

# Dawn Catering & Company Reaching out to those in need

MASHIYAT NAYEEM

Despite numerous awareness campaigns, the stigma surrounding transgender Bangladeshis remain apparent to this day. They are rarely considered to be regular members of the society and hence it becomes extremely difficult for them to find jobs even while holding qualifications, and to combat this very notion, Dawn, a youth powered social enterprise, recently launched Dawn Catering & Company which employs disadvantaged transgender people.

DC.Co is a start-up that provides monthly subscription based lunch services to offices around Uttara. It is a joint venture in collaboration with the NGO, Bandhu Social Welfare Society (BSWS), which works for the sexual minority population of the country. Dawn aims to fulfill their mission of improving the living standards of the transgender population through Project DC.Co. They aim to address the social stigma regarding this part of our community by employing them, thus giving them opportunities



where their skills and worth are recognised. At the same time, the income generated by DC.Co is reinvested to sustain Dawn and its endeavours.

The training programme kicked off last year with 6 members of the transgender community, teaching them skills – ranging from basic cooking to business principles and etiquettes required to maintain



customer relationship. Plans to employ the physically challenged are also underway.

Although their main focus is on everyday lunch, they recently had the opportunity to cater for over 500 delegates at IIMUN Session 2 Bangladesh at Sir John Wilson School. Their success at this major event has added event catering to the future plans of the business.

Dawn was established in the summer of 2014 when the innovative ideas of a group of high school students in Uttara came to fruition. Now comprising of a team with students hailing from several different English medium schools, Dawn addresses a wide range of social issues and hopes to improve the lives of the underprivileged, and also ensure they have the means to remain solvent. It wasn't easy to work behind the scenes of the social enterprise and concurrently work for minority groups and disadvantaged people in the hopes of achieving social advancement. The founder of Dawn credits the amazing team for the successful execution of the various projects Dawn

has initiated and for bringing the enterprise this far in spite of the many hurdles they faced along the way.

"My personal motivation was fueled by empathy rather than sympathy. My aim was to start a social enterprise that methodically carries out activities to help the economically, socially, physically or mentally disadvantaged, and address their needs by undertaking sustainable and innovative projects. Dawn's aim is to not only help the deprived to rise up but also to ensure that they have the ability and the means to remain standing," says Tahzeeb Ahmed, founder and CEO of Dawn.

With the aim of breaking the social barrier surrounding the transgender, it is safe to say Project DC.Co is living up to Dawn's slogan "Creating new possibilities".

Find out more at [www.dawnbd.com/dcco](http://www.dawnbd.com/dcco) and [www.facebook.com/DawnBD.org](http://www.facebook.com/DawnBD.org)

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# Thoughts of a soon-to-be graduate

MITHI CHOWDHURY

I remember when being a 90's kid used to be cool.

I look around now to find Chester's six feet under (bless his soul), and *Digimon* references garnering blank looks from ten-year olds.

It hits me now just as graduation looms closer; twelve years of schooling, and four years of college, over in a flash! As the inevitable rolls around, I find myself and my peers stuck between the traditions of old and the nuances of new. In the face of inescapable change, both in my life and in society around me, I can merely muse on the mixed feelings of such soon-to-be-graduates.

## ALWAYS RUNNING OUT OF TIME

You know that incessant panic you feel before an exam when you have to cram in an entire semester's worth of studying in one night? Well, that's my life now. Every moment is spent running from an imaginary talking hourglass that berates me to get my act together so I can land that coveted but dead end 9-to-5 job as soon as I graduate. That means stepping out of the picture-perfect realm of comfort that I've safely dwelled in during my undergrad years and taking risks. And what does 'taking risks' constitute, you ask? For me, it means juggling more extracurriculars than any sane human can handle and stretching myself thin trying to conjure a good resume.

Excuse me while I throw a funeral for my once faithful friend 'Netflix and binge'.

## ESTABLISH A LINKEDIN ACCOUNT

I've often experienced minor FOMO because I don't have a LinkedIn account. Even though I have a very sketchy idea of what it's used for, somehow having one seems important now. In a move to procrastinate in a produc-

tive way, I took the time to write a personal bio and to update my experiences. I even connected with friends and colleagues I've previously worked with in pursuit of a well-rounded network of professionals. Doing so has opened up remarkable opportunities that I wouldn't have stumbled upon otherwise.

Or so you'd think, right?

That might have been the case if I hadn't visited my account with the frequency of a millennial in a bookstore (*Are you proud of me now, Simon Sinek?*). But hey, at



least I have a LinkedIn account. Ha.

## BLAZE THROUGH MY BUCKET LIST

Student life may be coming to an end, but that doesn't mean I'm ready to face the music yet. Not adulting is blissful ignorance and I'm going to ride the wave of nonchalance on the crutches of adults for whatever limited time I have left. This means going on that trip I've been postponing since forever with the

#wanderlustcrew from class. You know, that group in class who go abroad almost every semester and possess nothing short of Harry's (or dad's) everlasting vault of gold coins at Gringotts?

By the end of the year, I might be looking at a depleted bank account (and a few thousand indebted to my parents) but at least I'll have a killer Instagram feed and the envy of my peers.

Now, if only I can figure out a way to dodge my mother's sandals as they'll surely zoom towards me when I ask for a loan...

## FIGURE OUT A LIFE PLAN

This is a question that every soon-to-be graduate faces from friends, nosy neighbours, distant relatives, you name it. As I mumble a bunch of words that sound smart (but make little sense) in answer, I realise that I have no clue. I've been so engrossed in university life that I don't even know where to begin planning out my life.

## WHAT NEXT?

Your guess is as good as mine. Gone are the days of stealing a nap in history class or calling in sick to binge watch the new *House of Cards* season. I assume I'll finally have to 'adult' in every essence of the word, but I have thought so before and been proven wrong.

How about I get back to you when I (and the million others about to graduate this year) figure this one out, eh?

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