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How the BBLT Graduates Applied their Learning in their Lives

An assessment of the "Building Bridges through the Leadership Training" Programme of Bangladesh Youth Leadership Center

Zainu Sadia Islam
Fathema Zhura Khatoon
Andrew Jenkins

BRAC Research and Evaluation Division

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ABBREVIATIONS

ADP	Adolescent Development Programme
APL	Art and Practice of Leadership
BBLT	Building Bridges through the Leadership Training
BYLC	Bangladesh Youth Leadership Center
IAU	Impact Assessment Unit
RED	Research and Evaluation Division

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ABSTRACT

The study considered both quantitative and qualitative method. Both treatment and comparison group considered for this study. Qualitative findings conclude that there is a lack of integration among the treatment group. Nonetheless, there is a substantial difference between the treatment group and the comparison group in each of the three components of Bangladesh Youth Leadership Center namely; 1) Building Bridges, 2) Leadership Training and 3) Community Services. The members of the treatment group are more expressive, confident, have more networking skills, clear knowledge of leadership and authority, and are much more involved in community service projects. Quantitative findings in terms of knowledge, attitude and practice in relation to leadership among the comparison group of BRAC staffs are similar practice in comparison to treatment group. However, this may be partly because of 'response bias', i.e. persons with good leadership characteristics may have been more likely to respond to this online survey. Recommendations for the future consideration of BYLC have been made, based on the findings.

How the BBLT Graduates Applied their Learning in their Lives

Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

Bangladesh Youth Leadership Center (BYLC) is the first leadership institute in Bangladesh with a mission of Bridging gaps in society by uniting youth from diverse backgrounds, equipping them with leadership, problem solving and teamwork skills and engaging them in community service and active citizenship. BYLC also has a specific vision which is "To create a poverty-free Bangladesh driven by the next generation of home-grown leaders". BYLC is registered as a non-profit organisation with the Registrar of Joint Stock Companies and Firms in Bangladesh on January 5, 2009.

BRAC (Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee) is ranked as a no 1 NGO in The Global Journal's list of the 100 Best NGOs in the World in 2013. The vision of BRAC is a world free from all forms of exploitation and discrimination where everyone has the opportunity to realise their potential. BRAC has always been enthusiastic about leadership development of youth of Bangladesh because BRAC truly believes they can make a difference. From the vision of BRAC and BYLC, it is clear that both of these non-profit organisations have been trying to achieve a similar goal. BRAC signed a memorandum of understanding on July 20, 2011 with BYLC to promote development of the first leadership institute in Bangladesh in order to catalyse positive change in society by training youth.

BYLC has brought the best of global leadership education to Bangladesh and made it available to youth. BYLC's approach to demonstrating leadership is through effective intervention, communication, team building, problem solving and providing community service. This approach created a platform for young people from different educational mediums to practice active citizenship in Bangladesh.

The signature programme of BYLC is a four-month long leadership course, Building Bridges through Leadership Training (BBLT). This programme unites students from different backgrounds of education namely Bangla, English and *Madrassa*. The original concept of developing the leadership skills of youth came from Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government in 2008. BYLC also conducts month-long leadership programmes for secondary school students and three-day long workshops on leadership for university students.

Over the past 5 years, BYLC's innovative approach to leadership development has been acknowledged by many organisations including the US State Department, the World Bank Group, the British High Commission in Dhaka, the Canadian High Commission in Dhaka, BRAC, the Asia Society, the Washington Post, the International Youth Foundation, and many others.

1.1 BYLC's APPROACH TOWARDS LEADERSHIP

Leadership is one of the most talked about, yet least understood subjects in Bangladesh. The crisis of leadership in Bangladesh is largely a consequence of what people understand 'leadership' to mean. However, BYLC views leadership and leaders in a different way. According to BYLC, leadership is an activity that mobilises people to tackle problems in our society and make real progress[1]. BYLC exists to educate the next generation of home-grown leaders and instill in them values of public service and active citizenship. In our society, leadership has long been perceived as a position of power or authority. However, BYLC believes that leadership is distinct from authority; it is a process, not a position.

Power comes from knowledge that influences the ability of a person to exercise to others. Authority comes from position and the formal right to take decisions or making commands. Authority is dependent on levels or positions and can be used in a limited manner as awarded.

Closely related to the concept of leadership is diversity. One objective of BYLC, is to create a tolerant and inclusive society by unifying the diverse factions in society. In Bangladesh, there are basically three types of schools: Bangla medium, English medium and *madrassa* (religious school). In English medium schools, the curriculum is mostly based on the UK education system. Also, there are some schools teaching the English version of Bangla curriculum fixed by the National Curriculum and Textbook Board.

It is because of difference that students from different backgrounds fail to develop a deep-rooted connection with each other which is really important for the overall development of a developing nation like Bangladesh. To bridge this gap, BYLC works as a form of cross cultural collaboration an interdisciplinary analysis of how a leader can responsibly embrace complex problem-solving and creative decision-making by providing a common platform for students from different backgrounds to come and work collectively to achieve a certain goal.

[1] The BYLC blog, Ejaj Ahmad on December 18 2009, Available at: http://www.bylc.org/blog/on-leadership/theory-and-practice-of-leadership/

1.2 BUILDING BRIDGES THROUGH LEADERSHIP TRAINING (BBLT)

BBLT is a four-month long leadership course designed for college and university students aged between 17 and 22. The first two BBLT programmes ran for one month. The course is divided into two phases. The first phase is more intensive and theoretical in nature, while the second phase is a reflection of the participants' learning by placing them in real life communities where they exercise their newly acquired leadership skills. In the first phase, participants undergo an intensive seven-week workshop on leadership. In the second phase they implement their newly honed leadership skills in the local community by designing and implementing small yet scalable service projects to better the lives of the underprivileged.

1.3 COMPONENTS OF BBLT PROGRAMME

The BBLT programme has the following three components. (1) Building Bridges, (2) Leadership Training and (3) Community Service.

Building Bridges

There are three different schooling systems in Bangladesh, namely English medium, Bangla medium and *Madrassa* medium. There is little or no interaction between students from these different backgrounds. BYLC believes that this division in society is a threat to social cohesion in the country. According to BYLC if future leaders, in whatever field, cannot understand where the other half of the population is coming from, then how will they exercise correct judgment and leadership?

Leadership Training

Drawing from leadership courses taught at Harvard and MIT, BYLC has developed its own curriculum that is both rigorous and culturally suited to the needs of Bangladeshi youth. The courses are taught in Bengali using local examples and case studies. An approach taken by BYLC is using a combination of lectures, large class discussions, small group peer consultations, reflection and team-building exercises, BYLC builds the leadership capacity of the students. BYLC believes that the experiential environment in the classroom ensures that the students develop self-awareness and an ability to step out of the comfort zone and take initiative

Community Service

An aim of BYLC is through community service projects, participants develop a sense of compassion towards their community and develop their project management, team building, problem solving and critical thinking skills.

1.4 OBJECTIVES OF BBLT

The objectives of each of the components of the BBLT programme are as follows;

- Building bridges: To create a space where students from diverse educational and socioeconomic backgrounds can engage in dialogue and work together to foster tolerance and pluralism.

- Leadership training: The curriculum seeks to

  > Differentiate between authority and leadership
  > Develop competent young leaders

- Community Service: To help students apply their newly learned skills and knowledge in their local communities by designing and implementing small, scalable and sustainable projects and awareness campaigns.

1.5 SELECTION PROCEDURE OF BBLT

Participants are selected through a rigorous selection procedure. After sourcing application through campus promotions, print and social media, the interested candidates go through a four-step admission process and the percentage of selection for this training programme is about 5-10% of the total applicants. During the selection procedure, BYLC tries to ensure gender balance to maintain its value of equality as well as address a cross-cutting issue like gender.

1.6 BBLT PROGRAMME

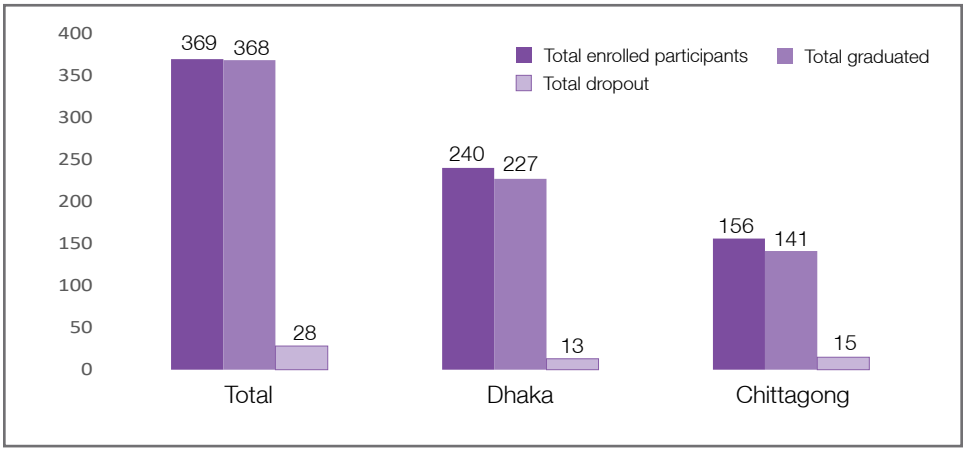
The objective of BYLC is to create a space where students from diverse educational and socioeconomic backgrounds can engage in dialogue and work together to foster tolerance and pluralism.

Table 1.1 BBLT programme at a glance

BBLT Batch	Year	Month	Place
BBLT 1	2008	July 18 - August 16	Chittagong
BBLT 2	2009	June 19 - July 23	Dhaka
BBLT 3	2009-2010	December 5 - January 9	Dhaka
BBLT 4	2010	July 10 - November 5	Chittagong
BBLT 5	2010-2011	November 4- February 26	Dhaka
BBLT 6	2011	April 10- July 23	Dhaka

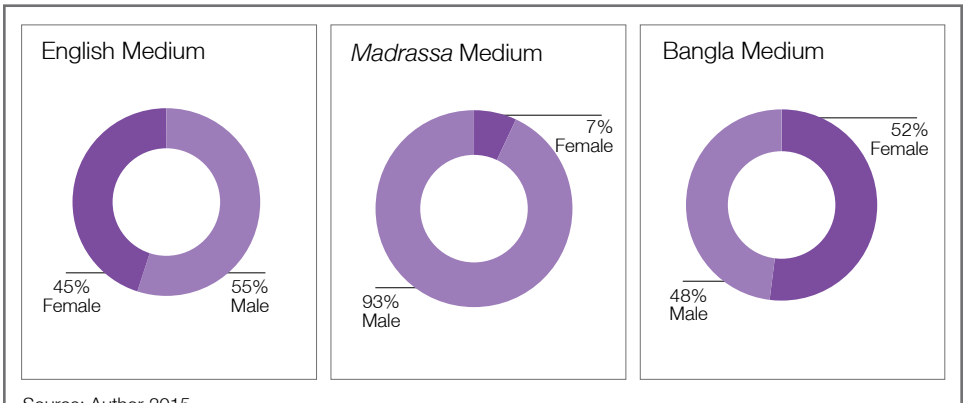
BBLT Batch	Year	Month	Place
BBLT 7	2011	June 30- October 29	Chittagong
BBLT 8	2011-2012	November 12- March 10	Dhaka
BBLT 9	2012-2013	September 5 - January 5	Dhaka
BBLT 10	2013	September 5 - January 5	Chittagong
BBLT 11	2014	March 22 - May 31	Dhaka

Fig 1.1 Enrollment, graduation and dropout rate by region



Graduation rate between batches varies significantly with a variance of 0.0% to 19.0%, and an average of 7.1%. Dhaka has a lower average dropout rate with an average of 5.4%, compared to Chittagong average of 9.6%.

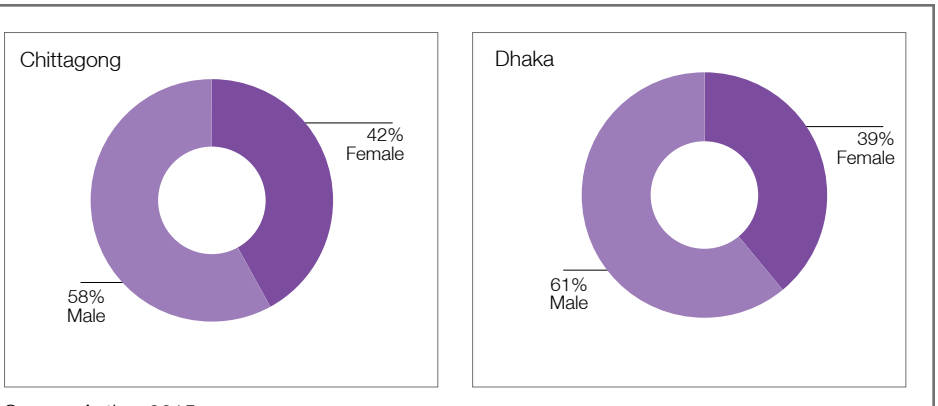
Fig 1.2 Male and female ratios by education medium



Source: Author 2015

It was observed that, compared with males, the percentage of females attending this training programme is significantly lower from the *Madrassa* medium and this is the lowest compared to the other two mediums. For the English medium the percentage of females is higher than males and the highest among the other two mediums. Among these three mediums we have found almost equal gender balance from the Bangla medium participants.

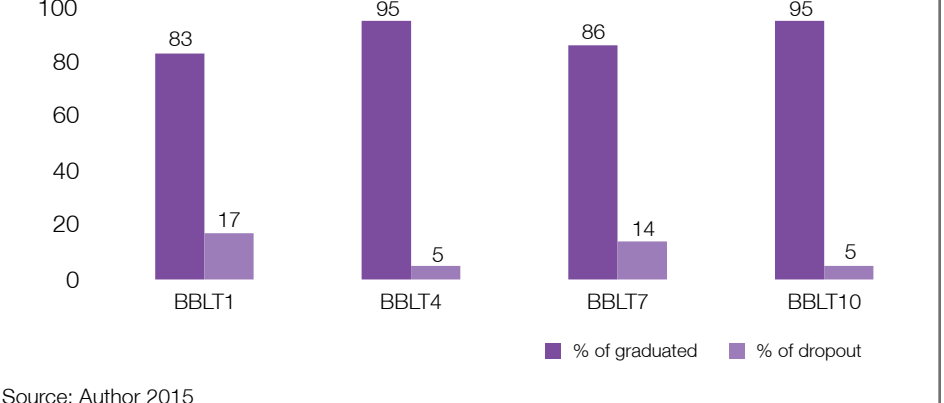
Fig 1.3 Gender ratios by region



Source: Author 2015

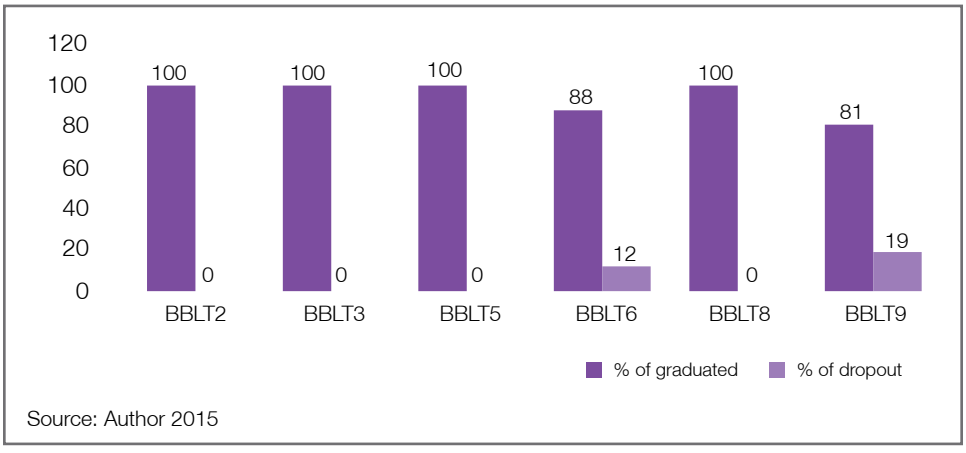
Gender ratios for the BBLT participants are close to 40% for females and 60% for males for both of the two regions.

Fig 1.4 Average graduated and dropout in Chittagong



Source: Author 2015

Fig 1.5 Average graduated and dropout in Dhaka



Source: Author 2015

An increasing trend of dropout is seen for the Dhaka region. Although there was 0% dropout in the first two batches, it rose sharply to 12% in the BBLT 6 batch and rose again to 19% in BBLT 9. There was a decreasing trend in the percentage of students graduating over time.

Chapter Two

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 EVOLUTION OF LEADERSHIP
From concept to a theory

Leadership as a theory started off its journey from the very beginning of human civilisation. One of the influential leadership thinkers was Plato. Plato's argument revolved around the most fundamental question when it comes to leadership, which was "Can leadership be taught?" Plato was the first thinker to come up with a systemic political and administrative model to arrange life in an ideal state. He argued that politicians must act as the rulers of the new ideal state, because they have real knowledge of what is 'the good' and which are the aims of the state. But in the later part of his life, he argued that the art of ruling (leadership) is like the art of sailing which can be learnt (Plato: The Republic[2]). Interesting is that Socrates in his questioning approach shows that human beings know a lot but don't know even more. Socrates insight of 'not knowing' is an essential item in leadership because it introduces uncertainty about the unknown and a drive for better understanding of e.g. other values, beliefs and interpretations, what to do with that, how to choose; multiple realities, ambiguity. Awareness of this is of importance for leadership and cross cultural collaboration as it offers entry points for conversation. Building bridges starts here.

As one of the early leadership theorists, Machiavelli (1468-1527) characterised leadership as certain effective techniques for manipulation and remaining in power (including deceit, bribery and murder). This gave him a bad reputation in later centuries. Machiavelli's contribution is presently seen much more in a positive in terms of his insights and skills in clever argumentation, interpretation of complex situations, interaction and communication; pro-active thinking and acting. Some western countries even have a Machiavelli award for clever policy making and public communication: how to win a policy battle without tough conflicts. Though throughout the history of human civilisation in some societies, people followed the directions of a few leaders, Adolf Hitler or Mao Zedong who possessed the qualities as stated

[2] Plato (2014). The Republic. Create Space independent publishing

by Machiavelli, were trusted by the masses (Benjamin[3]). But a major turnaround in leadership philosophy came at the end of the eighteenth century, known as the enlightenment period of leadership evolution. Sigmund Freud and Max Weber played the most influential role in deriving two new approaches to leadership. Freud, the founder of psychoanalysis, theorised that beneath the surface of the rational mind was the unconscious mind which was responsible for a significant proportion of human behaviour. Like Weber, he suggested looking at leadership from three perspectives: (1) bureaucratic, which argues that leadership comes from hierarchical positions; (2) traditional, which depicts leadership as an arbitrary exercise of power bound to loyalty, favouritism, and politics; and (3) the 'transformer' perspective, which argues that leadership requires heroic or superhuman qualities (transactional leadership). The work of these two social science theorists ultimately led to the development of intense research on leadership. It was in the twentieth century, 1920 to be precise, when the first contemporary leadership theory emerged, which is the 'trait based' leadership approach. The notion of this theory is that the make-up of the leader makes all the difference. But traits do not always predict leadership effectiveness, and this theory only dominated until about 1940. Researchers then shifted to looking at the behaviour or style of the leader (MIT Leadership Center[4]). The behavioural leadership approach focused on the behaviours that leaders enacted and how they treated followers. However, researchers could not come up with a single leadership model which is universally applicable to all situations. This line of research gave birth to a new theory called the 'contingency leadership' model—which argues that leadership is dependent on the particular situation. But given that there are endless contingencies in life, there are endless varieties of leadership, so researchers again tried to explore this field from different directions. Several leadership schools of thought then emerged, for example: the rational school of leadership, sceptics' school of leadership, information processing school of leadership, the new school of leadership etc.

Until now, leadership has been explored as the metaphor of a blind man and an elephant, where leadership was the elephant and there were a lot of blind people identifying different parts of leadership. To explore leadership more objectively requires the consolidation of findings of different previous research that laid the foundations of leadership as a scholarly topic. Many leadership researchers began to conceptualise ways in which many of the diverse findings could be united and otherwise synthesised and integrated, and so transformed this scholarly topic into a discipline. The birth of leadership as an educational discipline lies in the mid-20th century—1947 to be precise when Frederick Winslow Taylor introduced the 'Scientific Management Movement'.

[3] An examination of trust in contemporary American society. http://www.thegoodproject.org/pdf/CPL_WP_06_01_BenjaminGardnerPettingill.pdf

[4] http://video.mit.edu/watch/leadership-in-an-age-of-uncertainty-9974

In fact Taylor introduced his scientific management and 'leadership by prescription' already before 1900, Taylor's main publication is of 1911; he died in 1915. Elton Mayo's Hawthorne studies of 1933 led to the Human Relations Movement which was very influential with respect to leadership, stating that leaders should know about and act on (informal) relations between workers, the content of work and working conditions in order to motivate people. See also transactional leadership which states that positive stimuli given by leaders (e.g. a bonus) contribute to collaboration and well-being and performance of all involved. This was followed by authentic leadership or adaptive leadership with a focus on authentic self of the leader.

But the major breakthrough came with the establishment of the National College for School Leadership (NCSL) in 2000. This school focuses on teaching leadership, putting emphasis on its practice. This college played a pioneering role in promoting leadership as an educational discipline globally. In South Africa, the 'Matthew Goniwe School of Leadership and Governance' was modeled to some extent on the College, albeit on a much smaller scale and serving only a single province. Upon realising the importance of leadership education, many schools and organisations initiated different training programmes which aim to equip people with the appropriate knowledge, skills, and understanding to lead effectively. A few notable examples are: (1) the core focus of the teaching curriculum at Harvard Business School on leadership, which aims to foster a global conversation that addresses the challenges of leadership in context—across time and location, and encourage interdisciplinary exchange in order to bridge the gap between scholarship and practice, (2) the Leadership Institute at Yale working to provide comprehensive leadership training for all Yale students in order to produce moral, courageous, and visionary leaders who will serve as catalysts for positive change, and (3) McKinsey and Company through its McKinsey Leadership Development Programme initiative offers different leadership programmes which seek to support the development of leaders by bringing together relevant peer groups, facilitating their discussions, and infusing their practice with its latest insights.

Recent research suggests that today's most admired leaders are honest, inspiring, self-confident, and adaptive (MIT Leadership Center[5]), by which they influence and help to shape the values of people and society at large. In addition to this it is also important to consider 'vision' as an essential component of leadership. A new field of leadership research has emerged which is referred to as having a biological and evolutionary perspective. One of the prominent leadership theorists defines this perspective as meaning that leading effectively is less about mastering situations—or even mastering social skill sets—than about developing a genuine interest in and talent for fostering positive feeling in the people whose cooperation and support one needs (Daniel Goleman[6]). Moreover, this perspective opened the door to look at leadership through a unique lens. It led to the development a recent approach to leadership discipline called adaptive leadership. The essence of adaptive leadership was drawn from evolutionary biology which depicts that successful adaptations

[5] http://video.mit.edu/watch/leadership-in-an-age-of-uncertainty-9974

[6] http://www.danielgoleman.info/topics/leadership

enable a living system to take the best from its history into the future[7]. It argues that the real heroism of leadership involves having the courage to face reality and helping the people around you to face reality; and the accuracy of leaders' vision helps to face reality more objectively. This school of thought also argues that the new role is "to help people face reality and to mobilise them to make change". And making change is painful: "Many people have a 'smiley face' view of what it means to lead. They get a rude awakening when they find themselves with a leadership opportunity. Exercising leadership generates resistance and pain. People are afraid that they will lose something that's worthwhile. They're afraid that they're going to have to give up something that they're comfortable with" (Ron Hiefetz[8]). According to the Boston Consulting Group, adaptive leaders create conditions that enable dynamic networks of actors to achieve common goals in an environment of uncertainty. What makes this adaptive school of thought on leadership compelling is its originality and its honest approach towards leadership; as this approach begins with the argument that there is no universal checklist for becoming an adaptive leader, but by trying to mobilise a group to concentrate on a common issue, one can exercise leadership.

Operation theorists also recognise 'adaptability' as the possible nature of an organisational system. The essence of adaptive leadership helps organisations to transform that adaptive challenge into an opportunity, thus making it an advantage. To tackle an adaptive challenge, the organisation must possess strong readiness, responsiveness, and diagnostic capacity; so that it can come up with a strategy that will ensure achieving superior outcomes in a turbulent environment. Another feature of this school of thought is that the birth of this approach started with experimentation. It recognises that one cannot predict the outcome of the strategy in turbulent periods or uncertain periods. Thus, the organisation needs to run experiments to minimise the unpredictability of its environment. One of the core aspects of adaptive leadership is that leadership is a practice of mobilising people to tackle tough issues, adapt and thrive. A teaching method based on this concept allows the instructor to use different situations, and events present in the classroom come to life and be used to illustrate real world concepts another core aspect of this school of thought is that it begins its argument by keeping the focus on the work of leadership. In order to do that, this theory clearly makes the distinction between two critical points: (1) authority/leadership, (2) technical problems/adaptive challenges. The first distinction clarifies that having a position of authority does not mean that we exercise leadership; paradoxically, the powerful expectations of the role make us less likely to exercise leadership. Rather than focusing on the technical aspect of the problem, this theory puts emphasis on focusing on the adaptive (behavioural) part of the problem. This will help to distinguish between symptoms and actual problems. The highly successful KPMG Netherlands consulting firm provides a good example of how a company can engage in adaptive work[9].

[7] https://nclp.umd.edu/resources/bookreviews/BookReview-The_Practice_of_Adaptive_Leadership-Baylor-2011.pdf

[8] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QfLLDvn0pI8

[9] http://www.kpmgcampus.com/opportunities/leadership-edge

As time goes by, leadership is becoming a complex phenomenon in research which needs to be explored from different directions, and it is experiencing a rebirth due to developments in the academic world and the urgency of improving leadership globally.

Some people are fortunate enough to be born with traits that encourage other people to follow them, and many people will call them leaders. But these people are few. The rest of us can, nonetheless, become great leaders by studying the actions of successful leaders and, as Voltaire stated, by working to develop our leadership capacity as "the fruit of our labors."

2.2 PUBLIC LEADERSHIP IN BANGLADESH

The characteristics of a system which is perceived as bad by some or even by society for many purposes but rewarding for others. This as such is an interesting point: it shows inertia of the system which indicates difficulty of changing leadership within a context which allows or even promotes this type of leadership and needs to be addressed in 'building bridges'.

The leadership crisis in the public sector. Poverty alleviation has been a popular slogan of successive political leaderships in Bangladesh since the country's independence in 1971. "The persistence of poverty in Bangladesh originates less in the lack of resources for its alleviation than in the failures of governance. These failures consist of a lack of a developmental vision, absence of a commitment that goes beyond rhetoric and that could translate the vision into policies and programmes, and weak capacities at the administrative, technical and political levels to implement such programmes. The absence of a vision originating from within the country and projected through its political leadership leads to loss of ownership over the country's development agenda"[10].Although the previous quote is 18 years old it still remains relevant today in Bangladesh.

The commitment of political leadership is an essential driving force behind implementation of administrative reform efforts. In Bangladesh, the experience of the last three decades suggests that the political leadership has never been serious in its attempts to overhaul the administrative process. "International donors identified a number of bureaucratic dysfunctions as the major problem in pursuing good governance in Bangladesh. These dysfunctions include preoccupation with pervasive, highly centralised, overly bureaucratic processes. Also identified as problems are lack of accountability, responsiveness, transparency, and flexibility, combined with wastefulness, excessive hierarchy, and politicisation. Interestingly, international donors have condemned administrative leadership as the root cause of public agency dysfunction. International donors advocated proactive, entrepreneurial and customer-oriented public administrative leadership in Bangladesh to ensure

[10] http://agris.fao.org/agris-search/search.do?recordID=GB2013200710

good governance. For example, a DANIDA report proposes the adoption of a new public management spirit based on accountability and transparency by Bangladesh's public administration so that the country might pursue good governance and further development. The rise of religious extremism leading to terrorism in Bangladesh has a lot to do with the failure of political leadership"[11].

Bangladeshi non-profits have a long history of prospering in the initial stage before faltering due to leadership struggles and corruption allegations. A study carried out on four NGOs in Bangladesh showed that founder leaders can motivate and align the behaviours of individuals and groups to achieve success for the organisation but the organisations struggled to develop appropriate leaders for the future.[12] Extreme dependence on the founder leaders can lead to acquiescence, deference, flattery and placation. "The local NGO landscape is becoming scattered with debris of failed NGOs"[13].

2.3 UNDERSTANDING YOUTH LEADERSHIP

"Understanding and appreciating the complexity of leadership is a prerequisite to supporting and challenging teenagers to be the best leaders they can be[14]". Certain elements which were necessary in the development of youth leadership are; youth/adult partnerships, granting young people decision making power and responsibility for consequences, a broad context for learning and service and recognition of young people's experience, knowledge and skills.

Youth community engagement in recent years has developed significant momentum. Researchers and community leaders agree that involving youth in addressing issues that affect them has tremendous potential for social change. "Community engagement strategies can be an important part of the approach to help rural youth develop their organisational, logistical, leadership and decision-making skills"[15].

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[11] Khandaker Nayeemul Islam (2010) Good Governance and Bureaucratic Leadership: Can 'Builders and Titans' Approach be Applicable in Public Agency Leadership? A Case of Bureaucracy in Bangladesh. https://castle.eiu.edu/studiesonasia/documents/seriesIV/Khandaker_Islam.pdf

[12] M. Shammem Siddiq, Who will bear the torch tomorrow? Charismatic leadership and second-line leaders in development NGOs. http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/29192/1/IWP9_NGOleadership-IWP.pdf

[13] Lewis D (2011). Bangladesh: Politics, Economy and Civil Society, Cambridge University Press.

[14] Greimann and Addington, Youth Leadership Development Self-Efficacy: An Exploratory Study Involving a New Construct. http://www.journalofleadershiped.org/attachments/article/248/JOLE_7_1_Greiman_Addington.pdf

[15] Developing Innovative Approaches for Community Engagement http://www.open.gov.nl.ca/collaboration/pdf/community_engagement.pdf

Young people need opportunities to practise and assume leadership roles in preparation for future adult responsibilities. "Service-learning projects are one method for increasing leadership opportunities for at-risk youth. Service-learning projects offer teens the opportunity to practice leadership skills and reflect on the experience to learn more about themselves. Skills such as brainstorming, decision making, setting goals, and working with others can be taught and practised as teens plan and carry out significant service projects. Many studies support service learning as an effective method for teaching and enhancing leadership skills and positive attitudes in youth"[16].

[16] Bringing Leadership Experiences to Inner-City Youth. http://www.joe.org/joe/2001august/a6.php

Chapter Three

METHODS

3.1 STUDY OBJECTIVES AND AREA

The study had two specific objectives:

- Objective 1
  Explore in depth the leadership knowledge and understanding of the BBLT graduates.
- Objective 2
  Understand in which ways BBLT graduates are applying leadership skills in their lives.

A qualitative study was conducted from April 2013 to April 2014. Dhaka division was selected purposively as the study area. Due to time and budget constraints the respondents were called to a common space so that the attitude and perception towards leadership activities could be captured homogeneously.

3.2 DATA SOURCE

Primary data were collected from the respondents who have participated in the BBLT training course and those who have not. Secondary sources (books, journals and papers) were also reviewed.

3.3 SAMPLING

To assess the programme, the study considered a treatment and a comparison group from Dhaka. The treatment group was composed of youth who have received training during the period 2009-2012, and the comparison group consisted of youth who met the programme eligibility criteria in terms of age, gender and educational medium but did not receive the training, because funds and training opportunities were limited. More than 200 participants have graduated from the BBLT of BYLC within the study time line.

Out of 200 participants, about 10% of the participants were selected randomly for the treatment group. A similar number of respondents were selected for the comparison group considering the age, gender and educational background.

3.4 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Focus group discussions (FGDs) and in-depth interviews (IDIs) were conducted for both the treatment and the comparison group. Data triangulation and data validity were also considered between three types of Key Informant Interviews with the training participants and facilitators were considered.

Two case studies were analysed from the *madrassa* medium focusing on leadership skills, and explored how the knowledge gained affected respondents' day to day lives. Direct observation by the researchers was also used to capture the leadership qualities through observing the 'body language' of the respondents.

The following table summarises the total interviews conducted for this study.

Table 3.1

Tools and Techniques	Treatment (24)	Comparison (10)
Focus Group Discussions	3 (12 participants)	1 (4 participants)
In-depth Interviews	6	6
Key Informant Interviews	3	0
Case Studies	2	0

A homogeneous group from Bangla, English and *Madrassa* medium was formed separately for the FGD. The groups were formed in terms of equal gender balance and medium of education to gain a better understanding of the respondent's body language[17] towards leadership activity and interactive discussion during the FGDs. The number of participants for each of the FGDs was between 3 and 6.

Participants were randomly selected for the treatment and comparison group from the given list. For the Key Informant Interviews, those who were experienced facilitators of BYLC were selected. Two case studies were also analysed. A checklist was designed to conduct FGD, KII and IDI.

[17] Body Language Measuring Code: [1] Proper use of pause during speech; [2] Eye contact with the researchers and peers;[3] Proper use of emotion in appropriate context; [4] Use of hand when explaining, [5] Appropriate use of voice tone. http://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Guide_to_Social_Activity/Body_Language

3.5 DATA COLLECTION

Two researchers from IAU RED BRAC collected data. FGDs, KIIs, IDIs and case studies were conducted, each lasting about 60-90 minutes. Data was obtained from interviews through a digital tape recorder after receiving the consent (both verbal and written) of the participants.

At the end of each working day, the researchers briefly skimmed over the information collected throughout the day. Then summary notes were prepared based on the information collected. Once the interviews were conducted, researchers along with one enumerator transcribed the recordings. All transcriptions were triangulated, that is multiple notes were used along with the audio recordings.

For further comparison an online survey was conducted among BRAC staff meeting the following crieteria:

1. Staff <35 yrs & > level 9 (old system)
2. Staff who has joined BRAC < 5 years
3. Staff meeting BYLC attributes

Approximately 400 such respondents were identified and a total 100 respondents responded to the online questionnaire with a response rate of about 25%. The questionnaire was closely based on the checklists used for the FGDs and interviews.

3.6 DATA ANALYSIS

The data analysis was conducted by taking the following steps; data familiarisation, data reduction and data display.

Data familiarisation

Research assistants contributed to the process of transcription. Transcripts were made using recorded sound files and notes taken during fieldwork. The transcription was checked to increase the validity. Translated transcripts were compiled, read and discussed.

Data Presentation

Checklists were developed for FGDs, IDIs and KIIs. Triangulation of IDIs and FGDs along with KIIs findings was done to identify recurrent themes and for crosschecking.

3.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Questionnaires were read and comprehensively explained in front of each participant since they voluntarily accepted to participate in the study. Before interviewed, they were provided with information about the study and invited to participate. They were

informed that they can withdraw themselves from the study at any time without giving a reason. They were then asked to sign the written consent paper. Participants were assured of confidentiality regarding the information they provided. Participants were also assured that neither their name nor any other identifiers will be used in performing data analysis and in sharing the results of the study. The study method was approved by the BRAC research and evaluation division according to existing rules.

Chapter Four

EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

STUDY OBJECTIVES

- Objective 1
  Explore in depth knowledge and understanding about leadership of the BBLT graduates
- Objective 2
  Understand in which BBLT graduates are applying the leadership skills in their lives

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will highlight the findings related to the respondents' understanding of the leadership concept of BYLC and their perception of the dynamics of leadership. This chapter will also address how these BBLT graduates are applying their leadership skills in their lives. Three themes have identified for exploring this research objective by the researchers, according to the three different components of BYLC's BBLT programme these are: 1) Leadership and authority, 2) Building bridges, and 3) Community Service. Several subthemes have been generated to further aid the empirical findings. Findings regarding knowledge and perception of each of these three themes has been described according to the first objective and in the later section. Practice of these themes are presented, which meets the second objective.

4.2 THEME ONE
Leadership and Authority

4.2.1 Definition and distinction between leadership and authority

BYLC's definition of leadership is, "leadership is an activity that mobilises people to tackle tough problems in our society and make real progress[18]". The organisation

[18] The BYLC blog, Ejaj Ahmad on December 18th, 2009, Available at: http://www.bylc.org/blog/on-leadership/theory-and-practice-of-leadership/

views authority as very distinct from leadership. An 'authority' is someone who is in a position to give decision on any specific matter s/he is designated for.

The study revealed that there is a difference in understanding of the leadership and authority concepts between the treatment and the comparison group. Most of the participants from the treatment group were able to explain the definition of leadership, leader and authority promoted by the programme. Interestingly, the comparison group also mentioned similar definitions and perception of leadership and authority. However, there were some differences in perception and understanding of the concept of leadership and authority between these two groups.

> *"…Leadership is a role and leader is someone who plays the role".*
>
> - A *Madrassa* medium respondent (from treatment group) during IDI

> *"A leader is someone who mobilises a group of people to achieve a certain goal…"*
>
> - An English medium (from treatment group) respondent during IDI

> *"…Leadership is an inborn[19] quality. However, to be a leader you have to be educated, creative, expressive and attractive…."*
>
> - An *Madrassa* medium (from comparison group) respondent during IDI

A visible difference between the treatment and comparison group was observed in terms of understanding the difference between leadership and authority.

> *"Authority is someone holding a position in the society who has the power to make a difference… a leader is someone who can also bring about a change in society but does not necessarily need to be in an authority position..."*
>
> - Respondents during FGD (from treatment group)

Members of the same FGD also mentioned that, "there could be some problems when 'authority' cannot give any solution to a newly emerged problem. In that case anyone within part of that system can come forward and show his/her leadership skill."

> *"… Leaders have to be adaptive and technical in nature as during a real life crisis authority might not provide the exact solution even though he has the technical knowledge… whereas leaders are creative and should provide adaptive solution to problems and thus mobilise people...."*
>
> - A (treatment group) respondent during IDI

[19] i.e. present from birth

By comparison, respondents from the comparison group mentioned the differences between authority and leadership somewhat differently, and were less aware of potential leadership role of non-'authority' persons.

4.2.2 Problem identification

From the point of view of BYLC, in terms of leadership, identifying the nature of any problem is very important to elucidate that problem. Also stakeholders associated with it need to be involved in trying to tackle the root cause of the problem. This knowledge is given to the BBLT participants and it was observed by the researchers that, almost all the respondents in the treatment group do have a very clear understanding of this issue which is really promising.

> *"… People in this society might have a common dissatisfaction related to any existing issue which can be referred to as a 'problem'. For example if we see a traffic jam as a problem then we need to identify the stakeholders involved within this, only then we will be able to think and work accordingly to solve this problem…".*
>
> - A Respondent from English medium during IDI

4.3 THEME TWO
Building Bridges

4.3.1 Bridging gap

The findings established that the respondents from the treatment group have a clear knowledge regarding the 'building bridges' component of the programme. It promotes the value of networking with different types of people and the respondents are very aware of this issue.

> *"…Bridging gaps has two different interpretations for me. The first thing is to bridge the gap between people from different backgrounds and secondly we should work jointly in order to eliminate the gaps within the community…"*
>
> - Respondent during IDI

This existing gap between different educational mediums was identified by BYLC and then disseminated within the BBLT participants. From the interviews conducted for this study it was very evident that, the treatment group respondents were much more aware of this issue, compared to the comparison group. The BBLT graduates expressed respect for people from other backgrouds (different from their background) and tried to mitigate the differences among them while communicating. It seems clear from the interviews that this gap minimisation approach was learned from BYLC's BBLT programme.

4.3.2 Networking

According to the respondents from the treatment group, the heterogeneous small group formed by BYLC as an integrated part of the programme helped them to establish a good relationship with different educational background participants and continue that relationship.

> *"This small group discussion on individual leadership failure was very interesting for me. I was greatly fascinated by the dynamic opinion of different people and how this feedback could have helped me to succeed! This way I was able to make friends with those from different mediums and continue the friendship later."*
>
> - Respondent during IDI

Some respondents from the treatment group mentioned that prior to joining this training course there was limited scope for learning from so many dissimilar people.

> *"I always had an idea that, madrasa medium students are not that capable and are lagging behind but I am greatly surprised by how talented they can be if given such opportunities to explore issues and learn."*
>
> - A Respondent from English medium during IDI

It was further revealed that, both treatment and comparison group had equal opportunities to mix when they went to different universities in Bangladesh, but not at college level. However, the treatment group had more opportunities and wider networks, which was only possible due to BYLC's programme structure. This is a really interesting matter from the research point of view as networking among young people will ultimately support their development and that of the nation itself.

Another interesting perception was found during the conversation with the two groups. Both groups have a clear understanding that there is a gap in integration among education mediums. Also they perceive that, to achieve any goal for our country it is really necessary for all to stand on the same platform. The only difference between these two groups is, the treatment group has got the platform (provided by BYLC) to mitigate this gap whereas the comparison group does not.

One issue arose during the discussion during one FGD about creating an opportunity to connect to people. Some of the graduates favoured creating regular opportunities for them through BYLC's initiative whereas some contradicted this opinion. Quoting one of the comments from this group of people,

> *"…I am still in touch with the friends I made during the BBLT programme. I often meet with them, talk to them over social media and share views. It is not necessary for BYLC to create the opportunity for us to meet. We can meet anywhere but the initiative must come from me. That is the knowledge BYLC has given me…"*

During discussion, the respondents mentioned that prior to joining the BYLC programme, they used to question the quality of *madrassa* medium education compared to Bangla and English medium education. This perception was completely overturned by discovering the potential of the *madrassa* medium students. This would have remained unknown if they had not been able to meet through the programme. It was also interesting to note that, according to many of the respondents, each student from each medium has some special quality which others do not have.

> *"Madrassa medium students can very easily adapt to the community compared to the English medium students, whereas, the English medium students are good at communication with other stakeholders for managing funding etc. for running a project."*
>
> - A Respondent from English medium during IDI

The sense from the comments from most of the respondents was that despite having some differences there are strong capacities among the students from each medium and BYLC is a platform to integrate all these for collectively achieving a greater good for the country.

4.4 THEME THREE
Community service

The third theme identified for this qualitative study is community service. It was observed that most of the respondents from the treatment group are currently actively involved in community service activities, whereas, very few from the comparison group are doing so. Respondents from the treatment group have developed their own organisation after they graduated from BYLC and are working together with people from diverse backgrounds to achieve certain goals. For example: Road to School and Trash the Ash are two such projects which are being currently run by the BBLT-9 graduates.

Within the treatment group, *Madrassa* medium respondents could most effectually communicate with the deprived community compared to those from the other two mediums. One of the respondents from the English medium mentioned that,

> *"I was really amased at the interacting skill of one of my small group member from madrassa medium, whereas I knew that I do not have this quality… "*

It was also observed that, among the three mediums, Bangla medium students were found to be the most involved in several community beneficial activities.

4.4.1 Public speaking

According to the respondents, knowledge on effective public speaking was taught by BYLC in an innovative and useful way. Important issues need consideration for

becoming a better public speaker; eye contact with the audience, speech variation when needed i.e. connecting with the audience with emotion, speaking with relevance to the selected topic, and overall the importance of body language was taught as one of the core issues. One of the respondents mentioned:

> *"…like many other participants I was very scared at the fact that I had to give a speech in front of the whole class including the faculty of BYLC. However, later I became confident from the learning which BYLC had given me in this… this is a really important topic as we need to apply this skill in community service… "*

Not only was this skill used during the BBLT training period; rather it was very useful beyond BYLC's programme according to the respondents. One of the respondents stated that,

> *"…I always try to find a scope to apply the essons I have learnt here in my day to day life. For instance the techniques I have learned about 'public speaking'; I tried my best to apply this knowledge in a public speaking event at my college and it was remarkably appreciated by others, which I could not have achieved before..."*

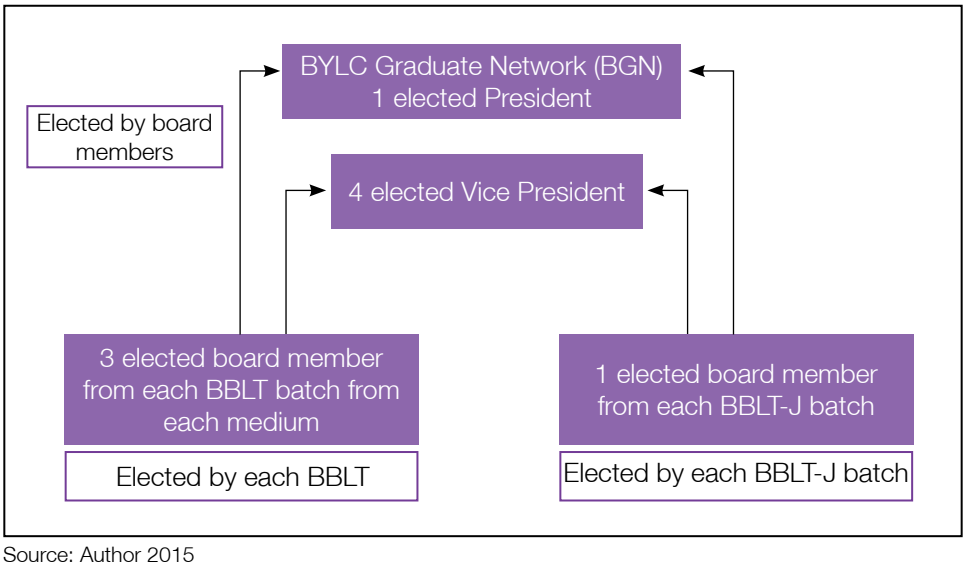
4.5 LEADERSHIP PRACTICES BY BBLT GRADUATES

4.5.1 BYLC Graduate Network (BGN)

From the interviews it was revealed that, the BBLT graduates are really trying to do something good for the country. They have formed their own organisation named BYLC graduate network (BGN) in 2012. The ultimate objective of this organisation is development of the alumni of BYLC in continuing the leadership journey of the alumni through some dynamic activities and organising training for personal development of the members which will lead to the career development of each individual.

Further investigating how this organisation is working through practicing leadership dynamics, it was found that, BGN elects 3 members from each BBLT batch (1 from each of the three mediums) and 1 from each BBLT-Junior batch. The reason for electing only one member from BBLT-J was mentioned that they are too young to take huge responsibility at that point. However, they perceive that, to maintain the BYLC alumni engagement it is necessary to take these young graduates into the network. These members are called board members. These board members then elect 4 vice-presidents and a president for successful operation of BGN. There are certain rules of thumb for each of these elected members of BGN. The same process is followed for both Dhaka and Chittagong Districts.

Fig 4.1 Organogram of BGN



Source: Author 2015

Constraints and Solutions

Since its formation in 2012, BGN has been facing some difficulties. There is a lack of spontaneous participation in the activities of BGN. Exploring the causes for this inactive performance one of several respondents who gave similar comments, said:

> *"… People applying for BBLT programme come here with different motives; these could be classified into three distinct ways: 1) self-motivated for learning and practising leadership dynamics, 2) to enrich the Curriculum Vitae by showing some extracurricular activities for studying in abroad; and 3) to establish good networking with people from different backgrounds which could work as a catalyst to develop their career…"*

From this comment it is obvious that, people who apply for the BBLT programme have different aims in applying and as a result their activities vary significantly after they graduate. However, it was mentioned that, as many graduates of BYLC leave the country for higher studies, there is very limited scope for them to remain actively involved in the activities. Also others are busy planning to go abroad or doing jobs, which also makes their contribution difficult.

The solution to this, identified by the graduates themselves is to add participants from another programme of BYLC namely Art and Practice of Leadership (APL), which is a 3 day leadership training. Further, it was added by the respondents that they would not only like to involve APL graduates but also they are trying to reach other BYLC graduates to include in the network to increase their social activities. However, this is still quite challenging for them to achieve.

4.5.2 Youth Walk Bangladesh

One of the most important practices of the BBLT programme can be understood by the activities of BBLT-9 graduates. These graduates have created an organisation called 'Youth Walk Bangladesh' after they completed the BBLT training. They are currently running two projects Road to school and Trash the ash, which are positive examples of successful continuation of the community service projects as well as continuing leadership learning. Respondents provided insights into one of these.

Project: Road to school

This project was initially part of the community service component of BBLT-9 batch. The objective of this project was to educate the underprivileged children from the urban slums of Dhaka aged between 8-12 years. The BBLT-9 participants conducted a need based survey within a defined underprivileged slum area (Tejgaon industrial area) and identified lack of awareness for education as primary need for that community. According to the respondents the survey showed, despite the existence of schools nearby, children were forced to work to support their family.

Identifying this problem, a small group of BBLT-9 decided to give the children education. Although it was a good decision, according to them, they initially faced many challenges. One of the challenges reported by one of the respondents;

> *"…their parents were not interested in education as did not have the knowledge of what education will bring to their children and to them…"*

Going deeper into problem analysis, the group analyzed the nature of the problem as taught by BYLC through the 'stakeholder analysis' approach. After analysis, they made a decision to involving the children's parents within the system. They showed some documentaries of the benefit of education and were able to convince the parents and their children. This way the graduates established a relationship with the parents and were able to provide informal education to the children.

However, the graduates thought in order to educate the children properly they should continue giving the children education. At the same time the respondent pointed out that,

> *"…We became very closely attached to the parents of that community and they used to wait eagerly for our arrival and have a chat with us... this feeling really encouraged us to continue doing something for that community… Also, the small group members became really close friends and jointly decided to continue the activity useful for the community in future…"*

To continue the project some graduates of BBLT-9 hired two local teachers for the slum children. They also raised funds to ensure the successful running of this project. Currently there are about 60 students continuing this education process and about 18 students have been admitted to the nearby government school.

It is a really interesting finding that, the comparison group respondents had also been involved in some community service projects but are not involved currently. All these projects were organised from either college or university and were a part of their extracurricular activity. It is more encouraging to see that respondents from both of the groups had an urge to do something good for the country. The only observed difference was, the treatment group members had the knowledge and platform to achieve their initial goals and managed to continue, whereas, the comparison group members had little knowledge or opportunity.

4.6 HOW BBLT GRADUATES ARE APPLYING LEADERSHIP LEARNING IN THEIR LIVES

The above findings are a clear indication of how the graduates are applying their newly learned skills in their lives. In addition, a table has been attached in the Annex showing the graduates' current project involvement, roles and responsibilities, challenges, potential benefit for the community etc. This will aid the understanding of the graduates' present involvement. It was a general observation that the treatment group were more involved in various socially valuable activities than the comparison group (see Annex). In addition, the future plans of the respondents taken from these activities have been gathered through IDIs and FGDs and are summarised below. This also shows the adaptive nature of the BBLT graduates aiding a greater potential positive impact of the programme.

Spillover Effect

The most interesting finding was the spillover effect of this BBLT programme. Most of the respondents came to know about this training programme from their college/ university seniors and/or friends who are BYLC graduates. Besides informing others about this training, they have shared their training experience with friends, college/ university juniors, siblings, cousins and beyond. They have highly motivated this group of people to apply for different programmes of BYLC. Sharing leadership knowledge and inspiring others, very distinctly indicate the positive impact of the training programme. This can be cross-checked with the increasing number of applicants through the year. Although the magnitude of the spillover effect was not specified by this qualitative study, if this can be measured in future it may show promising results.

Chapter Five

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

In this chapter an analysis has been described based on the findings of the previous chapter.

To begin with, BGN is the platform which actually shows what BYLC's graduates are currently doing after the programme. Several issues were observed regarding BGN activities and performance. First of all, BGN is an association of people from different backgrounds. Some are intellectual while others are good at communicating for getting project funding from donor agencies, while others are good at managing. So, there is a big opportunity to establish a successful project with diversified multi-skilled people provided there is a proper functional and active administration of BGN.

Although there are a set number of meetings, monthly and/or bi-monthly, the response rate is very poor among the graduates at this moment. Regularity in meeting is not often maintained. There were several reasons identified for this. Lack of motivation and study commitments were identified as two most hindering factors to actively contribute to BGN activities. However, as BGN only started its journey in 2012 it will take some time to achieve greater success.

Many issues were discussed on practicing leadership activities by the BBLT graduates.

A respondent raised a question,

> *"…why doesn't BYLC take an initiative by providing links to the graduates and creating opportunities…?"*

Another respondent expressed a different opinion and stated,

> *"…If higher management of BYLC is the only one to practice leadership then what we have actually learned through this training is in question. I believe it is our responsibility to advance the BBLT graduates towards achieving a particular goal, through using our networking skills learned at BYLC, which enable us to connect effectively…"*

It was very clear from the interviews that various dynamics of leadership activities are perceived and practiced by the respondents from the treatment group but this quality

was absent in the comparison group. In addition, the respondents from the treatment group were very vocal and more confident in their knowledge and perception towards leadership activities, which was really promising.

The BYLC Graduate Network is one of the ways to stay connected with the graduates. However, due to limited internet access of the *Madrassa* medium students it is very difficult for them to constantly monitor BGN activities. This sometimes creates a some inactivity among some of the group members.

CONFLICT AMONG PROGRAMMES OF BYLC

It was observed that there is a conflict among the participants and graduates of different programmes of BYLC. For instance, some respondents from the treatment group mentioned, after completion of the BBLT programme they are entitled to be called 'graduates', APL participants were given the title 'delegates'. This different 'entitlement' created some conflict among the BBLT graduates as this is a four month long programme whereas, APL is only a 3 day programme with more focus on career prospects. This conflict has been addressed recently by giving every participant in BBLT and APL the title of 'graduate'. Through this decision of BYLC, all the graduates now have a similar designation and motivation to work as a group for achieving a goal i.e. working for the betterment of the community. However, this change is still not welcomed by the BBLT graduates as they are making greater efforts than those from APL, but getting the same designation.

Discrimination in selection

According to respondents, discrimination in the selection for different programmes was evident in BYLC. It was some of the respondents' perception that only people from the elite class get a chance to attend this sort of training. According to one of the respondents (from the comparison group), despite studying in the same educational medium and being eligible for selection, he was not selected, but rather someone smarter and from the elite was offered admission. However, another respondent commented that there are specific selection criteria and he might have not met them. But later it came out that, the applicant was rejected from the interview panel with a comment "You already have attended the BBLT programme so we cannot select you for this similar type of programme" whereas, another participant was selected despite being a previous BBLT graduate. Transparency needs to be ensured in selecting applicants for attending programmes of BYLC.

> *"…people with a deprived background should be given top priority because they are already lagging behind. Rather the posh class people are given opportunity here in BYLC which highly deviates from the mission and vision of BYLC…"*
>
> - A respondent during FGD

"The students who will be selected are already pre-selected. The interview is just a formality. I know this because BYLC always inspires those who are already motivated enough and have enough opportunities, but what about those from a community which is lagging behind? So, on the whole, the community which is already lagging, gets less opportunity..."

- A respondent during FGD

Facilitator issue of BYLC

Although BBLT graduates are given an opportunity to act voluntarily as facilitators in several BBLT and/or other programmes of BYLC it was observed that, once a graduate works as facilitator and/or instructor they lose their motivation. Working as a facilitator and/or instructor in BYLC means a big responsibility. Besides this, the issue of the quality of the facilitators also needs consideration by BYLC, according to the respondents. Most of the faculty members for the BYLC training programme are actually graduates of the BBLT programme itself. Considerable improvement needs to take place to ensure better teaching quality. To solve this, a performance based incentive might be offered, which might be helpful in regaining motivation towards practicing leadership and, at the same time, ensure livelihood.

Clarification about funding

Previously the training was a World Bank funded project and scholarships were given to the participants for attending the course. However, now there is no provision for scholarships and new rules include taking a course fee from BBLT participants. According to the respondents the course should be free of cost, as this is a donor funded programme, and this would make it easier for people coming from a lower economic background.

BYLC first started its journey in 2009 as a non-profit organisation. But nowadays some of the respondents feel that it has become more commercialised, rather than a voluntary organisation. This should be a matter of concern for BYLC, which needs to be taken care of, or there may be perception gap which could be difficult to fill.

Also it is to be noted that, in 2009, there were no other leadership training organisations in Bangladesh so there was less competition. However now there are other leadership training organisations. So, one respondent suggested that it may be important for BYLC to provide some extra attraction for participants. .

Observations treatment group

- Most of the respondents were comfortable working with students of other mediums.
- Most of the respondents have worked with students of other mediums.
- Respondents have visited underprivileged communities and are currently active in different community service project/social works etc.

- Almost everyone is associated with different clubs, youth organisations, projects etc. There was a lack of confidence among the *Madrassa* medium respondents compared to the Bengali and English medium respondents.

Observations comparison group

- Respondents from the English medium have never worked with *Madrassa* medium students and also did not know any students from *Madrassa* medium personally while they were in college.
- Most of the respondents from all the three mediums believe in a 'leader-follower' approach to leadership.
- Respondents from English medium never visited any underprivileged community.
- There is a lack of understanding of leadership concepts and the adaptability of different dynamics of leadership activity.
- Most of the respondents from all the three mediums are not currently actively involved in extra-curricular activity like clubs, organisations, development projects etc.

Chapter Six

CASE STUDIES

The BYLC, is to create a platform between three types of schools: Bangla medium, English medium and *Madrassa* (religious school) for inclusive society. This platform works as a bridge so that BYLC graduate who are far from the mainstream such as graduates from *Madrassa* background are able to communicate with other background. Therefore, study team selected graduates from *Madrassa* medium as a case study analysis to know how a graduates come and work collectively to achieve a certain goal.

CASE STUDY 1

Name: Sabrina (name has been changed)
Designation: Graduate Outreach Associate, BYLC
BBLT Batch: 3
Medium of Education: *Madrassa*
Year of training: 5th December 2009 - 9th January 2010

Sabrina was in her final year of the Fazil exam which is equivalent to honours. In addition to this, she is also pursuing her Bachelor degree in Home Economics, specialisation in Child Development, from Dhaka University. She is not only studying but also actively involved with BYLC and BYLC Graduate Network (BGN).

Prior to joining BYLC she got the chance to join the signature programme of BYLC i.e. BBLT and became very enthusiastic about the youth development of Bangladesh through leadership practice. Her active performance in the group discussion and community service convinced the BYLC authority to take her as an intern after successfully completing the four month long training course. After commendably completing the internship she was offered a permanent position in BYLC as Graduate Outreach Associate which involves maintaining liaison with all the graduates of BYLC.

Initially this course came to her through a close friend and at first, she was not very clear about this course. But after reading the brochure she became interested in the course and applied. One thing she was a little bit worried about was the time

commitment but she thought it was an outstanding opportunity for her to meet people from different backgrounds and to share a common platform with a view of achieving a common goal. Besides, the community service component of the programme encouraged her greatly.

Although there was a little objection from her mother initially, her father was a true motivator and made her mother understand the importance of this course. She said, "When I asked my father whether I should go for this course he said that, it is totally up to me. If I think this will be good for me I should pursue this." At that time she didn't have any brothers so it was her father's dream to make her more than a son could ever be.

As she has completed the training course she feels more confident about herself and can observe things differently. The theories taught in the course about the dynamics of leadership have been very useful in her day to day life.

Her future plan is to work in an organisation which involves working with underprivileged children. She is also interested to work in a news reporting or advertising agency as nowadays she finds this sector very interesting. At another point she mentioned that, "My father's dream is to make me a teacher for the greater good and for pursuing his dream, I am delivering lectures as a proxy teacher and intend to do so in future so that I don't lose my dream and also pursue my father's dream. In this case both are matched as I will be working indirectly for child development."

The way she responded and gave a motivational speech was really mentionable and it is obvious that she will contribute tremendously towards the development of the country, which will eventually lead to a poverty free Bangladesh.

CASE STUDY 2

Rahim (name has been changed)
BBLT: 2
Madrassa Medium

After Rahim completed BBLT-2 in 2009, he became involved in various activities of BYLC. He used to go for marketing and learned many things from these visits with other colleagues of BYLC. These activities inspired him a lot. Then in 2010 a new discussion started for a new programme of BYLC which is BBLT-Junior. He gave a lot of input to this programme starting from planning, and then establishing and implementing it with his friends from BBLT-2 and BBLT-3.

Although it was a bit difficult for him in the beginning, he enjoyed these activities a lot and for most of the BBLT-J programme he had the the opportunity to work

as an instructor. Besides this, he also used to work as a facilitator for the BBLT programme. His activities as an instructor were conducting learning in the class room, giving assignments, checking those assignments etc. and as a facilitator he had the responsibility of conducting the small group discussion of the BBLT programme.

During the four years of his journey with BYLC he also used to work as a management trainee in BYLC and was involved in organising different programmes, for example Boot Camp, Summit etc.

In 2011 a plan was made for engaging the BYLC graduates and creating an alumni network. He was directly involved in this process and in 2012, the BYLC graduate network (BGN) was formed. And since then he has been working as an elected president of BGN. Dealing with the alumni, organising various activities for the graduates of BYLC and thus engaging young people in developing their careers, as well as working for the greater good of humanity are the main activities of BGN. But as BYLC head office is in Dhaka, so, presidents of BGN in Dhaka also have responsibility for maintaining liaison between Dhaka and Chittagong.

Problem

Initially there were some problems because he had been in reading in the *Madrassa* medium. He lacked confidence compared to English medium students. But as time passed by, he became more confident with students from different mediums when he realised that we all are standing on the same platform.

After completing HSC, Karim got a scholarship from the Sajeda Foundation for achieving remarkable results. The Sajeda foundation and BYLC are affiliated. The Sajeda Foundation gave him the application form for the BYLC BBLT programme and asked him to join. There was a full scholarship, and he became interested in joining the training.

What the Sajeda foundation told him is that BYLC uses the Harvard curriculum, and they advised him that, if you attend this training programme you all will have a good chance to expose yourselves to the broader world. Also, the leadership activity and community service project attracted him.

Expectations

His expectations were to get an idea of leadership activity but what he got was not only a clear understanding of the leadership concept but also how to practice leadership in his day to day life. There was not a very clear idea about the different curriculum mediums of Bangladesh and attending this training helped to make this very clear to him.

Challenges

Mixing with students from English medium schools was one of the most challenging tasks for him as he was from *Madrassa* medium. But mixing with Bangla medium students was not that difficult for him.

Community service did not hold much interest for him prior to attending this training as he did not have any experience of visiting slum areas. But due to BYLC's community service component, it was possible for him to go to the slum areas and observe how difficult people's lives can be and, in this regard, how he can apply his leadership expertise for the betterment of these people. This was what he learned from this training.

Chapter Seven

FINDINGS FROM BRAC STAFF

To obtain a second comparison group, an online survey was conducted among BRAC staff who met the following crieteria

- Staff <35 years and at level 9 or above (old BRAC HR system)
- Staff who joined BRAC within 5 years
- Staff meeting BYLC attributes, identified for selecting trainees

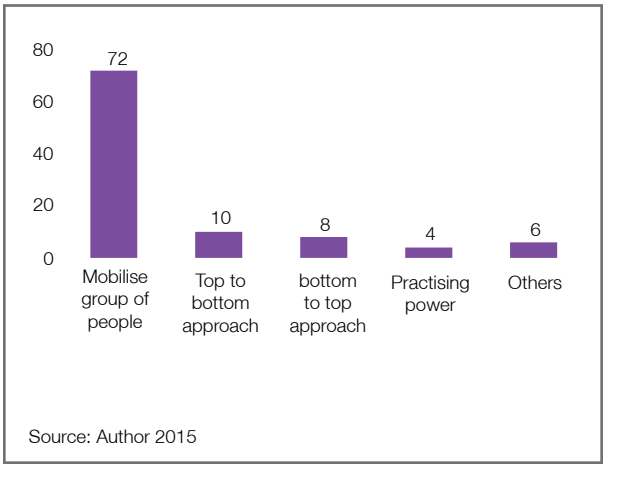
Approximately 400 such respondents were identified and a total of 100 respondents responded to the online questionnaire with a response rate of about 25%.

Findings are described below in terms of Knowledge, Attitude and Practice of leadership among BRAC staff. The findings show that BRAC staff and BYLC's respondents have equally clear knowledge, and that their attitutes towards leadership correlates. Not much difference in terms of practice has been observed.

KNOWLEDGE

According to 72% of the respondents leadership is 'mobilising group of people' which is exact definition of leadership taught by BYLC. Ten per cent of the respondents answered that 'top to bottom approach' is leadership, 8% answered 'bottom to top approach' and only 4 % answered that leadership is 'practicing power' (Fig 7.1).

Fig 7.1 Meaning of leadership



Source: Author 2015

An unexpected problem can be solved by discussing this with friend or colleagues according to 48% of the respondents. Doing a stakeholder analysis or discussing this with an authority is answered by respondents 24% and 26% of the respondents. A small group solves unexpected problems by discussing this with their parents (Fig 7.2).

A majority of the respondents (75%) states that improving leadership capacity can be improved by both improving technical knowledge and being more adaptive. Other respondents stated only one of the before mentioned, or none (Fig 7.3).

Fig 7.2 Solving an unexpected problem

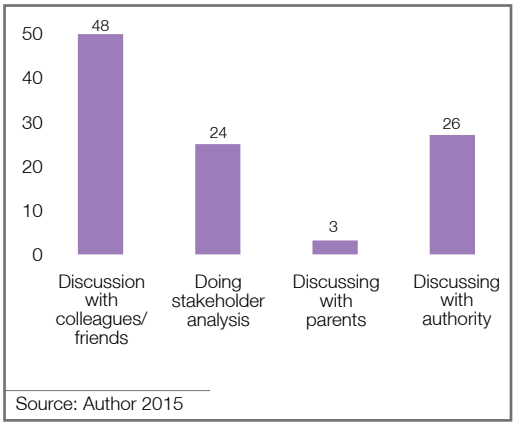
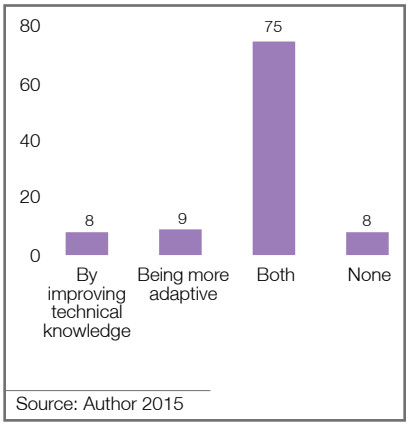
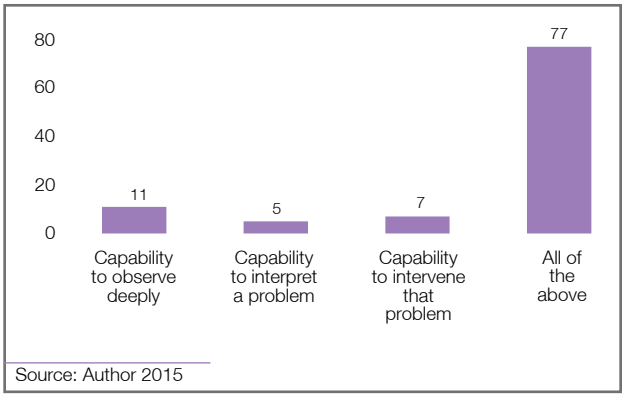


Fig 7.3 How leadership capacity be improved



More than three-fourths of the respondents (77%) indicate that a good leader has the capability to deeply observe, interpret a problem, and intervene in that problem. Only a small amount of respondents indicated that only one of these qualities is necessary to be a good leader (Fig 7.4).

Fig. 7.4 Qualities of a good leader



According to 58% of the respondents it is very important to involve all the stakeholders associated with a problem in order to solve the problem. Thirty eight per cent of the respondents state that this is somewhat important, and 4% either that this is not important, or they don't know (Fig 7.5) .

In a crisis situation it is most important to consider identifying the problem according to 52% of the respondents. Taking initiative is most important according to 44% and only 4% state that considering approval from authority is most important in a crisis situation (Fig 7.6).

Fig 7.5 Importance of stakeholder involvement

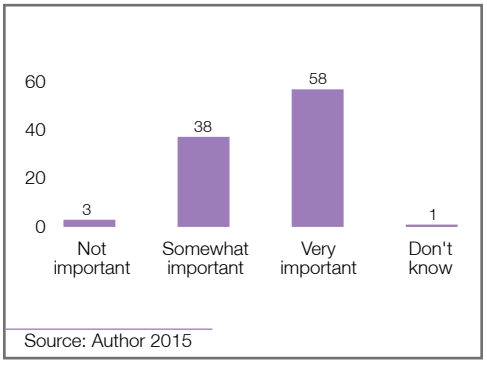
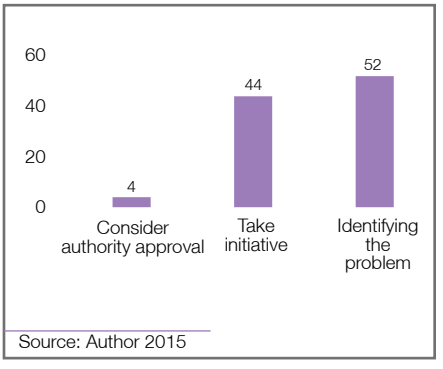


Fig 7.6 Solving crisis situation



Attitude

A majority of the respondents either disagrees (42%) or strongly disagrees (34%) with the statement "leadership is a quality by birth". However, 18% does agree with this statement and 2% strongly agrees (Fig 7.7).

Almost all of the respondents either strongly agree (42%) or agrees (50%) with the statement that anyone can practice leadership remaining at his/her own position. Only a very small number of respondents is undecided (5%), disagrees (3%), or strongly disagrees (1%) with this statement (Fig 7.8).

Fig 7.7 Attitude: Leadership is a quality by birth

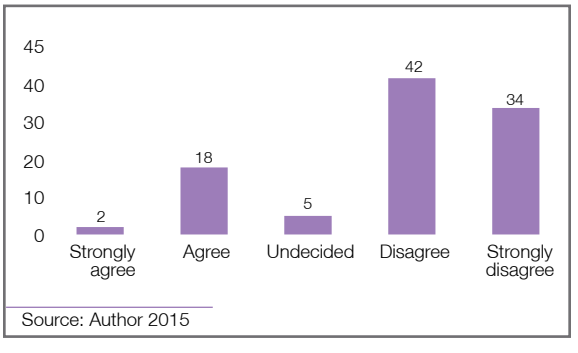
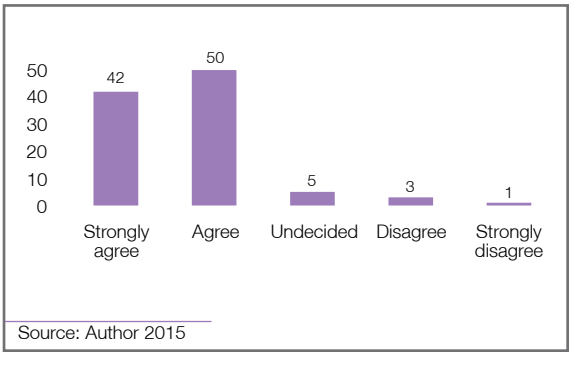
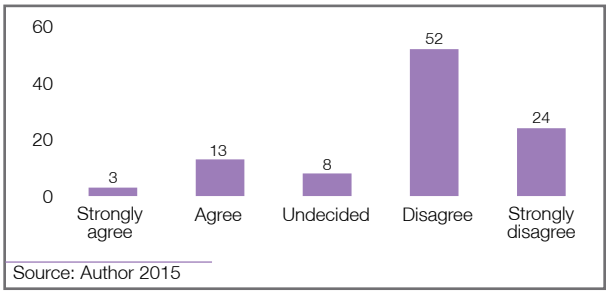


Fig 7.8 Attitude: Anyone can practice leadership at his/her own position



Fifty two per cent of the respondents disagrees that leadership practice is impossible if you are not in a position of authority. Twenty four per cent even strongly disagrees with this statement. However, almost a quarter of the respondents in undecided or (strongly) agrees (Fig 7.9).

Fig 7.9 Attitude: Leadership practice is impossible if you are not in a authority position



Of the respondents 56% is comfortable to work with people of different educational backgrounds and 17% is even highly comfortable. Twenty seven per cent is neutral and none of the respondents feels uncomfortable about this (Fig 7.10).

Fig 7.10 To what extent you are comfortable working with different educational background.

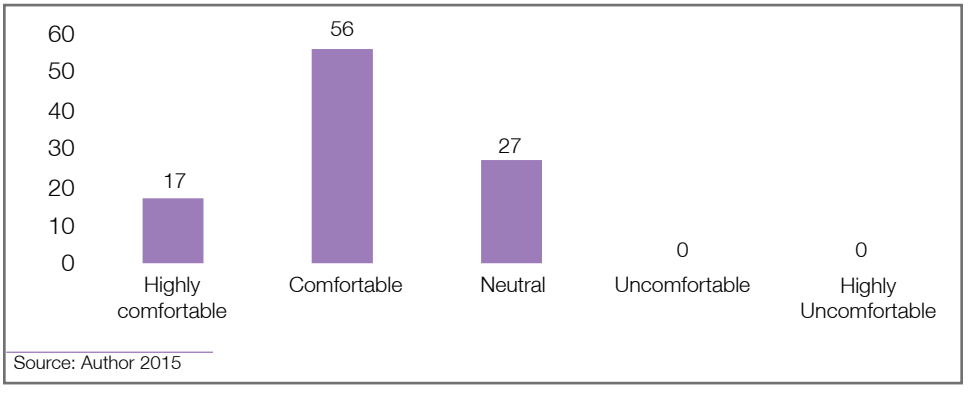
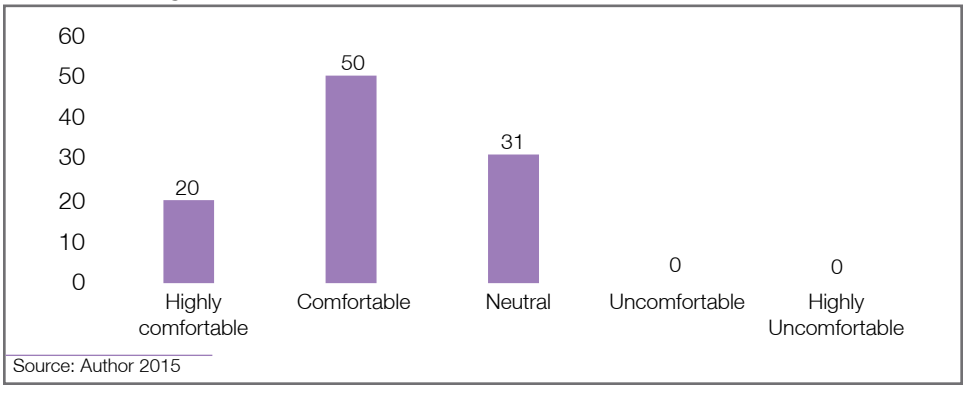


Fig 7.11 To what extent you are comfortable working with same educational background.



Of the respondents 50% is comfortable to work with people of the same educational backgrounds and 20% is even highly comfortable. Thirty one per cent is neutral and none of the respondents feels uncomfortable about this (Fig 7.11).

Sixty six per cent of the respondents strongly agrees and 32% agrees with the statement that in order to understand a community problem, you need to visit the community and talk to the people first. Only 2 % disagrees (strongly) (Fig 7.12).

Fig 7.12 Attitude: In order to understand a community problem, you need to visit the community and talk to the people first

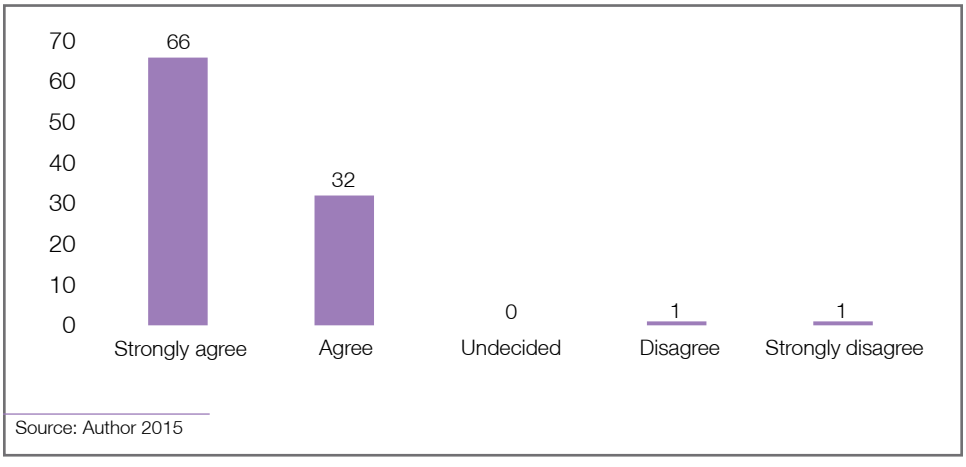
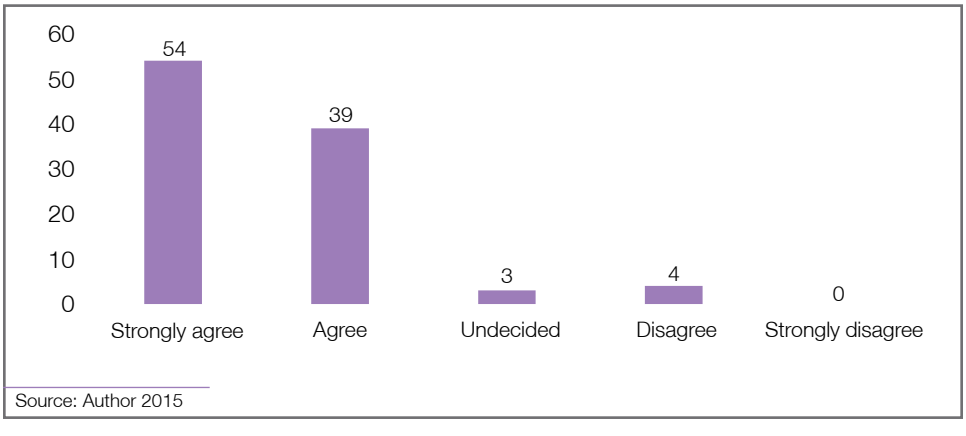


Fig. 7.13 For practicing leadership in your community you have to use proper gesture/attitude (e.g. proper use of pause while talking, hand movement for convincing people etc.)

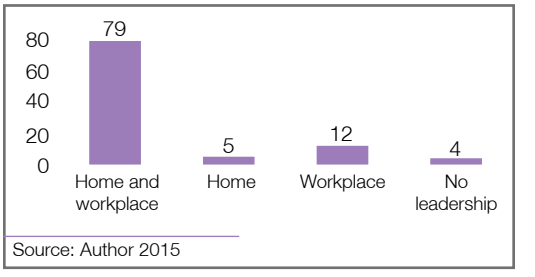


Of the respondents 54% strongly agrees with the statement that for practicing leadership in your community you have to use proper gesture/attitude and 39% agrees. Only 4% disagrees with this statement and 3% is undecided (Fig 7.13).

Practice

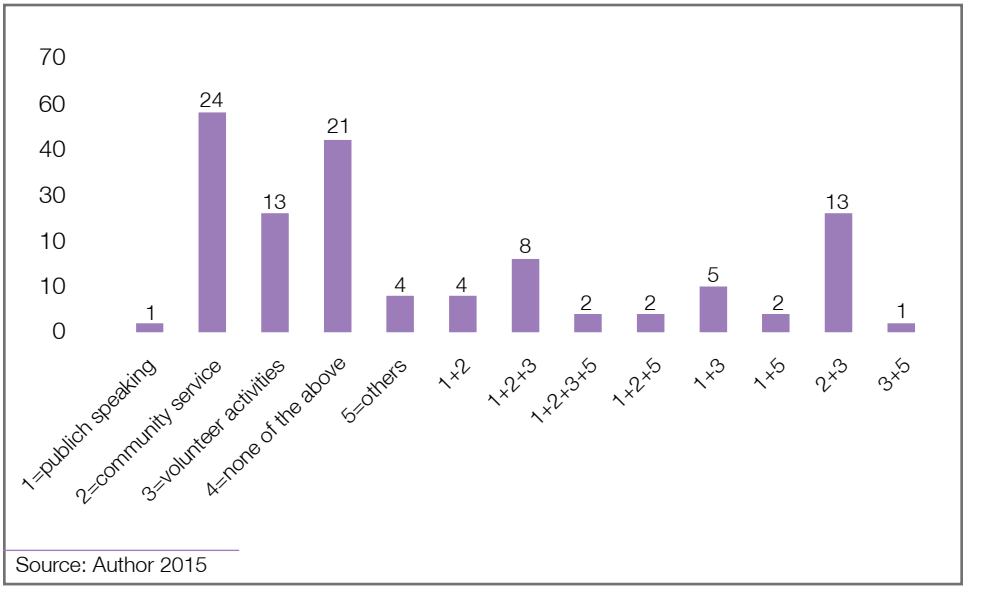
According to the respondents from BRAC approximately 79% of them were practicing leadership both at home and workplace.[20] About 5% were practicing at home compared to 12% at the workplace. About 4% were not practicing leadership at all (Fig 7.14).

Fig. 7.14 The places you are practicing your leadership skills?



Leadership activities such as public speaking, community service, volunteer activities and other options were given. Among these options 24% responded to be involved in community service while 21% were involved in none of the given options (Fig 7.15).

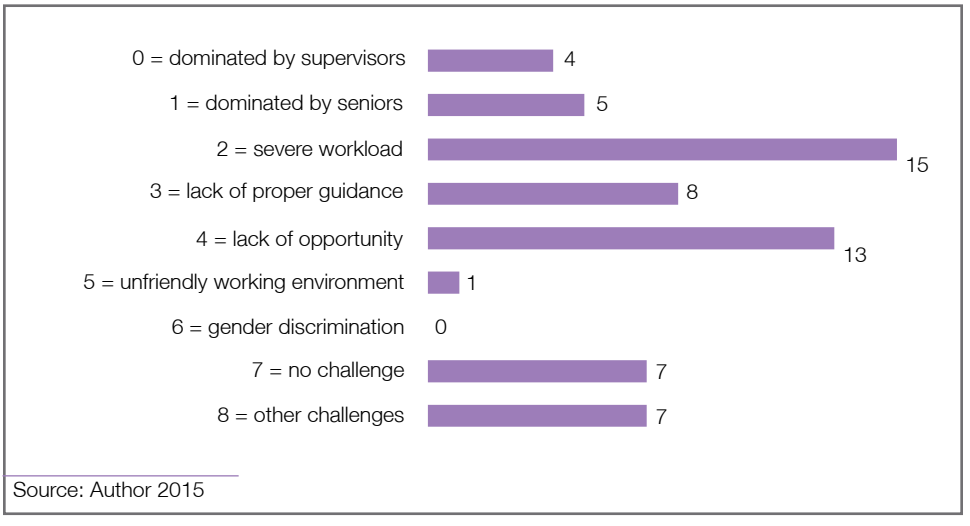
Fig. 7.15 Leadership activities



The respondents were asked to identify challenges to practicing leadership at BRAC if there were any. The given options were: dominated by supervisors, dominated by senior colleagues, lack of proper guidance, lack of opportunity, unfriendly working environment, gender discrimination etc. Approximately the higest percentage i.e. 15% of the repondents, mentioned that they are overloaded with work and about 13% think they lack opportunity (Fig 7.16).

[20] Online survey monkey used with limited survey questionnaire

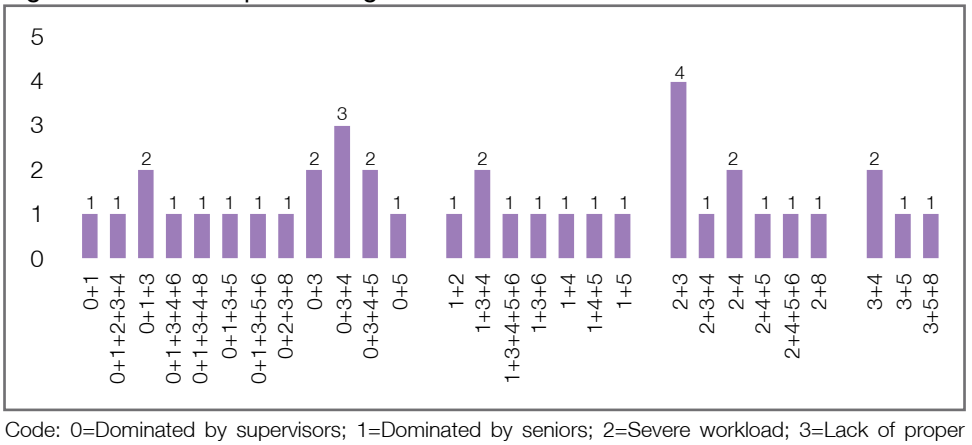
Fig. 7.16 Challenges faces in practicing leadership at BRAC



Source: Author 2015

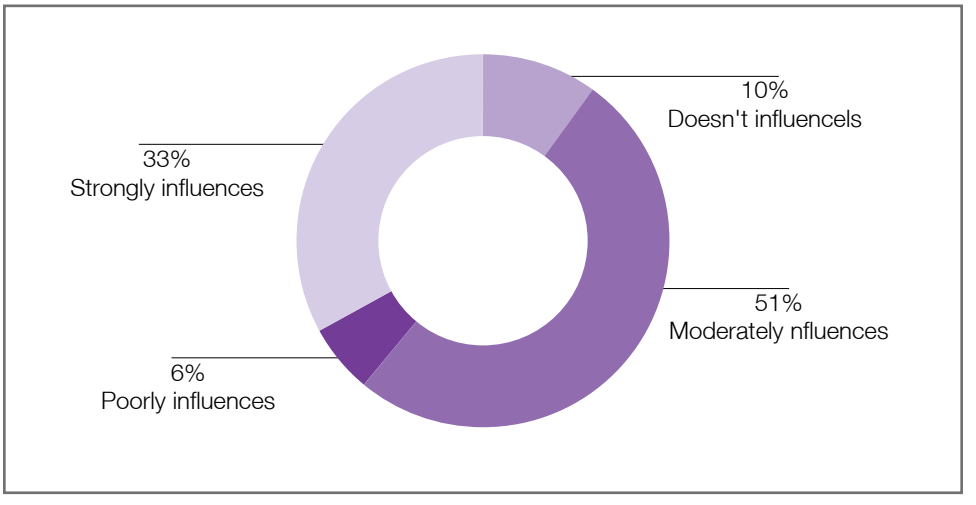
In addition, as this was a multiple choice question, many of the colleagues think that there are multi challenges. Approximately 40% choose more than one challenges at BRAC which is hindering their leadership practice at BRAC. The distribution is given in Fig 7.17 as follows:

Fig 7.17 Leadership hindering reasons in BRAC



Code: 0=Dominated by supervisors; 1=Dominated by seniors; 2=Severe workload; 3=Lack of proper guidance; 4=Lack of opportunity; 5=Unfriendly working environment; 6=Gender discrimination; 7=No challenge; 8=Other challenges.

Fig 7.18 To what extant challenges influence leadership practice at BRAC?

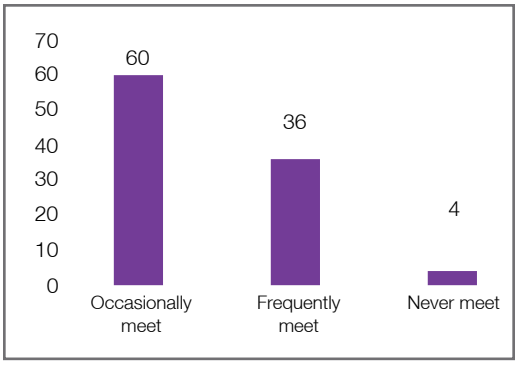


About 51% of the total respondents think that they are moderately influence by the above challenges mentioned. In addition, 33% believe they are strongly influence by the challenges (Fig 7.18).

Group voluntary services and meeting frequency

Whenever they were asked at what frequency they usually meet this mixed group of friends 60% responded that they meet occasionally, compared to 36% who meet frequently.

Fig. 7.19 Meeting frequency



Chapter Eight

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it can be said that there is a considerable difference between the BBLT treatment group and the comparison group in each of the three themes identified for this study namely; 1) Building Bridges, 2) Leadership Training and 3) Community Service. The treatment group were more expressive, confident, had more networking skills, clear knowledge of leadership and authority, and were much more involved in community service projects than the comparison group. These findings indicate the positive impact of the BBLT programme. Recommendations for the future consideration of BYLC have been made, based on the findings.

Generally, the findings from the BRAC comparison group were not too different from those of the BYLC treatment group, which suggests that BRAC is recruiting and developing a significant percentage of its staff having and/or developing positive leadership attitudes and skills. BRAC may consider the finding that > 80% of the BRAC respondents believe that their leadership potential is moderately or strongly influenced by various challenges occurring in the organisation, of which the two most important were: lack of opportunity (for leadership) and excessive workload.

Study Limitations

For this study, the biggest challenge was to track the respondents from the treatment group. As most of the respondents were graduating masters level studies or doing a job it was quite difficult for them to manage time to participate in interviews for this research. So, it was practically not possible for the researchers to select respondents randomly. In addition, finding an appropriate comparison group was also difficult for this study, as the comparison group members had little motive for participating in the study. Researchers also found difficulty in encouraging *Madrassa* medium female students to participate in this study. It was evident later that the number of female *Madrassa* students applying to take part in the BBLT programme is much less compared to others. Within the limited number of selected possible female

participants, it was challenging to reach them for the research because of: marriage, change of mobile number, limited/no email access etc. So, there may be an issue of self-selection bias specifically for female participants. Another challenge for this study was missing baseline information for both the comparison and the treatment group.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. There should be transparent selection criteria for the APL and BBLT programme to avoid conflict among these graduates. The three day APL training could be made mandatory for all the BBLT graduates to solve this problem, or complications may arise in future. More attention should be given to the female participants of *Madrassa* medium as their numbers are lagging behind.

2. Formal recognition should be given to the BBLT graduates. During the interviews the researchers observed frustration in some of the respondents' voices. They expect that a grading system may be introduced within the programme structure in order to identify the best performing participants. If not, it is very frustrating for those high performing respondents. Therefore, performance measurement monitoring and a grading system may be considered, or at least a 'distinction' category.

3. Engagement of the BBLT graduates with the BYLC higher management should be increased. BYLC will grow if, and only if the graduates 'grow'. There must be a bridge in between these two, so that the graduates get a chance to express their thoughts and get motivational thoughts from their role models. Annual retreats, picnics etc. could be arranged in an informal atmosphere.

4. There should be scope for media journalism, so that the more introverted participants can benefit from the programme. In addition, need based scholarship should be provided to the people who are disadvantaged financially, otherwise it will be really difficult for them to get a chance to attend this training programme. In addition, the "Public Speaking" session of the programme should be given more emphasis.

5. A significant number of participants drop out during the BBLT programme. This study found the reason and the current status of these dropped out participants of BBLT. Some incentive should be provided to the facilitators so that they can remain involved in the BYLC leadership activities and at the same time earn their livelihood.

6. Large class interaction should be increased. During small class discussion the intimacy among the group mates increases despite having different educational background but in large scale this needs to be reflected as well.

It was suggested by one of the respondent not to distribute 42 members into several groups and run small projects just for learning purposes. Rather these 42 members can jointly run a large project which might be sustainable. BYLC could give some thought to this.

7. To continue to try to assess the impact of the BYLC activities, more effort and resources should be given to tracking and monitoring graduates, and collecting baseline information on both successful and unsuccessful applicants. This database would be very helpful for future impact assessment and for continuous monitoring of the effects of the programme.

After collecting this data for some time, a more rigorous longitudinal impact study of the BBLT programme, tracking the graduates over the longer term, could be carried out in order to quantify better the effect of the programme on the youth of Bangladesh. This could include more direct observation to understand better the nature of the different impacts and also possible unexpected outcomes.

Annex. Current voluntary social activities undertaken by respondent BBLT graduates

Bangla Medium

Current Project name/volunteer work/entrepreneurship activity	Potential Impact of the activity on community	Challenges in implementation and how overcome	Stakeholders involved	Role & Responsibilities
Project "*Prerona*" (An international workshop based programme with book donations to prevent high school dropout and promote youth employment	Promoting positively in high school students Reducing dropouts & unemployment	Curriculum development for the workshop sessions Understanding our audience, their problems and expectations Absence of members at the workplaces	School authorities BYLC friends/team members Donors Students	Providing ideas Project proposal preparation & management Grant Management Partnership Development
Volunteer at TIB	Any people receiving help from our projects	N/A	Society Local political leaders	Distributing warm clothes to poor children Member & volunteering
KSWA Social Welfare Association	Educated children Employment generated	Finding market and customer To convince general people	Unemployed people of the selected area	Creating handicraft

Current Project name/volunteer work/entrepreneurship activity	Potential Impact of the activity on community	Challenges in implementation and how overcome	Stakeholders involved	Role & Responsibilities
Universal Children's Day (Jaago Foundation- volunteer)	Poor students motivated towards school and eventually conscious parents The society would understand the problems of the underprivileged and thereby initiate to overcome poverty	Fund Raising and to work with the local political figures	Underprivileged students	Selling flowers for the street children
Business of manufacturing clutch (Premium supplier of Gallery Apex)	The business helped a lot of uneducated women workers finding source of sustainable earning	Meeting the deadlines, legislative problems, shop return problem.	Customers	Designing, operational and communication
Project "*Sohay*" (Winter affected people's relief in northern Bangladesh)	Reduce sufferings of winter affected people Youth engagement in collection and distribution	Finding the most affected area Meeting huge crowd with limited resources at places like stations Adopting different distribution strategy	Donors Local influential people Friends	Providing ideas Clothes collection Fund rising
Duke of Edinburgh's Award	Urgent health volunteer creation for society		Volunteers Friends	Volunteers management First aid training learn and share

Current Project name/volunteer work/entrepreneurship activity	Potential Impact of the activity on community	Challenges in implementation and how overcome	Stakeholders involved	Role & Responsibilities
Student Aid	Poor meritorious students benefit	Time maintenance and fund raising	Volunteers 5 group members	Total project management
Project “Apu” (Alumni engagement in high school through one-to-one relationship for the girls)	Women empowerment	N/A	Alumni High school authority 5 group members Local students	Project Idea Propsal Dev. Grant Management Volunteers management
Fire service training (CDMP)	Skilled volunteer creation	N/A	Friends Mirpur dwellers	Fire service training learn and share
University Student Welfare Association 2008	Opportunity of alumni engagement & contribution in schools Village students are receiving help with admission into universities	N/A	Donors	Grant Management Others engagement
Youth Walk Bangladesh	Educated underprivileged children Anti-drug society	Initial problem with parents Initial problem with stakeholders	BBLT-9 batch mates and close friends Local community Children and their parents Youths	Motivate the children and their parents to get them into school Awareness building of the youths

English Medium

Current Project name/ volunteer work/ entrepreneurship activity	Potential Impact of the activity on community	Challenges in implementation and how overcome	Stakeholders involved	Role & Responsibilities
One degree initiative foundation (Department of Research and Documentation)	The impact is mostly on the efficiency of the organisation but little on the community	Trouble with working with people (delegating tasks, forming a proper evaluation system, etc) and also with planning for long-term goals effectively	The organisation, the department and the employees	Head of R and D: oversee all documents, conduct research for projects, opportunities etc. Project management, project planning, data collection and evaluation
Youth Walk Bangladesh	We have observed a great change in the mind set of the parents. They are more enthusiastic then before and are very optimistic. Better awareness of education and its value Increased literacy rate	Could not find a proper class room in the area Parents of the beneficiaries have doubt in the beginning To find common time to conduct meeting Changing the mindset of the slum dwellers towards education	Board members Students and their parents Friends and local people Youthwalk BD, BGN, BYLC, local authorities etc.	Project management Budget management Managing teacher taking classes 4 days/ week

The House of Volunteers (HOV) BRAC University	Since HOV is a club that works towards suitable development the long term impact is test to be sustainable and somewhat permanent	Being a president, people tend to depend on me, rather than taking their own initiative. By motivating the rest of the team to take up responsibilities.	Bracu Students, School students, donors	President overseeing all operations and projects. Networking with other chapter of HOV, coming up with new projects
Improving and promoting access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene for pavement dwellers and street children	Better health status and better productivity	Lack of motivation among both beneficiaries and community. Outcome can only be expected in the long run	DCC, WASA different NGOs	Project coordinate Management of all programmatic activities Staff management
Youth advocacy group of the UN Global Education First Initiative.	The report will be used in a country report by the advocacy group. The findings will be published and given to the UN and different governments.	Awakening the students in whom I took the survey about the youth resolution, since none of them had any idea. I overcame it with patience and translation help from friends	Member of advocacy group, UN officials, GOV. Officials , students of HSC,SSC	Write a report on the educational struggles of students in Bangladesh as well as giving a critical analysis on the youth resolution on the education for the UN
Save an old person this winter (think and do initiative)	People were saved from different winter diseases to a greater extent		Community people, donors and individuals	Fund raising Procurement Mentors, organizer,

Current Project name/ volunteer work/ entrepreneurship activity	Potential Impact of the activity on community	Challenges in implementation and how overcome	Stakeholders involved	Role & Responsibilities
Project Trash the ash and anti-drug and anti-smoking campaign	Increased awareness of the detrimental effects of drugs in most affected age groups (14-25)	Political unrest Bribery Visiting *madrassa* medium schools Negotiating permission from school authorities	Youthwalk BD, BGN, American Alumni association, US Embassy, BYLC etc. BBLT-9 Rupamsaha, Manjure, Tanim	Negotiating permission from school authorities assisting in writing project proposals
Reading, searching and mentoring for secondary and primary school children	Improving the quality of English and bangla languages developing leadership qualities and confidence from young age.	Getting stakeholders to buy the idea, convincing people to work for something that hasn't become established yet	Students, donors, university students	Designing the project, communicating with all the stakeholders and overseeing activities

Madrassa Medium

Current Project name/ volunteer work/ entrepreneurship activity	Potential Impact of the activity on community	Challenges in implementation and how overcome	Stakeholders involved	Role &Responsibilities
One of the co-founders and head of finance Bangladesh Center for Initiative BNCC 2009-13 BYLC Graduate Network	To trigger entrepreneurship among the young generation and to contribute to the society from one's own stand Social Works Active citizenship and tolerant BD	To deal with the criticism of people regarding fund collection Fund Crises and active participation of members EC works hand in hand to implement projects	BBLT-8 friends DU authority BYLC Graduates and the society	Collecting funds from the friends and the relatives Cadet VP Admin and Finance
Utthan distributes clothes to the underprivileged children of Dhaka and remote corner of the country	To trigger entrepreneurship among the young generation and to contribute to society Social Works Active citizenship	To deal with the criticism of people regarding fund collection Fund Crises and active participation of members EC works hand in hand to implement projects	KJ Hall students	Collecting funds from the friends and the relatives

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About

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