

To Whom It May Concern,

This letter is to express my interest in applying to the Next Generation Women Leaders event. As a sophomore year student at Nazarbayev University in Kazakhstan majoring in Computer Science I feel why it is important to promote women in the technical fields especially in Asia. As a member of ACM-W student club in my university I assist in organizing different events such as coding competitions for female students, technical and research talks and also such funny cultural events as movie nights and team travels. I think that such conferences as Next Generation Women Leaders play key role in inspiring females to pursue education in STEM and develop their leadership skills.

One book that had a great influence on my vision of leadership is “The 7 habits of highly effective people” by Stephen R. Covey. After reading this book the conclusion that I made is that before being a leader for others you have to become a leader for yourself. Being a leader for me is not just an ability to manage your time and control what you do everyday but an ability to understand your priorities and values in the life and determine long-term and short-term goals accordingly. If you fail to build a solid foundation of your life based on your principles then you are hardly likely to be able to lead other people or inspire them with your words or actions.

Recently I met one of my friends who was on that period of life, when you lose your motivation and cannot cope with melancholy. I am not a psychologist but in this case I understand that simple cheering words will not help. I tried to share with my own experience and say how I behaved in a similar situation, what motivated me and what keeps inspiring me. I was very happy when on the next day she wrote me that she got up earlier and again started to read books and attend English classes she abandoned last weeks. I could not influence someone if I did not believe to my own words or did not do what I determine as my goals.

Sometimes I feel that I spend a lot of time for study and forget about such important components of personal development as spirit, art, sport and interaction with other people. Thinking more about it this summer I made some important decisions for myself. I joined ACM Student Chapter Club in our university as a peer-to-peer mentor, who help freshman students with programming. I kept in my mind how it was sometimes difficult to cope with my courses when I was a first year student and how it would be helpful if someone directed me. I also decided that it is never late to learn something new and started to attend piano classes, since I always wished to play this beautiful instrument. Finally, one of the biggest victories over myself is that I made it a habit to run everyday in the morning in any weather without excuses.

Probably it seems strange that my whole essay about leadership is dedicated to my personal development rather than to stories how I led a large team and inspired them to follow me. However, as I said before being a leader starts from becoming a person, who deserves to lead others. At the end I want to add words of Mahatma Gandhi, one of the greatest leaders in history: *“You must be the change you want to see in the world.”*

I am looking forward to hearing from you soon. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Dana Zhumabekova.