



**Office  
of External  
Affairs**

# THE BRIDGE

## The Official Newsletter of the Office Of External Affairs

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### *Editor's Message*

2024 is off to a busy start at NSU with lots of our partnerships coming to fruition especially in the area of student mobility. If you are interested in learning more about the opportunities available to study abroad, please visit us in the Office of External Affairs located on the 5th floor of the Admin Building. Don't forget that you can take your IELTS exam at NSU, so stop by to register for the next one which will held at NSU on April 27th, 2024.

*Editor*

Dr. Katherine Li

*Reporter*

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### Congratulations NSU on the latest MoUs!



**N**SU has signed the following 5 new and renewed MoUs in the last two months: Police Staff College, Bangladesh, MetLife (renewal), Bangladesh, Institute of Water Modelling (renewal), Bangladesh, Peace for People, Nepal, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia.

To learn more about these partnerships, please visit <http://institutions.northsouth.edu/oea/international-affairs/partnership/list-of-mous/>, which is located on the front page of the NSU website under Int'l Partnership.

### From Music Major to Dean of Engineering: Obstacles, Opportunities, and Lessons Learned Along the Way



**Stanford  
University**

*O*n February 20, 2024, North South University (NSU) had the privilege of hosting Professor Jennifer Widom, the distinguished Frederick Emmons Terman Dean of the School of Engineering at Stanford University, USA. Professor Widom delivered an illuminating speech titled "From Music Major to Dean of Engineering: Obstacles, Opportunities, and Lessons Learned Along the Way" at the NSU Auditorium.



The event, meticulously organized by the Office of External Affairs at North South University, garnered significant attention. Professor Widom's presentation captivated attendees, offering profound insights into her professional



evolution. Through engaging anecdotes and reflections, she shared invaluable lessons from her remarkable journey, inspiring the audience with her experiences.

The seminar was marked by its interactive nature, with students playing a pivotal role by posing diverse questions. Their active participation, ranging from inquiries about Professor Widom's personal career trajectory to the intricate dynamics of engineering education at Stanford University, fostered a dynamic learning environment. This direct engagement with a luminary in the field provided students with invaluable firsthand insights.

Professor Widom's visit to Bangladesh included delivering the seminar and conducting a short course on Data Science. This course, designed for students from various public and private universities, is hosted at the NSU campus. By sharing her expertise in this critical area, Professor Widom's contribution is set to significantly enrich the country's educational landscape, equipping students with valuable skills for the future.



Professor Widom's presence at North South University is not just a visit but a significant milestone in the institution's academic journey. Her profound insights and contributions serve as a beacon of inspiration for students and faculty, reaffirming NSU's commitment to fostering excellence in education and research.

To know more about the event, visit the following link:

<https://www.facebook.com/OEANSU/videos/376502145100280>

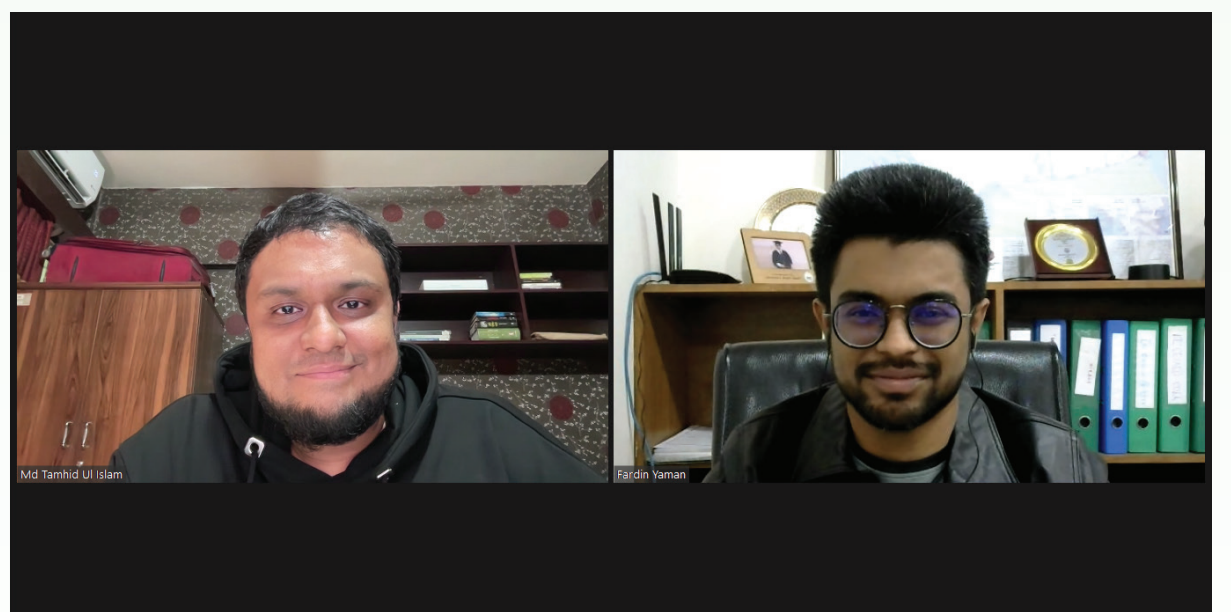
## NSU Alumni Talk Show 137

*In the one hundred and thirty-seventh episode of the NSU Alumni Talk Show, aired on January 01, 2024, Dr. Md. Tahmid Ul Islam, currently serving as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Marketing at North South University (NSU), shared his insights as the guest speaker. Dr. Islam's educational journey includes completing his Bachelors in Science (B.Sc.) in Biochemistry and Biotechnology in 2007 and an MBA in 2014, both from NSU. He further pursued an MSc in Strategic Management from Aston Business School, UK before returning to NSU to work in academia.*

As a dedicated educator, Dr. Islam finds fulfillment in shaping the minds of future generations through teaching. He values the flexibility in working hours that academia offers, which helps alleviate stress despite the demanding workload. Recognizing teaching as a noble profession, he emphasizes the importance of continuous learning and engagement in the educational process. Dr. Islam underscores the essential characteristics of an effective teacher, highlighting the significance of understanding students' psychology, possessing communication skills, and demonstrating empathy and patience. He believes that integrating humor into teaching fosters a more engaging classroom environment.

Sharing insights from his Ph.D. journey, Dr. Islam advises aspiring researchers to pursue topics they are genuinely passionate about, as the doctoral process requires a long-term commitment. He emphasizes the importance of selecting professors as supervisors who can provide valuable guidance and support throughout the research journey.

Dr. Islam's passion for filmmaking stemmed from his participation in ad-making competitions during his time at NSU. He found joy in storytelling through videos



videos and went on to create short films and corporate videos after graduation, leveraging his skills in marketing and content creation. Reflecting on his decision to attend NSU, Dr. Islam attributes his choice to the university's conducive environment, which encourages students to excel and prepares them for real-world challenges. Engaging in various extracurricular activities, including serving as the vice president of the bioscience club, enriched his campus experience and helped him overcome shyness, developing his social skills and confidence.

In offering advice to students, Dr. Islam emphasizes the importance of selecting the right subject aligned with their interests and setting clear goals. He underscores the value of networking and acquiring software skills, recognizing their significance in today's competitive landscape.

To know more about the event, visit the following link:  
<https://www.facebook.com/OEANSU/videos/7302411733112227>

## Meeting with Oxford Institute



A meeting was convened between the Office of External Affairs and Oxford Institute on January 14, 2024. Ms. Mona Masoud, Country Coordinator, Oxford Institute, joined the meeting with Ms. Samina Alam Miti, International Affairs Officer, OEA; Ms. Sadia Jeesan Ayesha, International Ambassador; and Ms. Tasnia Azmeri Madiha, Coordination Offer, OEA.

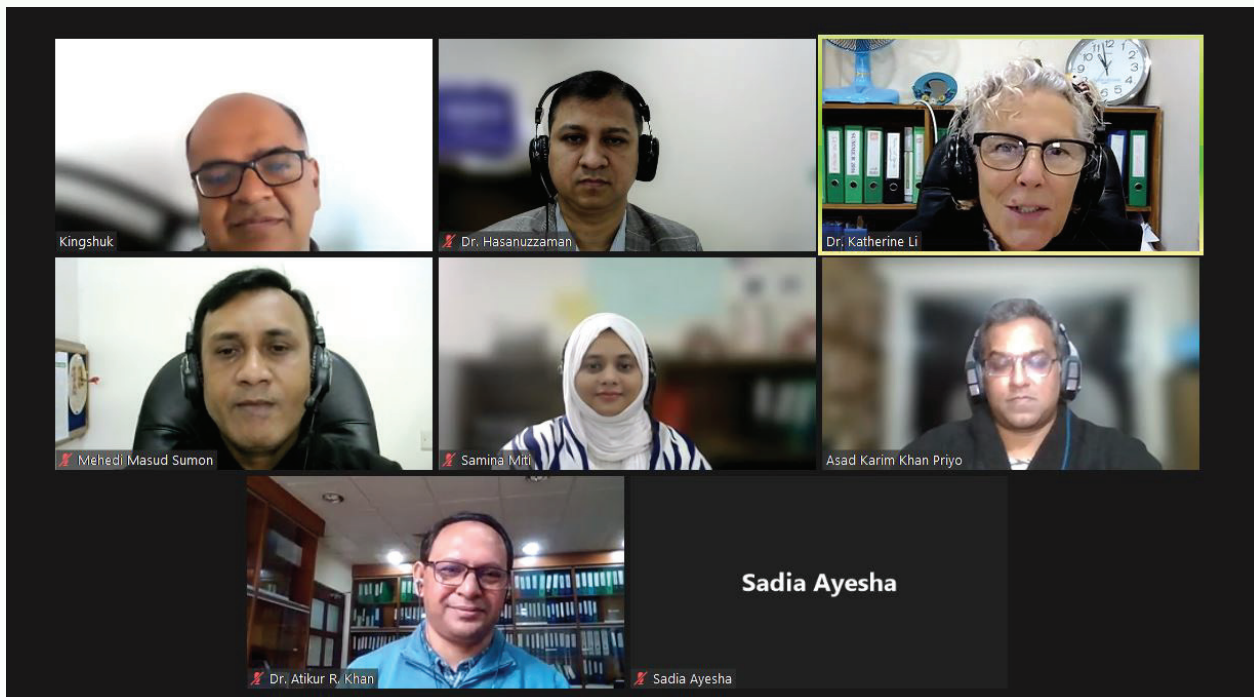
Ms. Masoud presented the Oxford Annual Summer Programme 2024, featuring two-week residential programs titled "The Oxford Experience," held in July and August. These programs, focusing on Oxford Learning, Leadership, and Lifestyle, offer students a unique opportunity to immerse themselves in the undergraduate experience at Oxford University. Participants reside in university accommodation, attend courses by Oxford scholars, and explore various aspects of student life in the city, fostering invaluable personal and academic growth.

The Oxford Summer Programme, previously attended by NSU students in 2024, extends an invitation for the upcoming session in July-August 2024, with the application window currently open. This collaboration with the Oxford Institute presents NSU students with enriching opportunities to broaden their horizons, forge lasting memories, and gain invaluable insights into academia and student life at a prestigious institution like Oxford University.



## Meeting with Goa Institute of Management, India

A meeting was convened between the Office of External Affairs and the Goa Institute of Management (GIM), India, held on January 15, 2024, and January 21, 2024, with the primary agenda focusing on the forthcoming short-term summer exchange program to be hosted by NSU. The meeting brought together representatives from both institutions, including Dr. Katherine Li, Director; Ms. Samina Alam Miti, International Affairs Officer; and Ms. Sadia Ayesha Jeesan, International Ambassador, from OEA, along with Dr. Tamjid Ahmed Chowdhury, Director, MBA & EMBA Programs; Dr. Atikur Rahman Khan, Department of Management; Dr. Asad Karim Khan Priyo, Department of Economics; and Mr. Quazi Tafsirul Islam, Senior Lecturer of Strategy & HR, School of Business & Economics, and Coordinator, NSU Startups Next.



In the course of the meeting, both institutions collaboratively devised a comprehensive class schedule to optimize the learning experience for the visiting students from GIM during their one-month summer program at NSU. Moreover, NSU has forged partnerships with esteemed organizations such as UNICEF, the International Labour Organization (ILO), and the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), facilitating the organization of an upcoming symposium at NSU. Additionally, NSU has meticulously planned field visits to various NGOs and Ready-Made Garments (RMG) factories to provide students with firsthand insights into their operations.

Overall, the meetings proved to be highly productive, fostering fruitful discussions and solidifying plans for the successful execution of the summer exchange program. Both NSU and GIM express palpable excitement and optimism regarding the upcoming program. With the unwavering support and assistance from the Office of External Affairs, both institutions are poised for a resounding success. The students from GIM are anticipated to arrive in Bangladesh by the first week of March 2024, eagerly looking forward to the enriching educational experience that awaits them at NSU.

## Meeting with University of Hawai‘i, USA



UNIVERSITY  
of HAWAI‘I  
MĀNOA

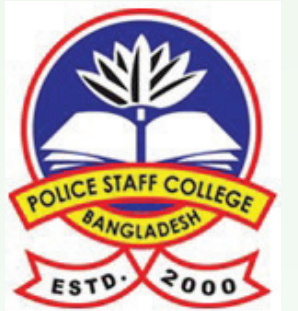
*On January 16, 2024, a meeting was convened between North South University (NSU) and the University of Hawai‘i (UHM), USA. Professor Nori Tarui, Senior Advisor to the Dean on Global College Initiatives at the College of Social Sciences, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, and Dr. Katherine Li, Director of the Office of External Affairs at NSU, were present at the meeting via Zoom. The primary objective of this meeting was to enhance the existing Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between NSU and UHM and explore avenues to elevate their collaborative efforts.*

During the meeting, both institutions expressed a keen interest in advancing the partnership to new heights by focusing on initiatives such as establishing a joint certificate program in Peace Studies and facilitating student exchanges. These endeavors aim to provide students with invaluable opportunities to engage in field visits alongside NGO networks, particularly beneficial for those studying disciplines such as Development Economics and Sustainability.

It is worth noting that while an MoU already exists between UHM and NSU, the meeting served as a platform to reinforce the relationship and identify areas for further collaboration, thereby enriching the educational experience and fostering mutual benefits for students of both institutions. With a shared commitment to academic excellence and global engagement, the future holds promising prospects for continued cooperation and growth between NSU and UHM.

## MoU Signing Ceremony with Police Staff College

*On January 16, 2024, North South University (NSU) and Police Staff College Bangladesh (PSC) formalized a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) aimed at fostering enhanced cooperation in education, research, and professional development. The signing ceremony, held at the Police Staff College premises in Dhaka, marked a significant step towards strengthening collaboration between the two esteemed institutions.*



The Honorable Vice-Chancellor, Professor Atiqul Islam, led the NSU delegation, while Rector Dr. Mallick Faqru Islam BPM, PPM, represented Police Staff College Bangladesh. Expressing his enthusiasm for the partnership, Professor Atiqul Islam emphasized the commitment to nurturing academic excellence and collaboration. He highlighted the shared goal of creating opportunities for knowledge exchange to contribute to societal development.

The MoU delineates the mutual commitment

of NSU and Police Staff College Bangladesh to bolster collaborative efforts across various domains. Key provisions include promoting joint research and publications, facilitating faculty and administrative staff exchanges, enabling graduate student exchanges, offering internship opportunities, and sharing research outcomes and academic publications. Additionally, the agreement encompasses initiatives such as joint training workshops on pertinent topics and endeavors to contribute to a safer society through research and practical applications. Furthermore, the MoU opens avenues for exploring additional academic and educational exchange programs aligned with the objectives of both institutions, thus paving the way for comprehensive collaboration.



## NSU Alumni Talk Show 138

In the one hundred and thirty-eighth episode of the NSU Alumni Talk Show, aired on January 16, 2024, Ms. Faiza Zahin, a distinguished alumna from the NSU batch 2016, was featured as the keynote speaker. Having completed her Bachelor's in Business Administration (BBA), Ms. Zahin embarked on a career journey, leading her to establish Ayykori, a pioneering cashback platform in Bangladesh, where she serves as the Chief Marketing Officer.

Ms. Zahin's entrepreneurial journey is a testament to the power of perseverance and vision. Her path was not a conventional one, but it was one that led her to make a significant impact. After gaining experience in the e-commerce sector, notably through her participation in Daraz's future leadership program, she founded Ayykori. This was not just another business venture but a platform with a vision to empower communities by fostering employment and financial independence, a vision that continues to guide her today.

Despite the inherent challenges of startup ventures, Ms. Zahin emphasizes the importance of acquiring a broad understanding of various business aspects beyond one's expertise. She advocates for cultivating a diverse skill set and a resilient mindset, citing hard work as a fundamental trait for success in entrepreneurship. Ayykori, under Ms. Zahin's leadership, aspires to become the premier consumer tech platform in Bangladesh, with a mission to facilitate employment opportunities and foster financial autonomy among its users. Additionally, the company aims for global expansion, reflecting its ambition to transcend national borders.

NSU played a significant role in shaping Ms. Zahin's career trajectory. While initially aspiring to join Dhaka University's IBA program, she found NSU an excellent alternative. The university's strong alumni network and vibrant campus life were not just perks but crucial factors that contributed significantly to her personal growth and career development. At NSU, she found the support and resources she needed to turn her entrepreneurial dreams into a reality.

Ms. Zahin's advice to aspiring entrepreneurs and students is theoretical, practical, and actionable. She emphasizes the importance of active learning, encouraging individuals to derive practical insights from their academic courses. She also stresses the value of networking, urging them to prioritize building meaningful connections with peers and professionals. These are not just words but strategies she has used to achieve success, making her advice all the more valuable.

To know more about the event, visit the following link:  
<https://www.facebook.com/OEANSU/videos/354902607285028>

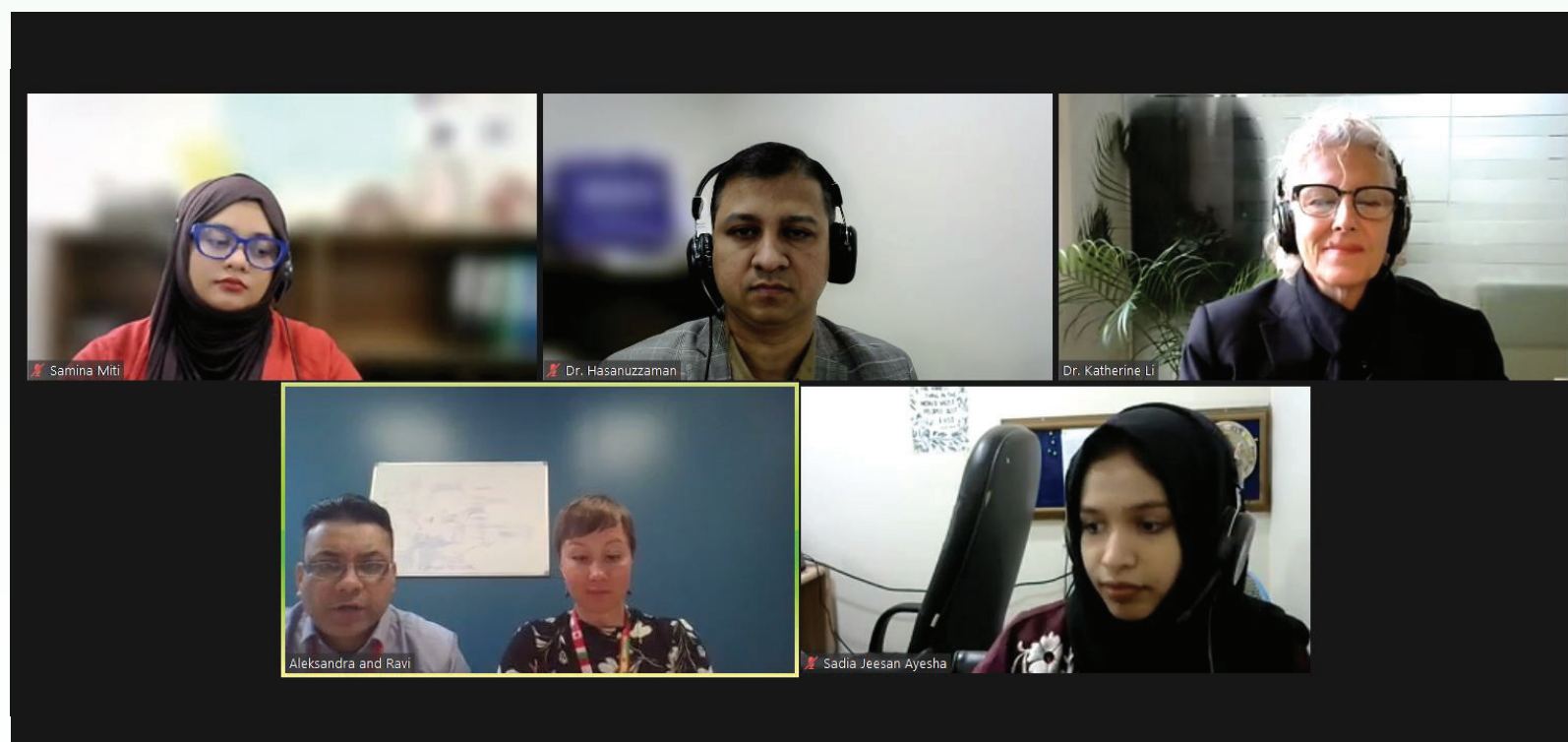


## Collaboration Meeting with Solent University, UK

On January 17, 2024, North South University (NSU) and Solent University, UK held a virtual meeting via Zoom to discuss the possibility of renewing their Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), which lapsed in 2024.

**SOLENT**  
UNIVERSITY

SOUTHAMPTON



The main agenda of the meeting centered on potential areas of collaboration, particularly in research involving faculties and departments. The meeting proved to be highly productive, and subsequent follow-up discussions are required to finalize the specifics of the renewed agreement.

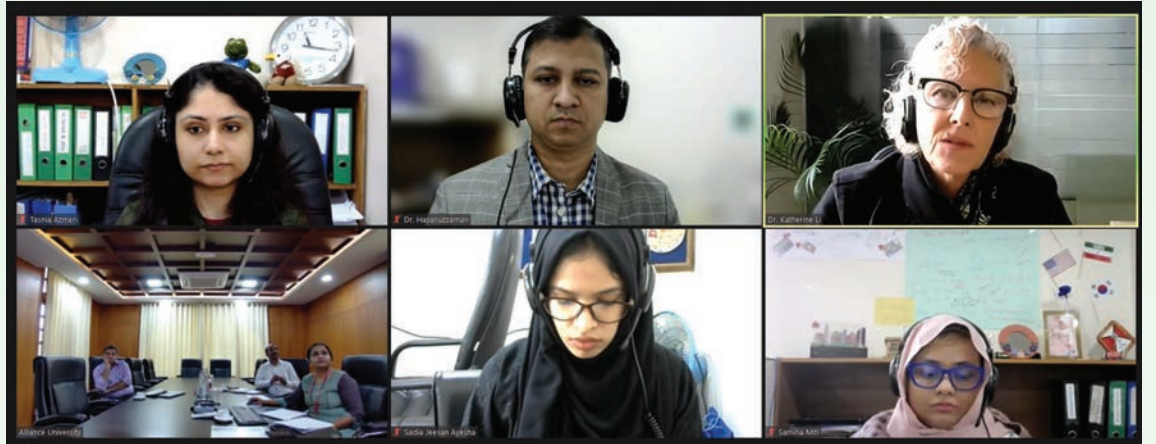
## Collaboration Meeting with Alliance University, India



**ALLIANCE**  
UNIVERSITY

On January 24, 2024, North South University (NSU) and Alliance University, India held their first introductory meeting via Zoom. The primary objective of the meet-

ing was to delve into the respective backgrounds, departments, initiatives, and facilities of both universities, with the aim of establishing collaboration and drafting a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). Alliance University expressed keen interest in potential partnerships with NSU, particularly in areas such as research, faculty and student exchange programs, and joint seminars and projects. While no final decisions were made, the discussions proved to be promising, and further meetings are required to solidify plans



## NSU Visits Caritas Bangladesh

A meeting was held on January 24, 2024, between Caritas Bangladesh (CB) and North South University's (NSU) Office of External Affairs (OEA) at Caritas Central Office. Present from Caritas Bangladesh were Mr. Sebastian Rozario, Executive Director; Mr. Daud Jibon Das, Director-Programs (Designate); Mr. Remi Subash Das, Director of Finance & Administration; and from NSU, Dr. Katherine Li, Director, OEA; Dr. Mainul Islam Chowdhury, Associate Professor, Department of Economics; and Mr. Mehedi Masud Sumon, Officer, OEA.



Dr. Li began by introducing the role of OEA, emphasizing areas of potential collaboration such as research, joint publications, training, and internships. Mr. Rozario then provided an overview of Caritas Bangladesh, its history, and current initiatives. He highlighted the organization's goals, focusing on social welfare, ecological conservation, education, health, disaster management, and development of indigenous peoples.



Mr. Rozario also suggested possible areas of collaboration between CB and NSU, including joint research, publications, research funding, student internships, and training opportunities. He expressed interest in utilizing NSU's faculty and students for ongoing and future projects. Dr. Mainul Islam Chowdhury, representing NSU's Department of Economics, discussed potential collaborations in research, field studies, and internships for students in various degree programs. He emphasized the department's expertise and the opportunity for joint funding and data sharing.

Dr. Li concluded the meeting by highlighting NSU's research capabilities, career services, and expert faculty members. She expressed optimism about the prospects for collaboration and joint initiatives between CB and NSU.

In response, Dr. Chowdhury requested the OEA to draft a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for Caritas Bangladesh, which relevant departments and faculty members would review for further input. He thanked the OEA for facilitating the discussion and looked forward to future collaboration.

## NSU Alumni Talk Show 139

In the one hundred and thirty-ninth episode of the NSU Alumni Talk Show, which aired on January 24, 2024, Ms. Shehrina Kamal, an esteemed alumni from NSU's batch of 2005, shared insights into her remarkable journey from Bangladesh to Germany. Having graduated with a bachelor's degree in Economics from NSU and subsequently completing her MBA from Mannheim Business School, Ms. Kamal currently serves as the Vice President of Platform Innovation at Everstream Analytics in Germany, specializing in B2B SaaS solutions for supply chain technologies.

Reflecting on her transition to Germany, Ms. Kamal recounted her initial steps, including an internship at DHL headquarters, eventually leading to a full-time role within the company's sales team. Subsequently, she ventured into innovation, spearheading internal startups, such as Everstream Analytics, where she now leads product management. Ms. Kamal attributes her diverse skill set to her time at NSU, where she embraced opportunities to delve into various facets of academia and extracurricular activities, shaping her into a versatile professional.

When discussing essential skills for the IT sector, Ms. Kamal emphasized the significance of intellectual curiosity, a trait she believes can be nurtured from a young age. While technical prowess is crucial, she underscored the value of experiential learning gained through participation in clubs and organizations, which can enhance one's adaptability and problem-solving abilities. From her leadership experiences across diverse global teams, Ms. Kamal highlighted the importance of genuine care and sincerity in leadership. She emphasized that fostering a culture of empathy and support enables leaders to cultivate firm commitments and loyalty from their team members.

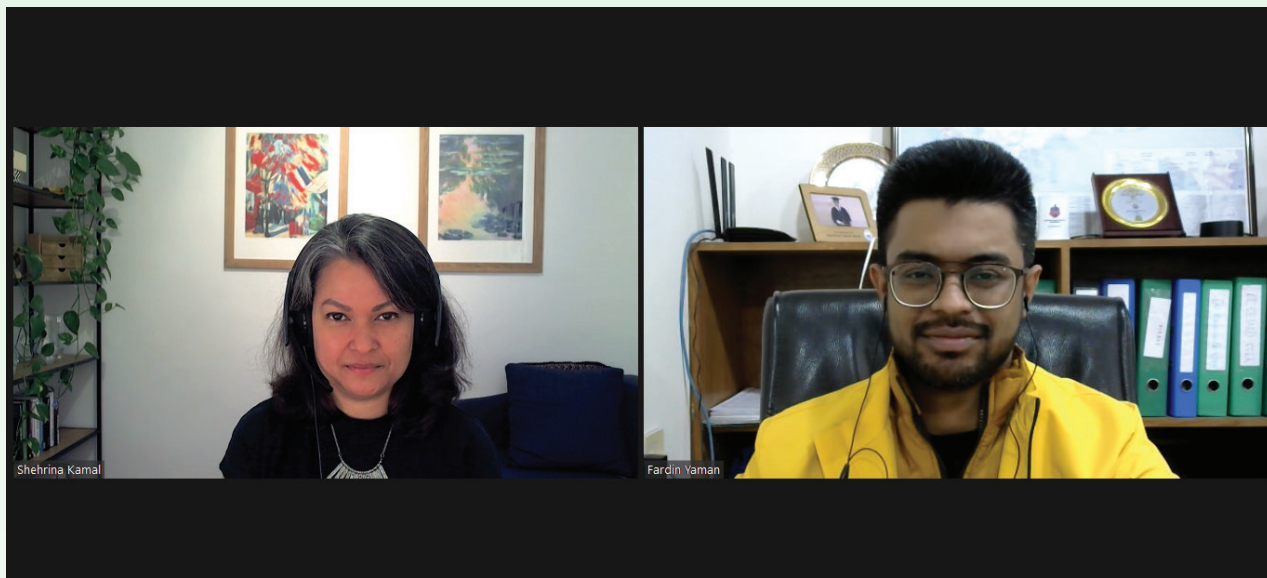
Addressing challenges faced by students relocating abroad, particularly in Europe, Ms. Kamal discussed the competitive job market exacerbated by language barriers. She emphasized the significance of multilingualism in broadening opportunities and advocated for greater exposure to international experiences, lamenting the limited accessibility for students in Bangladesh compared to their European counterparts.

Reflecting on her decision to choose NSU, Ms. Kamal praised the university's esteemed reputation and conducive academic excellence environment. She fondly recalled the camaraderie among students in the Economics department, appreciating the close-knit community and personalized learning experience. Reminiscing about her NSU days, Ms. Kamal nostalgically recalled the vibrant campus atmosphere and cherished moments with friends. As a teaching assistant at the Department of English and Modern Languages, she frequently visited the department, nurturing her passion for English literature through elective courses and forming lasting friendships.

During the conclusion of the show, in offering advice to current students, Ms. Kamal emphasized the importance of proactivity and resilience in navigating one's professional journey. She encouraged students to embrace diverse opportunities, recognizing the value of every experience in shaping their skills and character. With an open mind and a willingness to explore, Ms. Kamal believes individuals can unlock their full potential and thrive in an ever-evolving global landscape.

To know more about the event, visit the following link:

<https://www.facebook.com/OEANSU/videos/231052463419795>



## Collaboration Meeting with UNICEF

On January 25, 2024, a meeting was held between representatives from North South University (NSU) and Mr. Vedprakash Gautam, Corporate Alliances Specialist at UNICEF, Bangladesh. Present at the discussion from NSU were Dr. Katherine Li, Director of the Office of External Affairs (OEA); Prof. Niaz Ahmed, Director of NSU Center for Business Research; Dr. Dipak Kumar Mitra, Chairman of the Department of Public Health; Mr. Quazi



Tafsirul Islam, Senior Lecturer of the Department of Management and Coordinator of NSU Startups Next; Ms. Samina Alam Miti, International Affairs Officer at OEA; Mr. Mehedi Masud Sumon, Officer at OEA; and Ms. Sadia Jeelan Ayesha, International Ambassador at OEA. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss and plan for an upcoming student visit from the Goa Institute of Management (GIM), India.

During the meeting, UNICEF offered to host an orientation session for the GIM delegation. This session would introduce them to the Family Friendly program implemented in select Ready-Made Garment (RMG) factories. The session aims to familiarize the visiting students with UNICEF's initiatives and provide insights into social responsibility and sustainable practices within the RMG sector. The collaboration between NSU, UNICEF, and GIM under-

scores a commitment to enhancing educational experiences and fostering awareness of critical issues in industry settings.

## Collaboration Meeting with Peace for People, Nepal

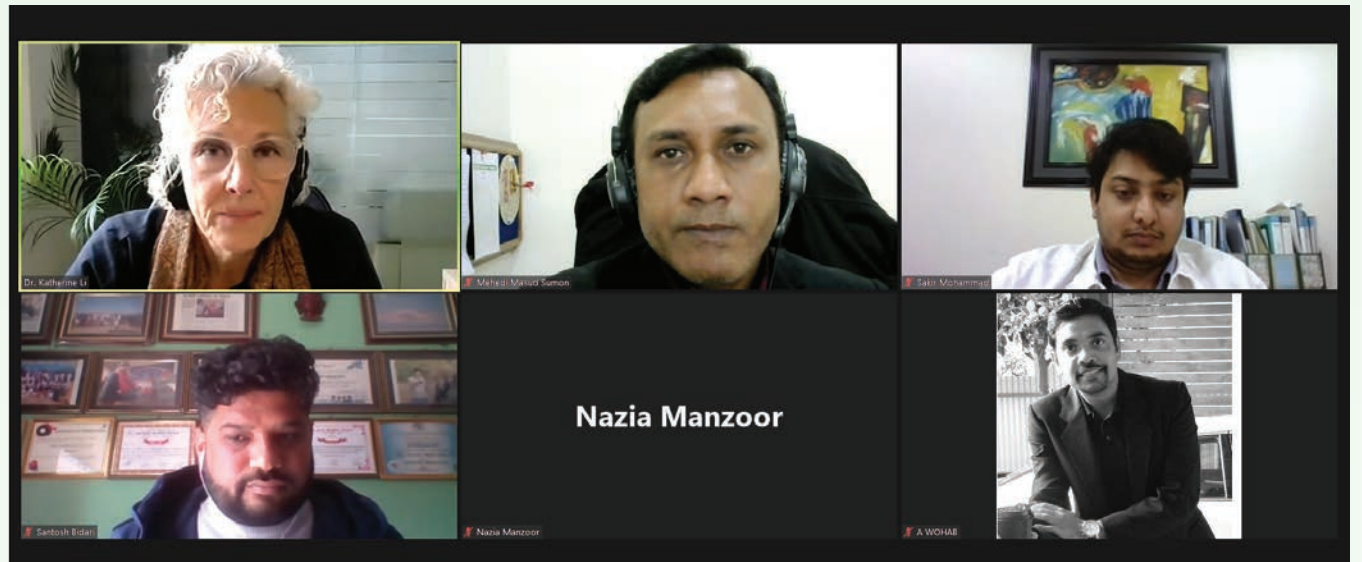


*On January 25, 2024, Mr. Santosh Bidari, the founder of Peace for People (P4P), Nepal, engaged in a virtual meeting with the Office of External Affairs (OEA) and the Center for Peace Studies (CPS) at North South University via Zoom platform. During the hour-long discussion, Mr. Bidari highlighted his organization's commitment to using education as a catalyst for peace. P4P regularly facilitates student exchanges, providing opportunities for individuals to deepen their understanding of peace and education. Over the past five years, they have hosted over 100 students, championing values of Education, Equality, and Environment. Additionally, P4P has developed a curriculum and training materials for various certificate courses.*

Dr. Katherine Li, Director, OEA, expressed her interest in fostering cross-border education initiatives to enable NSU students to engage in projects and internships at Peace for People. Dr. Abdul Wohab, Coordinator of CPS, proposed collaboration on certificate

courses due to the alignment between Peace for People's offerings and CPS's curriculum. Additionally, Dr. Nazia Manzoor, Assistant Professor, Department of English and Modern Languages (DEML) of NSU, emphasized the significance of promoting student exchanges to advance peace initiatives. She suggested further brainstorming sessions to explore collaboration opportunities.

Mr. Mehedi Masud Sumon, Officer, OEA, supported Dr. Wohab's proposal for joint certificate courses and advocated for formalizing the collaboration through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with P4P. Dr. Li endorsed the idea and committed to sending a draft MoU to Mr. Bidari for further discussion. The agreement aims to solidify the partnership and facilitate ongoing collaboration between North South University and Peace for People.



## NSU Student Exchange Program with OP Jindal Global University, India

Dr. Katherine Li, Director of the Office of External Affairs, on January 27, 2024, along with four students from North South University, traveled to Delhi to commence the Spring 2024 semester study abroad program. During their visit, Dr. Li engaged in discussions with faculty members from the Jindal School of International Affairs (JSIA) to explore avenues for expanding the collaboration between JGU and NSU. The meeting aimed to assess opportunities for further cooperation and enhancement of academic exchanges between the two institutions. Dr. Li's visit underscored NSU's commitment to fostering international partnerships and promoting cross-cultural learning experiences for its students.





## Delegation Visit from Macquarie University, Australia

*A delegation from Macquarie University (MQU) visited North South University (NSU) on January 30, 2024, to explore collaboration opportunities outlined in their existing Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). The meeting was attended by esteemed members from both institutions, including deans, directors, and faculty members.*



**MACQUARIE**  
University  
SYDNEY · AUSTRALIA

Dr. Javed Bari, Dean of NSU's School of Engineering and Physical Sciences (SEPS), provided an introduction to NSU, highlighting its diverse programs and recent additions, such as graduate-level programs in Civil Engineering and Mathematics. Discussions ensued on further development of engineering programs and the potential introduction of biomedical programs. Both institutions engaged in discussions regarding specific department-level collaborative activities, aiming for joint research initiatives, student and faculty exchanges, joint seminars, and collaborative design projects. The possibility of joint Ph.D. programs (Cotutelle) was also explored, pending approval from the University Grants Commission (UGC) for NSU's Ph.D. programs.



NSU's Office of External Affairs (OEA) highlighted its extensive NGO/INGO network, offering avenues for research initiatives. Collaboration proposals, such as aiding NSU's Department of Architecture in urban heritage research and study abroad opportunities for NSU students, were also discussed. The meeting concluded with a positive outlook, with both institutions agreeing to initiate collaborative activities in civil engineering and electrical engineering, thereby strengthening their partnership and paving the way for future endeavors.

## Collaboration Meeting with MacEwan University, Canada



*A collaborative meeting was convened via Zoom between MacEwan University in Canada and North South University on January 30, 2024. Present from MacEwan University were Ms. Erin Wight, the Director of MacEwan International and a Regulated Canadian Immigration Consultant (RCIC); Ms. Nina Christine Delling, the Lead for International Mobility and Partnerships, along with Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Anthropology, Economics, and Political Science. Representing NSU were Dr. Katherine Li, the Director, the Office of External Affairs (OEA); Dr. Hasanuzzaman Sohail, the Assistant Director, OEA; Ms. Samina Alam Miti, International Affairs Officer, OEA; Ms. Tasnia Azmeri Madiha, Coordination Officer, OEA; and Mr. Mehedi Masud Sumon, Officer, OEA.*

The primary agenda of the meeting was to discuss study tours that both universities would jointly host under their collaborative partnership. MacEwan University expressed a keen interest in exploring further possibilities for student mobility collaboration in the upcoming months. North South University expressed its openness to the idea of an agreement where NSU could host a small group of students for a study tour, and MacEwan could receive an exchange student for a semester. Of specific interest were the areas of Economics and Business at MacEwan University, which sought NSU's support in organizing a study tour involving ten students and two faculty members, commencing in 2025 and continuing in alternating years. These departments also aimed to understand how NSU could assist in terms of logistical arrangements, planning visits to businesses and NGOs, and facilitating academic and student connections.

In response, NSU presented a draft outlining the details of its short study tour plan for the upcoming months, emphasizing its focus on students interested in the Ready-Made Garment (RMG) sector and sustainable development programs. NSU already has established collaborations with numerous NGOs engaged in work related to sustainable development goals. At the conclusion of the meeting, it was decided that a follow-up meeting would be scheduled once final decisions regarding the study tour plans had been made. Both universities expressed their enthusiasm for bringing this plan to fruition and were content with the progress of the discussions.

## Delegation Visit from the University of Adelaide, Australia

*On January 31, 2024, a delegation from the University of Adelaide (UoA) visited the Office of External Affairs (OEA) at North South University (NSU). The delegation included Dr. Amit Srivastava, Director, Centre for Asian and Middle Eastern Architecture and Associate Dean, Faculty of Science, Engineering and Technology; and Mr. Devjani Das Shelat, Manager, Student Recruitment, International Recruitment. Representing NSU was Ms. Tasnia Azmeri Madiha, Coordination Officer, OEA.*



THE UNIVERSITY  
of ADELAIDE

During the meeting, Mr. Shelat and Ms. Madiha engaged in discussions regarding the Master in Development Studies (MDS) program at NSU, which bears similarities to the program offered at UoA. They also delved into details concerning the admission process and course curriculum. Additionally, Dr. Srivastava expressed keen interest in fostering articulation and collaborative research opportunities, particularly with NSU's School of Engineering & Physical Sciences (SEPS).



The primary aim of this interaction was to fortify the existing Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the two universities. The intention is to broaden the scope of activities outlined in the MoU to further benefit students from both institutions.

## Delegation Visit from Western Sydney University, Australia



*On January 31, 2024, a delegation from Western Sydney University (WSU), Australia, convened at the Office of External Affairs (OEA) at North South University (NSU). This meeting marked a significant milestone as it explored avenues for expanding collaboration within the existing Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the two institutions.*

During the discussion, it was agreed that NSU students pursuing further studies at WSU would be eligible for a 30% scholarship, subject to specific conditions. Additionally, potential opportunities for a faculty member from NSU to pursue a fully funded Ph.D. program at WSU under the MoU were also explored.

These collaborative initiatives present a multitude of opportunities for both NSU students and faculty members. They underscore the mutual benefits derived from the implementation of MoUs between universities and highlight the potential for fostering enhanced academic and research partnerships.



## OEA Booth at NSU Summer Orientation

On February 03, 2024, the Office of External Affairs (OEA) organized a booth at North South University's plaza area, led by Ms. Sadia Jeesan Ayesha, International Ambassador, along with Ms. Zafreen Islam and Mr. Hafiz Uzzaman Tuhin, Student Workers from OEA.

The purpose of the booth was to inform students about various opportunities facilitated by the OEA through partnerships and Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with both local and international universities and organizations. Students were provided guidance on applying to foreign universities for master's and Ph.D. programs and the possibility of credit transfers from NSU. Information about exchange programs, as well as summer and winter camps, was also shared with students who visited the booth.



The event was highly successful, attracting numerous students eager to learn about these opportunities. The OEA remains committed to reaching out to students and assisting them in accessing such activities while ensuring they are informed about the benefits available to them.

## Collaboration Meeting with Queen's University, Canada



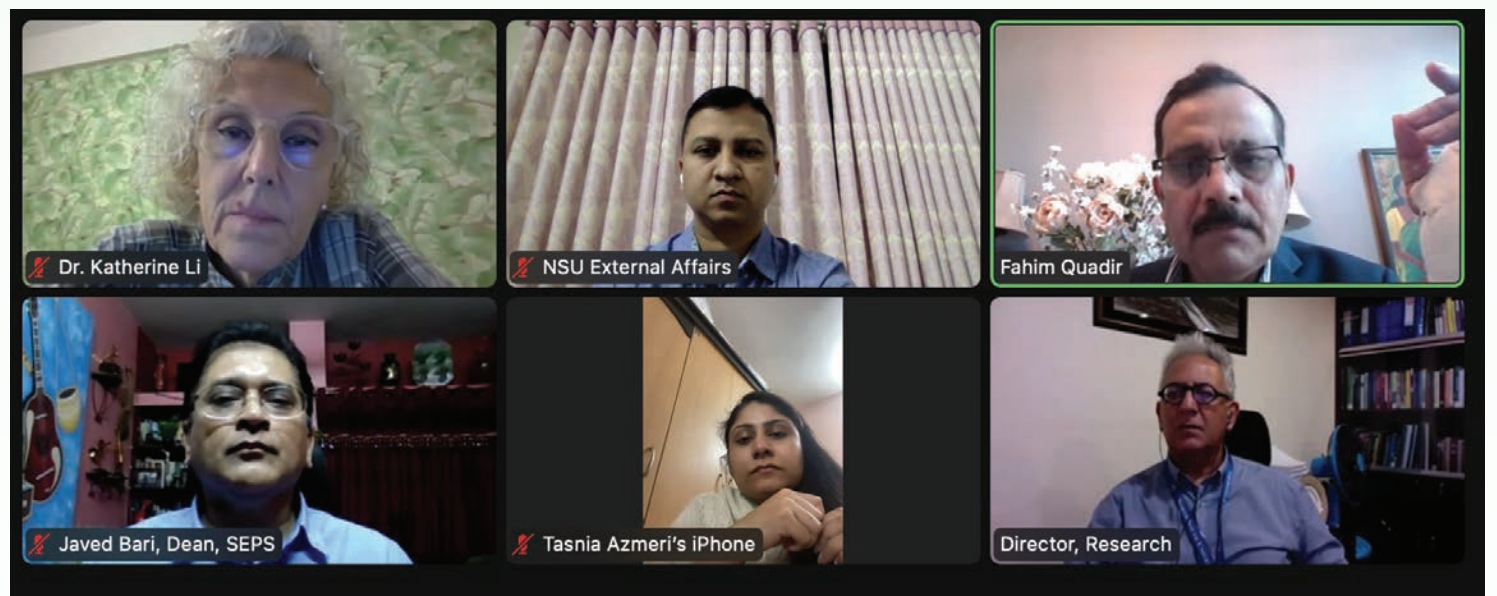
On February 06, 2024, a virtual meeting was set up between North South University (NSU) and Queen's University, Canada. From NSU, Dr. Katherine Li, Director, Office of External Affairs (OEA); Dr. Norman Kenneth Swazo, Director, Office of Research; Dr. Javed Bari, Dean, School of Engineering & Physical Sciences (SEPS); Dr. Hasanuzzaman Sohail, Assistant Director, OEA; and Ms. Tasnia Azmeri Madiha, Coordination Officer, OEA was present in the meeting with Dr. Fahim Quadir, Vice-Provost and Dean, Queen's University, Canada.

The primary agenda of the meeting was to explore mutually beneficial relationships between NSU and Queen's University. Key areas of collaboration identified during the discussion included research collaboration, dual degree programs, and faculty and student exchange initiatives.

Regarding research collaboration, both institutions expressed interest in exploring joint research projects in climate change, clean energy, climate resilience, nuclear waste management, water and human health, and sustainability. Plans for a follow-up meeting were discussed to delve into the specifics of potential research collaborations. Additionally, the possibility of introducing dual degree programs was explored, allowing students to obtain degrees from both institutions. Details regarding the structure and implementation of such programs will be further discussed and finalized.

Furthermore, NSU and Queen's University expressed interest in facilitating faculty and student exchanges. These exchange programs would encompass various academic disciplines and levels, providing enriching experiences for participants. Potential activities include undergraduate and postgraduate student exchanges, faculty exchanges for research collaborations, teaching expertise interchange, short-term visiting lectures, and administrative knowledge transfer sessions.

While these ideas require further development, both institutions are committed to exploring and solidifying these areas of collaboration. The meeting concluded with a shared enthusiasm for building a meaningful partnership between Queen's University and North South University.



## Meeting with Professor Tamara Jackson, University of Adelaide, Australia

On February 6, 2024, Dr. Tamara Jackson, Rupantar Project Leader and Senior Research Fellow at the University of Adelaide's School of Agriculture, Food and Wine, visited North South University (NSU). Attendees from NSU included Dr. Katherine Li, Director, Office of External Affairs



THE UNIVERSITY of ADELAIDE



(OEA); Professor Nazrul Islam, Director, NSU-UWA Agribusiness Centre of Excellence (ACE), NSU; Dr. Hasanuz-zaman Sohail, Assistant Director, OEA; and Ms. Tasnia Azmeri Madiha, Coordination Officer, OEA.

During the meeting, Dr. Jackson provided an overview of the University of Adelaide and the Rupantar project, focusing on assessing the adoption and diffusion of agricultural innovations in Bangladesh. This project aligns closely with NSU's Rupantar project, funded by the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research. The Rupantar project aims to achieve sustainable, efficient, diversified food systems at scale in the EGP by understanding interactions between technologies, scaling interventions, and policy settings. It employs a phased approach to understanding the context for diversification, distilling key lessons, and applying them in local activities in Bangladesh, West Bengal, and Nepal. The project emphasizes monitoring change and strategic communication with stakeholders.

The discussion also revolved around assessing the adoption and diffusion of agricultural innovations in Bangladesh. The meeting strengthened the bond under the existing MoU and fostered excitement for future collaboration in research and project sectors,

particularly with the NSU-UWA Agribusiness Centre of Excellence (ACE), benefitting both institutions.

## Delegation Visit from Charles Darwin University, Australia



On February 7, 2024, Ms. Renu Yadav, Regional Market Manager for South Asia at Charles Darwin University (CDU) in Australia, visited North South University (NSU). During her visit, a memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed between CDU and NSU, marking the beginning of collaborative efforts between the two institutions. Ms. Yadav also conducted a seminar hosted by NSU's Office of External Affairs (OEA), which attracted many enthusiastic NSU students interested in studying at CDU.

In her seminar, Ms. Yadav provided an overview of CDU, highlighting its picturesque campus and vibrant multicultural environment, with students from diverse backgrounds worldwide. CDU, a public university in Darwin, Australia, boasts a main campus and eight satellite campuses across metropolitan and regional areas. It was formed by merging three institutions: the Northern Territory University, the Menzies School of Health Research, and the Centralian College.



CDU offers a comprehensive range of undergraduate and postgraduate programs across various fields, including business, education, engineering, health, and information technology. Its emphasis on Indigenous education and sustainability initiatives is noteworthy.

To support students financially, CDU offers a variety of scholarships, including merit-based scholarships, program-specific scholarships, and equity scholarships for disadvantaged students. International students can access scholarships specifically tailored to them through the CDU website. Prospective students can conveniently apply online, with admission criteria typically comprising academic qualifications and English language proficiency.

The seminar provided students with valuable insights into the opportunities available at CDU, complemented by firsthand experiences shared by NSU alumni who recently graduated from CDU. The session concluded with an engaging Q&A segment and a token of appreciation presented to Ms. Yadav for her dedication and informative presentation.

To know more about the event, visit the following link:

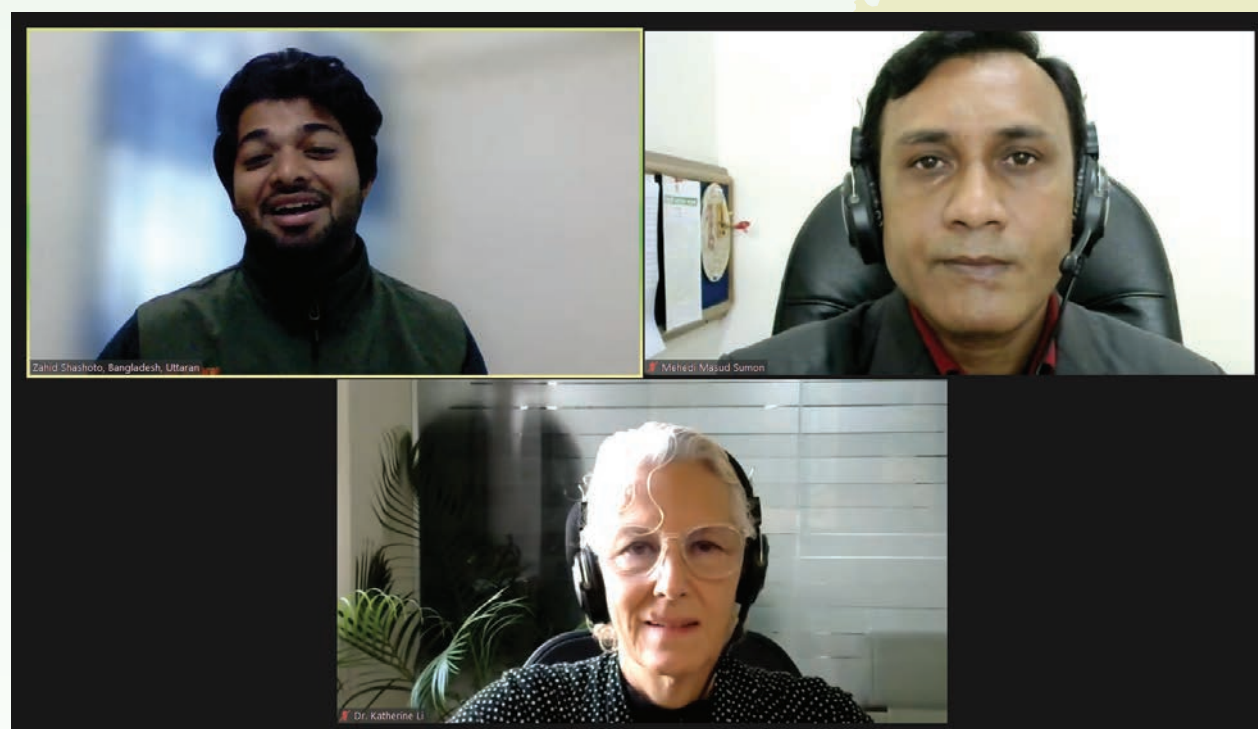
<https://www.facebook.com/OEANSU/videos/700945755542121>

## NGO Talk Show (Episode 35)

The thirty-fifth episode of the "NGO Talk Show" aired on February 07, 2024, featuring UTTARAN, with Mr. Zahid Amin Shashoto, Head of Program for Climate Change and Water Governance at UTTARAN, as the keynote speaker. Mr. Shashoto, an NSU alumni and former lecturer at NSU, shared insights into the organization's mission and initiatives.



**Uttaran**



UTTARAN, founded in 1985 in Jatpur village, Bangladesh, operates with a vision of fostering a society free from inequality and empowering individuals. Initially focused on establishing educational opportunities, UTTARAN expanded its scope to address broader issues of poverty alleviation and social change. Through a rights-based approach, the organization aims to empower communities, diversify livelihoods, and advocate for social justice across Bangladesh.

The organization's inception stemmed from the aspiration of its founder, Shahidul Islam, to create educational opportunities for both girls and boys in the region. With strong community support, Uttaran Shanghai, a youth club, was established, leading to the recognition of larger social issues beyond education. Collaboration with NGOs like BRAC and WPF has been instrumental in addressing challenges related to safe water and nutrition, with a focus on

creating sustainable models and influencing government policies.

UTTARAN operates with a strategic plan spanning five years, aligning its efforts with national development structures and prioritizing local knowledge. While not directly targeting Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the organization integrates SDG-related objectives into its operational framework to better address community needs and achieve tangible outcomes. With a presence in 28 upazilas, UTTARAN aims to foster a society characterized by gender, class, and caste equality through six core programs.

Mr. Shashoto emphasized the importance of research tailored to community needs, advocating for action-oriented and need-based research approaches. Besides, he thanked the NSU authority for being an MoU between NSU and UTTARAN. At the same time, he invited NSU students to engage in internships, field trips, and learning workshops to gain practical insights into rural development challenges. Additionally, opportunities for research collaboration with NSU faculty members were highlighted as avenues for mutual learning and impact.

In conclusion, UTTARAN's commitment to community empowerment and social change underscores its mission-driven approach towards addressing multifaceted challenges. The organization's collaboration with NSU offers promising avenues for students to contribute to rural development efforts while gaining valuable experience and insights into grassroots initiatives.

To know more about the event, visit the following link:

<https://www.facebook.com/OEANSU/videos/1466439904305649>

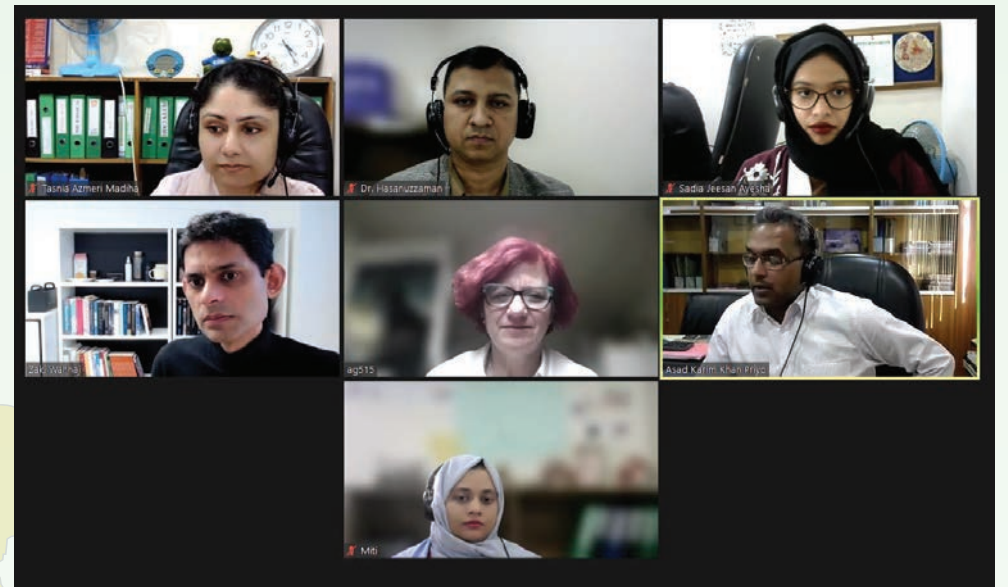
## Student Exchange Planning Meeting with the University of Kent, UK

# University of Kent

*O*n February 7, 2024, a virtual meeting was convened between North South University's Office of External Affairs (OEA) and the University of Kent, UK. Present were esteemed representatives from both institutions, including University of Kent, Dr Adelina Gschwandtner, Director of Graduate Studies and Senior Lecturer in Economics, University of Kent; Dr Helal Ahammad, Dean, School of Business and Economics (SBE); Dr. Katherine Li, Director, OEA; Dr. Asad Karim Priyo, Chairman, Department of Economics; Dr. Hasanuzzaman Sohail, Assistant Director, OEA; Ms. Samina Alam Miti, International Affairs Officer, OEA; Mr. Mehedi Masud Sumon, Officer, OEA; Ms. Tasnia Azmeri Madiha, Coordination Officer, OEA; and Ms. Sadia Jeesan

*Ayesha, International Ambassador, OEA.*

The University of Kent expressed its intention to send students to NSU for a 28-day short-term exchange program focused on research, with allocated funding for this purpose. Dr. Li and Dr. Sohail addressed concerns regarding student accommodation, safety, and other essential facilities at NSU. Additionally, Ms. Samina Alam Miti provided insights into NSU's ongoing short-term exchange program with the Goa Institute of Management (GIM), India, highlighting features such as excursion trips and field visits to NGOs and RMG factories. NSU proposed extending similar opportunities to students from the University of Kent, with Ms. Miti offering to develop a detailed itinerary for their review.



The meeting yielded fruitful discussions, paving the way for mutually beneficial collaboration under the existing MoU between the two universities. This partnership promises to enhance the academic experience and opportunities for students from both institutions.

## NSU Alumni Talk Show 140



*I*n the one hundred and fortieth episode of the NSU Alumni Talk Show, aired on February 08, 2024, Mr. Mahendra Giri, an international alumnus from Nepal, was the guest speaker. Having completed his Master's in Public Health from North South University in 2017, Mr. Giri currently serves as the Public Health Inspector in Lalitpur Metropolitan City, Nepal. His journey into public health began after obtaining a bachelor's degree in Healthcare Management from Pokhara University in Nepal, showcasing his dedication to the healthcare sector.

In Lalitpur Metropolitan City, Mr. Giri collaborates with local government entities to extend primary healthcare services to impoverished communities. He actively engages in research endeavors with local authorities and other stakeholders, aiming to address pertinent health challenges. His passion for public health stems from its direct impact on people's lives, promoting better healthcare and overall well-being, making it a field he is deeply committed to.

Navigating the challenges inherent in ensuring public health safety proves crucial in Nepal's evolving federal system, according to Mr. Giri. Lalitpur Metropolitan City, situated in the capital Kathmandu, faces population influxes from rural areas, necessitating health infrastructure, human resources, and technology preparations. The rise in noncommunicable diseases further complicates the health landscape, with ailments like hypertension, diabetes, and cancer posing significant challenges.

Reflecting on the essential skills for public health graduates, Mr. Giri emphasizes dedication, studiousness, and curiosity. Graduates must comprehend the broader policy implications to effectively address healthcare issues locally and globally, promoting the well-being of the communities they serve. Transitioning to his teaching experiences, Mr. Giri highlights the importance of fostering leadership qualities and personal growth. His motivation lies in serving people and imparting knowledge to the younger generation, driven by a desire to contribute positively to society.

During the show's conclusion, Mr. Giri reflects on his time at NSU, sharing the factors that led him to choose Bangladesh and NSU for his studies. Nepal's limited options for pursuing a master's degree in Public Health prompted his decision to join NSU, reinforced by recommendations from seniors and acquaintances.

His NSU experience was enriched by participation in international seminars, extracurricular activities, and interactions with faculty members renowned in their field. The supportive environment at NSU, including assistance from the Office of External Affairs, facilitated his academic journey and cultural experiences, leaving a lasting impression. Despite initial challenges, Mr. Giri found seamless integration into NSU life, aided by effective communication and support from department staff and seniors.

To know more about the event, visit the following link:

<https://www.facebook.com/OEANSU/videos/1565308984235677>

## What's Your Story? (Episode 20)

*On February 8, 2024, North South University had the privilege of hosting a "What's Your Story" session with the esteemed Dr. Ahmed Mushfiq Mobarak, a distinguished Professor of Management and Economics at the prestigious Yale School of Management. Dr. Mobarak's illustrious career is marked by his groundbreaking work in development economics, particularly his pioneering field experiments in Bangladesh, Nepal, and Sierra Leone.*

Dr. Mobarak's journey from his hometown of Dhaka to the hallowed halls of Yale was a testament to his resilience and passion for development economics. Born and raised in Dhaka and educated in India and the USA, his formative years were shaped by his mother, a civil servant, and doctor, who instilled in him the values of hard work and family. His interest in development economics was sparked by his personal experiences and observations, a passion he pursued academically, even after initially studying environmental economics.

The desire for a better educational environment and proficiency in English influenced the decision to study abroad. A pivotal moment occurred during a family trip to the USA when he was eight years old, which left a lasting impression on him and sparked a fondness for American culture. This, coupled with the intellectual vibrancy of the USA in the field of development economics, motivated him to pursue higher education there.

Joining Yale University, renowned for its excellence in development economics, was a natural choice for Dr. Mobarak. The university's diverse community and robust research environment provided an ideal setting for his academic pursuits. His research interests were inspired by his childhood experiences in Bangladesh, emphasizing the importance of first hand exposure to diverse challenges.

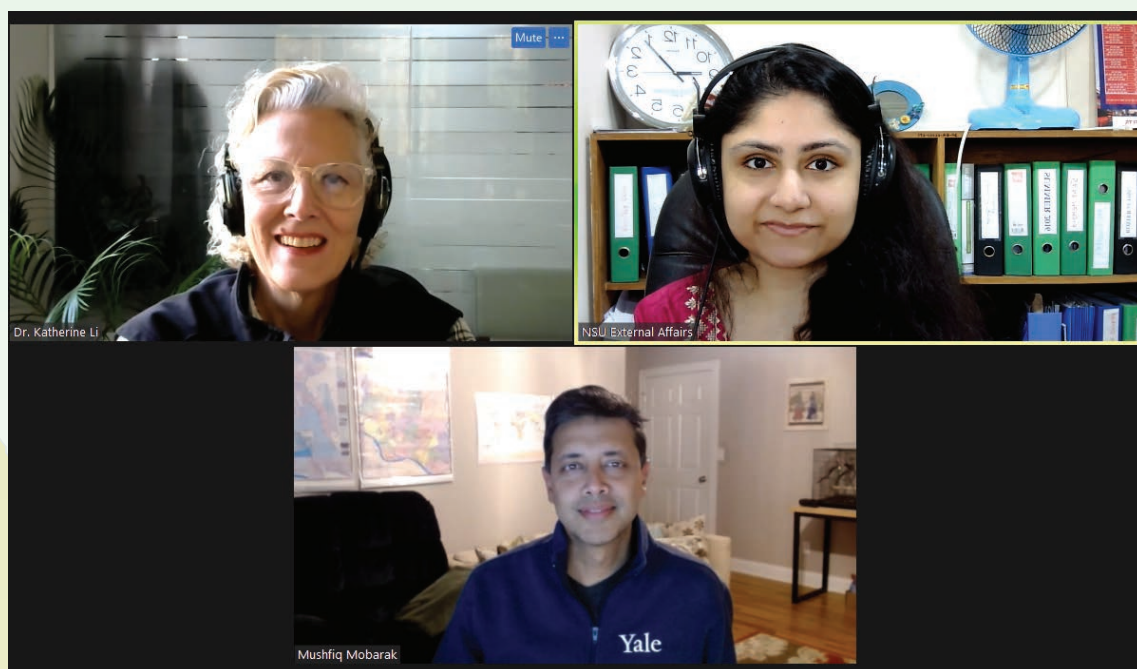
Dr. Mobarak values strong mathematical skills and creative thinking when assessing potential research candidates. He emphasizes the significance of resilience and perseverance, essential traits for navigating the challenges of a Ph.D. program. Balancing career aspirations with family commitments proved his greatest challenge, which he addressed by integrating work and family activities.

Dr. Mobarak's advice for the students and faculty at North South University is invaluable. He encourages them to prioritize and incentivize research, seeing it as a complement to teaching rather than a substitute. He advocates for a redefinition of success, one that is based on impact, and encourages individuals to explore different metrics for measuring their contributions to the world. His words are a call to action, inspiring us all to make a difference through our work.

In conclusion, Dr. Mobarak's journey from Dhaka to Yale epitomizes the pursuit of academic excellence and social impact. His experiences underscore the value of resilience, creativity, and the pursuit of knowledge in overcoming challenges and making meaningful contributions to society.

To know more about the event, visit the following link:

<https://www.facebook.com/OEANSU/videos/937386940655057>



## NSU Delegation Visits Nepal



*A delegation from North South University (NSU) visited Kathmandu, Nepal from February 08, 2024, led by the Honorable Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Atiqul Islam, accompanied by Prof. Sk. Tawfique M. Haque, Dean of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, and Dr. Samiksha Koirala, Assistant Professor of Political Science and Sociology. The purpose of the visit was to enhance NSU's network. Throughout their stay, the delegation engaged in a series of meetings with government officials, educational consultancies, and NSU alumni. The visit also received coverage in prominent national newspapers such as Annapurna Express and The Rising Nepal.*

During a meeting with the Secretary of the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology, Ms. Pramila Devi Bajracharya, Prof. Islam announced NSU's commitment to offer five scholarships for Nepali students. The Secretary expressed interest in collaborating with NSU in various areas, including education, science, and innovation. This indicates a potential avenue for bilateral cooperation between NSU and Nepali educational institutions.

At the alumni meeting, former NSU students expressed interest in establishing an alumni association in Nepal. Additionally, representatives from Signup Educational Consultancy, Worldwide International Education Consultancy, and Broadlink Consultancy showed eagerness to collaborate with NSU. They highlighted Bangladesh as a preferred destination for Nepali students due to its reputation for providing quality education, affordability, and geographical proximity.

The expressed interest from both Nepali alumni and educational consultancies underscores the growing recognition of NSU's academic excellence and its



appeal to international students. This presents an opportunity for NSU to strengthen its presence in Nepal and foster mutually beneficial partnerships with local stakeholders in the education sector.

The visit to Kathmandu also reflects NSU's commitment to fostering international collaborations and expanding its global footprint. By engaging with government officials, alumni, and educational consultancies, NSU aims to create avenues for academic exchange, research collaboration, and student mobility, ultimately enriching the educational experience for both Nepali and Bangladeshi students.

## NSU Alumni Talk Show 141

*In the one hundred and forty-first episode of the NSU Alumni Talk Show, aired on February 11, 2024, Mr. Shafie Ali Adan from Somalia, an international alumnus, was the featured guest. He graduated from NSU in 2014 with a Bachelor's in Civil and Environmental Engineering. Currently, Mr. Adan serves as the Advisor at the Ministry of Energy and Water Resources in Galmudug State, Somalia. Additionally, he is the Founder and Manager of KAAH CONSTRUCTION COMPANY, a venture aimed at contributing to the community, generating employment, and fostering independence.*

Inspired by a desire to benefit his community, Mr. Adan established KAAH CONSTRUCTION COMPANY. He sought to provide employment opportunities and contribute to local development initiatives. Moreover, he valued entrepreneurship's autonomy, enabling him to make independent decisions and operate without constraints. To date, Mr. Adan has successfully completed 16-17 projects, with an additional six projects currently underway, each varying in scale and complexity.

Discussing prospects for infrastructure development in Somalia, Mr. Adan highlighted the country's positive trajectory. Despite challenges associated with financial constraints, significant progress is evident, with construction projects proliferating and engineers actively engaged. The determination of the Somali people to overcome obstacles has been pivotal in driving infrastructure development initiatives forward.

As an advisor at the Ministry of Energy and Water Resources, Mr. Adan emphasized the ministry's proactive stance and focus on addressing fundamental needs for water and electricity. He underscored the importance of ongoing projects to provide affordable and sustainable access to these essential services in the coming years.

Reflecting on his decision to study at NSU and reside in Bangladesh, Mr. Adan shared his initial apprehensions and subsequent positive experiences. He admired the diverse educational environment and appreciated the supportive community at NSU. Despite initial language barriers, he found comfort in the welcoming atmosphere and formed lasting friendships, making Bangladesh feel like a second home. The Office of External Affairs (OEA) played a crucial role in easing his transition, offering assistance with visa matters and supporting international students.

Overall, Mr. Adan's journey exemplifies resilience and the pursuit of academic and professional excellence amidst diverse cultural landscapes. To know more about the event, visit the following link:  
<https://www.facebook.com/OEANSU/videos/1044397389962649>





## NSU Participates in the International Day of the Arabian Leopard

The United Nations General Assembly has designated February 10 as the International Day of the Arabian Leopard to spotlight the plight of this Critically Endangered species. The Arabian leopard's rapid decline poses a significant challenge to biodiversity conservation in its native habitat, highlighting the urgent need to address the global nature crisis.



The UN aims to elevate the Arabian leopard as a symbol of conservation and sustainability in its natural environment, emphasizing the pivotal role of biodiversity in preserving the health and resilience of ecosystems worldwide.

The resolution acknowledges the Arabian leopard's crucial role in the Arabian ecosystem and encourages collaborative regional efforts to safeguard this species and others facing similar threats. It calls for increased conservation measures by Arabian range states, relevant stakeholders, including NGOs and local communities, and UN agencies.

Observing the International Day of the Arabian Leopard will raise awareness about the species and mobilize public support for conservation endeavors aimed at restoring leopard populations and protecting other endangered species, thereby benefiting ecosystems.

In commemoration of this occasion, students from various universities, including NSU, participated in a catwalk and up-to-7 km walk organized by the Royal Embassy of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) in the

Bashundhara Residential Area of the capital. The event aimed to raise awareness about the conservation of endangered wild cats. Following the activities, prizes were awarded to the participants by the chief guest and other dignitaries.

## Ambassador Talk Series: Korea



REPUBLIC OF KOREA

H.E. Mr. Park Young-Sik, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Bangladesh, made a significant visit to express Korea's commitment to global contributions during an Ambassadorial talk at North South University (NSU) on February 12, 2024. The event, titled 'Modern Korea: History, Democracy, Economy, Peace, and Security,' was organized by the Center for Peace Studies (CPS) of the South Asian Institute of Policy and Governance (SAIPG) and NSU's Office of External Affairs (OEA). The session was chaired by the Honorable Vice Chancellor of NSU, Professor Atiqul Islam, while Dr. Katherine Li, Director, OEA, moderated it.



Delving into Korea's economic development and global competitiveness, Ambassador Park highlighted investments in specific areas such as Research and Development (R&D), the smartphone industry, the semiconductor industry, and creative technology. He also addressed efforts to enhance governance, transparency, accountability, and combat corruption.

Ambassador Park underscored Korea's aim to expand cooperation in the Indo-Pacific and beyond, advocating for a multi-dimensional network of partnerships. He outlined strategic partnerships tailored to various sub-regions, including the North Pacific, Southeast Asia, South Asia, Oceania, the African Indian Ocean, and Europe, each with a unique focus and potential.

In closing, Ambassador Park expressed hope for further bilateral development between Korea and Bangladesh, urging mutual prosperity. Professor Atiqul Islam noted Korea's potential as an economic model for Bangladesh, given its remarkable growth amidst geopolitical tensions in the Korean Peninsula.

The event featured engaging discussions with participants from various national and international organizations, universities, development agencies, embassies, and media outlets. NSU and SIPG faculty members also contributed insightful questions and commentary during the session.

To know more about the event, visit the following link:

<https://www.facebook.com/OEANSU/videos/278520451924617>

## Collaboration Meeting with Concern Worldwide

*On February 13, 2024, a meeting convened between North South University (NSU) and Concern Worldwide NGO at the head office of Concern Worldwide. NSU was represented by Dr. Katherine Li, Director, Office of External Affairs (OEA); Dr. Bulbul Ashraf Siddiqi, Associate Professor, Dept. of Political Science & Sociology, Director, Confucius Institute at NSU; Dr. Mohammad Jalal Uddin Sikder, Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science & Sociology; and Mr. Mehedi Masud Sumon, Officer, OEA. Concern Worldwide attendees included Mr. Manish Kumar Agrawal, Country Director; Mr. Jyotiraj Patra, Programme Director; and Ms. Jane Michel, Deputy Director, Programme, Quality and Business Development.*



The session commenced with Dr. Li providing an overview of NSU and OEA's collaborative initiatives, aiming to benefit students and faculty through avenues like short-term exchange programs, joint research, publications, and internships. Mr. Patra, Programme Director, delivered a presentation on Concern Worldwide Bangladesh's Country Strategic Plan 2022 - 2026, outlining objectives focusing on sustained change in health, nutrition, and livelihoods sectors, climate change, humanitarian action, partnership, and equality, diversity, and inclusion, all in alignment with government priorities and Sustainable Development Goals.



Acknowledging NSU faculty's academic excellence and research contributions, both parties recognized the potential for fruitful collaboration. The meeting concluded with a mutual agreement to formalize the partnership through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), signaling a commitment to joint endeavors in the future.

## Meeting with UBC, Canada on Global Summer Program 2024



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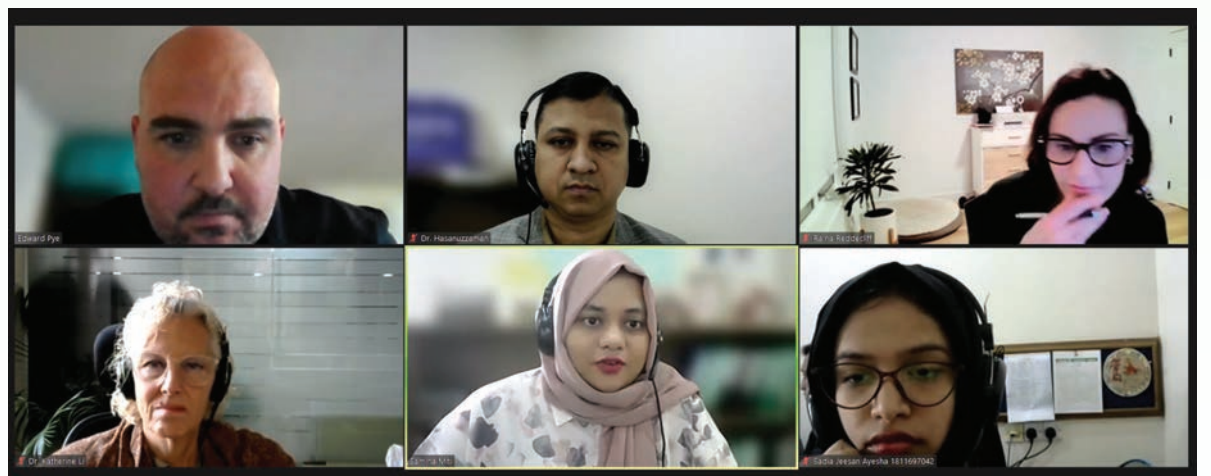
*Sadia Jeesan Ayesha, International Ambassador, OEA.*

*On February 13, 2024, the Office of External Affairs (OEA) at North South University (NSU) held a meeting with representatives from UBC Okanagan Campus to discuss the upcoming Canada Global Summer Program scheduled for July 2024. Attending from UBC were Mr. Edward Pye, Program Coordinator, Educational Programming, and Ms. Raina Reddecliff, Associate Director, Campus Internationalization and Executive Communication. NSU was represented by Dr. Katherine Li, Director, OEA; Dr. Hasanuzzaman Sohail, Assistant Director, OEA; Ms. Samina Alam Miti, International Affairs Officer, OEA; and Ms.*

The meeting focused on the Canada Global Summer Program's application requirements, process, and associated costs. UBC will offer courses in engineering, health, business, communications, psychology, and sociology exclusively for undergraduate students. Applicants must demonstrate proficiency in English through a standardized test to qualify for the program.

Additionally, discussions encompassed program activities, accommodation arrangements, credit limits, and other pertinent details.

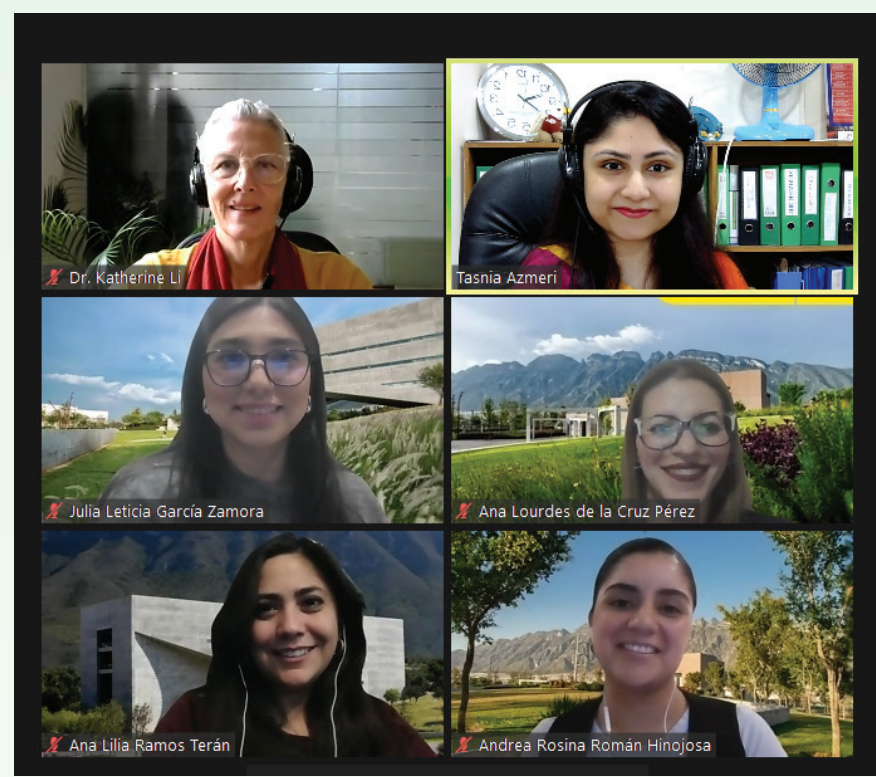
The meeting proved highly productive, and NSU eagerly anticipates sending students to the UBC Okanagan Campus for this enriching opportunity.





## Information Session with the Universidad de Monterrey, México

On February 14, 2024, the Office of External Affairs (OEA) at North South University (NSU) organized an informative session on Facebook Live featuring Universidad de Monterrey (UDEM). Established in 1969, UDEM is a prestigious private university in San Pedro Garza García, Mexico. Guided by Catholic principles, UDEM promotes inclusivity and offers high-quality education. It ranks among the top 1200 universities worldwide in the QS World University Rankings 2024.



UDEM stands out with its diverse array of undergraduate and graduate programs, spanning fields such as Business, Engineering, Humanities, and Social Sciences. What sets UDEM apart is its curriculum, which prioritizes a liberal arts education. This unique approach integrates co-curricular activities, internships, community service, and volunteer opportunities, creating a holistic learning environment that prepares students for the real world.

UDEM facilitates international programs with a global outlook, including exchange semesters and study-abroad opportunities. The university holds the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) accreditation in the U.S., underscoring its global recognition.

Applying to UDEM is a straightforward process. Prospective students must typically submit their transcripts, standardized test scores (if applicable), and application essays. Additional requirements may apply to international students. It's always a good idea to refer to the UDEM website for the most up-to-date admission procedures and requirements.

UDEM's campus is renowned for its scenic beauty and modern amenities, including libraries, computer labs, sports centers, and green spaces. The university fosters a vibrant campus culture with numerous clubs, organizations, and cultural events, enhancing students' overall experience beyond academics.

To support deserving students, UDEM offers various scholarships and financial aid programs. International students are encouraged to explore scholarship opportunities tailored to their needs and circumstances.

For further details, prospective applicants are advised to visit the UDEM website for comprehensive information on available scholarships and financial assistance.

To know more about the event, visit the following link:  
<https://www.facebook.com/OEANSU/videos/804501631535562>

## Collaboration Meeting with Awaj Foundation



A virtual meeting was convened on February 14, 2024, between the Office of External Affairs (OEA) at NSU and the Awaj Foundation via Zoom. From NSU, Dr. Mohammad Jalal Uddin Sikder, Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science and Sociology; Dr. Katherine Li, Director, OEA; and Mr. Mehedi Masud Sumon, Officer, OEA, participated. Representing Awaj Foundation were Ms. Nazma Akter, Founder and Executive Director; Ms. Ismet Jarin, Project Coordinator; Mr. Md. Imran Rahman, Project Coordinator; and Ms. Sampreety Ali, Communication Officer.

Ms. Akter initiated the meeting with an overview of the Awaj Foundation, a Bangladeshi non-profit organization advocating for improved working conditions in the garment industry. Their focus is on promoting fair treatment and gender equality, empowering primarily women workers through rights education, legal assistance, and community support.

Additionally, they conduct advocacy campaigns at national and international levels, such as successfully advocating for a raise in the minimum wage for garment workers.

Ms. Jarin emphasized the need to collaborate with students on gender-based violence issues, highlighting its prevalence not only in workplaces but also in the entire society. Areas of potential collaboration include researching reasons behind the high turnover rate of female garment workers, developing maternity facilities, addressing workers' rights violations, and combating gender-based violence, etc.

Ms. Akter further elaborated on the organization's challenges and achievements, suggesting research opportunities to explore successful industry practices, automation, and climate change impacts.



Dr. Li underscored the importance of educating local and international students about the garment industry and its alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). She emphasized that such knowledge dissemination could improve global awareness of worker rights, inform better management practices among factory owners, and educate consumers about ethical considerations in their purchasing decisions.

The meeting concluded with the decision to draft a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for further collaboration between NSU and the Awaj Foundation. Once finalized, the MoU will pave the way for enhanced partnerships and initiatives to address challenges within the garment industry and advance gender equality.

## Study in Korea Seminar 2024



*On February 14, 2024, the Korean Embassy organized a seminar promoting higher education opportunities in Korea. The seminar attracted the participation of 9 students from North South University (NSU), eager to explore educational prospects in Korea.*

During the seminar, Bangladeshi alumni shared their firsthand experiences of studying in Korea, offering valuable insights into Korean academic life and culture. Their testimonials provided prospective students with a glimpse into the benefits and challenges of pursuing higher education in Korea.

In their informative session, the Korean Embassy representatives emphasized the value of the scholarship opportunities available for Bangladeshi students. They also stressed the importance of learning the Korean language, which is crucial to adapting to academic and social life in Korea. The attendees were further motivated to incorporate unique elements into their applications, increasing their chances of success.

With its comprehensive approach, the seminar provided NSU students with all the necessary information about studying in Korea.

The seminar left no stone unturned, from scholarship options to language requirements and even strategies for crafting compelling applications. This comprehensive platform reassured the attendees and instilled confidence in their decision to study in Korea.

## NGO Talk Show (Episode 36)



*In the thirty-sixth episode of the NGO Talk Show, aired on February 18, 2024, Mr. Santosh Bidari, the Founder & CEO of Peace for People (P4P) based in Kathmandu, Nepal, was featured as the keynote speaker. Mr. Bidari began by sharing the unique approach of P4P, established in 2009 with a steadfast commitment to addressing social and gender challenges prevalent in Nepal. P4P's approach, which recognizes education as pivotal in breaking these cycles, initially focused on rural communities. They aimed to empower individuals and unleash their potential through equitable access to education. The organization's ethos, centered around promoting equal education, social justice, and collaboration, drives its mission of fostering sustainable communities through education, empowerment, and equality.*

Reflecting on the extensive contribution of civil society to Nepal's development, Mr. Bidari emphasized the significant impact made by NGOs and INGOs across various sectors, such as education, healthcare, social welfare, and community development. While pinpointing the exact percentage of Nepal supported by civil society proves challenging, these organizations' palpable and widespread influence underscores their indispensable role in advancing the nation towards sustainable development goals.

In alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), P4P focuses on the 4Es: education, empowerment, equality, and environment. Goal 4 underscores the imperative of providing quality education to all children, while Goal 5 addresses gender inequality, aiming to diminish existing disparities. Additionally, Goal 13 emphasizes climate action, an area where P4P prioritizes its efforts, alongside Goal 16, which advocates for peacebuilding initiatives.

When it comes to research methodologies, Mr. Bidari strongly advocates for action research, citing its unique potential to enable firsthand engagement with communities and stakeholders. By immersing oneself in the field and fostering direct communication, action research offers a practical and effective way to gain a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities at hand, thereby informing more impactful interventions.



Expressing interest in forging unique collaborations, Mr. Bidari sought partnership opportunities with institutions like NSU. He presented proposals for joint research initiatives, publication collaborations, research fund/grant applications, and student internships. These proposals underscore P4P's commitment to fostering mutually beneficial alliances to advance research, education, and community development initiatives, highlighting the potential benefits such collaborations can bring to both parties.

To know more about the event, visit the following link:

<https://www.facebook.com/OEANSU/videos/240123789162128>

## Annual IELTS Partners' Meet

*On February 19, 2024, the British Council hosted its Annual IELTS Partners' Meet at the Radisson Blu Hotel, an event that served as a platform for celebrating partnerships and collaboration. Among the esteemed invitees was North South University (NSU), which has enjoyed a fruitful partnership with the British Council since 2019. Dr. Katherine Li, Director of the Office of External Affairs (OEA), and Ms. Tasnia Azmeri Madiha, Coordination Officer of OEA, represented NSU at this significant gathering.*



The event brought together key figures from both NSU and the British Council, highlighting the importance of their ongoing collaboration. From the British Council, notable attendees included Ms. Sarwat Reza, Director of Business Development; Mr. Zunayed Ahmed, Director of Operations, Examinations; Mr. Maxim Raimann, Country Exams Director; and Ms. T. Tabassum Chowdhury, Manager of Business Pursuit in the Business Development, Examinations division. A highlight of the evening was the award-giving ceremony, where partners were recognized and honored for their contributions and achievements. This served as a moment of appreciation for the collaborative efforts between NSU and the British Council over the years.

The event concluded on a celebratory note with a gala dinner, providing an opportunity for further networking and camaraderie among the attendees. All in all, the Annual IELTS Partners' Meet served as a testament to the enduring relationship between NSU and the British Council, highlighting their shared commitment to excellence and mutual support in the realm of education and language assessment.



## NSU Participates in the AACSB Deans' Conference, Spain

The 2024 AACSB Deans Conference convened from February 20, 2024 in Barcelona, Spain, tailored specifically for heads of business schools worldwide. With a carefully curated agenda, the conference aimed to address critical challenges confronting business schools and their forward-thinking leaders globally. Noteworthy sessions included topics such as humanizing leadership, navigating the era of artificial intelligence, and fostering continuous learning for deans, among others. The Dean of the School of Business and Economics (SBE) of North South University (NSU), Prof. Helal Ahmmad, was invited to the conference, to leverage the event's networking opportunities and critical insights.

Participation in the event exceeded 600 deans from approximately 60 countries, offering a platform for networking and fruitful engagement. Attendees had the opportunity to interact with peers grappling with similar challenges, exchanging valuable insights and strategies for overcoming obstacles in their respective institutions. The Welcome session, led by AACSB International's President & CEO, Ms. Lily Bi, featured key findings from a recent AACSB Deans' Survey, alongside AACSB's strategic vision and direction.



The NSU School of Business and Economics (SBE), an AACSB Member since 2015, remains steadfast in its pursuit of AACSB Accreditation. Recently, NSU SBE submitted its 'Gap Analysis,' a crucial step in the AACSB Initial Accreditation process. Prof. Helal Ahmmad, the dean of SBE, seized the opportunity to actively partake in the conference, leveraging its time-sensitive nature and extensive networking prospects. During the 'Innovations that Inspire' session, he shared insights into SBE's impactful certification programs for women entrepreneurship training, which culminated in the establishment of a Business Support Center within the SBE Centre for Business Research.

Prof. Ahmmad expressed gratitude to NSU Leadership and Management for the opportunity to engage in the conference, emphasizing its role in enriching his vision and direction for the school. His engagement further solidified his commitment to SBE's mission of providing globally informed yet locally focused business education, ensuring its continued growth and impact on the international stage.

## International Faculty Exchange Program at the University of Kyushu, Japan



**KYUSHU  
UNIVERSITY**

The Sakura Science Exchange Program, hosted by Kyushu University's Faculty of Design in Fukuoka, Japan, took place from February 4 to February 17, 2024. This initiative, established by the Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST), aims to foster collaboration and exchange among youths from Asia and Japan. Notably, five universities from South Asian countries participated, with North South University Bangladesh making unique contributions to the program.

Dr. Nandini Awal, Associate Professor and Chair, along with Architect Mehnaj Tabassum, Lecturer from the Department of Architecture, represented North South University Bangladesh at the program. The itinerary comprised symposiums, architecture tours, lectures, design studio jury sessions, and workshops on preserving architectural heritage, historical towns, and landscapes.



During the symposiums, our esteemed colleagues, Dr. Awal, and Architect Tabassum, presented their research topic, "The Challenges and Imperatives in



Preserving Urban Heritage of Mymensingh, Bangladesh," twice. Their insightful discussions on the applicability of lessons learned from Japan to Bangladesh, based on their analysis of visited projects in Japan, were genuinely enlightening.

The participation of North South University (NSU), Bangladesh in this program is significant due to the existing memorandum of understanding (MoU) between Kyushu University School of Design and NSU. This collaboration opens doors for future opportunities for both faculty members and students, facilitating research and knowledge exchange.

Beyond strengthening ties with Japan, participation in the Sakura Science Exchange Program also fosters connections with other participating countries, paving the way for potential research and knowledge-sharing collaborations. This engagement holds promising prospects for future partnerships with a diverse range of nations.

Overall, the program not only enhances relations between North South University (NSU), Bangladesh and Japan but also paves the way for meaningful partnerships with other nations. It underscores the vital role of international collaboration in advancing research and promoting cross-cultural understanding in academia, emphasizing the significance of our collective work.

## Collaboration Meeting with Practical Action, Bangladesh

On February 25, 2024, a virtual meeting was convened between the Office of External Affairs (OEA) at NSU and Practical Action, Bangladesh via Zoom. Representing Practical Action were Dr. Shawkat Begum, Country Director; Ms. Tamanna Rahman, Thematic Lead for Climate and Resilience Portfolio; Mr. Tahmid Hossain, Thematic Lead for Waste and Sanitation; and Ms. Anika Ahmed Upoma, Assistant Officer in the Fundraising and Business Development Unit. From NSU, attendees included Dr. Katherine Li, Director of OEA; Md. Shiyam Sadik, Lecturer in Environmental Science and Management; and Mr. Mehedi Masud Sumon, Officer in OEA.

## Practical ACTION



At the outset of the meeting, Dr. Li provided an overview of OEA's objectives and practices before yielding the floor to Dr. Begum, who introduced Practical Action, Bangladesh, originating in the UK and now an international organization focusing on enhancing regional capacity and fostering learning. Dr. Begum highlighted their diverse activities, including waste management, sanitation, agriculture, and renewable energy initiatives aimed at bolstering resilience in communities.

Notably, their Climate Change and Resilience program prioritizes early warning systems for natural disasters and collaborates with the government on disaster preparedness apps.

Ms. Rahman elaborated on a project investigating the impacts of climate-induced hazards on food security in Faridpur and Satkhira. Practical Action's efforts extend to addressing plastic pollution by exploring methods to convert waste into alternative energy sources. Additionally, they operate a compost research and training center in Faridpur. Mr. Hossain emphasized Practical Action's readiness to support students interested in waste management and sanitation sectors, offering research collaboration opportunities.

Mr. Sadik proposed hosting seminars and dialogues to disseminate knowledge among NSU students, supplementing collaborative efforts. Dr. Li underscored the interdisciplinary nature of the projects, acknowledging their appeal to faculties beyond environmental and ecological fields. The meeting concluded with anticipation for future collaboration, with further details to be discussed in upcoming sessions.

All in all, the meeting highlighted the potential for a fruitful collaboration between NSU and Practical Action, with both parties eager to explore joint research, publications, and knowledge-sharing initiatives in environmental sustainability and community resilience through the signing of an MoU.

## International Student Feature

*Nada Ali Mohsen is an Egyptian student who is currently studying in the Biochemistry and Biotechnology department. She was born and raised in Egypt but moved to Bangladesh when she was 7, which has been her home for the past 14 years. Despite moving to a whole different continent, she has grown fond of Egyptian and Arabic culture and media, especially 70s Egyptian music. Some of her favorite artists include Fairuz, Abdel Halim Hafiz, and the Al-Fajer Palestinian group.*

*Between all the hours spent studying (and crying, and questioning her sanity) over all her biochemistry courses, Nada really enjoys reading fiction and learning languages. Some of her favorite books include Piranesi by Susanna Clarke, Babel by R.F. Kuang, and Sword of Kaigen by ML Wang. She is currently self-studying Japanese, Turkish, Bengali, and German, at varying levels of proficiency. Nada wishes to use different languages to connect with and gain deeper insights into various cultures, including her own.*

**Interviewer:** Can you discuss the differences in educational systems between Egypt and Bangladesh, and how you've adapted to the academic environment in Bangladesh?

**Nada:** I have been here for years now but I remember my biggest obstacle was the language barrier for sure. I did not know any Bangla (naturally) and barely understood English. I was so young and it felt like all my classmates already knew each other so well, and I could not understand a word. I remember being scared I will never be able to have friends and I will be lonely forever. I don't remember particularly putting in any proper effort to learn Bangla but being so immersed in the language and hearing it being spoken around me for so many years definitely helped me absorb it in a way. I feel like being in an environment like this so early in my life far from Egypt was the main reason for my love of languages now that I think about it; I could not speak Arabic since no one will understand me so I had to use my two weakest and nonexistent languages. Now learning languages here and there no matter how little is one of my favorite hobbies!

**Interviewer:** What initially sparked your interest in biochemistry, and how do you see it influencing your career goals?

**Nada:** I always thought I wanted to get into medicine, a surgeon, to be more specific. I lived with the idea of being a doctor for most of my life until I realized that I didn't like the idea of it anymore. I did still love biology and I enjoy chemistry the same way some people might enjoy math (controversial I know). So, biochemistry felt like the obvious. I started reading more about the field and I realized that I would enjoy it way more than medicine; I love the idea of research, I love seeing how science develops and advances and being able to contribute to that no matter how little feels perfect for me.

**Interviewer:** In what ways do you believe your cultural background and upbringing have influenced your perspective on scientific research and academic pursuits?

**Nada:** Egypt's culture is very heavily influenced by religion, so my upbringing has been very influenced by Islamic teachings and traditions. I was always told that seeking knowledge is the highest form of faith and worship in Islam. Also, I used to always bother my mom with all types of annoying questions, and despite it all she still patiently did her best to answer them. I think this was a big factor in my wanting to go into a field that is so research-oriented instead of a more "well-known" field.

**Interviewer:** Have you encountered any cross-cultural differences in academic or social settings at NSU, and how have you navigated them?

**Nada:** Growing up, I was always surrounded by people of different cultures and religions. I remember my friend groups at some parts of my life looking like a diverse friend group in a Western movie. With that, I would think nothing could ever surprise me, but it made me realize that I was too young to care that much about my friend's backgrounds since we were young and didn't have that many opinions yet. Also, my school was a pretty Muslim school so I never truly grasped the idea of religious differences. NSU definitely has a more diverse environment than my old school and you get to see and hear many religions or lack thereof. I feel like this made me a more empathetic person. Instead of getting defensive I learnt to actually listen to and think about other people's beliefs and in a way I think it has influenced my own faith. So overall it was more helpful to me than an obstacle really.

**Interviewer:** Can you share a favorite book, film, or piece of art that has influenced your perspective on science or sparked your curiosity about the natural world?

**Nada:** I love this question!! I think the book that had the biggest impact on me in that sense was Piranesi by Susanna Clarke. It's a very dreamy book, and it's very speculative in a way. It's hard to explain what it's "exactly" about without giving the whole story away, but the main aspect of the book that resonated with me the most was Piranesi's character. I think it's very rare to see a character who is a scientist/researcher and also religious. A lot of people think that science and religion are mutually exclusive; like any interest or love you have for science is almost surface level if you also have faith or any religious practices, so it was very refreshing to see a character who, while being busy exploring and researching not let it get in the way of being religious, and vice versa. One of my favorite lines that resonated with me the most has to be: "The enormity of the task sometimes makes me feel dizzy, but as a scientist and an explorer, I have a duty to bear witness to the Splendors of the World." This is how I feel about being Muslim and have a passion in science. Knowledge is one way of worship and so is being witness to Allah's creation. It's a lovely book that will stay with me for a long, long time!

**Interviewer:** Looking ahead, what are your aspirations for further education or professional development after completing your undergraduate studies at NSU?

**Nada:** I think I will continue on to pursue a master's and a Ph.D. inshallah in biochemistry and/or molecular biology. Many people, especially in my culture (outside of academia at least) think that being a scientist sounds too childish, like a little kid saying they want to be an astronaut, but that's exactly what I want to be: a scientist

**Interviewer:** What advice would you give to other international students considering pursuing a degree in biochemistry at NSU or a similar institution in Bangladesh?

**Nada:** This will sound so basic but if you really do love the field, don't give up!! Biochemistry is really not for the weak and can get really hard at times (I have so much to review as I write this, actually), but still do not give up and think you are not meant for it even though you love it. You are not alone in the struggle and one bad grade does not make you a failure or that you are not good enough for the field. Biochemistry needs patience, more than anything else. As for being in Bangladesh, try learning the language. I am by no means perfect and I am still working on my reading abilities but it makes navigating life here so much easier. In my opinion, as international students I think it's only respectful to at least put an effort into speaking the language of the country we move to.





## Alumni Feature



*Mr. Parvez Karim Abbasi, is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Economics, East West University, Dhaka, Bangladesh. He had completed M.A. in Economics from York University, Toronto, Canada, 2004- 2005 on a full scholarship and did his B. S. in Economics from North South University during 1999-2003. Mr. Abbasi's research interests primarily lies in the area of Geopolitics, Geo-economics, Political Economy and Energy Security, with special emphasis on BRJ and IPS. He uses interdisciplinary approach consisting of Economics, History, Political Science, International Relations, and Sociology to analyze complex, multilayered sociopolitical and economic issues with domestic and international relevance. He has published multiple academic articles in both local as well as international peer-reviewed journals. He also has attended and presented papers at local as well as international conferences, seminars and roundtables. His most recent academic journal article is "Economic Drivers Shaping Bangladesh as a Trading State: The Relevance of Geopolitical Neutrality" published in the Journal of Governance, Security & Development, Volume 2, Number 2, January 2022. Mr. Abbasi occasionally writes op-eds and columns for English language publications in Dhaka which has been favorably received both at home and abroad. Some of his most recent articles include "Pondering the Palashi parable" on 26 February 2023 in the Long Form segment of Dhaka Tribune and "The Art of War of Hyder Ali & Tipu Sultan -Lessons for Small States in the Era of the New Great Game" on the 20 March 2022 issue of The Security World.*

*Mr. Abbasi is a member of the Strategic Studies Network of the Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies, a US Department of Defense (DoD) regional center focused on enhancing security cooperation between the U.S. and the NESAs region. He had attended the 2016 Annual SSN Conference in Ankara, Turkey, March 31-April 3 2016, where he presented a paper on "Emerging Economic trends in NESAs region" and gave an expert interview on the topic of "Balkanization of Middle East-A 21st Century reality?". He has also presented a paper "China in South Asia: A Geo-economic Analysis, A Brave New World" at the International Conference on The 1st Forum in China-India-Pakistan International Cooperation under the Framework of Shanghai Cooperation Organization organized by Center for China- India- Pakistan Studies, of Sichuan University of Science and Engineering, China in Zigong, 24-26 October 2019. Furthermore, he has Presented a paper "BRJ & South Asia-An Economic Analysis" at the International Conference on 'Belt and Road Initiative and Indo-Pacific Strategy: Opportunities and Challenges.' organized jointly by the Pathfinder Foundation, Sri Lanka and National Institute for South China Sea Studies (NISCS), China in Colombo, 13 January 2020. He also presented a paper "China-Bangladesh Relations and the Quest for Economic Equiproximity" at International Conference on "Understanding China" organized by Nepal Institute for International Cooperation and Engagement (NIICE) via webinar, 16 August 2020, Kathmandu, Nepal. He also participated both as a speaker and a moderator in the two international conferences of 'Bay of Bengal Conversation' in Dhaka, during 2022 and 2023.*

*Mr. Abbasi was invited by the National Defence College Bangladesh, to deliver lecture at the National Defence Course 2022 and Armed Forces War Course 2022 and 2023. He also regularly gives lectures at the Development Administration Course for BCS Administration cadre officers in National Academy for Planning and Development (NAPD) institute of Ministry of Planning on topics such as Alternate Development Models, Economy of Health and Education in Bangladesh etc.*

*Mr. Abbasi frequently participates as an expert discussant in TV Talk shows on International relations, Geostrategic issues as well as trade and macroeconomic related themes on National TV.*

**Interviewer:** Can you share a bit about your academic and professional background, and how you became interested in economics?

**Mr. Abbasi:** If I need to identify a point of origin for my academic odyssey, it must start with Sunbeams, where I had completed my primary education. Sunbeams back then had only up to Class V. We even had a graduation ceremony at the end of Class V back in 1990! I still remember that we were so sad to leave our beloved school nestled in a quiet leafy corner of Road 27, Dhanmondi. The next stint was at Scholastica, between 1991 and 1996, where I completed my O Levels and Class XI. The one thing that I would like to point out was the contrasting yet effective approaches in both these institutions-Sunbeams had a solid, demanding no-nonsense approach, whereas Scholastica allowed for more freedom and individual creativity. I did my A Levels from Mastermind in 1997 -98, which had just started out back then.

Spring of 1999 landed me in the Undergraduate Program of Economics Department of North South University. NSU was spread across amongst three buildings, Sher Plaza, Star Tower and BTA in Kemal Ataturk .Yet, the quality of education that I received there from the amazing faculty over there more than made up for my initial disappointment of not being able to go abroad, like my school friends for my undergrad studies. Now that I look back, NSU truly provided us with quality North American education, for which I remain grateful. A special



mention should be made of the wonderful faculty that we had in our own Economics Department such as Professors A K Enamul Haque and Rafiqul Islam Molla. The academic support staff such as Department Secretary Biswajeet Da were extremely friendly and cooperative. What made the undergrad experience truly unique was the vibrant, energetic and very bright student body in the department as well as the university.

I then did my M.A. in Economics from York University, Toronto, Canada, 2004- 2005 on an exceedingly generous scholarship. Again, NSU was the conduit for my admission and scholarship, as Professor Mahmudul Anam of York University, used to teach at the Economics Department of North South during the summer semesters. A whole generation of Economic graduates had a shot at international graduate studies in Canada due to the foresight and catholicity of mind like Enam and Anam Sir.

I joined East West on a full time basis in January 2008 as a lecturer in the Economics Department and worked my way to the rank of Assistant Professor. I was overjoyed to find several friends of mine from NSU as colleagues in the Economics Department of East West University. Apart from teaching in the University, I have been engaged in research, particularly in the fields of geopolitics and geo-economics, where I carry out interdisciplinary analysis by combining the insights of economics, international relations, history and sociology.

I was drawn to Economics early on, while I was studying for it during my O Levels. Probably seeing Amartya Sen being awarded the Nobel Prize for Economics consciously or unconsciously encouraged a whole generation of South Asians to take up the study. It might sound as a cliché but Economics is truly the queen of social sciences. It investigates societal problems within an analytical framework and provides a range of feasible policy options to decision makers. By concerning with the stated objectives of raising social welfare, it touches every aspect of our lives. Whether it is Urban Economics or Health Economics or Energy Economics, the application of economics is continuously evolving and expanding. Economics will remain relevant as the preeminent social science subject as long as human beings continue to live in an organized society.

**Interviewer:** As an Assistant Professor, what courses do you teach, and what areas of economics are you particularly passionate about?

**Mr. Abbasi:** Well, the standard answer to this question, which I don't tire from saying with a straight face, is that I teach whatever course my department assigns me! Jokes aside, I usually teach third and fourth year courses such as Money and Banking, Contemporary issues in International Economics, Economics of Development in South Asia, Trade Policy Analysis, Asian and Emerging Economics, History of Economic Thought and Law and Economics. As my courses indicate, I am more interested in the applied aspects of economics, especially in the realm of political economy, geopolitics and geo-economics. Economic causes largely dominate the realm of domestic politics or influence the behavior of states in the international arena. The competition for scarce resources, whether it is oil or rare earth metals or gaining access to shipping lanes or cutting edge technology are all dominated by different strands of economic thinking or schools of thought. Even the concept of populism associated with international leaders like Trump, Erdoğan or Modi can be partly or largely explained by economics. I believe we will witness the transition from American unipolar domination to a more fragmented multipolar global order within our lifetime. The rising economic heft of Asian, African and Latin American countries is partially responsible for this momentous change. It is truly exciting to be an economist and witness and analyze and anticipate these trends.

**Interviewer:** What do you find most rewarding about teaching economics to students? Are there particular challenges you face in this role?

**Mr. Abbasi:** I confess I like to teach. Period. I have been teaching students ever since I finished A Levels. For most of the time I have taught economics to young impressionable minds, animated by eagerness to learn and question. I like the challenge of teaching and holding students' attention over long periods of time. An occasional dose of humor helps in class to relieve the monotony. By providing topical examples, I try to make my courses more relatable and exciting for my students. Mentoring young inquisitive people is a privilege, afforded to few. I believe that passion for teaching is a must. The challenge of teaching economics or any other subject is essentially the same-how to reach out to the comparatively weaker students, so that they don't feel left out. Plus, there is the onus of self-motivation for a teacher. If a teacher enters the class bored, dejected or listless, it surely rubs on among the entire class. Last but not least, there is a constant need for teachers to study and augment one's knowledge. Teaching is a dynamic process, which despite its demanding nature, can be pretty rewarding.

**Interviewer:** If you had the opportunity to advise policymakers in Bangladesh, what economic and geopolitical policies or strategies would you recommend to address current challenges and promote long-term growth?

**Mr. Abbasi:** Well, in terms of economic issues, my advice to policymakers is pretty straightforward and consistent. I have been saying so in the various seminars, conferences and talk shows that I happen to frequent. The policymakers must take steps in reducing income inequality in the society. To do so, qualitative and quantitative improvement must be made in the education and health sectors. Skills training and investing in Research and Development would be the key to create a large pool of highly skilled labor force. Bangladesh has predominantly a youthful population. Investing in the youth is the key to prosperity. A universal insurance and health-care system must be put in place. To do all this, the government must widen its tax base and cut down on wastage. Transparency, accountability, decentralization, devolution and good governance are essential to ensure sustainable development and poverty alleviation.

In terms of geopolitics, my advice to foreign policy mandarins and strategic thinkers would be to avoid temptation and pressure from the competing great powers and not firmly adhere to one camp or another during the time of the New Cold War. A policy of equiproximity or equidistance should be pursued. Economic and defense diplomacy should be robustly pursued to secure our strategic interests

**Interviewer:** Can you share some highlights of your recent research or publications? What topics are you currently exploring?

**Mr. Abbasi:** As I have already indicated, my area of research interest lies in the realm of geopolitics and geo-economics. I have been working on themes such as Great power competition ((USA vs. China), Belt and Road Initiative, Indo Pacific Strategy, Trade War, Tech War, the competition to secure access to hydrocarbon deposits, rare earth metals or advanced semiconductors. The most recent research article that I had published "Economic Drivers Shaping Bangladesh as a Trading State: The Relevance of Geopolitical Neutrality" explores these themes from a Bangladeshi perspective. History is a powerful tool to predict future events as we rarely learn from our mistakes. At present, I am researching on historical precedents of Bengal being caught in regional power competition and what lessons Bangladesh can draw from it. "Pondering the Palashi parable" that appeared in the long form of Dhaka Tribune is probably a partial manifestation of my current research pursuits or rather, a statement of research intent.

**Interviewer:** As an alumnus of NSU, what are your suggestions for NSUers who are interested in pursuing a career as economist?

**Mr. Abbasi:** Each person's journey is different and unique. Yet, looking back, from my days as a bright eyed undergrad student in the Economics Department of NSU, I would urge the current crop of econ undergrads to read. Read as much as possible. Read beyond textbooks and journal articles. Economics is more than journal articles and seminars. It is a living subject, which draws its inspiration from the society around us. Observe the people around you. Being well-read enables students to relate theories to real world happenings. Intellectual curiosity for students is a must. Then the journey becomes that much fulfilling and rewarding. A well-rounded education is more useful than a narrow one. In the end, enjoy what you do. Good Luck to all the NSUers interested in pursuing a career in economics! May you have a fantastic adventure? I end with the iconic salutation from Star Trek "May the Force be with You".

## Special Faculty Feature

*Dr. Niaz Ahmed* is Professor Emeritus at SCSU, USA and Professor of Marketing and Director of NSU Center for Business Research in Bangladesh. Professor Ahmed's academic background includes an MDP from Harvard University, USA, a GMP from the University of Cambridge, U.K. and a Ph.D. in Marketing and Communication from USM, USA.

Prior to becoming a part of North South University, Dr. Ahmed held teaching positions in the USA at the State University of New York and Saint Cloud State University, where he attained a tenured professor status. His academic journey also extended to the Middle East, where he contributed to the University of Bahrain, Effat University, and Sohar University.

Dr. Ahmed also assumed key administrative roles in the USA, having served as Dean, Director of Graduate Studies, Director of Research, and Chairperson of the Faculty Research Grants Commission. His industry experience extends to entities such as NBC and PBS networks, as well as GCCO in the USA. In his capacity as a consultant, Professor Ahmed has offered valuable national and international services in the realms of marketing and academic management.

His professional journey has encompassed living and working among diverse populations in the East Coast, Midwest, and the West Coast of the United States. His global engagement extends beyond borders, with visits to more than 40 countries across five continents, contributing to his extensive portfolio in research, consulting, and tourism.

As a distinguished Senior Fulbright Scholar, Dr. Ahmed has contributed significantly to academia with numerous refereed journal articles and a notable scholarly book titled "Cross-Cultural Content Analysis." Currently, he is in the process of completing a thought-provoking philosophical book entitled "The Tyranny of Extremism." Expanding his creative repertoire, Dr. Ahmed has ventured into screenwriting, with his latest works, "Resurgence 2030" and "Averting The Last Crunch," earning acclaim through several international awards and recognitions.

As a staunch advocate for diversity, equity, and inclusion, Professor Ahmed holds a firm belief in the transformative potential of education and the importance of fostering a diverse learning environment. His varied experiences have endowed him with a broad perspective that aligns with the global and multicultural dimensions of higher education. Driven by a profound sense of purpose, Dr. Ahmed's academic mission is centered around cultivating the highest quality education and implementing impactful practices for students. His unwavering commitment extends to the creation of a supportive, student-centered, and intellectually stimulating learning environment, designed to empower students on their academic journey.

Dr. Ahmed's management and administrative services have consistently demonstrated impactful and transformative leadership across diverse sectors where his expertise has been instrumental in fostering growth and excellence in both the corporate world and academia. Throughout his academic career, he has supported and fostered excellence in teaching, research, and service, and has brought together faculty, staff, and administrators to work toward common goals in a spirit of compassion, community, and empowerment. He has developed highly motivated and competent teams by establishing harmonious relationships with a diverse population of constituencies based on fairness and inclusiveness, integrity and accountability, and transparency and consultation.

Prof. Ahmed's higher education philosophy emphasizes a comprehensive, broad-based learning that helps students develop a deep foundational knowledge encompassing a broad spectrum of subjects, fostering communication skills, critical and creative thinking, ethical and social responsibility, and informed citizenship. Through an integrated and interdisciplinary education, he aims not only to prepare students for professional growth, transferable competencies, innovation, and leadership but also to nurture sustainable intellectual development and a lifelong dedication to learning. He also believes that institutions of higher education should forge interdisciplinary collaborations and partnerships involving various stakeholders, such as academia, employers, policymakers, and nonprofit sectors, to address the evolving trends, challenges, and opportunities in our interconnected world.

Dr. Ahmed firmly advocates that the future of human civilization extends beyond scientific advancements to include a profound awareness and appreciation of human dignity, social justice, ethical responsibility, equality, diversity, and service to society and humanity. He calls for a renewed focus on positive human values to reshape attitudes and behaviors and foster a humane planetary culture, advancing sustainable peace, cross-cultural understanding, and human rights.

After traversing an extensive professional and academic journey, his path has now circled back to his home country. Holding a firm conviction, he believes that North South University possesses inherent potential to ascend as a preeminent center of higher learning in the region. Having dedicated decades of service in both industry and academia, spanning across the United States and diverse corners of the globe, he looks forward to contributing earnestly to his motherland.

Beyond the confines of his professional identity, Dr. Ahmed passionately engages in the realms of music, writing songs, singing, and playing a variety of musical instruments.



**Interviewer:** Tell us about where you grew up, went to school and the attitude of people around you toward education.

**Prof. Niaz:** I spent my formative years in Dhaka and pursued my undergraduate studies at the University of Dhaka. My academic journey continued in the USA, where I earned both my Master's and Ph.D. degrees. Education was highly valued in my family, as both sets of grandparents held prominent positions in the education sector, instilling a deep respect for learning. Three of my uncles also served as university professors and deans, further emphasizing the significance of education in our family.

**Interviewer:** How did you develop your interest in Marketing and Communication?

**Prof. Niaz:** My academic focus on Communication and Marketing laid the foundation for my professional journey. I had the privilege of working in the dynamic media and marketing industry in the USA, contributing to renowned networks such as NBC and PBS, as well as GCCI.

**Interviewer:** What led you to go to the USA and work there for so long?

**Prof. Niaz:** My initial move to the USA was driven by a pursuit of higher education. Following the completion of my degrees, I immersed myself in the industry for several years, eventually establishing my own marketing consulting firm. Subsequently, my passion for academia led me to teach in New York and Minnesota.

**Interviewer:** From your experience, how does serving in an administrative role make an academic more effective and how does serving as a faculty member make an administrator more effective?

**Prof. Niaz:** Having held both faculty and administrative positions globally, I have acquired the ability to navigate the needs of diverse stakeholders. This dual perspective has enhanced my capacity to balance academic and administrative needs and responsibilities effectively.

**Interviewer:** What was the reason for so much travel throughout your academic career? What put you on the road?

**Prof. Niaz:** My extensive travel was predominantly driven by consultancy projects worldwide. The exposure to new places and cultures not only enriched my professional endeavors but also fueled my personal passion for exploration.

**Interviewer:** Tell us about your experience as a distinguished Senior Fulbright Scholar.

**Prof. Niaz:** As a postdoc Senior Fulbright Scholar, I conducted impactful research in Asia, resulting in several refereed journal articles and a scholarly book, contributing significantly to my academic portfolio.

**Interviewer:** What motivated you to write your book on "Cross-Cultural Content Analysis"?

**Prof. Niaz:** My book on "Cross-Cultural Content Analysis" emerged from the foundation laid during my doctoral research, which I expanded further during my postdoc Senior Fulbright fellowship.

**Interviewer:** How have you moved toward research on extremism?

**Prof. Niaz:** Observing the global shift towards extreme ideologies in social, political, religious, and global realms motivated me to delve into research on extremism. My aim is to offer recommendations for addressing and reforming this concerning trend.

**Interviewer:** You seem to be committed to SDG 4.7. Can you describe what you mean by sustainable intellectual development and a lifelong dedication to learning?

**Prof. Niaz:** Sustainable intellectual development involves a commitment to continuous learning, critical thinking, and adaptability across various facets of life. Lifelong dedication to learning extends beyond formal education, fostering personal and professional growth, problem-solving skills, and a meaningful life.

**Interviewer:** How does your global experience inform what you do in the classroom?

**Prof. Niaz:** My international background and diverse intercultural experiences shape my teaching approach. By incorporating global and multicultural perspectives, I offer insights into marketing, media, and communication issues, resonating well with students who appreciate the cross-cultural context.

**Interviewer:** What does it mean to be a global citizen and how can educators role model and cultivate global citizenship in students?

**Prof. Niaz:** Being a global citizen involves recognizing interconnectedness, understanding diverse perspectives, and actively engaging in addressing global challenges. Educators can cultivate global citizenship by fostering cultural awareness, encouraging critical thinking, promoting empathy, and providing opportunities for international collaboration and service learning.

**Interviewer:** You call for a renewed focus on "positive human values". Can you explain what you mean and what you do to promote those?

**Prof. Niaz:** Positive human values, such as empathy, cooperation, and compassion, are crucial for meaningful connections, ethical decision-making, and addressing global challenges. I encourage students to internalize these values and I also explore their significance in my philosophical writings.

**Interviewer:** The fact that you came back to serve your motherland after having already put in a full academic career says a lot about your passion. Can you tell us what you hope to see regarding education in Bangladesh?

**Prof. Niaz:** While acknowledging progress in Bangladesh's education system, I envision a comprehensive approach addressing evolving challenges. Priorities include continued investment in infrastructure, modern teacher training, technology integration, curriculum development, and promoting inclusive education.

**Interviewer:** You have shared that you love music, writing songs and playing a variety of instruments. Can you tell us more about your musical inclination?

**Prof. Niaz:** Since childhood, I've immersed myself in learning musical instruments such as Benzo, Guitar, and Keyboards. During my college years in the USA, I even ventured into songwriting and performed with a band as a hobby. Additionally, my creative interests extend to writing screenplays, including works such as Resurgence 2030 and Averting The Last Crunch, both of which have garnered several international awards and recognitions.

**Interviewer:** Any lifelong dreams that you still want to accomplish?

**Prof. Niaz:** My lifelong objectives revolve around making a meaningful impact on the world through my work, addressing important issues to improve the life and livelihood of fellow beings. After all, what is the deeper purpose and meaning of life when we are lying six feet deep beneath the ground?

## NSU Student Attends the UN SDGs Forum 2024 in Thailand



From January 03, 2024 till January 07, 2024, Ms. Atia Fairouz attended the UN SDGs forum organized by the Headway Institute of Strategic Alliance in Bangkok, Thailand. The three-day conference was beautifully arranged by the organizers and comprised different workshops and activities. Social changemakers from all over the world were present in this Forum, and she got the chance to represent her country, Bangladesh and the work that connected her to the SDGs. She has always had a soft corner for the underprivileged street children of her country and is aiming to do something for them. Apart from that, the other delegates also shared their success stories on the platform, and she is immensely grateful for the enriching experience of learning from exceptional colleagues. The ending ceremony was a very colorful event, with everyone dressed in their traditional outfits; the event was a success. The insights gained were genuinely transformative, shaping her perspective and skills. Ms. Fairouz is excited for the lasting impact and meaningful connections forged.



## NSU Student Secures the Study in Canada Scholarship (SiCS) 2023

*My time at Saint Mary's University, Halifax, NS, Canada, was truly special and unforgettable. During my four months there, I met amazing people, made lifelong friends, learned a lot from great professors, and had countless memorable moments. Even though I've left SMU physically, the memories I made there will stay with me forever.*



Getting to SMU wasn't easy because of my visa issues that delayed my arrival by two weeks. However, Ms. Miyuki Arai, the Director of Global Learning Services, supported me from the start to the end of my exchange program. Her help was crucial in overcoming challenges, and I'm really grateful to her for that.



Anas Ahmad

The academic environment at SMU is impressive. It not only offers excellent education but also embraces students from all over the world. As an international student, I felt like I belonged there, which made SMU feel like a second home to me. Studying at SMU was both rewarding and eye-opening. I took courses like international marketing, human resource management, and sociology, which gave me valuable skills and new perspectives that will be useful in my future career and personal life. My professors were incredibly supportive, and working on group projects helped me connect with classmates who became not just friends but also great collaborators.

Outside of classes, SMU provided unique experiences like visiting the Burke-Gaffney Observatory, where I saw the moon and stars up close. And going apple-picking with friends on a trip organized by SMU was a fun and memorable experience.

Overall, my time at Saint Mary's University was more than just about academics; it was a life-changing experience that has shaped me in many ways. The welcoming atmosphere, diverse culture, and academic excellence make SMU an extraordinary place, and I'm grateful for the chance to have been part of it. SMU has shown me that anything is possible, and as I move forward, I take with me knowledge and a deep appreciation for the wonderful experiences I had there.

Finally, I express my heartfelt thanks to the Office of External Affairs (OEA), North South University, for facilitating such an exceptional opportunity for the students of North South University. Only a few students from Bangladesh get this fantastic opportunity to grab the prestigious Study in Canada Scholarship (SiCS) program funded by Global Affairs, Canada. The continuous endeavor of OEA will secure more and more scholarships and exchange opportunities for the students of NSU to make them global students!



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