

Encouraging the Pioneers of Tomorrow

RAFIDAH RAHMAN

Toppers from schools across the country were acknowledged for their exceptional results at Cambridge's Outstanding Learner Awards ceremony, held on November 27 at the Westin Dhaka.

Conducted by the British Council, the ceremony was attended by Mark Clayton, British Deputy High Commissioner, and Dr. Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury, Speaker of Bangladesh Parliament as Chief Guest, along with other CIE and British Council representatives.

The event started with the attendees singing the National Anthem followed by a speech by Ruchira Ghosh, Regional Director of Cambridge International Examinations, South Asia. She said, "Over the past decade, Cambridge qualifications have witnessed a gain in stature and popularity in Bangladesh. It gives us immense pleasure to see learners across Bangladesh exhibiting their passion to succeed."

Following her speech, Ghosh awarded 13 students who achieved 'Top marks in the World' with certificates. Jim Scarth



OBE, Acting Country Director, British Council, in his deeply encouraging speech ensured how each of these brilliant minds have a prospect of studying at the top universities of the world but also stressed on the importance of patriotism and coming back home to work for the development of one's own country.

Scarth presented 'High Achievement' awards to 21 students from schools across the country. Among them, Proma Ayesha Kibria, from Aga Khan School, was elected as the formal student speaker. She made her point stating that Rome wasn't built in a day; similarly, her brilliant results weren't a fluke but a culmination

of sheer diligence and determination. She thanked her friends, parents and especially her teachers for supporting her throughout the journey.

Mark Clayton gave away the 'Best Across' awards to the three students who scored highest on a set of subjects among the Cambridge International levels (O/A Level). He believed that the objective of Cambridge programmes is to expand and establish all facets of creative ingenuity, critical thinking and analytical skills required to prepare students for their university life.

Lastly, the honourable Speaker of Bangladesh Parliament, Dr. Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury came on stage and delivered her enlightening words. She said, "It is a pleasure to be amongst the highest achievers. The human resource in Bangladesh is one of our areas of strength. The youth of our country is also very talented, and we must nurture them properly so that they can serve our country as members of the workforce." She felicitated the 31 students who gained the 'Top in Bangladesh' awards.

PROJECT TRISHNA

Youth group providing clean drinking water

IMAAN KHASRU

Project Trishna is a volunteer-driven social venture created by Footsteps Foundation, a youth-based social enterprise. Its aim is simple: to provide free access to clean drinking water for the general public, especially the low income groups.

The project appeals to businesses and homes who may buy one of Project Trishna's customised water filters. They are then responsible for its maintenance. These filters are then set up on the sidewalks or right in front of office buildings, and you have a source of clean water for all who need it. The buyers become the owners of the water filter, which becomes branded with their logo on it. Footsteps Foundation ensures that the filters are working smoothly and achieving their purpose. Using this method, the project has successfully set up around 50 water filters in 30 different locations all over Dhaka.

Through this initiative, Footsteps Foundation has effectively reiterated the concept that it doesn't take big efforts to initiate change. All one needs is a great idea, a little bit of investment, and hardworking volunteers to drive home the cause.



Each of the volunteers is called upon to rise to a certain level of professionalism. It isn't enough just to make a post about the project; volunteers need to personally call up businessmen and women, convince them to schedule appointments, and then deliver a presentation that would get them on board. Needless to say, every volunteer who committed to the project came out with stronger social and professional skills.

Project Trishna provides over a thousand litres of clean drinking water to pedestrians daily. The simple yet effective concept of combining a business' social responsibility and the project's easy contract works

wonders.

Project Trishna turns to address one of the nation's many pressing, yet relatively unnoticed issues. Ironically, the volunteers that sold the most filters were actually the youngest ones in the group. Despite a lack of knowledge on the working world, they brought determination and commitment beyond anyone else. Really, what more would a volunteer need? If anything, this is proof that the youth may just be the change-makers this country needs.

The writer is a Class X student at Sunbeams School.

