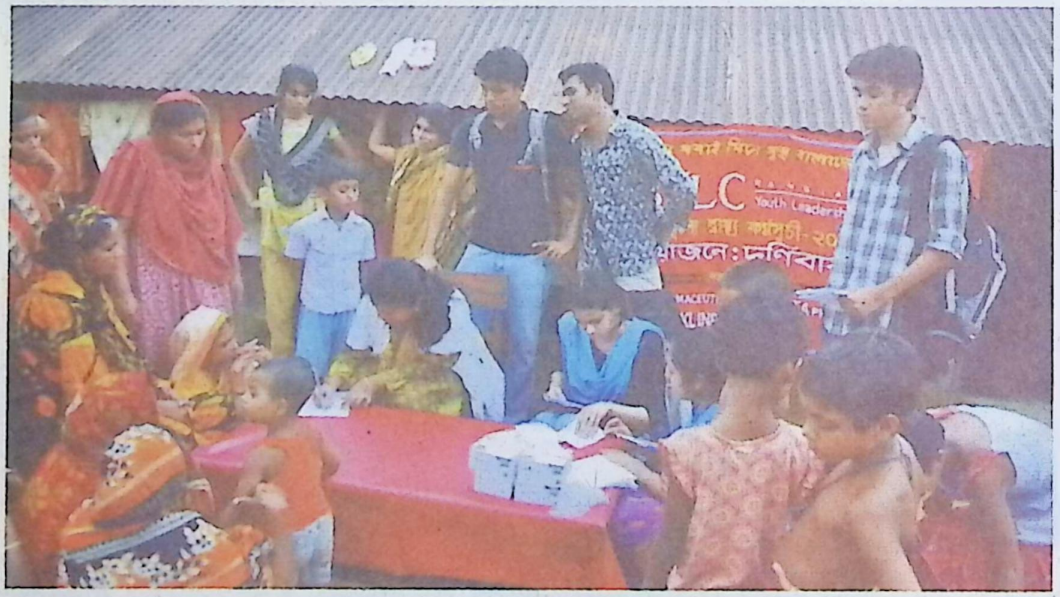
Date: July 10, 2010
Location: Regional Public Administration and Training Center, Chittagong
Time: 3 pm to 6 pm
Purpose: To be a part of BYLC's leadership training

BBLT 4: Training of a lifetime

Munzerin Shahid

ALTHOUGH these were the four commonplace notions on all 38 of the young minds present, little did these individuals know that this day would mark the beginning of a new era for them. Being a part of Building Bridges through Leadership Training (BBLT 4) of Bangladesh Youth Leadership Center (BYLC) has helped us realise how much we lack and how much can be attained. The exceptional lectures that we attended not only unbolted the gates to leadership, but also did what others deemed unattainable- uniting Bengali, Madrassa and English medium students.



After an intensive month of leadership training, all of us came out with a fresh perspective on life. Empowered with the training to lead social change, we decided to translate the classroom teachings to a real world setting in order to bring change to the lives of the underprivileged. We chose six community projects and selected a local slum in Motijharna, Chittagong to implement our newly found skills.

Every project team had a motto. The team 'Aamra Pari' chose women's skill development. They worked with 85 families and facilitated skill development training to 10 women. Their training included teaching women how to make different items from bamboo. Their motto was quite simple- "The only way women would be interested in day to day aspects like health and hygiene is if they are given the opportunity to earn for themselves first". They wanted to uplift these women in such a way so that they learned something that would stay with them long after the training was over. They were very successful in doing so too. Although the formal project is over, the team has promised to stay in touch and work together in future as well. Team 'Aunirbaan' worked on water refinement and disinfection in the area. They had come to this decision when they discovered that in the past month, three children had died from waterborne diseases. They had worked with approximately 60 families and distributed water filters to four families who needed it the most. Their interventions turned out to be a success; they had effectively managed to teach the importance of water purification to the people in their area.

Team 'Durnibaar' worked on health. There was a crying need for solutions to a myriad of health related problems. More importantly, out of 300 families they worked with, barely 10 were aware of the existence of anti-worm medicines or oral saline. Some of them even claimed to have visited a doctor, paying a hefty fee, who prescribed medicines that did not work. Hence, the necessity of a medical