

# An Ode to English Teachers

MASHIYAT NAYEEM

Teachers can make or break us. Strangely, in the case of English teachers, they mostly just seem to make us. In addition to their inherent storytelling ability, they possess the qualities of a parental figure and can form a bond with the students that lasts beyond the classroom. Having a trusted adult in the form of a teacher can be crucial to many students, especially those who are facing the struggles of growing up.

Looking back on my school days, I was lucky enough to have amazing teachers across all subjects, but interestingly the ones whose teaching I carry on to this day are all teachers of English language or literature.

In middle school, my teacher introduced me to Mitch Albom's *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* and it became one of my favorite books. With her funny anecdotes, she instilled the love for analysing literary texts and laid the foundations of my writing abilities. My 8th grade teacher showed me how to be independent at a time when my friends neglected me and I was the lonely kid. The teacher during my O level years was nothing short of a motherly figure and I still go to her for advice to this day. My English tutor was like a big sister to me, and she went beyond



DESIGN: FATIMA JAHAN ENA

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PHOTOS: COURTESY

## DPS STS School Dhaka returns with TEDx

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IRINA JAHAN

On October 15, DPS STS School Dhaka hosted the second iteration of their TEDx event, on the premises of the school's senior campus in Dhaka. Speakers from a diverse range of sectors were in attendance to speak to the audience—who were then given the chance to interact with them and ask questions during a half-hour panel discussion session.

The event was sponsored by Monash Pathways at Universal College Bangladesh and M A Tayab Limited. The programme was inaugurated by Dr Shivananda CS, Principal of DPS STS School Dhaka and Dr Sandeep Ananthanarayanan, CEO of the Higher Education Wing of STS Group.

The panel of speakers had many interesting and inspirational personalities, including Ghulam Sumdany Don, Corporate trainer and Chief Inspirational Officer at Don Sumdany Facilitation & Consultancy; Manizey Ibrahim, author, lawyer, and the Director of Legal Affairs at Ibrahim Securities Limited;



Md Tajdin Hassan, founder of Mission Save Bangladesh and Chief Business Officer at The Daily Star; Anika Rabhani, certified yoga instructor and founder of Yoganika; Debra Elroymsen, author, co-founder and Acting Executive Director of The Institute of Wellbeing Bangladesh; Rizvana Hredita,

co-founder and Chief Operating Officer of Hydroquo+ and Lingwing; Rakin Absar, social media personality; Sadman Sadik, educator at 10 Minutes School; Sourodir Paul, winner of World Universities Debating Competition (WUDC) 2022 and Shah Rafayat Chowdhury, co-founder of Footsteps Bangladesh.

TEDx events aim to provide an enlightening experience and share ideas that would allow the attendees to be influenced positively. Speakers of TEDx DPS STS School shared the stories of their journey to success, the roadblocks they faced on the way, and their ongoing perseverance with the young enthusiastic listeners during the event.

Not only were the participants elated by the presence of the guest speakers, but the music and dance performances by the school's talented students served as a wonderful addition to the vibrant and lively ambiance.

The licensee of this year's event, Numma E Jannat, who is also an A-level candidate at the school said, “TEDx is not just an event, it gives people a new way of looking at life.”

## Faez's dreams for a better Barishal

MAISHA ISLAM MONAMEE

Barishal Youth Society (BYS) is one of the largest youth-led organisations in Bangladesh's northern and southern regions. Founded by Faez Belal in 2014, it strives to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of quality education, gender equality, climate action, and peace and justice. With the primary goal of providing leadership and economic growth assistance to women, the platform is supported by 18,000 members and 1,200 volunteers. “We strictly ensure equitable and



adequate involvement of both men and women in entrepreneurial and social cohesion leadership. In an attempt to achieve these goals, we have launched several social ventures,” explained Faez.

After completing his graduation from the University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB), he is presently working as an executive director at BYS. It was for his efforts in the humanitarian field, that he received the prestigious Diana Award, earlier this year.

BYS's projects include Barishal Nook, Bangladesh's first self-designed learning centre for marginalised communities. This joint project by IFNB and Project DEFY—in partnership with Knodel foundation, BASTOB, and YOU Stiftung Bildung für Kinder in Not—

is supported by GREEN ink., Bosch Bangladesh, ULAB, and Tech Academy. Its intervention, in the context of the SDG model, uses a decentralised and context-relevant educational paradigm.

The organisation also launched the Avoy app, in collaboration with United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), to ensure the safety of women in public spaces. They have also been playing an active role as a partner organiser of the Digital Khichuri Challenge—UNDP's effort to bring peace and tolerance to the digital

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BYS designed and implemented the first ever Girl's Summit, in partnership with Plan International Bangladesh. Mentoring around 30 youth-led organisations, as part of their social intervention and strategy to connect grassroots communities. Over three days, women-led organisations had the chance to express their requirements for skill building and growth on a variety of topics such as women empowerment, attaining excellence in leadership, and entrepreneurship. They also received two months of intensive mentorship sessions to help them increase their capacity.

Additionally, BYS has also been running a campaign to ensure safer bathing spaces for everyone, that also focuses on mitigating gender-based violence, with Plan International Bangladesh and Population Services and Training Center (PSTC). The youth organisation has been conducting workshops, under the Movers Program, with indigenous and coastal youth from across the country. The workshops' goal is to develop the soft skills of 3,000 youth, in regards to climate action, gender equality, leadership in action and orientation to entrepreneurship.

Their social startup, Pannyobari, targets climate action, gender equality, decent work, and economic growth.

“Most of these products are created through recycling domestic and other industrial materials. By creating climate-friendly products, youth from the coastal area will start generating income through the green energy movement,” shared Faez.

“Shomporke Valo Thakuk Desh”, another one of their projects, focuses on emergency humanitarian crisis response. This project assists families affected by emergency crises through basic necessities such as food, education, hygiene items, and facilities. To assist families, BYS has also provided educational workshops and skill development courses.

BYS also organises the Youth Fest, their largest annual event, which contributes to the growth and development of participants. This event creates a platform that connects youth and government, making it easier for them to interact and solve problems.

Till now, the organisation has directly impacted 1 million beneficiaries. By 2030, they plan to empower 2 million women across the country. “I want to make BYS the largest youth organisation in Bangladesh and with our motto of decentralisation, we want to reach every grassroots marginalised community and want to be part of their sustainable development,” Faez concluded.

the confines of the question paper to touch on writing about the world at large.

Thus, if a match was ever made in heaven, it would be an English teacher and a budding writer in the classroom. When I asked my fellow SHOUT writers whether their teacher impacted their writing career, the number of responses was overwhelming, to say the least.

“I remember my favourite English Literature teacher in Grade 8 taught us the value of ‘creative liberty.’ The way she would relentlessly bring great, positive, energy to the classroom made me look forward to her classes,” reminisced Ayra Areeba Abid.

Another writer, Inqiad Bin Ali, talked about the mentorship he received from his teacher. “Our discussions didn't centre around our lessons only. We talked about basically everything in life—ranging from current affairs to sports to morality. They widened my horizon and made me think deeper about my surroundings, whilst enriching my vocabulary and grammar. It sounds cliché, but without him, I wouldn't be where I am now.”

Several others commented how the teaching style and encouragement from their teachers were essential in shaping their love for literature and honing their penmanship. For some, their choice of major was defined with the help of their English teachers or professors.

“With my poor CGPA in Economics and just a minor in English, I didn't think I'd get into any good programs, but he all but pushed me into applying for Columbia [University] and I managed to get in, so I'll always be grateful for that.” recounted Sarah Bari, the Editor of Daily Star Books.

This further reinforces the importance of a teacher's dedication toward enriching young minds and not just finishing the syllabus.

Perhaps, English teachers are made of sugar, spice, and everything nice, or perhaps they were just born for their role. Whatever the case may be, we can all unanimously agree that they have had significant impacts in our lives and we owe them a great deal of appreciation!

*Mashiyat dissociated too much and is now stranded on Neverland. Tell her to grow up at mashiyat.nayeem@gmail.com*

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