audience, sending a message through a dramatized program. It's the power of the media to inform the public about different issues including public health and so on. Also, there are issues of governance, which is a very important issue here in Bangladesh and it is just not enough to say somebody has the right to vote. They have to understand about the candidate's ability. But the organization is not only concerned with political issues, but rather it acts as a facilitator of local people.

We have many different programs, including the Active Literacy program in Somalia, Promotion of the English Language program, it doesn't have a one-side fixed approach. It takes into consideration what the locally engaged people say about the needs of their country, for instance in Darfur, people were helped to find out where they could get help or humanitarian aid, since an emergency situation is in existence there. And in Khartoum, the Trust has helped train local journalists in order to give them a media framework and make them understand how to present important news in a balanced fashion. The main objective is to help people help themselves. It doesn't really do or build things like build a hospital but makes people aware that they need one. We have different programs about the prevention of malaria and HIV-AIDS. In Bangladesh, we have a program called Bangladesh Shonglap. We are a new organization and we have had discussions about whether we should keep the word 'BBC' with the name of the trust or not. But keeping in mind that we have the same values as that of BBC, we finally decided to keep it.

SC: The topic for the debate at Lalbagh is about different issues related to population. What made you choose Bangladesh as the country where this will be discussed?

ZB: The question that we are going to ask is, is there an impending global population crisis? I don't want to give anybody the impression that we are asking if there are too many people in the world? And that there are too many people in Bangladesh! We came to Bangladesh to discuss if there is a thing as population crisis globally and for some countries it could mean a shrinking population as well as ones which are expanding too rapidly for their governments to cope up with. Australia, Japan and some countries in Europe are facing severe problems because of their steadily aging population. In Bangladesh, the population growth has long been a problem specially because of global warming, floods and other problems which is claiming your land. So Bangladesh was a good place to discuss the issue.

SC: Is there any reason behind choosing the Lalbagh fort for the debate tomorrow?

ZB: The only reason is it's a beautiful fort and it's going to look even better when it gets floodlit. The weather too is very good at this time of the year and it sure is going to portray a positive image of Bangladesh. Enclosed auditoriums and conference rooms are present everywhere; this is what is going to make the country look different.

SC: How important do you think debate is as an extra curricular activity in schools, colleges and universities? Students of today will become future Presidents and Prime Ministers. Does it help in their grooming up?

ZB: The format of debate is a very good discipline to make young people aware of what's happening around them at a very early age. Sometimes in the media it is said that you are trying to oversimplify issues by saying that something is for and against, the world is not black and white, it's grey. I have sympathy with that point of view, however I believe that a debate, in the true sense of the word, helps to clarify your thoughts when you have to take a stance for or against an opinion. It is not just a superficial exercise. It forces people to think hard.

SC: You've been very successful in terms of journalism, news presentation and conducting the debates and also in the World Service Trust. What would be your advice for young girls, budding journalists who are coming into this profession these days in Bangladesh?

ZB: There is no step-by-step guide to do this. I have been in this profession for a while now. The key thing I'd say is to be interested. Be interested in people around you. You must have that curiosity which you never ever lose. Freedom of expression is very important and many people in the world do not have that. So one has to ask if there is something more than just showing my face on TV!

Quotes

I believe that peace is not merely an absence of war but the nurture of human life, and that in time this nurture would do away with war as a natural process.
-- Jane Addams

Any definition of a culture of peace must address the problem of achieving justice for communities and individuals who do not have the means to compete or cope without structured assistance and compassionate help.
-- Mahnaz Afkhami

We want peace on earth!
-- Robert Alan

It may seem sometimes as if a culture of peace does not stand a chance against the culture of war, the culture of violence and the cultures of impunity and intolerance. Peace may indeed be a complex challenge, dependent on action in many fields and even a bit of luck from time to time. It may be a painfully slow process, and fragile and imperfect when it is achieved. But peace is in our hands. We can do it.
-- Kofi Annan