Foreword from President

January 13, 2013

Dear Friends,

As we welcome the new season, my colleagues and I at BYLC hope that this newsletter finds you in good health and spirit. This year marks the fifth year of our founding and as we look ahead to 2013, it is a pertinent time to look back on our journey of the past four years and define new avenues for growth.

So far, we have provided leadership training to 10 batches of high school, college and madressa students, and many of our program alumni will graduate from university this year and enter the job market. As they take this important step, we have realized that it is not enough to provide leadership training and engage our youth in service, but it is also crucial to help them find them meaningful jobs that provide a secure livelihood. After all, without a roof over your head and food on the table, public service and volunteerism become a distant thought. To address this, we have established the BYLC Graduate Network connecting our graduates with potential employers while providing guidance and training on career development and entrepreneurship.

In the last quarter, we have completed BBLT 9 and 10, launched BBLT Junior 5 and 6, and helped organize the Asia 21 Young Leaders Summit as Asia Society’s local partner. BYLC led the Bangladesh delegation to the Commonwealth Asia Alliance of Young Entrepreneur Summit in Mumbai, as well as organized a national workshop on leadership in collaboration with the Canadian High Commission.

It has been a busy past few months with more initiatives planned for the next quarter, and we look forward to sharing our experiences with you in our next newsletter.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your ongoing support and encouragement for our work. I hope that 2013 brings you and your loved ones much happiness and prosperity.

Sincerely,
Ejaj Ahmad
Founder and President

ASIA 21 YOUNG LEADERS SUMMIT

BYLC partners with Asia Society for the seventh Asia 21 Young Leaders Summit

Ejaj Ahmad moderating a discussion on leadership with Dr. Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury at the inaugural session of the Asia 21 Summit at BRAC CDM, Savar.

In partnership with Bangladesh Youth Leadership Center (BYLC) and the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs of the Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh, the Asia Society hosted its seventh Asia 21 Young Leaders Summit on December 7-9, 2012 at BRAC CDM, Savar. This year’s theme was ‘Asia 21 in 2020: Catalyzing Change, Sustaining Impact’. Dr. Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury, Honorable State Minister of the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, and Sir Faze Hasan Abed, Founder and Chairperson of BRAC, delivered keynote addresses at the Summit, which was attended by more than 100 delegates from 20 countries in the Asia-Pacific region.

PRIVET SECTOR SUPPORT FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

S K Sur Chowdhury, Deputy Governor of Bangladesh Bank, Ejaj Ahmad and Mainuddin Monem, Deputy Managing Director of Abdul Monem Limited, discuss engaging the private sector in youth leadership development in Bangladesh at BYLC Headquarters.

YOUNG ENTREPRENEUR SUMMIT

The Bangladesh delegation at the 2012 Commonwealth Asia Alliance of Young Entrepreneurs (CAAYE) Summit in Mumbai included Raiyan Islam, Zaker Read, Tabith Awal, Ejaj Ahmad, Nuher Khan, Faraaz Rahim and Ishiq Alam.

"BYLC’s leadership workshop helps young..."
people develop two important skills - the ability to think critically, and the ability to analyze and see clearly into the heart of any matter."

Heather Cruden, High Commissioner of Canada to Bangladesh, at the Inaugural Ceremony of the National Workshop on Leadership

**BBLT participants solve real world problems**

Following intensive classroom training on leadership for six weeks, participants of BBLT 9 and BBLT 10 entered the community to translate their leadership learning into action. Implementing a systematic approach, they conducted a needs assessment survey in underprivileged communities to understand some of the complex challenges facing the residents. Divided into small groups of six, they designed and executed multiple projects on health & hygiene, education, women empowerment and entrepreneurship in Dhaka and Chittagong. A common challenge faced by the groups included fundraising for their projects. However, they persevered and were able to raise adequate funds to implement their projects. 77 participants in the BBLT 9 and 10 programs spent more than 8000 hours in the community and served more than 450 beneficiaries.

Notably, Shonkhoneel, a small group of BBLT 9, launched four awareness campaigns on anti-smoking and anti-drug addiction in different educational institutions in Dhaka city. Through these events they were able to reach out to 3000 school children and make them aware about the health hazards related to smoking. The BBLT 9 program in Dhaka concluded on December 29, 2012 and the BBLT 10 program in Chittagong on January 5, 2013.

**BYLC Graduate Network (BGN) celebrates Bangladesh’s 42nd Victory Day** with BBLT and BBLT Junior graduates by organizing an art competition titled ‘Bijoye Tarunyo’ at BYLC Headquarters.

**DISCUSSION ON YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

BYLC hosts an interactive session on youth entrepreneurship at BYLC Headquarters for 20 British Council’s International Study Visit participants from UK, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and India.

**BYLC IN THE MEDIA**

Read about the Bangladesh delegation to the CAAYE Summit
Spotlight:
Mohammad Abir Mazumder, BBLT 6 graduate and Vice President, Admin and Finance of BGN.

Mohammad Abir Mazumder completed his Chartered Accountancy Qualification from the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA), UK. He graduated from BYLC’s sixth Building Bridges through Leadership Training (BBLT) program and is currently working as the Vice President, Admin and Finance of BYLC Graduate Network (BGN), Dhaka.

Tell us about your extracurricular activities. What motivates you to take up these initiatives?

My first exposure to extracurricular activities came through the BBLT 6 program of BYLC and since then it has been nothing short of a dream. I needed a slight push to think out of the box and being a part of the BBLT program has been my biggest motivation factor.

Recently, I had the privilege of representing Bangladesh in the World Business Dialogue in Germany and my team won the Entrepreneurship Summer School there competing with participants from 26 different countries.

I am currently working to establish a regional chapter of Kairos Society, an entrepreneurial network conceived at the Wharton Business School, in Bangladesh to promote entrepreneurship and to provide a global platform to Bangladeshi students. I am also working as Head of Social Entrepreneurship Cell at South Asian Youth Society (SAYS), a youth-led organization. I am passionate about entrepreneurship which, I believe, is the key to reducing poverty in a country like Bangladesh.

You have also become the VP, Finance and Admin of BYLC Graduate Network (BGN). Congratulations! What inspired you to join BGN and what is your vision for the organization?

BGN provides a platform for all the BBLT and BBLT Junior graduates of Bangladesh to come together and share their entrepreneurial experiences. I believe this platform will contribute to the growth and development of Bangladesh as an entrepreneurial nation.
BYLC to hone their leadership skills. I find it incredibly rewarding to be part of such an accomplished group.

As a Chartered Management Accountant, my goal is to build a strong reporting system in BGN and to ensure accountability in all its dealings. I am also working on putting together a structure for the day-to-day operations of the organization.

You graduated from the BBLT 6 program in 2011. Do you feel that the program has prepared you for the challenges you face in your personal and professional life?

The BBLT program helped me rediscover myself and connect to my deeper purpose in life. It has made me more reflective in nature and I find this habit useful in both my personal as well as my professional life. I think more deeply about any issue before making an intervention. Working with peers from different backgrounds to organize a project in the community challenged me to develop my managerial skills. However, my biggest lesson has been that it is not necessary to become a leader but it is imperative to exercise leadership in life irrespective of age, position or status.