



PHOTO: STAR

SAFE SPACES FOR YOUTH: PATH TO PROGRESS

Roundtable discussion on International Youth Day 2018

RASMIA RAHMAN AMREEN

UNFPA and The Daily Star jointly organised a roundtable on "Safe Spaces for Youth" to commemorate the United Nations' International Youth Day 2018 at the Azimur Rahman Conference Hall of The Daily Star Centre.

Celebrated every August 12, the objective of this year's IYD was to promote youth engagement and empowerment through civic, public, digital and physical spaces. The right to express one's opinion, nurture mutual respect irrespective of differences, initiate and deliver construc-

tive dialogues were a few of the many attributes IYD'18 wanted to encourage amongst this particular mass throughout the world.

Engagement in safe physical and virtual spaces would ensure the youth to feel recognised for who they are and what values they stand for. As a result, they would be far better skilled in making the right choices, be on par with channeling emotions constructively and develop social skills that would allow harmony and system within society.

Other than discussing and explaining the above ideas in the context of

Bangladesh, adolescent issues, unemployment statistics, lack of awareness on reproductive health and many other topics were touched upon.

Eshani Ruwanpura, Chief of Adolescent and Youth Unit of UNFPA Bangladesh, emphasised on the dire need of a national youth policy and action plan as 48 million people in Bangladesh are youth. With adequate budget allocation, addressing youth issues will be easier.

Korvi Rakshand, Founder and Chairman of JAAGO Foundation, said that there is a lack of good teachers at the grass root level of our education system.

Without proper guidance, materialising safe spaces for youth is almost impossible.

Jeroen Steeghs, Head of Development Cooperation, Charge d' Affaires, Embassy of the Kingdom of Netherlands, spoke about the need for providing required information regarding health issues to the youth.

The roundtable speakers also highlighted the recent past events that affected and involved a large portion of the young population of Bangladesh. Everyone agreed that ensuring and proactively creating safe spaces for the youth is the one factor that can lead the country to a prosperous future.



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Running towards a purpose

SANJIDA CHOWDHURY

Enduring the early morning rain, nearly 500 runners gathered at Hatirjheel on August 3, 2018, for a 5K run to advocate safe spaces for youth and a positive lifestyle garnered with sound health. The run was organised by Bangladesh Youth Leadership Center in collaboration with the Ministry of Youth and Sports to celebrate this year's UN International Youth Day's theme "Safe Spaces for Youth".

Including Bangladeshis, this run brought together people of different nationalities with the age group ranging from 10 to 70 years. With the aim of engaging youth in recreational activities, and involving them in decision making process, this run intended to make them self-aware about their right to have physical and mental safe spaces. The chief guest, Youth and Sports Secretary Md Ashadul Islam, shared the same objective and assured his support in future endeavours central to youth

development.

Besides focusing on safe spaces, this event was dedicated to the students who met untimely deaths due to road accidents. BYLC believes that now is the time when youth should be concerned about their own safety, health and livelihood.

The run called it a day by honouring participants with medals and certificates. The programme was organised with assistance from Praava Health, Elite Force and Paragon Group.



Hey, you're future-ready

OSAMA BIN NOOR

At this minute, there are over 1.8 billion young people between the ages of 10 and 24 in the world. This is by far the largest youth population ever recorded in history.

Around 62 percent of Bangladesh is youth -- the greatest human resource for attaining economic development of a country. Bangladesh is brimming with the massive uncontained energy of youths that will diminish if we do not take quick actions.

According to findings of World Bank in 2017, youth unemployment rate has increased to 11.4 percent -- a 0.4 percent increase from the previous year. This is a steady increase in unemployment since 2010. More than 50 percent of students are facing the common problem of having a future-ready job. Youths complain of not getting a job, yet the recruiter is frustrated with not finding the right person for the vacancy.

The accessibility of jobs was previously a problem. Thankfully, with the advent and increased availability of the internet, more and more youths can avail the opportunities out there. In fact, different organisations now provide job descriptions illustrating the qualities they want in

an employee.

Running an organisation myself, I believe good understanding of and appropriate use of technology to solve problems, analytical and research skills, an adaptive mindset, good decision-making and problem-solving skills, management, leadership and communication skills, creativity, ethics, integrity and the ability to accept and learn from criticism are the characteristics every youth needs for their career development.

In many countries, educational institution offers different activities in their formal system and clubs also play a vital role. Platforms such as Coursera, Udemy, EdX, LinekdIn Learning, and many others are helping hands for youths for learning many skills. However, just learning is not enough; volunteer work and internships are also important.

As a student, right now, you should think about the skills you already have, the kind of job you want and additional skills you can learn to build your resume. Remember, if you never try, you will never know.

Osama Bin Noor is the Co-founder of Youth Opportunities and a Fellow of The Royal Commonwealth Society and Yunus & Youth.



PHOTO: TARIN FATEMA MITHILA PECULIAR CHILDHOOD

A photograph clicked by Tarin Fatema Mithila for 'A Thousand Words.' She won the first prize in the Bookstagram category.

Litmosphere's 'A Thousand Words' opens today

SHABABA IQBAL

Members of Litmosphere, an online book club that provides people a platform to share their viewpoints on books and much more, have organised a one-of-a-kind two-day exhibition on book photography, which opens today at Gallery Chitrak, Dhanmondi.

Titled 'A Thousand Words,' the exhibition aims to show everyone the creative genius of Bookstagram - the practice of clicking photographs of books and putting them up on Instagram. People on Bookstagram post book photos daily or as often as possible.

The exhibition aspires to shed light on many such bookworms who enjoy photography. The photographs are exhibited in two categories, General Entry and Bookstagram, and they are exclusively clicked by the members of Litmosphere.

Besides book photography, stalls for books and merchandise, a mini library, a reading nook, storytelling and open mic sessions and food are central parts of 'A Thousand Words.'

Litmosphere's team also raised an impressive amount of money for a physically challenged vendor through an auction of books that one of the moderators bought from him. The response to the auction was largely positive. Lit-mama, as they fondly call him, will receive the proceeds from that auction at the event.

"This exhibition embodies the essence of what's it like to be a part of our book club-big photos of books coming to life from tiny screens, discussions on books and sipping coffee while reading," says Rubaiya Tasnim Chowdhury, the founder of Litmosphere. Star Youth, The Daily Star, is the youth engagement partner of this event.



PHOTO: COURTESY

Mastermind Model UN Conference 2018

The three-day long Model UN Conference organised by Mastermind English Medium School came to an end on August 13, 2018.

There were a total of 11 committees, each of which were various United Nations bodies. Almost 250 students partook in the conference, that took place in the school's premises. The gala

night was held at Westin Hotel. An award giving ceremony was held followed by dinner.

Organisers believe that, through such conferences students can be equipped with skills of diplomacy, negotiation and geopolitical information. All these fortes are essential in the making of a well qualified diplomat.

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