

NATIONAL YOUTH SUMMIT 2016

An Opportunity for Youth to Make a Difference

SHREYOSI ENDOW

United Nations Youth and Students Association Bangladesh (UNYSAB) organised the National Youth Summit 2016 on April 29, 2016 in the Nawab Ali Chowdhury Senate Building, University of Dhaka. The theme of the summit was "The Role of Youth for Sustainable Development Goals" and students from colleges and universities around the country assembled to discuss the crucial aspects of the goals.

The summit was inaugurated by Mohammad Mamun Mia, President, UNYSAB. Also present were special guests Dr. Syed Md. Saikh Imtiaz, Chairman and Associate Professor, Department of Women and Gender Studies, University of Dhaka, Qantara K Khan, Faculty Member, School of Business, Independent University Bangladesh (IUB), Dr. Taufik Joardar, Assistant Professor, James P Grant School of Public Health, BRAC University and Tajdin Hassan, Head of Marketing, The Daily Star.

In his speech, Dr. Imtiaz said, "Today's youth has endless possibilities but they should know how to use their voices and urge the stakeholders to implement suggested policies. This summit will give the youth a platform to share ideas that will propel the country towards greater progress."

The topics to be discussed were divided into a total of eleven categories which were youth education, research and training, youth and employment, youth politics and conflict transformation, health issues of the youth along with their special needs, specific needs of young

women and girls, youth and environment, youth and food security and agriculture, youth leadership and empowerment, youth and technology, institutionalisation of youth agenda in the legal system and finally, youth culture and sports.

The delegates were divided into eleven groups, each under a facilitator, and were asked to make a presentation on their assigned topics. In their presentations, they were instructed to address the problems that youth faces in that particular field and come up with solutions for the problems. They were also told to look into the existing policies and suggest amendments or additions where they thought necessary. A Q&A session took place after every



PHOTOS: DARSHAN CHAKMA

presentation.

Qantara K Khan and Dr. Joardar went on to assist the groups individually. They were also in charge of judging the presentations which highlighted numerous important policies such as organising motivational programmes for the grass-root youths for improved



political awareness, introducing new chapters in our curriculum to aware the youth of their rights, taking necessary steps to remove social stigma against mental health etc.

Once all the presentations had been made, the judges awarded crests to four groups - youth education, research and training, youth politics and conflict transformation, health issues of the youth along with their special needs and specific needs of young women and girls - as the winners of the group presentations. Certificates were given to all the delegates who participated.

Tanjim Ferdous, who facilitated the group for youth culture and sports, was awarded a crest for his outstanding facilitation. He said, "My role as a facilitator was to take the participants' ideas and organise them in a proper

manner so that they give a good presentation. I encouraged them to talk about the problems they face themselves in this area and the possible solutions to those and they did very well."

Anonya Tanchangya, 19, a student of University of Dhaka who was a delegate at the event, reflected on why she decided to participate. She said, "Through this summit, not only could we enrich our knowledge about the SDGs but also, make our own contribution to the youth policies which I hope will be implemented soon. It was a great experience overall."

The Daily Star was the Youth Engagement Partner of the programme.

Shreyosi Endow is a tea addict who likes to read poetry and is obsessed with plants. Send her a mail at endow1211s@gmail.com

FINDING SOLUTIONS FOR THE SOCIETY

MOBASHIR MONIM

The idea of giving back to the community has created a lasting impression on many over the years. However, the idea of giving to the community to gain for one self is one that is much more recent and exceptional.

"Be a little selfish to be selfless" - is the philosophy with which YASD has been led, where one helps the community to benefit from it, while making it a better place to live in. To increase the youth activity in the social development processes, YES Alumni Bangladesh created the YASD workshop.

During the YASD workshop, held on April 7, 2016, the participants were given a task to find a social issue and formulate a solution to the said issue. From there, the best solution would be selected and given a grant to make it into a reality. Setting up businesses for disabled, promoting greener environment, preventing drug abuse and encouraging activity of urban children, these were the solutions brought up by the participants of the YASD. Each of the solution was designed by the participants to tackle a unique social problem.

Singling out a solution among all of them was a tough call to make, especially since all of the solutions tackled different problems. This conflict led to a unanimous decision by the YES Alumni organising team to give grants to implement all of the solutions instead of just one. The participating teams were given



certificates by the Cultural Affairs Officer of the US Embassy, George Mesthos, along with a pat on the back for accomplishing such a feat during the closing ceremony of YASD on the April 25, 2016 at the American Center.

All the participants were given time to refine their ideas further with the help of YASD mentors and to bring it in the form of a project. Each the projects will be given a separate grant for the execution and are to be implemented during August.