



IYF team members and volunteers distributed books among their students earlier this year.



Muhammad Jahirul Islam at a youth development programme at Daffodil International College.



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Igniting confidence across communities

MAISHA ISLAM MONAMEE

Ignite Youth Foundation (IYF) is a youth-led social organisation, founded by Muhammad Jahirul Islam in 2016. Jahirul is one of the recipients of the 2020 Diana Award. IYF aims at ensuring secure futures for underprivileged children across rural areas, through access to quality education. Their school in Baunia, officially established in 2017, currently has 67 students. It started rather informally in 2016, as initially, their volunteers conducted the classes at a park.

IYF is committed to supporting their students until they are prepared for university. "We conduct classes on nutrition and hygiene and also arrange co-curricular activities for our students," Jahirul added.

Owing to the lack of proper medical services around slums, thousands of children die of preventable diseases like malaria, diarrhea and pneumonia. Through their project, Niramoy, IYF conducts various medical campaigns and distributes medicines at community levels. Through their Ignite Blood Bank, they have donated over 2,000 blood bags till date.

Their project, Craftnite, provides hand-craft training to underprivileged women. "We want to secure a source of income for



IYF team members and volunteers at their Ramadan event.

PHOTOS: COURTESY

these women, and ensure that their children attend school regularly," added Jahirul. This project also focuses on building self-help groups for the women, and has aided over 100 families since its inception.

IYF also runs Project Shabolombi, which generates income sources for their beneficiaries through zakat funds from capable

donors. "Our team closely monitors the beneficiaries to ensure their sustainable livelihoods," shared Jahirul.

The team also arranges various workshops and training programmes under their Youth Development Program. Through 35 workshops and events on computer science, internet, capacity building, coaching, coun-

selling, event management, environmental training, leadership training and career guidance, they aim to empower young people across the country.

The organisation also runs various campaigns on hygiene across rural communities, distributes sanitation products and conducts awareness programmes on topics like education, family planning, gender and social discrimination.

IYF also supplies bins to households, based on subscriptions, as a waste management solution. The garbage bin is divided into two separate compartments for organic and inorganic wastes. The organic matter is compressed and delivered to recycling vendors. Recently, Jahirul won the Global Students Entrepreneur Award for this project.

Owing to the coronavirus crisis, the organisation's school is shut, and their regular activities are on hold. Nonetheless, even in these tough times, volunteers of the organisation distributed around 1,000 food packages to those in need, and extended medical support to more than 500 patients. With the help of twelve doctors, they are also providing online consultations. Moving forward, IYF plans to establish schools across all districts of Bangladesh.

Huawei HMS App Innovation Contest 2020 for Developers (Up to US\$1 million in prizes)

The Huawei HMS App Innovation Contest aims to inspire global developers to leverage HMS Core to create innovative apps, bringing smart life services to Huawei device users in 170+ countries and regions. The contest will be held in Europe, Asia Pacific, Middle East & Africa, Latin America, and China, respectively.

DEADLINE: August 30, 2020 | Competitions

Seedstars Migration Challenge 2020

The global call for applications for the 2020 Migration Challenge is now open. In partnership with the International Organisation of Employers (IOE) and the Business Advisory Group of Migration, Seedstars is looking at rewarding innovative early-stage Human Resources, FinTech, CivicTech, and EdTech start-ups with solution-oriented products to improve migration systems that respond to labour market needs.

DEADLINE: August 25, 2020 | Competitions



Working for basic education and employment rights



Team members and volunteers of the foundation with the students of their school.

PHOTO: COURTESY

RASHEEK TABASSUM MONDIRA

SONGKOLPO Foundation, a non-profit organisation, supports orphaned and underprivileged children in Dhaka, in different ways. Founded in 2014, the organisation equips underprivileged communities with access to resources, quality education and livelihood skills, among other things. Their SONGKOLPO School, established in 2016, is a self-funded institute for children who have no access to basic education rights. Mehedi Islam Akash, an Economics student from United International University, is the founder and chairman of the organisation.

The foundation has a 'Sponsor a Child' programme, through which individuals can provide a child's educational fees with only BDT 1,500 per month. As of now, the programme has 12 active sponsors. Their school, located in Mirpur 2, currently facilitates classes up to the second grade, with only one certified teacher. Volunteers of the organisation, most of whom are university students, teach different subjects at the school, in teams of five. The foundation launches an internship programme every six months. Currently, they have 10 working interns, some of whom want to teach classes at the school as well. Mehedi hopes to provide

technical education to the students. "The underprivileged children of our country need to be self-reliant to enrich their lives," he adds.

The foundation launched several initiatives over the years, with 14 members and 100 active volunteers. They aided affected communities during the floods of 2016 and 2017. During Eid and winter, they distribute clothes to those in need. In monsoon, they provide raincoats to rickshaw pullers across Dhaka, through their 'Project Raincoat'.

'Feeding Bangladesh' and 'Project Survival', their initiatives to combat the coronavirus pandemic, are commendable. Their objective is to raise awareness among school children about proper hygiene and health guidelines. They started off with providing one month's supply of food and other necessary products to the families of their school's students. As hundreds of requests came in, they started distributing food and other items amongst the masses.

Till June, they distributed food packages to 7,800 individuals and 525 families, including people from the transgender community. Working in different areas of Mirpur, they distributed 500 hand sanitisers, 3,500 masks, 300 hand wash packages and other essentials to under-

privileged communities. They also disinfected several public areas. In these unprecedented times, their teacher and their volunteers are visiting their students weekly, to ensure that they are studying and following health guidelines at home properly.

During Eid-ul-Fitr, the foundation arranged food for 600 people on the streets. "Many rickshaw pullers and other daily wage earners are living on the streets, because they are struggling to pay their rents. We provided them with cooked meals," shares Mehedi.

With their 'Project Qurban', the organisation aims to collect donations to buy cattle, and distribute cooked meat among underprivileged families this year.

Under their initiative, 'ProjectPoriborton', they are collecting Zakat funds to provide unemployed individuals with rickshaws and sewing machines. Till now, they have collected funds for one sewing machine. "We aim to provide families with long term employment plans," shares Asif Khan, an active member of the organisation.

Moving forward, SONGKOLPO Foundation is determined to keep working to restore the basic rights of the less fortunate communities.