Education without Borders 2009:
3 days to make a world of difference

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EDUCATION without Borders (EWB) is an international student conference hosted biennially by the Higher Colleges of Technology (HCT) in Abu Dhabi, in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The vision of EWB is to use education and technology to help create a world in which people can lead free and dignified lives. This is achieved by engaging the world's most innovative students and leaders of business, technology, education, and the humanitarian sector in a collaborative forum that culminates with commitment to action. From 2003 each of EWB conferences included Bangladeshi students. I am proud to state that all Bangladeshi flag holders at EWB were from BRAC University. Kazi Anisur Rahman of BRAC University participated in EWB 2003. Hammad Ali, Nafid Haque, Rezwanul Haque Bhuiyan and Farhana Mahbub participated in EWB 2007.

This year students were invited to submit papers in one of three categories and four sub-themes. I submitted my paper for EWB 2009 and waited eagerly for the result. In 2nd March 2009 the good news came that I was selected as a delegate in the conference. The best part was that once I reached Dubai, all our transport and accommodation expenses would be paid for by the organizers! That news spurred me and my teachers, who did their best to arrange full support. I am especially grateful to our honorable Vice-chancellor Prof. Jamilur Reza Chowdhury, Head of CSE department Dr. Sayeed Salam and my supervisor Head of Center for Research on Bangla Language Processing Dr. Mumit Khan.

I reached Dubai in 29th March at 8 AM Dubai time. Dubai's wide streets, the fast cars, and everything else seemed to be out from a movie. I was allocated a room in the luxurious Grand Millennium Hotel, where a 3 day long Bangladesh fair had ended just 1 day before the conference. My room mate was Nafid Haque who was participating at EWB for 2nd time. After a short trip around the city and the shopping malls we got back to the hotel around 1 PM. Then we received our conference kit and get informed about schedules and other required information. Our Mentor was Christine who was a nice Australian lady.



The conference started on 30th March and went on till the 1st April. The opening ceremony was attended by several prominent speakers, including Former Indian President Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam, Chief Executive-Rolls-Royce Sir John Rose and Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research-UAE Nahayan Mabarak Al Nahayan. Throughout the first day, we browsed the conference venue and got to meet several other delegates. We were pleasantly surprised to find that there were eight other people from Bangladesh. Adnan Murshed Chowdhury came from APU, Japan. Qatar; Zinnat Akhter was born in Italy and now lives in UK, while Rizwana Samsad is from Monash University, Australia. However, there were 8 delegates from Asian University for Women, Bangladesh.

The conference continued with the student presentation sessions.



Between sessions, the delegates were seen browsing internet and take refreshments. In addition to the conference, we were taken along to several events in order to give us a feel of what UAE is all about. There was a gala dinner and grand cultural show on the first night of the conference. During the gala dinner, we were supposed to wear outfits that somehow represented our culture. Starting from high-tech laser shows, fireworks, magic shows and small documentaries, the five hour show seemed to encompass everything one could possibly have thought of. RIVERDANCE, the Rocking Dance team from Ireland; Dudana Mazmanishvili, the Georgian pianist; Diana Yukawa, a soloist with the Japan Philharmonic; Ladysmith Black Mambazo, Susan from USA, Princesses of Violin from Hungary; Anna Phoebe from UK; Raageshwari, Sivamani and Rythmscape band from India performed.

On the last day of the conference, the delegates got to meet a very special guest - Princess Astrid, Princess of Belgium and Jennifer Azzi, Motivational Speaker and Wellness Trainer, Olympics Gold Medalist from USA. Jennifer taught us how to see and follow our dream. giving required information before the conference. My teacher Dr. Sayeed Salam and my supervisor Dr. Mumit Khan helped me to prepare for the experience. We are proud to have such teachers in BRAC University. Last but not the least I would like to thank our vice-chancellor Dr. Jamilur Reza Chowdhury for his blessings.