5 youth-led initiatives fighting the good fight against COVID-19

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Oxygen should be free for all

A platform introduced by Shongjog | Connecting People, led by some former students of BUET and youths of different backgrounds, this project aims to supply oxygen cylinders to the people who need them at no cost. They are collecting unused medical-grade cylinders, disinfect them and refill them by following the proper guidelines. The cylinders are taken back after the purpose is served and refilled for another person in need. "Few weeks go, the demand for oxygen cylinders began to increase, so did the price of oxygen cylinders with the deterioration of the COVID-19 situation. Observing the circumstances, we initiated this project with the slogan 'Oxygen should be free for all' as it is every human's fundamental right to breathe", said Ahmed Javed Jamal, one of the founders of Shongjog. Shongjog is now trying to expand its service to deliver oxygen cylinders to more people outside Dhaka who are in need. It is also supplying oximeters at a cheaper rate to save people from unethical suppliers.
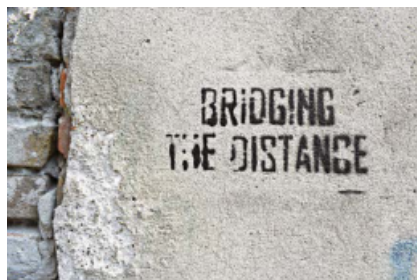
Buy masks, help to provide baby foods

This is the objective of Pashe Achhi Initiative's 'Project Shurokkha'. The initiative is selling boxes of surgical masks at a reasonable price with a BDT 100 delivery charge inside of Dhaka from which BDT 50 will be used to provide baby food to underprivileged children. Every 7 customers can contribute to buy one packet of milk powder of good quality that costs BDT 350. They are also selling Oximeters within an affordable price and taking the same delivery charge with the same intention. They have even started to deliver outside Dhaka to help people out. "The main purpose of this project is to make safe and cheap necessary health accessories available to people and to ensure the nutrition of unprivileged children", said Tahmid Hasan, the co-founder of this initiative. Under 'Project Shurokka', they have so far sold 1860 boxes of surgical masks and 210 Oximeters ensuring baby food for the children of 250 poor families till now.

Nirapod contact-tracing app

This app has been developed by a team of youth IT specialists of Inovace Technologies. Between April and May, many migrant workers were coming back and so this versatile team helped the police of Chattogram and Chandpur district to keep a track of the citizens who should be in 14-day self-quarantine through this app. 'Nirapod' has been designed to trace the possible COVID-19 spread inside a managed environment of organizations & institutions. Nirapod Application's backend admin panel has been used by Bangladesh Police for ensuring quarantine monitoring,

relief distribution, information management, etc. They are now working to build a comprehensive system where the COVID-19 test, infection, isolation and treatment history of all the front-line workers will be managed. "Besides Nirapod App, we are working with BIPAP Machine, Oxygen Concentrators Machine, Oximeters etc. We define our success by our products' capability of saving lives during this crisis", said Aminur Rashid Asif, CTO of Inovace Technologies.

Supporting healthier lifestyle

During this pandemic, many waste collectors are working without safety gears, which makes them vulnerable to the risk factors. GARBAGEMAN, a tech-based recycling company founded by 10 young entrepreneurs, has taken an initiative to provide food and safety gears to this population. Till now, 400 waste collectors in Uttara and Tejgaon have been provided with PPE and food supplies. They are planning to extend this service by providing safety equipment to 200 waste collectors in Gulshan and 2200 cleaners in 16 different municipalities. GARBAGEMAN is also offering field training that includes basic COVID-19 prevention and safety measures during waste collection and disposables to the waste collectors. Volunteers are also doing schedule-based plastic collection from Dhanmondi, Gulshan, Banani, and Uttara to reduce and recycle plastic waste and to create mass awareness. "The use of plastics has increased with the ongoing COVID-19 crisis. We need a healthy environment to be healthy, hence we are trying to create awareness among the citizens and connect them in the recovery and recycling of plastics through our collection campaigns", said Fahim Uddin, Founder and CEO of GARBAGEMAN.

Feeding stray animals

Stray cats and dogs are suffering from a food crisis under the current pandemic circumstances. To feed these helpless animals, Care for Paws, a non-profitable animal welfare organization and its volunteers are running a project on every alternative day basis. During this pandemic, they have fed 50,000 stray cats and dogs. That means 1,250 (or over) stray animals on every other day. They have also vaccinated stray animals and done neuter surgery (if necessary). Because of the lockdown, many of their volunteers are not available, but they are still running this feeding project with a handful of volunteers. "No matter how few possessions you have, or how little money you have, if you help the animals, nature will make you rich beyond measure", said Sourav Shamim, chairman of Care for Paws, while talking about the manpower shortage and lack of financial support of this project.

THE BOSSMAN
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