Nokia-connecting students

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NOKIA and AIESEC collaboratively presented AIESEC in North South University's celebrated event, Developing Leaders Day in the North South University campus in the capital on the 5 April 2010. The speaker for the event was Prem Chand, General Manager of Nokia Emerging Asia Ltd., and he shared his leadership experiences with three hundred enthusiastic students of the university in one of its seminar halls.

As the students eagerly awaited Prem Chand with the volunteers running around making sure everything was going according to plan, there was in the seminar hall a sort of excitement about what he might talk about, or what he might do. Before he made his appearance, the master of ceremonies, Nile Haq, taught the audience how to do drum rolls the AIESEC way, an important part of the AIESEC culture to greet guests. It was with gusto that the audience took to it, with three hundred North South University students beating out the drum roll as Prem Chand walked into the hall, almost bemused at the ecstatic welcome.

Developing Leaders Day is an annual event that AIESEC's local bodies hold, where participating students are privy to the life experiences, inspirations and vision of a great leader. After a stirring speech given by a top leader, the students are given an opportunity to ask questions to the leader and participate directly in the seminar. It is an opportunity for students to interact with real life leaders, instead of simply reading about them, or watching them on TV, and discussing key issues with them. The participating students got the chance to learn about leadership first-hand.

This year, AIESEC in NSU's Developing Leaders Day, with the tagline 'learn by example, lead by example', presented Prem Chand, General Manager of Nokia Emerging Asia Ltd. Opening with a joke, Chand was far from being what the students might have pictured him to be a cold, distant and powerful corporate leader. Instead he was amiable, and seemed to enjoy himself just as much as any of the students present to hear him speak. Taking a personal approach, he talked about the journey that brought him to Bangladesh, about his team in Bangladesh and how well they have been able to work together.

He looked into the future, and talked about the exciting direction that this generation was going to take with everything that is happening with the internet; he talked about the difference between his generation and this generation, stressing on how much more power everybody has today. More than ever before, people are getting impacted by the actions of their government or by large corporations, and by the interactions between national and international issues. At the same time, people have more opportunities to participate directly in these affairs because of the Internet. He brought up interesting statistics, stating that the most on-demand ten jobs in the world did not even exist in 2004, and that today's youth, on average, would have ten to fourteen jobs by the time they are 38. Chand is definitely an optimist, given the great excitement he has for the future, and where this generation is headed and has in store. However, he urged the students to not forget to enjoy and live life while chasing after work.

After this, it was question-answer time. Students asked everything from personal questions to advice if there was ever a good way to fire a friend, given that Chand stressesed on a friendly corporate environment, Chand underlined the importance of the ability to compartmentalise life to be able to treat personal and professional lives completely differently. Asked about his first job, Chand told the students about his very early desire to be a pilot and how his first job was extremely boring and menial, at an aviation center, and he could only stand to do it for three months. He said that a drive to be independent lead him to work at places like KFC and Pizza Hut while continuing school. Chand, when asked what he would do for Bangladesh if he was its head, said he would brand the country internationally. He mentioned how beautiful the country is and how hard-working and decent its people are, and he would brand the country in a way that would show this to people the world over, and make them want to visit the country. He also talked about making the country more 'foreigner-friendly'.

