

The next generation leaders

Tanzina Rahman



GREEN and yellow were the colours of the day. As the children in green coloured t-shirts gathered around the field in the cold morning, the golden rays of the sun glistened over their heads making them look like little elves. While the children in bright yellow t-shirts were busy welcoming the guest and making sure everything was going in order. It was their event, and they were the ones who organised it!

Part of the Youth Sport Leadership (YSL) trainings, around 150 students congregated at Dhanmondi Kamrunnesa Govt' Girls High School to exhibit their leadership abilities and introduce their special sport skills. The trainings started from 15 December to 23 December 2009, whereby number of participants and schools took part to develop their leadership skills through sports and arts.

Around eight teachers (two from each school) and 32 students (eight young leaders) from four schools participated in the programme. The participating schools were Kamrunnesa Govt Girls' High School, Dhanmondi, IET Govt High School, Narayanganj, Manikganj Govt High School, Manikganj and Natore Govt Girls' High School, Natore.

From estimating the budget for the programme to liaising with the media and organising activities for the children, the students managed every aspects of the event.

According to Nafiza Basher Popy, Assistant Teacher of Dhanmondi Kamrunnesa Govt Girls' High School, who also attended the training sessions, said that the guests were impressed by the leadership potential the students demonstrated through this programme.



“The training will surely assist them in future development and to become active and responsible citizens of our country,” she added.

Earlier British Council has also organised similar YSL trainings in Khulna. The mayor of Khulna attended the event as the chief guest. The participating schools in Khulna were Khulna Zilla School, Khulna, Jessore Govt Girls' High School, Jessore, Satkhira Govt Girls' High School, Satkhira and

tion, a project that forms part of the legacy programme of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. More than one million children and adolescent across the country will benefit physically and mentally from quality sports activities, under the International Inspiration project implemented jointly by UNICEF and British Council together with the Ministry of Youth and sports, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Children



Kushtia Govt Girls' High School, Kushtia.

The YSL programme provides International Inspiration Local Tutors with the skills, knowledge and understanding needed to facilitate a high quality learning experience. Trainers from UK came to Bangladesh to conduct these trainings. Both students and teachers were introduced to the teaching and learning methods that are used to enable young leaders to enhance their leadership skills.

The training is a part of International Inspira-

and Women Affairs.

Furthermore through this project, two hundred thousand children, aged four to ten, will learn swimming, in a country where drowning is one of the biggest killer of children aged one to ten.

As physical education is a vital necessity in the development of children and their academic curriculum, programmes like YSL are playing a key role to enhance the current education system of Bangladesh.





Girls call the shots at cricket jamboree

Funded by the UK government, the International Inspiration Programme aims to use sports as a medium to develop leadership, social harmony and connectivity. Recently, England's U-19 cricket team took part in a programme with local school children to take that mission a step further. Drenched in cricket inspiration, **Towheed Feroze** writes

The sight was an unusual one – a young girl taking the cricket bat and tapping the field to get a feel of the pitch.

The pitch was nothing special, just a thick mat over a field, but the makeshift nature of it did not deter the teenager from emulating the acts of her cricket stars. 'Cricket is as much a sport for girls as it is for boys,' remarks Iti, a student from Dhanmondi Girls High School. And as she strikes a pose with the bat, the bowler from the opposite side, a boy, prepares to make his delivery.

If there is anyone out there who still clings on to the idea that cricket or, sport in general, is mainly ruled by men, then it is time for them to wake up from a slumber of ignorance. This sense of inclusion in sports was remarkably illustrated on October 24 at the field of the

Dhanmondi Qamrunnessa Government Girls High School.

The visiting England U-19 cricket team came to the school and experienced a cricket carnival going on

involving students of six schools: Dhanmondi Qamrunnessa Government Girls High School, Motijheel Government Girls and Boys School, IET Government High School, Dhaka Alia Madrasa, Banglabazar Govt. Girls High School and Dhanmondi Govt Girls and Boys. But the involvement of the students and the visit of the England team went far deeper than just playing a little pre-winter afternoon cricket.

The students from the six schools are part of the UK government's International Inspiration programme that looks ahead to the 2012 London Olympics. The main objectives of the programme are to harness the power of sports to unite social groups, nurture leadership



PRITO REZA

qualities among the young, instil a sense of confidence and inspire the young to transform their lives in 20 developing countries.

Since its launch in January 2008, the programme was at first successfully piloted in five countries: Azerbaijan, Brazil, India, Palau and Zambia. Bangladesh, along with Ghana, Jordan, Mozambique and Trinidad and Tobago, are in the second stage of the programme. The new funding is from the UK Department for International Development (DFID) with an additional £5.4 million and this backs up the £9 million already invested by DFID, the

British Council, UNICEF, DCMS and the Premier League. In India, the programme has provided an impetus for a national drive for physical fitness in the run up to the Commonwealth Games in 2010.

As the young professional English cricket players divided into small groups got involved in training sessions with the school level players, the message of inclusion of International Inspiration, delivered by the British Council, stood out prominently.

'We are learning how to field and bat better,' says a thrilled Shariful Islam, a student of class nine from Dhanmondi Boys. He hits the ball with his bat, runs to the end of a long queue to wait for another chance to catch a ball hit high by an England player.

Though smiling and well integrated within the training session, the English players do not take their task flippantly. When someone misses, s/he has to do two sit-ups as punishment. But what happens when the coaching English player misses a catch? Well, just like the others, he goes down and gives 10 push-ups

on the ground.

The school children stand by him and count all the 10 presses. 'That is what I call camaraderie,' comments Shariful. Apart from getting crucial tips, what else is Sharif learning? The sweaty young teenager pauses, thinks for a second, and says: 'encouragement and teamwork' – two fundamental traits of the International Inspiration programme.

Watching the whole spectacle was Monjurul Huq, founder of the Shoronika High School in Netrokona. His view is that if children get such opportunities to mingle with established sports people, then it would be easier for them to pick up the positive and constructive aspects of sports. 'But to make International Inspiration a total success, such initiatives should also be taken to the zilas, district towns and thanas,' he added.

Ina, a student of class ten and an avid cricket follower, loves cricket but says that as part of the International Inspiration programme, she will put her love into action on the field rather than expressing it in front of the television.

'This programme and especially this interaction with young England players has whipped up my desire to play,' she says, and also adds that to fulfil the leadership building goal, interactions with people from different nationalities is essential.

As the session came to an end, the England players handed out six gift bags containing cricket equipment to the six schools. The equipment was paid for by the UK's Richmond Cricket Club and the bags were donated by Sports World. 'The main aim is to ensure that everyone gets to be involved and play,' commented Chris Austin, head of DFID Bangladesh.

Talking about the whole event, John Abrahams, manager of the England u-19 said, 'we loved being here as this gave us a chance to interact with young people who, in the future, may play for Bangladesh.' Terming the session 'thoroughly enjoyable,' he also said that it was particularly important as it involved students, teachers, trainers, players and also managers.

In the carnival of bon-homie many possibly did not notice that the policemen provided by the Bangladesh government for the security of the cricket players were also enjoying the cricket extravaganza with claps and expressions of approval. Salman, a cricket-lover but not a player, noticed this and made the ultimate comment: 'if someone looks for an all-inclusive inspiration then this has to be it. In all that frenzy of fun, frolic and friendship, no one seemed to dither.' ♦

Education without Borders

Tanzina Rahman

"I just couldn't believe that these things were right in front of us, around us and we had hardly noticed them till now."

Fourteen year old Rehnuma was in awe after taking part in the Perception Programme organised by her school- Maple Leaf International School. Part of the DFID Global School Partnership (DGSP) programme, this activity indeed was an eye opening experience for her and many others who had little knowledge about the global development issues like child labour, human rights, pollution, climate change, poverty and illiteracy.

"The students learned about the inclusive sides of our society," explained Humaira Fatima Jalil, a teacher of Maple Leaf International School who coordinated the programme in the school.

"Disability is a taboo in our society. Physically handicapped people are often separated. After visiting institutions for the physically challenged people, our students realised that they are no different than us. That with little help they too can have a normal life," said Ms. Humaira.

Projects like this and many others concerning global issues such as sustainable development, energy/water conservation, human rights, citizenship, drug abuse, sexism, sports for girls were initiated in five different schools by DFID Global School Partnership (DGSP) in 2006 to analyse its success in the grounds of Bangladesh. Upon receiving sanguine results, DGSP has been finally launched where Bangladeshi schools will be connected with UK schools. The programme provides advice and guidance, professional development and grants to schools that are using school partnerships as a means for developing a global dimension within their curriculum. It targets a total of 175 school links to be established by March 2012.

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tiative of the British Council, Cambridge Education Foundation, UK One World Linking Association (UKOWLA) and Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO), funded by the Department for International Development (DFID). Nurul Islam Nahid MP of Ministry of Education, Professor Salma Akhter, Director, Institute of Education Research, University of Dhaka and Chris Austin, Country Representative, Department for International Development (DFID) inaugurated the project.

DGSP allows the students to explore their perceptions, recognize connections and to think critically about cultural, economic and political differences. By sharing ideas with

their peers from developing country like UK, they get involved in the wider community where they become the problem solver.

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The term "global learning" has become a catch phrase these days. Recognising and understanding the need of today's world is imperative to compete. Organisations like British Council are thus bringing the best among the youth by interweaving a global dimension within the formal curriculum. Besides DGSP, British Council is also coordinating other programmes to nurture the young generation such as the Connecting Classrooms (CC) which is an international school partnership project to strengthen inter-cultural dialogue and integrate international dimension into school curriculum, and International Inspiration (II) which is also an international programme to empower sports and physical education among the youth.

Camping by CE Students by the Gomti River

Nauroz Farhan Nur

DEPARTMENT of Civil Engineering (CE) of University of Asia Pacific (UAP) recently arranged a camping at Burichong in Comilla. The CE students set up their camp at Balikhara village near Gomti River. The tour was held from the 19th of November to the 21st of November. The students passed two memorable days of their life during the camp. Prof. Dr. Md. Tarek Uddin, Head of the Department of CE visited the camp venue and shared some moments with the students. The students



did everything from preparing food to cleaning the dishes. Setting up the tent was the most challenging work in camping. Late at night, a barbeque party added an unusual taste of food to the menu. The students stayed outside their tent in the night by chitchatting and doing music around the camp-

fire. The students who faced a lot of problems solved their troubles hand in hand and gained an experience on how to work together as well as to solve unforeseen problems. It also helped them to forget the monotony of urban life.

(2nd Semester, Dept. of CE)

Few hours with vermicompost

Tanha Shamree

IF someone had asked me to spend few hours with vermicompost, my reaction would be "yuck!" But my thoughts changed after the 14th of November. On that day, British Council gave us an opportunity to know about this nasty but environment-friendly thing. They sent an invitation to our school offering students from 10-15 years of age to visit British Council to get some idea about vermicompost. The programme was conducted by CMES (Centre for Mass Education in Science) under their Basic School System (BSS) programme.

We the student of Universal Tutorial School reached British Council at 2:45 pm. The Auditorium was large and so was the projection. Two other schools also participated in the programme. Dr. Ibrahim showed us the whole process with the help of a projector along with

the aid of a practical experiment.

Vermicompost is the improved compost obtained through actions of earthworm on organic matter. CMES was the first in Bangladesh to work with the research and development of vermicompost and now started producing and marketing this cheap but more effective fertilizer. Recent experiment carried out by CMES shows that vermicompost has higher rate of nutrient than processed cow dung. To facilitate and popularize it they are working through Basic School System (BSS).

I used to feel icky about worms. The lecture by Dr. Ibrahim not only lessened my fear but also made me feel like touching it and I did touch it. After the study tour, we learned that, some disgusting creatures could really be helpful to our environment as well as to us.