Public Lecture on "Leadership for the 21st Century" at BRAC University

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ENTREPRENEURSHIP Development Forum (EDF) of BRAC University recently hosted a public lecture on "Leadership for the 21st Century". The objective of the lecture was to put the student leaders of BRAC University in touch with the practitioners of leadership in Bangladesh. Senior Lecturer of BRAC Business School, Anup Chowdhury, successfully coordinated the event. Ratul Dev, Vice President of EDF was the chief facilitator of this lecture. Ejaj Ahmad, a Harvard graduate, and founder and president of Bangladesh Youth Leadership Center (BYLC) was the keynote speaker at the event. Students of BRACU, IUB, ULAB, DU and JU as well as faculty members from BRACU and IBA attended the event.

The lecture began at 3:45 pm when Shabab Mahfuz, a student of BRACU and senior member of EDF, gave the opening speech. In it he introduced EDF and talked about Ejaj Ahmad and the humble beginning of his organization, BYLC. Educated at Harvard University, St. Andrews University and Maple Leaf International School, Mr. Ahmad launched BYLC's program Building Bridges through Leadership Training in Chittagong in 2008 with its co-founder Shammi S. Quddus, a third year student of MIT. BYLC hopes to achieve the following objectives: minimize the communication gap between the students of English, Bangla and Madrasa mediums, hone the analytical skills of students through small group case analysis and sessions, and apply these honed skills in the real world. It also tries to foster compassion amongst today's youth, encourage creativity and raise social awareness about Bangladesh. BYLC hopes to implement youth programs in different regions of Bangladesh.



The authoritative personality of Mr. Ahmad immediately captivated the young crowd when he came up to speak in the occasion. His voice resonated the can-do attitude and youthful idealism of today's generation. In his words he dispersed the stereotypical assumptions that cling to the term 'leadership' and explicitly expressed how the meaning of word could vary from person to person. Mr. Ahmad continuously focused on the relationship of a person with himself/herself and repeatedly urged students to deeply think about their future, their goals and what they want to achieve in life. According to him, the key to achieving the leadership qualities that all students strive to posses comes from deep analysis of the experiences of one's own life and it is necessary for every individual to self-evaluate himself or herself. Only then can it be possible take the risks necessary to accomplish what one really feels deeply about.

Another aspect that Mr. Ahmad focused on was mobilizing groups. According to him, group activity is a major aspect of all business activities and for the successful mobilization of a group it is necessary to understand the values of different personalities and factions that make up the group. In this way, one can learn how to effectively analyze group dynamics, find partners, and mobilize people for action.

Mr. Ejaj Ahmad wrapped up the event stating that everything in life is for the greater good and it is important to maintain a balance between the social obligations and one's personal desire to fulfill their goals. According to Mr. Ahmad, "Real leadership comes from the heart. You only exercise leadership when you truly care about something."

Mr. Ejaj Ahmad's words were truly pearls of wisdom. In his words lie the fiery energy, passion and idealism that the youth of today, unhindered from archaic norms and social conventions, can identify with. For the future leaders who strive to be the next Richard Branson or Anita Roddick, it is quite inspiring to keep the progressive words of Mr. Ahmad in mind before venturing out into the great unknown future.

(BRAC Business School)