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Messages

From the people we love so much.
I am delighted to see that YC interns have not lost their link with YC, and with each other. Now you even want to give it a more organized shape in the form of a magazine. Congratulations! I like your idea. This will keep our channel open to you wherever you are.

I hope you found your time in YC worth spending. This at least gave you an opportunity to see us in our daily work and be a co-traveler with us. We are pursuing a dream to find a way to create a world which is different and much better. You became part of our dream too.

I believe we can make this dream a reality given our combined creative power. Then we add the power of social business and technology. This can become unbeatable. Let’s keep trying until our dream becomes a reality. It’s good to have you with us.
The Involvement of the young generation is essential to achieve our goal of putting poverty into museums in a near future. Therefore, it is our duty to give to the youth the opportunity to get involved with the vision and activities of the Yunus Centre, so that they can learn first-hand about the concept and practice of social business.

Within the established network of Yunus Centre, many past interns have already blossomed into leaders and advocates of social and human rights, developing knowledge and expertise that is being shared across the world. Our target is to involve as motivated students as possible in our activities create a better tomorrow.
A human being has many responsibilities in this wonderful world. Helping the young generation to contribute in building the world peace is one of humanity’s great responsibilities. At the Yunus Centre, we are honored to extend our help to the youth through our internship program. Our interns are very talented, energetic and ambitious learners who have a high interest in what social business is, how it works and how to take the idea forward into our society.

They become part of our daily activities and gather numerous experiences for their future career. We are proud of our interns who are exceptional in the capability to work for the society and the world peace, making them grow into the leaders not just of tomorrow but of today.

Rahima Khatun
AGM
Admin & HR
Chief of Internship Program, YC
A Look Back!

Thank you so much for being with us. We miss you. We hope you have gone a long way with your dreams.
YC Assignments

The day to day,
… but occasionally.
My days at YC

The environment, Internship and Immersion Program at Yunus Centre
Ashika Perveen Tuly

It’s an absolute thrill for me to have the opportunity to intern at the Yunus Centre because I believe Social Business is a well-timed instrument of bringing a change in society. I have, for quite some time, wanted to do my Internship in such an organization where I can go through a wide range of different activities. It has been very exciting for me to work with the Executive Director’s Team, Social Business Team and Administrative Team. The environment here is incredibly friendly.

Though it’s a corporate environment, the people here always put their friendliest foot first and help us in many ways to make us proficient. Besides doing the deskwork in the office, I have also gone on some amazing and exciting field trips. It’s like I’m practicing my work theoretically and practically at the same time. So, I am optimistic and confident about implementing these experiences in my professional life.

As another twist, the Yunus Centre is also a big platform for Immersion Programs. Now one might wonder, what is an Immersion Program? Well, the Immersion Program is a month-long exclusive and intensive program which basically gives one the opportunity to dive into the concept of social business and as well as the philosophy of Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Professor Muhammad Yunus.

By joining the Immersion Program anyone can get the flavors of gaining practical insights into the operation, management and social impact of these businesses through meetings as well as field trips to Grameen Bank and Grameen families of Social Business. People of different ages from different countries attend this program to explore themselves and the impact they can have in the field of social business.

And of course during the time, forms a great bond among the members of Internship Program and Immersion Program. We work like a team; people here share their life experiences and also have lots of fun. At the end of the program both the immers-ers and interns need to submit their own Social Business Plan and a report on the program. So it’s really a great journey for every participant to be in the Internship and/or Immersion Program at the Yunus Centre.
A

righ, so this is basically an event where all the big and important people from the Grameen Family come and sit at the Grameen Bank Auditorium, and people we call the NU-s come in and present their business plans. After that, if the Grameen people like the plan, they fund their projects, and that’s about it.

Now, the obvious question would be, what does ‘NU’ mean? Well, the Grameen Bank has a system of only lending to poor women who register with the bank as members. The bank provides loans to these members (also called borrowers) exclusively and even their family members are not allowed to apply.

The NU-s are the direct biological children of these members. NU means Nobin Udyokta, a Bangla term meaning New (nobil) Entrepreneur (udyokta). And like I said before, even the NU’s can’t apply for loans from GB. The money they get from these Design Labs comes from a separate fund that just like GB only funds NU-s (not even their mothers).

So, there’s like many different Grameen companies and all of them work on different things. The NU Project is like a side project for 4 of Grameen’s top companies. These are Grameen Trust, Grameen Telecom Trust, Grameen Kolyan and Grameen Shakti Shamajik Babsha. All four of these companies still work on their original company goals, but they do this on a monthly basis too.

So, the way Design Lab works is pretty simple, if you are a son/daughter of a Grameen borrower, you simply contact the four companies and they take you through the process. You can start a new business or apply for an equity loan for your ongoing business.

We first learned about this about two weeks before the design lab. Oh! And the Design Lab happens right in the middle of every month, usually Friday/Saturdays. Anyway, about two weeks before the design lab, the Social Business Team called us in and gave each of us one of the project applications from the NU-s.

The NU-s have to present their project ideas using PowerPoint. And so the SB Team gave us the .ppt files and said, ‘Find EVERYTHING that’s wrong with these. Be absolutely ruthless.’ And we were like, ‘Sweet! Let’s do it!’

So we started going through them and sure enough, found loads of mistakes with the presentation file, finances, supply chain, product ideas, etc. So we submitted the ideas back to the SB Team.
Next up was the Design Lab. So we went in bright and early at 8:30 at the Grameen Bank Auditorium. There the SB Team briefed us about exactly what things happen there and at what time. The interns are involved in the opening session, the presentations, the group forming, the discussion group, the group report presentation and final recommendation.

Anyway, the Design Lab ends with group photos with Yunus Sir and then he announces lunch. People get lunch packets and can take them home with them, but almost everyone eats there. This is when people mingle and get to know each other. This meet n’ greet can go on for about two hours.

We barely had a chance to sit down all day. And even when we were sitting, we were participating. I think the only thing the interns don’t get to do is the final funding decision part.
During my first week of internship I was asked by Yunus Centre to volunteer on Khazanah Asia Scholarship 2015 assessment program. I heard about this scholarship program where the best candidates from Bangladesh compete for the ultimate achievement to study abroad on their preferred subject.

It has become one of my dreams to apply for the Khazanah Asia Scholarship. Luckily, I got the opportunity to attend the assessment day as a volunteer and practically saw how the candidates are evaluated based on different criteria. It is now clear to me that on what basis one should prepare oneself for this scholarship.

On the assessment day I arrived early and Mr. Kazi Sayem Jayed, Assistant Program Office of Yunus Centre instructed me the activities of the day and my responsibilities. I welcomed all the candidates to the conference room. The candidates were from diverse backgrounds that ranged from HSBC Bankers to Dhaka University teacher’s assistants. They were so successful, both academically and professionally, that all of them deserve special respect.

At 9.30 am the assessment stage started. Three delegates from Yayasan Khazanah Foundation welcomed the candidates and gave them the guideline for their to-do lists. Below I have shared my experience of Khazanah Asia Scholarship 2015 assessment program.

At first, each candidate was given a unique case study which was plotted on the common ground of hiring executives or HR. Case included descriptions of some potential applicants, their skills, experiences, expected salaries etc. The assessors wrote some vacant positions on a flipchart. The assessors gave them 20 minutes to go through the case study and then 3 minutes each for presenting their opinion of who they think is fit in which positions. I was very amused to hear all the incontestable views of the candidates.

Then for the next part, all the candidates were formed into a single group where their task was to discuss the same topic but this time as a team. What was my duty? Yeah, it was just to watch the spark of their ideas and intelligence as there was little volunteering stuff to do! I learned a lot from those candidates.
They left no stone unturned to reach to an combined conclusion. All the tools and techniques that I learned at my university, came to life when I saw them using critical analysis such as SWOT, Financial Scope, Porter’s models, etc. practically. I thought this could be the end of deciding the best candidate, but each of them seemed to excel in different directions with no end in sight. The assessors then gave the candidates another half hour to prepare the case studies based on some key questions. I watched with my jaw dropped, their untiring efforts to prove their worth. What else do I need to get my necessary motivation? Those guys showed me how to do it.

Unfortunately, this was the end of my peeped learning because on the later part the candidates were taken to specified rooms for their individual interviews.

It would be better if I could have volunteered there too but it was not to be.

The experience I got from volunteering for the assessment event of Khazanah Asia Scholarship is invaluable to me. It was like exposing myself to a knowledge ball which is a matter of good luck. I have learnt how complex the assessment stages can be and how intelligent you can become in overcoming those perplexing maze moments.

As I am interested in applying for the Khazanah Asia Scholarship, this experience will give me a competitive advantage in future. My heartfelt thanks go to Yunus Centre for giving me this super opportunity.
Field Trips

Trips to places that may or may not look like fields.
Achar & Chilling

In Sonargaon’s Grameen Bank Village Centre

Samiul Alam

We had the privilege to visit a Grameen Bank Village Centre where we came to know about the success stories of micro-credit loans that have been improving the lives of villagers in Sonargaon which is about 1 hour away from the capital Dhaka. We arrived to attend an early morning meeting of a group that had been meeting every week to pay their installments and to talk about the improvement in their lives.

We were duly enlightened by the ladies of the group as they gave us an insight into their lives. As the group meeting ended with a customary salute; we were invited into a Grameen borrower’s home which we found had modern fixtures unlike the rest of the village. This included clean cooking stoves and sanitary latrines which are big achievements in terms of home improvement in rural Bangladesh. When we were invited in, we got to have some homemade Bangali Achar which was memorable to say the least. We followed another Grameen Bank borrower to her house in which we were astounded by how Grameen micro-credit programs had developed a family from living in a rusted tin-shed house to a 2 storied concrete building. The development was as evident as the sky above, the lady also showed us the cow she owned and how she was hoping to expand her farm.

This radical change in livelihood was evident and showed the success of these programs in rural Bangladesh. As interns at the Yunus Centre, our in-depth exposure to these programs during these visits was an absolute mind-opening experience.

As we were ending our trip, we made our way to the Branch office in Sonargaon. It was inside a shopping market on the third floor. As we entered, we saw officers disbursing loan amounts to women. We got to sit down with the manager on the branch and he explained to us the process of disbursing loans and other services they provide such as savings programs.
He also explained that almost all transactions are done in cash as most of the borrowers are living in the rural areas. He also mentioned how radically it changes the livelihood of a borrower and their credit limits are raised with successful repayments of loans.

There were also loan programs for beggars who acquire micro-loans of 1000 to 3000 taka with repayment methods more lax than regular loans. We were served chips and tea as we saw the daily routine of the bank; we eventually got up and left the branch with hopeful hearts.

We found this trip was a memorable one; we observed the improved livelihood of the borrowers and the continued mission of Grameen Bank in raising their standard of living of their members.
The Slum School

Suraiya Sharmeen

The other day, we visited a slum school near Mirpur area in Dhaka. The school was established in 2014 and teaches underprivileged children from class one to five. There were 30 children in the school who were currently pursuing their education.

It was a great day for me with these wonderful children. Honestly, I thought before that the children of the slum school would be too shy and unwilling to talk with us but I was totally surprised when I met with them.

They were really good at communication and they also proved their talent through several activities such as reciting poem, singing songs etc. Their eyes were filled with curiosity to learn new things, meet new people and explore the world around them. I realized after that if proper learning facilities with better environment can be provided to these children with great potential, obviously they will attain remarkable success in life.

Another important issue would be the school’s intense focus on the ‘age’ of the student. And by that I mean, that there’s no focus at all. Usually, in Bangladesh, students get placed into grades by age. It seems that most schools don’t care if the student knows the things being taught in the classes before or after. They think, if a child is ‘x’ years old, s/he should be in ‘g’ class. And if the child misses some important lessons because of this placement, … meh!
But here, the system is completely different. All students are enrolled into the same grade no matter what their age. And this is awesome because, this ensures that every child learns every lesson and no lesson gets passed over. In the school we visited, everyone was in class 3, but their age ranged from 8 – 12. If someone missed enrolment in any year, they won’t be enrolled in a junior class in the same unit. They will have to join the new all-inclusive unit opening the next year. And regardless their age, their schooling will include all the lessons.

In case you’re wondering if it is difficult for them to join the next year at a different unit in a different location, we learned that every new location is usually opened in the same slum barely 10 minutes away on foot. So it’s literally in the same neighborhood. But the teachers strongly maintain the students in every unit so that they don’t lag behind and try to go to the next unit. There is not scope for mid-level entry and that is by design.
Most importantly, this project is mostly supported by the Grameen Group including representatives from Grameen Australia and the Yunus Centre in Bangladesh. The school started operations in January 2015 in Dhaka, near the city center in Bangladesh. Initially there were 10 students taken under the guidance of a Head Teacher, a highly qualified automobile mechanic and teacher from Japan. The school has gained Japanese standards of training, best practice skills, experience in service, repair, panel beating and painting by the Grameen Australia that allows disadvantaged youth to gain marketable skills and secure sustainable income and job opportunities.

The Japan Auto-mechanic School provides a great opportunity to these potential youths to pursue comprehensive English tuition, a business-training module and management of personal finances so that they can be capable enough for the workforce. The school has the capacity to train 100 students per year with 200 living on site where they will complete a two-year program.

The most precious part of my internship period at the Yunus Centre is “fields visit” sessions where I gained life changing experiences on how social business actually works in Bangladesh. Then, sometime in January, I had an opportunity to visit “Japan Auto-mechanic School” in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

The Japan Auto-mechanic School is structured as a social business started by Professor Muhammad Yunus which provides wide-ranging training and practical experience in Auto Mechanical Service, Repair, Panel Beating and Painting to the underprivileged Bangladeshi boys, coming from Grameen Bank’s borrower families. These students are not selected for their high grades, instead they’re selected for not having those grades. The project is an international joint venture partnership between Japanese Foundation NPO SK Dream Japan, Grameen Shikkha and Rangs Workshop Ltd.
The Yunus centre internship program is very different from other internships. This program is not only bound by deskwork, here interns are getting the opportunity to know about real life experience by visiting different organization and meeting. I also got an opportunity to visit Grameen industrial park which located at Sarabo, Kasimpur, Gazipur, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Situated here is a social business joint venture between BASF, one of the world’s leading chemical companies, and Grameen Healthcare Trust Ltd. of Bangladesh which manufactures insecticide impregnated mosquito nets to prevent malaria infections effectively. It was formed in 2009 to improve the health and business opportunities of the poor of Bangladesh.

First, we visited that place where mosquito nets are manufactured. The floor manager, who had been working in that industry for long time, explained to us how they manufacture mosquito nets. We saw different type of machines there where color and chemicals are mixed.

Now they are producing nets in three colors as per the consumers’ demand. We saw many mosquito nets were ready for sale. I found the most interesting part when I saw their cutting section where they easily cut one by one net in a same size. One of my Brazilian friends bought a mosquito net from there. We always find the finished goods in our market but when you see the raw materials and how it turns in to the finish goods you really get an amazing inspiration to use that product. After visiting this mosquito net company, I really got this kind of feelings in my mind.

After visiting mosquito net factory then we visited Grameen Fabrics and fashions Ltd. (GFFL) which is a textile-based export oriented company. They make polo t-shirt, trousers and other clothes mostly for export in different countries like Europe, Australia, and USA etc. We saw four sections of these fabrics that include dying, cutting, swing and finishing sections.
Lastly, we visited one social business product where sanitary napkins are produced exclusively for poor garments factory worker girls. Even today village women and girls were not concerned about how sanitary napkins need to be used and their importance for health. This company’s main concern is to create awareness among poor village girls and women about sanitary napkins usefulness. This product price is very low compared to other napkins because their main consumers are poor women and girls.

Here most workers are women and in this way women are getting jobs. In addition, they reduce our unemployment rate by creating this type of social businesses. Here is the full design of Grameen Industrial Park and their products. I can say that the day is not so far where this industrial park will become one of the most important business areas in this country and they will create a new business for the wellbeing of people and not only for profit maximizing.

They usually make 25000 t-shirts in one day. All people are so devoted on their working area although they have different type of works in a same room.

When we saw the finished product, everyone wanted to buy a t-shirt from there. However, we were not allowed to buy them because there are rules that those t-shirts are only for exporting.
After cold January morning out in Ashulia visiting “Young Entrepreneurs” projects by Grameen Shakti Shamajik Kalyan; we finally retired to Jahangirnagar for lunch. After entering through the elegant façade of a university entrance, we were finally in the midst of the greenery of the university town. Jahangirnagar University which about 32 kilometres away from the bustling metropolitan Dhaka is a sigh of relief for many residents of the capital. During the winter season, the university lakes are host to a throng of different migratory birds who travel from as far as Siberia and Himalayas to the brisk winter climate of Bangladesh.

As our car arrived in the university town, we drove straight to Bot-tola where one would find an assortment of Bangladeshi food in the restaurants. The tin-shed restaurants were bustling with the lunch time crowd.

The air sang of freshly cooked curries and vegetable dishes; after walking through the lane, we settled on a restaurant which boasted an assortment of bhorta; which is basically mashed dried fish, various mashed vegetables et al. We finished our lunch eventually and were off to the tour of the university by a fellow Jahangirnagar student.

We came upon the lakes that were temporary homes to the migratory birds, often a dozen of the birds took flight into the sky in an almost synchronized manner.

As captivating as it was, what was striking, was the resilience of the birds which flew thousands of miles to this university town and made it their home for the winter before flying back at the end of the season. We captured numerous pictures of birds and saw the graffiti art on the roadside; a recreation of Banksy and a portrait of Che Guevara among many others.
We eventually got on the car and took a trip to the butterfly park which was regrettably closed and we got to see the Department of Pharmacy building which gave an insight of the student life in Jahangirnagar.

Students talking, photocopy machine buzzing and tea cups clanging; it was the sound of knowledge brewing in the midst of the greenery. As we bid adieu to the university town and headed for the bustling Dhaka, we gained an experience that would worth being retold for a long time.
After Hours

Yup! It’s exactly what it sounds like.
We have new interns and new friends coming over to Yunus Centre from different parts of the world. Although the circle keeps expanding almost every week the homely feeling never seems to leave us. Our little workspace at the office is always filled with cheerful conversations. However, our interactions are not limited inside the walls of Yunus Centre.

More often than not, we set out for little adventures inside the city. As soon as the clock strikes 6 we re-energize ourselves, pack up and kick start our evening by trying out different restaurants, street food, the ever so popular food carts, etc. This one time all of us interns headed towards Rifles Square in Dhanmondi to try out the cart stations that offer a diverse range of scrumptious items such as burgers, Malaysian dosas, nachos, fuchka and the list is never ending!

It was a chilly winter evening with Rifles Square’s striking decorations for the New Years and all of us sat chatting and laughing in the warmth of each other’s company. On another occasion, a few of us interns took our Brazilian friend to a traditional Bengali Holud ceremony. The girls dressed up in colorful saris while the boys put on panjabis.

It was a great musical night with lots of colors and dancing. Our friend from Brazil was truly mesmerized by the extravagance of Bengali weddings. We surely gave her good stories to take back home.

It’s always a good time with the YC crew!

Ishma Iqbal
These are only a few instances that come to mind, nonetheless there have been countless such hangouts in the past two months. We made trips to Old Dhaka to give our foreign peers a taste of biriyani and borhani. I remember one of them commenting, "Even Bengali drinks are spicy! How come?" We all had a good laugh.

With one more month left of this internship I feel heavy hearted that the YC journey would soon come to an end. I made some truly wonderful friends here and created amazing memories that would stay with me for a lifetime.
Perks of being a YC Intern

Ishma Iqbal

In a general sense, internships in most organizations include repetitive desk work in an unfamiliar and temporary environment. Before I started working in Yunus Centre I had developed a preconception that I would have to do tedious tasks such as photocopying or reading long reports that do not interest me. However, I was proven wrong on my very first day here. Not only did I make two good friends during the first week but also learnt about the unique concept of social business.

As the weeks rolled by the workplace seemed more and more amicable and exciting. The desk where all the interns sit were saturated at one point with people from Australia, Brazil, Egypt, etc. It is never a dull moment for us Yunus Centre interns. Starting from chitchats with my diverse group of peers to field trips around the city this is not at all like other quintessential internships.

Each day brings with it something new for me to learn. The work never gets monotonous as I am always discovering new ways to do a task and with some help from my fellow interns it is always a learning process. The most exciting aspect is undoubtedly the times we get to see Professor Yunus and listen to his inspiring words at different events such as the Design Lab. A very memorable day was when mountain climber Wasfia Nazreen came to visit Yunus Centre and shared her exhilarating stories.

All these little moments combined make this internship experience ever so stimulating. We are always motivated to bring out the best and absorb the positive energy around. Working with a multicultural set of interns, visiting villages and factories, singing our hearts out during the road trips, working and learning new things everyday are all perks of being a Yunus Centre Intern. You will surely never get bored!
The other side of the river
A tale of 5 interns navigating through the history of the Ahsan Manzil

Saad Habib

One of the oldest and grandest structures in the heart of Old Dhaka is the Ahsan Manzil. Right on the bank of the Buriganga River lies a residential Palace built during the Mughal era which took almost 13 years to complete. Now a museum, we found out the history behind this establishment is as fascinating as the palace itself. A short rickshaw ride from the Red fort of Dhaka, we 5 interns navigated the twists and turns of the narrow and immensely crowded city streets to the port area called Sadarghat.

Following the directions of the exceedingly friendly locals and answering the same question “where from?” for the hundredth time, we walked through the gates of Ahsan Manzil to its magnificent sight. Built by Sheikh Enayet Ullah of the Nawab family it was a garden house, until he was murdered by a representative of the Mughal emperor at a party.

After that the palace was sold to French traders by his son. The traders added their own improvements and used it as a trading house until they were forced out of the country by the English. It was then purchased by the landlord of Dhaka and was hit by a devastating tornado, which required reconstruction and was ultimately acquired by the government as the grandeur had died down and it was turning into a slum.

Portraits of the many rulers and their family lineage adorned the walls of the massive high ceiling rooms of the palace. Unfortunately pictures weren’t allowed inside, and the experience itself was quite surreal as there were furniture and other artefacts from the very first rulers. The ballroom and dining rooms were larger than life with a Great Gatsby feel to it. The royal silverware and fine china were laid out in majestic manner with the backdrop of the armoured guards set to protect the royalty dining here.
The trip would not have been complete without a boat tour of the Buriganga River, which was not the most hygienic experience we've had in Bangladesh. But the boat man assured us we would be fine. Swaying very heavily in the wake of the larger vessels the 5 of us set out in a small kayak style boat and did a small lap around river banks.

The timing was perfect as the sun descended behind the buildings the cool air ruffled through our hair, sweeping away the restless vibes of the big city. The night came to an end at another landmark in old Dhaka. Here we filled up with “haji’s biriyani”, a food experience that has most definitely lived up to all the hype.
The Out World Adventures

Saint Martin’s Island
Shah Waseef

The first and most remarkable feature of this trip that I would like for you to know, is that coming to Dhaka from Saint Martin took us longer than coming to Dhaka from Cairo (Yes, Cairo of Egypt!!!). Now that you know that, let’s move on to the main story.

The trip took place at the pristine period of a cold sunny weekend in Jan’16. We had to ask for some days off from YC to make the trip so we could go in early and come back late. (And by late I mean, I’m writing this article at YC on Sunday, roughly 3 hours after we got back to Dhaka.) We basically utilized the ENTIRE weekend.

We started off right after office, going directly to the bus station, (we all brought our luggage to the office that day). The bus started an hour late at 8:30 and we arrived at the Teknaf Bus Point at 7:30. From there it was a 1 hour wait for the ticket counter to open and another hour for the boat to actually start moving (insert heavy yawning here). On the boat we experienced what I can only describe as a very slow and inefficient open-air oven. By the end we were neither rare nor well-done, simply flustered.
Arriving at the jetty (at StM) we were aggressively greeted by two naval officers who told us to present our passports and wanted to take pictures on their phones to keep records of all non-nationals on the island (I was the only local on the trip).

Next up, is the hotel description. Some people go on vacations and select prissy hotel rooms with excessive lighting, closets and dressers, mini-fridges and concierges, basically for royal treatments. If I had to say 4 things about our room, they’d be, the washroom worked, the door locked, there were enough beds and that the only time we were in the room is when we were sleeping.

So basically, we checked in, dropped bags, locked door aaaaaaand off to the beach. On the first day, we were a bit tired from the journey, so we just went a couple hundred feet from the hotel. On the way back, we went through the main road of the island (yes, there’s only one main road, has all the important things). Anyway, we started looking out for what was where, like souvenir shops, restaurants, pharmacies, etc.

The restaurants here have this common feature of showcasing all the seafood they have out on a table out front. You can pick and choose which type of seafood you want and how you want it cooked (fried, grilled, curry, etc.)
At first we thought, let’s visit each restaurant once so we can visit more, but we ended up going to Hotel Sahina three times (we actually ate 6 times in total, breakfast excluded), because their grilling is just awesome.

Anyway, tried some of the others, they vary in cooking class. Breakfast seemed about the same everywhere. But they vary in styles of Dal & Vegetables. Everyone there is super-friendly. But for some reason the cost of things seem to fluctuate greatly by day and night. Things that cost 100 at night can cost about 1000 in the day, especially when the launches come/go.

In terms of activities, some of the more well-known “Fun” activities seemed difficult to find. They say, they have scuba diving and snorkeling facilities, but not only did we not find them, when we asked they said we need to bring our own equipment.

The equipment isn’t even available for rent (weird, I know). There are plenty of cycles available for rent. But remember to check the tires, brakes and chain before your rent. Charge is about BDT 40 per hour and cheaper for longer hours. As for us, we did none of that.

On our second day there, we started from the North-East point of the island (the jetty) and walked all the way to Chera Dwip, a small sub-island at the south most point of StM. Remember to check the time for high and low tide before you go. Start going in the first half of high tide and you can walk across the water in low tide by the time you get there. We miscalculated this and had to take a boat back.

Also, boats on the way back during high tide are super expensive. If this happens, bargain or try asking any of the others who came via boat. People are super friendly and the people we asked agreed in less than 30 seconds. They didn’t even let us share the charge, but we tipped the boatman anyway.

On our second day there, we started from the North-East point of the island (the jetty) and walked all the way to Chera Dwip, a small sub-island at the south most point of StM. Remember to check the time for high and low tide before you go. Start going in the first half of high tide and you can walk across the water in low tide by the time you get there. We miscalculated this and had to take a boat back.

The point here is, go early in the day, and you won’t get stuck. As for the boats, they tend to be shaky, but don’t worry; the boatmen have some old-school tricks for these situations.

Coming back to the main story, on the third day, when we went to the west side of the island. Basically the entire circumference of the island is just beaches all the way, with the occasional coral deposits. The west side is most popular for the sunset view, which makes the hearts of romantic couples jump out. But, this also means that this side is more or less empty throughout the rest of the day making it like an unofficial private beach perfect for swimming and sunbathing.
Arrive here during low tide (usually just before lunch time) and you can see the exact locations of the coral deposits and the rest which is just sand. This way, you’ll know where to swim in the afternoon high tide.

Anyway, the rest of our trip were things like, going to bed too tired, roaming the locality, sitting beachside reading, enjoying the breeze and sights, that’s about it. We invite you to go explore the rest for yourselves. We’ll answer questions in the Facebook group.

Till Next Time. Cheers!
Co-Curriculars

Jobs on the side!
We’re simple people, who love Social Business & Sandwiches.

Let’s kick this off with a quick intro. We are Social Business Youth Alliance Global. We occasionally call ourselves SBYA Global. We are headquartered in Bangladesh, but we are growing every day and expanding in Africa and Europe. We’re interested in 3 things,
- Social Business,
- Young People and
- Social Businesses by Young People.

So how do we do it? Well, if you’re interested, we have a whole website dedicated to explaining to you the frontward backward and sideways of our process. But basically, we execute 3 simple steps. Listen – where we arrange for people to come in and get to know from those who do. Learn – where we put together opportunities for you to get ideas and start the impossible. Lead – where we show you the way to get started and make the magic happen.

If you’re a beginner, we invite you to look us up on Google and Facebook, post questions till your fingers hurt and stalk us like crazy adventurers. Also, look up Social Business Champ and Social Business Youth Summit.

If you’re more dedicated and feeling ambitious, email us about a collaboration project. We are always ready to work with whoever thinks s/he can become the next global revolution.

Finally, if you want to partner up for projects or open up an SBYA for your country, feel free to call or chat or email us day or night.

And if you don’t think you fit into any of these categories, we are always up for a cup of coffee and a sandwich.
As a last bit, if anyone is interested photography, we just started our latest Social Business named Photopreneurs (www.photopreneurs.org). This is a JVSB (Joint Venture Social Business) between SBYA Global and Prito Reza Productions.

Also, if you have a social business now, feel free to apply to our other ongoing project YY Goshti – Creative Accelerator for Social Businesses (www.yygoshti.com). This one is in collaboration with the EMK Center of Bangladesh as part of the EMK Small Grant Program.

To look us up or to follow:
Our journey to Social Business literacy started back in 2012 when we were just second semester students struggling to understand the complex business courses of our bachelor’s degree. We used to attend different motivational sessions where we got the message that improvement starts with involving oneself with the extracurricular activities. Confused, we in the quest of strengthening our academic position joined around 10 clubs and eventually filtered down to a special club named ‘Business and Social Entrepreneurship Club’ abbreviated as BSEC.

At that time we were unsure about what we were going to learn from BSEC. But eventually, Ms. Parisa Islam, the then coordinator of the club and a long time follower of Professor Muhammad Yunus, was able to convince us that the club’s mission was to steer the youths’ focus toward the wellbeing of society through the business lens which they called Social Business. Nothing else was needed to get our interest when we heard about doing good for others through businesses.
Most of the activities of the club were arranged to enhance the business knowledge, especially the social business knowledge base, of the members. Possessed by the notion of helping others through business, we two were so enjoying the thrill that we often cared very little to attend regular classes; instead we attended the seminars of BSEC. Those two novice members have travelled a four years path since then. Today I am carrying the responsibilities of leading BSEC as the President and Rupanti Zaman as the Vice President and also we are two proud interns of Yunus Centre as well.

BSEC got its’ biggest recognition in 2014 when Eastern University in cooperation with BSEC organized ‘Social Business Youth Convention 2014’ where Nobel Laureate Professor Muhammad Yunus attended as the chief guest. Students with diverse backgrounds from different universities across Bangladesh came up with their outstanding social business plan and to hear from their idol person Professor Muhammad Yunus. Our love for the knowledge of Social Business finally paid off.

Our interests yielded us networking with the international student community. Four students from Hochschule Kontanz University of Applied Science, Germany came to visit us in February 2015. They gave a presentation on how the solitude of the senior citizens had become a social problem in Germany and what initiatives they were taking in overcoming those unpleasant social problems. Impressed by their thought I instantly offered them a mutual handicraft business scheme which would be made by the deprived yet skilled people of Bangladesh and marketed by the lonely citizens of Germany. The session was full of such interactive and creative ideas.

On June 1, 2015, we again had the luck to get our beloved Professor Muhammad Yunus among us on “Social Business Academic Conclave 2015”. This time not only students but also academicians participated to present their views and ideas. It was an immensely successful event and for the first time I heard my favorite quote from Yunus sir, “We are not job seekers, we are job givers”. We jumped with joy when we heard the name of the social business plan winner ‘Team Baymax’, which members are from BSEC. Our feeling of accomplishment doubled when we heard the name of our former club coordinator Ms. Parisa Islam for the best research paper on social business. We felt very proud.
Today student delegates from different universities all around the world visit us every year to share their experiences. Now BSEC has three hundred club members and they are very proud. They remain very busy all the time inviting social business entrepreneurs to hear their success stories and organizing social business workshops for the student community. I consider them as gems because they are carrying the message of our beloved Professor Yunus sir to create a world without poverty. I expect them to devote their energy to the solution of problems and come up with ideas to send the social problems in the history books. We youth is the future of tomorrow and social change depends on us a lot.

If I don't share my pacing from BSEC to Yunus Centre then my story will be incomplete. It was December 2015; I just finished my final-final exam of BBA. Ms. Parisa Islam called me and asked if I am interested for an internship at Yunus Centre. The fascinated me, took less than a second to say ‘yes’. And now I am writing this experience story sitting on a desk of Yunus Centre as an intern challenging myself every day, every moment to do something for the mankind.

To know more about BSEC: https://www.facebook.com/EU.BSEC/?ref=hl
**What did I get out of it?**

Saad Habib

During my school life one of my favourite teachers used to say “live and let live” I was charmed by the theological and ideological horizon of the wise saying but could not appreciate the practicality or affordability of the dictation.

But now since years has passed and I roamed around the different boarders of the present day world I now can afford to understand the importance and the core meaning of the words and the joy and pleasure thus derived. It does not only apply to individual level but also to international perspective.

I want to inform the readers that it was working at The Yunus Centre which made it possible. Looking at Prof. Dr. Yunus’s life, and visiting the different projects that Grameen is conducting during our different field visits made it clear to me and my fellow interns that now we have a clear vision and mission in life. There is no scope to refuse the contribution that this Nobel Laureate made to the millions of people not just in Bangladesh but around the world.

I was educated in Dhaka and studied in an English medium school. So far I recall we were in a constant pressure to leave the country. Although we did not care about the district names of Bangladesh we memorized the geo-cultural dimensions of the different states of the rich nations. We grew up with a constant pressure “Flee and don’t come back.” We used to say but that is “brain drain” they argued better be drained then die. They told us good brains that stay here become unutilized or corrupted.

The colonization of Bangladesh by the British Empire has ended but by using the market monopoly of the developed countries to commercialise the developing nations, everything from cheap labour to intellectual minds have been transported.

Working at the Yunus Centre has taught me how to address such a social problem effectively, in the sense that not to have the false expectation that we can stop it all at once, but to work at it one step at a time. Like many of the social problems Grameen bank helped to solve, time wasn’t wasted by businessmen arguing about extensive models but by determined individuals making small scale implementations of logic which ultimately turned into great ventures.

The social problems vary greatly from nation to nation as much as the people, and the solutions can also be just as creative. This internship has opened my eyes as to how everyday regular people can do very little to improve the lives of so many. Preparing me and giving me the tools to address such problems at home and abroad for which I am very thankful.

A lot of my class mates have been working throughout university and are doing exciting internships as well, working at established and at for-profit companies learning the tricks of the trade. But I’m glad I chose the Yunus Centre because it has instilled a high moral code within me constructing a vision to improve the lives of people as my primary goal, stepping into my professional career.
After 32 hours of interminable waiting at the Gatwick airport, drenched with perspiration, droopy eyes, tangled hair I finally reached the historic city of Berlin. I felt unready to rush to the meeting directly from the airport. I could feel the jitters as I waited for U-bahn 6 that would take me to Seestraße.

A cozy little café, Café Mandelzweig, full of young people from almost all over the world assembled there. The hectic journey no longer enervated me. Rather I felt animated to see the verve and vitality of the young crowd. Young Challengers Meeting commenced. In this first get together, Pastor Paul Nogossek from Begegnungskirche and the owner of Café Mandelzweig gave us insights into various social conflict areas in Berlin and the measures taken by them to help those in need.

We, the Young Challengers exchanged our views and shared different ideas for change. I got to meet so many young folks at the meeting; some were already running their own social enterprises and others, like me, were still gaining experiences. I also got to reunite with my colleagues from Social Business Youth Alliance (SBYA), which made the GSBS journey livelier.

The following day we gathered at the Betahaus early morning, geared up for the Young Challengers meeting. I was pleased to finally meet Hans Reitz, the cofounder of Grameen Creative Lab who delivered a beautiful speech on ‘A Human Future’. Prof Yunus was definitely being missed. Even though he was not present with us physically, his message did reach us. And it did, as always, motivate us.

We listened zealously to his invitation to young people to use our creativity combined with technology to tackle the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations by targeting to obtain ‘three zeros’: zero poverty, zero unemployment and zero net carbon emissions.
After an intensive round of speech and breakout sessions, young challengers were split into ‘Explorers and Practitioners’ group. I was of course in the explorers group. In this round I, along with five other fellow Young Challengers came up with a business idea to solve the issue of refugee crisis in Germany and presented it to everyone in the room.

The next three days we attended the main conference, Global Social Business Summit, the grand event that brought together academics, experts, CEOs and individuals engaged in social business. It took place at the symbolic Airport of Tempelhof, which was once a takeoff, and landing site for the “raisin bombers” ensuring the provision of vital supplies for the people in West Berlin.

I was really happy to meet the YC team again. It was great to meet Khashru bhaiya, Tanbir bhaiya and Lamiya Apu and see them present the tremendous work of Grameen social businesses and projects. The conference helped me gain insights into the progress and success of social businesses beyond Bangladesh in an international platform. Amidst the conference Young Challengers were also given an opportunity to present their idea and challenge global leaders present in the conference.

I was proud to present the work of SBYA in such a grand platform and share our vision of empowering youth into social business.
Friendships were built, new initiatives were taken, and the passion for changing the world was once again rejuvenated. With this fresh awakening of doing something as joyful as social business, my GSBS journey came to an end. I remember during an interview at the Young Challengers Meeting, I was asked, what is that one thing that drives me towards social business. Without giving it a single thought, I said I loved social business because it is about people. Social business is not only a theory to be read in the beautiful books of Muhammad Yunus. It is a way of living that gives me hope of a humane world. And I feel fortunate to be a little part of it.

With these multifarious feelings I returned to the mechanical life of university. But to my joy after a few days I got back home, I received a letter from the Grameen Creative Lab to which was attached a Social Business Dollar that reverberated ‘social business dollar has an endless life’.
Women Empowering Women

Suraiya Sharmeen

Getting a chance to pursue my higher study in Malaysia enabled me going ahead one step further to identify myself and to believe in my strength. I was a girl with less/no confidence before, to do something by myself; but now I have enough courage to contribute myself for the wellbeing of myself, my family as well as my country. The first experience of Malaysia was not too good as that was my first time to stay alone without family and it was pretty hard for me to adjust myself with the new people and environment.

“When tiny, tiny things start happening a million times, it becomes a large thing. It lays down the foundation of a strong economic base. With women participating in building this economic base, it becomes the foundation for better social and economic future ...”

— Dr. Muhammad Yunus

One of the major problems I faced is Malaysia was the food which was totally new to me and also different from Bangladeshi foods. Though there were lots of problems I had to face, I tried my best to overcome and I did it! Another and one of the biggest chances I got that is an internship opportunity at Yunus Centre. From the beginning of my graduation level, I was very much curious to know Dr. Muhammad Yunus’s social business concept and also work with this idea to eradicate poverty from my country.

This was one of the main reasons behind doing my internship at Yunus Centre. Besides that, Yunus Centre gives an intern a valuable opportunity to work with different teams such as Executive Director’s Team, Social business team, Admin team and also to visit several Grameen organizations. Thus, an intern at Yunus Centre can learn practical knowledge to enhance his/her professionalism and capability in the recent competitive corporate world through practicing multitasks. I am very much grateful to Dr. Muhammad Yunus for giving me right path and hope to be an independent woman with potential.

Higher education is the freedom that every girl deserves though a number of the Bangladeshi girls deprived of it and unfortunately get married before being a graduate. This tradition needs to be changed as soon as possible and I am motivated enough to encourage other girls and their families around me to be independent women through proper education. I believe that, the misery of the Bangladeshi underprivileged girls will be totally ended one day.

“It took me quite a long time to develop a voice, and now that I have it, I am not going to be silent.”

— Madeleine Albright
A Little bit about us!

There’s about 10 of us.
I am doing my undergraduate program from Independent University, Bangladesh and my major is HRM. In future I want to work in a non-profit organization (NGO). It's my dream to work for the deprived people. During my studies in university I was seeking for an organization for my Internship Program which is connected to the welfare of the society.

The impact of the business on people or environment, rather the amount of profit made in a given period measures the success of social business. Social business is about making complete sacrifice of financial reward from business. It is about total delinking from the old framework of business. As Yunus Centre itself is a brand so of course there is no doubt that how it will pay impact to build up my career in the next decade.
I am doing my undergraduate program from the American International University – Bangladesh. My background is Accounting and Finance and in the future I want to work in a non-profit organization (NGO). It’s my dream to work for the deprived people. While studying in university I was seeking for an organization for my Internship Program which is connected to the welfare of the society. And obviously Yunus Centre is such a platform where I can start my journey to walk the path of my dream. Moreover a superior environment always adds value for professional and as well as for personal life. And Yunus Centre is such a place where as an Intern one can have the flavors of both corporate environment and as well as the environment of field activities. As Yunus Centre itself is a brand, so of course there is no doubt that how it will pay impact to build up my career in next decade.
ISHMA IQBAL

I'm from Bangladesh and I recently completed my undergraduate studies in Economics and Finance from The University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong. Ever since Professor Yunus' work became well known, I became very interested in his concepts and way of work. Therefore, when I heard about the internship program at Yunus Centre I thought what better way to learn about social business than to work for the Nobel Laureate himself. I dream to have my own social enterprise and business one day through which I can change the lives of people in a positive way. My main aim will be to eradicate poverty.
I am from small country that is full of natural beauty called Bangladesh. I am so lucky that I got a chance to go abroad for my higher study in Malaysia. I am now in my final year at Taylor’s University and my major is in International Business and Marketing. My mother is a Grameen Bank Borrower and one of the board members of Grameen bank. From my childhood, I had seen how Grameen Bank supported our family and the most important thing is, my mom got an opportunity to do something for herself. I got to know about social business from my mom when she worked with Dr. Muhammad Yunus and also from other online journals. Dr Muhammad Yunus has always been my inspiration. Before joining my university life, I was planning that I will do something with my inspiration to fulfil my dream. Then I came to know about the internship program at Yunus centre, which made my way simple to know more about Dr. Muhammad Yunus and his activities and Social Business.
I live in Dhaka and I have completed my Bachelor’s degree on Business Administration from Eastern University Bangladesh. During my four year’s graduation period, I was involved in different social welfare activities. I am also leading a Social Business club named ‘BSEC’ as the President. I have a genuine interest in becoming a Social Business entrepreneur because I believe that helping my surroundings to improve is the ultimate satisfaction one can get from life. So I am working towards it.

Internship at Yunus Centre is what I consider as a big achievement in my life. I could understand the whole mechanism of Social Business working from there. I also made some good home and abroad friends who worked with me as interns at Yunus Centre. I love travelling, making friends and experimenting my brain with new skills every day. My aim in life is very similar to that of my idol Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Prof. Dr. Muhammad Yunus. I follow his philosophy and want to become a contributor of social change in future.
This is Rupanti Zaman. I am from Dhaka, Bangladesh. I have completed my Bachelor’s of Business Administration (BBA) from Eastern University, Bangladesh. I was involved with Business & Social Entrepreneurship Club (BSEC) while doing my graduation where I used to do some extracurricular activities regarding Social Business and from where I was being motivated about Social Business. I was the Vice President of that club. I have interest on Social Business. Doing internship at Yunus Centre was a great experience for me and I am very lucky that I got the chance doing internee there. I have learned a lot of things from Yunus Centre and I am very fond of Nobel Laureate Prof. Dr. Muhammad Yunus. I am a friendly person but I take time to make friends. I found some good friends at Yunus Centre while doing internee there. I love singing and making crafts. I want to do something for the street children. I want to be a social entrepreneur in my near future to reduce any social problem.
I’m Saad Habib, currently in my 3rd year of electrical engineering at the University of Sydney. Coming from a science and engineering background I had very little idea about what to expect from this internship, starting from the terminology to the business models it was all new to me. Which put me in a very unique position to be able to look at the model from an engineering perspective. It has given me great insight to the lives of the people in rural villages and how the most basic human instinct to help each other, can be used to create a variety of self-sustaining businesses that is changing the lives of so many people around the world. I hope to start my own social business one day and this internship has equipped me with the right tools and mindset to make it a reality.
SAMIUL ALAM

I am a Bangladeshi who has recently graduated from Monash University in Malaysia. I have majored in International Studies and I am hoping to work in the Development Sector in the near future and follow through that in my post-graduate studies. Like many other students in the liberal arts; I’ve come to know of Dr. Muhammad Yunus’ work in Micro-Credit and Social Business during the numerous courses that referred his work. As a resident of Bangladesh, I had to reap the opportunity to work up-close in the epicentre of it all. I have used my time here in Yunus Centre to gain as the plethora of knowledge about Social Business and how revolutionary an idea can be. I hope use my experience here as a stepping stone to start my career in development and bringing in social change in wherever I work in the world.
I am Suraiya Sharmeen, a Bangladeshi student studying in International Business and Marketing program at Taylor's University, Malaysia. From the beginning of my graduation level in business study, I was very much interested to work with Dr Muhammad Yunus and contribute myself to build his “Social Business” idea around the world to solve the world’s most pressing social problems. Moreover, as a Bangladeshi I have the responsibility to ensure my country’s prosperity. I believe that an internship opportunity at Yunus Centre will perfectly provide me the right path to do so and help me to enhance my professionalism and efficiency of the current business world as well.
Hi! I’m Shah Waseef (or Waseef if we’re already friends) and I like food (usually sweet-sour-spicy), Chocolate (absolutely indiscriminately) and singing (yes, out loud, individually or as a group). I am often accused (rather brutally I must say) of being a workaholic, and yet most of the time I find myself doing either one or a combo of the three things I just said in the first sentence.

My life is awesome because of all the amazing friends I have, and I learned soooooo many things in that time, like glass art, riding a motorcycle, thrift shopping, the importance of leather boots and the likes. And all of that because I started following my new life motto, Leap before you look and regret only what you did (I just can’t wait to get a snarky comment from some of my friends about this). And I must say, the life has never been this exciting.

Anyway, because they said I have to, I’ll let you know, I’m doing a Bachelor’s degree (actually I’m probably done by the time you’re reading this) in Human Resource Management and in Finance from the United International University, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

I love learning, but hate reading, with unreal vigor. And my grades are not too pitiful either (just a little bit proud of that, kinda-sorta).

I didn’t want to be limited to my major fields, and so I ended up learning Spanish (I love learning languages) and am currently somewhere in the middle of learning Social Business. I started learning that at SBYA Global (I work here with the awesomest co-workers on the planet).

And I guess that’s about it. Also, I just love sandwiches and if any of you ever wanna meet up, just look me up of Facebook or something. Cheers!
Let’s see, what else is left to say? I hope we have achieved something here and that you had fun reading this. We would consider this little trinket successful if it inspires even one of you just a little bit.

Cheers to life, and Say Yes to Chocolate.

Keep it YY.