graduates
- To develop a more holistic learning experience for BYLC graduates that will touch upon their diverse developmental needs
- To equip BYLC graduates to successfully transition into meaningful and high impact roles in the private, public, and civil sectors

**500+**

PEOPLE REGISTERED  
FOR L-LAB EVENTS

**200,000+**

PEOPLE REACHED  
THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA



## **Journey to the Light of Hope**

Journey to the Light of Hope depicts a ship caught in a stormy night. The captain of the ship is trying to lead the crew towards the safety of an island—a peaceful place basking in the warmth of the glowing sun. He is trying to show his crew the way, and they are rowing to shore, slowly but surely, through the turbulent waves. The picture is an imagery to represent the challenges of exercising leadership in the real world. Although the journey of leadership is full of obstacles, with patience, perseverance, and teamwork, these obstacles can be overcome, and a better future can be crafted.

*The picture was drawn by Amiya, Farah, Ovick, Sayeef, Shorno, and Taieb, participants of BYLC's Building Bridges through Leadership Training program.*

An abstract graphic on the left side of the page, consisting of several white lines that form overlapping geometric shapes, including triangles and a large arrow-like shape pointing to the right. The background is a solid orange color.

# Our Impact

# Hear from some of our Graduates



## Ovick Alam (BBLT 3):

Ovick is a digital media entrepreneur who loves to solve complex problems and build great teams that are committed to excellence. He is the Co-Founder and Managing Partner of WebAble, a digital creative agency, and is passionate about marketing technology. Ovick is a Co-Organizer of TEDxDhaka and Founder of BridgeWee. He has been trained in management and entrepreneurship in USA, UAE, and Sri Lanka. Ovick graduated from University of Dhaka in 2012 with a major in Marketing.

"At BYLC, I learned that I should not sit back and blame the authority for the problems I face. I should get down to the floor, deal with my problem, and take initiative. Even when you are not in the position of authority or a policymaking role, you still need to step forward and say, 'Let's do it!' That takes courage!"



## Zayan Waziha Faiyad (BBLT-J4):

Zayan is a freshman at Harvard College and a graduate of BBLT-J 4. She is actively involved in several organizations on campus, including the First Generation Student Union, the Social Innovation Collaborative, the Institute of Politics, and the Harvard College Students for Bangladesh. She is passionate about social innovation and gender advocacy, and believes that the key to development lies in improving social capital through fostering stronger networks of collaboration.

"Participating in the BBLT J-4 program was one of the most transformative experiences of my life. As I am currently navigating through life on campus and managing the pace, intensity, and explosion of opportunities, my lessons from the BBLT-J program have provided me with the perspective to get the most out of the experience without feeling overwhelmed. However, the values of tolerance and civic engagement that I have learned during the BBLT-J program will remain as my biggest accomplishments."



## Waiz Rahim: (Summit 2014)

Waiz loves to build innovative products. He is passionate about photography, filmmaking, startups, and tackling social causes but is also aware that there is only so much he can do by himself. This realization led him to build [www.projekt.co](http://www.projekt.co), a crowdfunding platform that he believes will empower artists, changemakers, and innovators. His past endeavors include working on an athletic apparel startup in Los Angeles and interning at the manufacturing facilities of Rahimafrooz. Waiz is currently studying Industrial and Systems Engineering at the University of Southern California.

"My greatest takeaway from the BYLC Summit was the principle of 'Leadership without Authority'—that we don't have to be in a position of authority to be leaders and create impact. Each one of us has the power to make a significant impact on a cause that we believe in or towards a given purpose, and it is this belief that has led me to build projekt.co—a platform that allows individuals to take initiative and make an impact."





### Indira Rahman (BBLT 9):

Indira is a graduate of BBLT 9 and a first year student at Franklin & Marshall College, USA. She is currently pursuing a double major in Astrophysics and English Literature as well as curating her own Special Studies in Global Terrorism. She was an intern at BYLC and now interns as a workshop leader at the Creative Writers Corps (CWC) program funded by F&M's Philadelphia Alumni Writers House. During November 2012, she founded Project Road to School (R2S) as part of BBLT 9's Leadership in Action requirement. Recently, she won the Kathryn W. Davis Foundation's Projects for Peace Prize for her plans to expand the R2S project. Indira is active in The College Reporter, F&M's student-run newspaper. She is also an active member of the F&M Debate Society and is the third debater in the school's history to earn qualifying points for national debate.

"BBLT 9 taught me how to apply leadership in everyday life. Every day is an exercise in demonstrating competence and compassion, but most of all, courage; courage to go against the flow, courage to push beyond my comfort zone. Before attending the BBLT program, I was often worried about not fitting into the wider system; I was always on the edges, restless, afraid, and complacent. The BBLT program taught me that's exactly where I want to be—on the edge of things, beyond my comfort zone, looking for a challenge, and keeping an eye out for the next big thing.



### Syeda Lammim Ahad (BBLT 3):

Lammim, a BBLT 3 graduate, is a final year student of Electrical and Electronic Engineering at Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET). She participated in the Study of the United States Institutes (SUSI) program on Public Policy and Government Leadership. Lammim worked as a Co-Director and Treasurer of School of Life, a project sponsored by the US Department of State Bureau for Educational and Cultural Affairs and implemented by the Meridian International Center. The project facilitated about a hundred and fifty students from six different schools to engage in active citizenship through small efforts in local communities. In 2014, Lammim was selected to be a part of Professor Muhammad Yunus' delegation of ten young minds from Bangladesh to attend the One Young World Summit that was held from October 14-19 at Dublin, Ireland.

"BYLC has taught me to be more tolerant of differences, and to be more courageous to do what I feel is right, and to be more competent in handling stress and moving forward with the work that I believe in. I strongly feel that the experience at BYLC has shaped me into who I am today and the lessons I have learned at BYLC will stay with me throughout my life."



### Fahim Masoud Aziz (BBLT 3):

Fahim, a BBLT 3 graduate, is an Economics and Math double major at the College of Wooster in Ohio. He is also one of the founders of Backpack, a peer-to-peer platform designed to bring goods from around the world to people. His startup was part of the Y-Combinator, which provides the best startups in Silicon Valley with seed funding. Before starting Backpack, Fahim worked at a number of organizations in both Bangladesh and the US, including The Yunus Centre and World View Solutions Inc. In his free time, Fahim practices karate and is also the Founder and President of Kyokushin, Wooster, a full-fledged sub-branch of a Tokyo-based karate organization.

"When one tries to innovate and change the status quo, others often get uncomfortable and they resist the change. The thing that I learned from BYLC is not to take such resistance personally and accept them as obstacles that will appear in your journey to make the world a better place. I have also learned to have the courage and the perspective to focus on the work in spite of the numerous challenges."

# BRAC Impact Assessment Study

## Background:

Upon reaching our five-year milestone, we chose to take a critical look at our approach to leadership development and assess our impact before forging ahead. We commissioned an external study with the Research and Evaluation Division (RED) of BRAC, the world's largest NGO, to assess the impact of our signature Building Bridges through Leadership Training (BBLT) program.

## Study group:

The treatment group for the preliminary study comprised of 24 graduates of our BBLT program. The comparison group consisted of BBLT finalists who did not participate in BBLT but met the program eligibility criteria in terms of age, gender, and educational medium.

## Methodology:

The study was qualitative in nature and used standard data collection techniques that included In-Depth Interviews, Key Informant Interviews, Focus Group Discussions, Case Studies, and Direct Observations. During the study, students were interviewed about their knowledge on leadership, their attitudes towards different mediums of education, their active participation in voluntary work at the community level, their entrepreneurial activities, and their personal development as seen by their parents. Researchers also noted some physical cues including proper use of pause during speech, eye contact with researchers and peers, proper use of emotion given the context, body language, and appropriate use of tone when speaking.

## Impact assessment:

To assess the impact of the BBLT program, the study measured the difference between the treatment group and the comparison group across three of BYLC's fundamental building blocks, namely:

- Building Bridges: ability to forge relationships with people from different educational and socio-economic backgrounds
- Leadership Training: faculties of expression, self-confidence, networking skills, and knowledge about leadership and authority
- Community Service: involvement in community service projects

## Findings:

The study concluded that BYLC graduates are able to think more independently, have a clear understanding of the distinction between leadership and authority, are more adept at building relationships with their peers from diverse backgrounds, and are generally more committed to community service activities.



# Governing Board



## Chairperson

---

**Manzoor Hasan OBE**, a barrister, is presently the Managing Partner of Manzoor Hasan & Associates, and was previously the Founding Executive Director of Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB).



## Founder & President

---

**Ejaj Ahmad** is a social entrepreneur with extensive professional and academic training in leadership.



## Member

---

**Akhter Matin Chaudhury**, Managing Director and Chairman, Nuvista Pharma Limited, is also a certified Chartered Accountant.



## Member

---

**Pial Islam**, Founder and Managing Partner of pi Strategy Consulting, was previously a Global Leadership Fellow at the World Economic Forum.



## Member

---

**Homayara Ahmed**, Assistant Professor, Institute of Business Administration (IBA), University of Dhaka, is an expert on human resource management.



## Member

---

**Sara Hossain**, a barrister, practices at the Supreme Court of Bangladesh, and is a member of the law firm of Dr. Kamal Hossain & Associates.



## Member

---

**Zafar Sobhan**, Editor of Dhaka Tribune, is a 2009 Yale World Fellow and a 2005 Young Global Leader of the World Economic Forum

# International Advisory Board



*Member*

**Sultana Afroz**, career bureaucrat, is presently a Joint Secretary at the Economic Relations Division, Ministry of Finance, Government of Bangladesh.



*Member*

**Ronald Heifetz**, King Hussein bin Talal Senior Lecturer in Public Leadership at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government, was the Founding Director of the Kennedy School's Center for Public Leadership.



*Member*

**Barbara Kellerman**, James McGregor Burns Lecturer in Public Leadership at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government, was the Founding Executive Director of the Kennedy School's Center for Public Leadership.



*Member*

**Max Klau**, developmental psychologist with an expertise in leadership in complex systems, is presently the Vice President of Leadership Development at City Year, a national service and leadership development program headquartered in Boston, Massachusetts.



*Member*

**Mijarul Quayes**, a former Foreign Secretary, is presently the Bangladesh Ambassador to Brazil.



*Member*

**Gowher Rizvi**, Advisor to the Honorable Prime Minister of Bangladesh, is the immediate past Director of the Ash Institute for Democratic Governance and Innovation at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government.



## The Calling

The Calling signifies the vision for a better future. This vision is embodied by the eye where the future is seen as a land of peace—bright, lively, and full of colors. The picture also represents the transformation of people who overcome their barriers and move ahead courageously. In the picture, we see people marching forward from darkness into light and edging closer to a beautiful vision. In this picture, the eye also represents wisdom—the capacity to interpret problems from multiple dimensions and forge ahead with clarity of purpose and determination.

*The picture was drawn by Asad, Nashin, Nusrat, Salahuddin, Tahsin, Tamjeed, and Toufiq, participants of BYLC's Building Bridges through Leadership Training program.*

# Invest in the Next Generation

What does it take to build a poverty-free Bangladesh? It takes a group of people who are courageous, compassionate, and competent. Our greatest joy is to witness these qualities flourish in our graduates, which affirms our hope that the youth will be at the front and center of our vision for the future. Our graduates' struggle to become the leaders that Bangladesh so desperately needs is our collective struggle. It will take the active involvement of a community to nurture our future leaders.

We hope that you and your institution will step forward to invest in the next generation. We are looking for scholarship funding, project based assistance, and institutional support to increase the scope of our engagement.

For more information on how we can create value for each other, please contact:

**Sadaf Sultan**  
Business Development and Communications  
Manager  
sadaf@bylc.org  
+880 2 883 3519; +880 18 1917 1919





**BYLC** B A N G L A D E S H  
Youth Leadership Center

BYLC Headquarters  
Plot 3 Road 20 Block J Baridhara Dhaka 1212 Bangladesh  
phone (02) 883 3519 info@bylc.org www.bylc.org