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# NEXT STEP

## The social entrepreneur conundrum

Think you have what it takes to be one?

Figuring out the perfect time to become a social entrepreneur is quite simple. You should only become a social entrepreneur when you have identified a concrete problem around you that you passionately want to solve. Problem identification and drive should come first, followed by your decision to become a social entrepreneur.



ILLUSTRATION: EHSANUR RAZA RONNY

With the recent rise in glamour associated with being a social entrepreneur and the hype around startup culture in Bangladesh, the desire to become the next big change-maker is now more than ever. Over 90% of startups fail according to research by the Startup Genome Project, yet everyone wants to become an entrepreneur.

Among entrepreneurs, social entrepreneurs face one additional problem- burnouts. According to research by Creators for Good, social entrepreneurs are two times more likely to burnout than a normal entrepreneur. According to research conducted from Harvard Business School, stress is their biggest challenge. Being a social entrepreneur means thousands of thankless hours of relentlessly working behind the scenes. Even if we disregard the extremely high possibility of a business failure, there still remains the overarching possibility of a mental breakdown, and that doesn't sound fun.

So, what is the solution? Only become a social entrepreneur when you are ready. And when do you know you are ready? Let us take a look at what Ayman Sadiq, founder of 10 Minute School has to say about this. In just a few years, he has developed the organization into the largest educational platform in Bangladesh that teaches over 250,000 students daily for free. How does he do it? How does he work 24/7 without burning out? The answer is simple. First, he identified the problem and found a purpose. Then, he decided to open 10 Minute School. This chat I had with him will paint a better picture.

This winter, Ayman Sadiq invited me over to his house

to chat about a project where I wanted to collaborate with him. When I was about to enter the building, a guard greeted me. It was just one of the hundred fleeting interactions people have over the span of a day, and I quickly forgot all about it when I stepped inside the elevator. As I started chatting with Ayman about the project, he randomly asked me, "Do you know the story of the guard you met downstairs?". I didn't. Ayman did, and that is why he does what he does.

The guard grew up in a small village in Kurigram. His father was too sick to work. His mother begged on the streets for a living only because it paid more than working as a house maid. His elder brother lives separately with his family and never drops by to say hello. So, the massive responsibility of taking care of the family falls on the little guy, our guard. Before he gave his SSC exams, he studied full time and worked as a wood carpenter to support his family. Saying that life is hard for him is a massive understatement. After his SSC exams, he moved to Dhaka for his HSC exams. Now he works as a security guard, making BDT 8120 (roughly \$100) per month which he sends back home to support his family. There is a small space in the roof of the building where he works. He uses that space to study for his HSC exams. Education can be the only way to make it in Bangladesh sometimes. Education fuels the dreams of the working-class and that's why this little guy studies. Readers, recall what you were doing during grade 10 or 12 and compare that with what our protagonist here is doing.

Ayman Sadiq was shocked when he heard the story of the guard. He asked him, "What happens if you don't understand something while studying?" The guard replied, "That happens all the time. A kind teacher in Ibrahimpur teaches me for free. I will always remain grateful to him". Ayman then looked at the guard and asked, "Have you heard of 10 Minute School?" End of story.

"Can you imagine what the guard would do if that generous teacher wasn't around? Who would help him then? There are 42 million students like him all across Bangladesh. Who helps them? Don't you feel that someone has to?", Ayman asked me that day.

This is why Ayman Sadiq does what he does. The infamous burnout of the social entrepreneur doesn't deem his motivation or passion. So before you decide to become a social entrepreneur, make sure you have a concrete purpose and a problem that you passionately want to solve. It has to be a problem that you see in the community around you and absolutely cannot stand. Can you think of something that pops right up? That's where you start.

SEEM S. NOOR

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## THE BOSSMAN

BY E. RAZA RONNY



## BENEFITS OF STUDYING ABROAD

LEARNING NOT TO NAVEL CONTEMPLATE

01

You move outside your comfortable bubble and realize the outer world has a lot to offer in terms of opportunities.

GAINING INSIGHT INTO HUMAN BEHAVIOUR

02

You become open to accepting points of views that don't necessarily match yours.

DEVELOPING POISE AND SELF-CONFIDENCE

03

You learn to adapt to uncertainty. You learn to cope with unfamiliar situations without breaking a sweat.

APPRECIATING SHADES OF GREY

04

You learn to accept that not everything that worked back home will necessarily work in a foreign land.

LEARNING TO LISTEN

05

You will get accustomed to paying attention to different expressions and concepts

Source: Forbes

Design: Syeda Adiba Arif

## Students from IBA, DU join Erasmus+ exchange program



The exchange program students with their lab masters Ulla Maija and Janne Karjalainen.

Students from the Institute of Business Administration, University of Dhaka have secured the prestigious Erasmus+ global exchange studentship for the spring semester in the renowned Oulu University of Applied Sciences, located in Oulu, Finland. Three

recent graduates from BBA discipline Sohrawardy Noor, Khandaker Shameel Murtaz, and Arshia Haque were selected from the collaborative university decision board as recipients of the scholarship, which covers their academic and living costs in

Finland. They are currently studying service design through concept and demo creation courses in interdisciplinary teams in the development lab and working with students from 16 different nationalities under the supervision of their lab masters.

## 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.



## The art of writing professional e-mails

Emails aren't as informal as chats, or as formal as applications. Tread carefully along the lines to avoid red flags that can give off the wrong tone.

### ADDRESS CAREFULLY

The opening line of your email lays down the premise of your email. The founder of a reputed music production company, Saim Ahmed\* said, "It is better to study how your supervisors communicate over mails. Speaking in context of Bangladesh, either go with sir/madam if super formal, or Mr X or Ms Y."

### KEEP IT CONCISE

Nobody likes to read unnecessarily long sentences or words. Convoluted, lengthy expressions are annoying and unprofessional. So help save your workmate's time (and your own) by making sure your emails are smart and to

the point.

### KNOW HOW TO CC/BCC PROPERLY

This cannot be emphasized enough, as the CC and BCC tools are tricky and frequently misused. Use the former to keep someone in the conversation loop, and the latter to add someone to an email conversation without the others knowing. Saim said, "When you mass e-mail, you don't have to put 200 email addresses on the 'To' section, unless specified otherwise. Put everyone on BCC and then send yourself the mail. That way if people reply, it will only reach you and not every last person on earth."

### ADJUST YOUR TONE

Saim said, "Some offices have specific decorum for how they communicate with external bodies versus how they communicate

internally. Know which tone you should follow."

### STEER CLEAR OF BUZZWORDS

The goal is to make your stance clear and get the message across. Thus, try to avoid acronyms and internet-lingos.

### KEEP PUNCTUATION IN CHECK

Punctuations have the potential to alter the entire meaning of your sentence, so there's no scope of treating them lightly. Besides, coming off as someone who knows his/her grammar definitely helps.

\*Name changed for privacy

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