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Inspiring Generation Next

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'Inspiring Generation Next' was a virtual session held recently with Sumaya Kazi, a young Bangladeshi-American entrepreneur who is the founder and chief executive officer of San Francisco-based technology company Sumazi, an intelligent social navigation system for personal and professional networks. The event was put together by Bangladesh Brand Forum, EMK Center, Google Business Group and JCI Dhaka West. The event started off at 11:30a.m. of March 5, by Shariful Islam, founder, Bangladesh Brand Forum who gave a thought provoking introduction as to why Sumaya Kazi's story acts as an inspiration to the youth to start up something new. This was followed by a speech by Michael Harker, foreign service officer, U.S. Department of State and then M. K. Aaref, director, EMK Centre who spoke of his pride for partnering with such a webinar as he believes Sumaya is an embodiment of courage and she would succeed in making the youth believe in their ideas and implement them.



Sumaya Kazi

Finally Sumaya Kazi was connected through google hangouts by Salman Hossain, the co-founder of Google Business Group and since then, she consistently kept her audience enticed by sharing her journey. Many in the audience had a preoccupied notion that born and brought up in California would, without a doubt get the benefit of the land she resides in. America is the land of opportunities and people are rather acclimated. However, as soon as she started to paint the picture of her early life, stating that she was repeatedly under parental and societal pressure to choose medicine as a career, the youth in the audience began to relate to her. She took her listeners through her school days where she attended a competition called Distinguished Young Women competition which won her scholarship for college, marking the importance of extra-curricular activities. She said that it is never too late to shift to the path which gives us happiness when she narrated her switching from law to business at University of California, Berkeley from where she graduated in 2004.

She also enthralled her audience when she told them about working in the University Human Rights Centre on campus, transcribing interviews of war-torn victims from Bosnia and Croatia and how they went viral too swiftly and soon



Attendees from IABC, BRACU at Inspiring Generation Next held at EMK centre in the capital.— New Age photo

people from many parts of the world wanted to share their stories through her words. Before finding her company, Sumaya served as a senior social media manager at Fortune 500 Sun Microsystems where she was responsible for the global strategy and implementation of new and social media across multiple platforms. While at Sun Microsystems, Sumaya was still so passionate about getting the story out of war-torn victims that she she continued her off-side job which led on the formation of The Cultural Connect, followed by Sumazi.com. Her team published over 800 interviews across 5 weekly publications of under-35 leaders across different ethnic diasporas that led a viral chain of meaningful connections and tools for mobilization of young adults across 100 countries.

She divulged the strategy and traits in her that took her to where she is now. 'You should not give up on your dreams, be comfortable with them and put yourselves out there to face the challenges in life,' Sumaya addressed the youth. She shared that the best time to start up something is when one is young because then one is surrounded with young enthusiasts. She also emphasised the importance of how one must seek help if needed and not be hesitant, because it would only create stagnation in their lives and ultimately cause depression. 'It's not necessary to have absolute knowledge about how to run a start-up and one will get a hang of it as time goes by,' the young entrepreneur encouraged the attendees.

Sumaya Kazi is a brilliant mind who persuaded her interests and is dedicated, trying to benefit the world around her. Through the virtual session, she succeeded to instill the thought in her audience to do the same and help not only their native country but the entire globe. The intention of the event was to train the youth properly to develop their skill and knowledge. In excess of this training programme, Inspiring Generation Next can mentor and monitor the youth entrepreneurs. This sector is vital to implement IGN initiatives effectively. Through the virtual interactive session with Global Bangladeshi Experts, they made the difference to the young minds leaving them feeling stronger and more confident about themselves and their peers.

Tanzeela Rahman is a member of International Association of Business Communicators, BRAC University, who attended the webinar