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NEXT STEP

AUWNMUN '17 ORIENTING STUDENTS TO A MULTICULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

After successfully hosting two consecutive Model United Nations (MUN) conferences, Asian University for Women (AUW) is set to organise the third edition of Asian University for Women National Model United Nations (AUWNMUN) from February 9-11, 2017.

Themed "Endorsing Multiculturalism to Counter Terrorism", this year's AUWNMUN's organisers are choosing to tackle the issues of terrorism and extremism with the sole idea of having "unity in diversity". This writer sat down to talk about this year's AUWNMUN with the three core members of the organisers and secretariat: Samiha Sahel, Secretary General of AUWNMUN '17, Mahpara Mashiyat, Deputy Secretary General, and Inshirah Ali, Under Secretary General of Logistics.

1. Why do you think that the theme for this year's AUWNMUN is so important?

Inshirah Ali (IA): I believe the theme of the conference is important to make people aware of the current situation of the world. In the 21st century, when we should all be thinking about the progress towards global development, we can still see many injustices being committed around us, human rights being violated. We hope the theme will make people think about these and inspire them to come forward with feasible solutions.

2. With the surged international news coverage on Islam and terrorism over the past couple of years, why do you think this theme has not been touched upon earlier?

Samiha Sahel (SS): It would be inaccurate to say that this issue has not been touched upon previously. In many of the conferences, it regularly came up and was intensely debated upon. However, as it was not the prime focus or theme of other conferences, we decided to settle on this issue on account of the numerous ghastly wars and massacres that mainly occurred



due to the non-acceptance of diversity.

3. Tell us something about the AUWNMUN Secretariat. It is extremely unique compared to the other MUNs that are organised across Bangladesh.

Mahpara Mashiyat (MM): AUWNMUN has always been exceptional in terms of the secretariat. It is the only all women's secretariat till date in Bangladesh and also the most diverse one in terms of nationality, with this year's secretariat having members coming from seven Asian countries.

4. Considering that we all wish to reduce the scale and number of extremist/terrorist attacks worldwide, do not you think that not having international participants from outside the university this

year only feeds into the minds of those following the fundamentalist/terrorist/violent path?

SS: It may or may not. Regardless of the fact that AUWNMUN will not have students from abroad, the participants represent countries all over the globe. That way, even if international delegates cannot come, the situation is not affected anyway. Also, the club has decided to organise the conferences on a bi-yearly basis—this year's will be a national conference, the next an international, and so on.

5. How intense are you all expecting the committee sessions to be and/or what are your expectations from the pool of delegates who will be participating in this year's AUWNMUN?

IA: This time we have selected the best delegate applications from different institutions. As the theme of the conference is now a very seriously discussed issue and we have six different committees with interesting and intense agendas, we are hoping every committee will be very energetic and enthusiastic.

MM: We are looking forward to very spirited committee sessions on global issues addressing extremist points of view and the lack of inclusiveness in society. We hope that the delegates get an unforgettable experience and a better understanding of the world today as well as what it will become tomorrow.

INTERVIEWED BY: RAISA ASHRAF

Raisa is in her third year of study at AUW. She will be on the International Press Committee at AUWNMUN '17.

SPARK* BANGLADESH ACCELERATOR AN EXCITING OPPORTUNITY FOR EMERGING SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS

Spark* Bangladesh is running their third entrepreneurship accelerator programme, in partnership with Build Bangladesh, this April.

Spark* Bangladesh aims to improve the lives of people living in poverty by accelerating startup social enterprises and supporting them as they grow their businesses and make greater positive changes in their communities. Spark currently operates in five countries, and has supported 267 entrepreneurs who have significantly changed millions of lives to date.

Spark* Bangladesh Accelerator will bring together 12 emerging social entrepreneurs for five days of intensive entrepreneurship training from April 15-20, 2017, led by world class facilitators. It is a powerful and practical curriculum, aimed at unlocking the potential of each startup venture, covering strategy, impact, innovation and more. Entrepreneurs will learn how to refine their business models, and ultimately become better equipped to improve the lives of people living in Bangladesh through their ventures.

The entrepreneurs will also be provided 12 months of ongoing support from Spark* to help improve their models and scale their venture. This will include regular business and strategy support from the Spark* team, access to free graphic and web designers, pro-bono legal support, assistance with tracking impact, plus multiple injections of small funding to encourage innovation and growth. Further down the line, continued growth will be encouraged through access to larger funding and investment as well as connections to impact investors, global organisations, and strategic partners within Spark*'s network of international partners.

Emerging social entrepreneurs are encouraged to apply online at: www.sparkinternational.org/spark-bangladesh/. Applications close on March 1, 2017.

TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOUR LIFE WITH TWO EASY STEPS



Many of us feel so immensely dissatisfied by what is going on with our lives that we feel stuck. You have heard probably of this a thousand times over and over again: "You are the master of your own fate." And although it is quite impossible for us to say that outside factors do not weigh into what happens to us, it is nonetheless true.

You have the ability to decide how your life should proceed. While we all have the tendency to blame someone else or the other for the situation we are in, say for example, a parent or a teacher, we are responsible for a big part of the problem or the situation itself.

Your actions have the power to change your situation, and your decisions reap rewards and consequences. You must wise up and take responsibility of your life. Stop complaining and start working. If you wish to go ahead in your career, or tackle a skill, you can, and you will. All you have to do is realise that you have the ability to, and start working on it.

1. Understand your situation and assess what you can do to improve it

It can be said that some things depend a whole lot on our luck or just can't be controlled. Understand how much you can do within your limits and evaluate your situation. Figure out what it is that you want and figure out what you must do to achieve it. Make a plan in your head and a checklist if you wish to.

2. Go for it

Nothing will ever change, nothing will ever happen if you don't take the action. You have to start working on whatever it is that you want.

Carry out your plans and step out of your comfort zone. It is all you, you just have to work for it.

The scary part of taking responsibility for your life is that you will have to always hold yourself accountable. Which can be daunting, to know that you have to shoulder the blame. But it also does mean that you can change the direction your life is taking right now. You can make whatever you want out of it. It's yours.

RAHMA MIRZA

The writer is a sophomore at the Institute of Business Administration, University of Dhaka

Making a DIFFERENCE

Bangladesh is rapidly moving towards middle income status by 2021. Our businesses definitely offer immense opportunities for the growing economy and this diversity needs a stage for the stories untold. See Bangladesh make its mark on the global map as Making a Difference brings you our proudest success stories from across the country.

MIND MAP YOUR NEW YEAR'S GOALS TO REALITY

If with the beginning of every new year you tell yourself that you will change your life right from the 1st, but fail regardless of all those Pinterest boards and bookmarks, this is for you.



Former Google career coach and job strategist Jenny Blake suggests drawing a mind map to figure out how exactly you plan to live a more productive or planned life. To be brief, perhaps you will actually accomplish some of those resolutions. This mind map helps you visually work through your goals and see them from a wider perspective and form connections between your objectives.

Blake suggests doing this on paper (your resolutions are easier to achieve when you can fight your on-screen addictions). Take a

blank paper and jot down the year, e.g. 2017, on the very middle. Draw spokes to connect it to the various themes or objectives you have. For example, each of these lines could connect to career, skill building, family, fun, values and so on. Then, work on each objective. Start by asking yourself, "How is this important to me? What does success for this objective look like?"

The answers to your question should be written joined by further lines from the objective. For example, in family, you could see

success as "Have one family dinner each week" or "Meet up with parents once a month".

Visualising and setting goals using mind maps help you brainstorm creatively. Needless to say, this is a very old-school yet effective method for any type of goal setting session or meetings in organisations as well.

SABRINA RAHMAN

The writer is a junior at the Institute of Business Administration, University of Dhaka