



Nishonkoch Foundation volunteers at their event, 'Spirit of Ramadan', in 2019.

PHOTOS: COURTESY

Ensuring youth involvement in community development

MAISHA ISLAM MONAMEE

Nishonkoch Foundation started their journey in December 2016. They strive to ensure youth involvement in social development and accessibility to quality education. The organisation was formed as a New Year's resolution by Mohammad Fahim, a student of North South University (NSU), and his friends.

Their annual projects include an event called 'Education For All', during which they distribute school supplies among underprivileged students. Their environmental project, 'TrashTag Challenge', is a daylong drive inviting young volunteers to clean up the streets and raise awareness about cleanliness. 'Spirit of Ramadan' is the organisation's flagship event, during which they distribute food packages to underprivileged communities in the month of Ramadan. They also conduct a street food hygiene campaign, to encourage vendors to serve food after maintaining



Volunteers distributing food packages during 'Spirit of Ramadan', earlier this year.

hygiene protocols. "Being able to bring smiles to people's faces is the best part of our work. They inspire us to keep working," said Shakir Ahmed, Co-founder of Nishonkoch Foundation and a student of NSU. Every year, the team celebrates their founding anniversary with underprivileged kids.

Nishonkoch Foundation carried out a number of distribution drives during the pandemic. They distributed leaflets and soaps among slum dwellers, to generate awareness about the spread of the coronavirus disease. Furthermore, they distributed 500 packages of monthlong groceries for those in need during Ramadan and arranged meals for more than 2,000 individuals on Eid.

In the future, the foundation plans to establish a digital lab in the city to facilitate technological education for underprivileged children. "We also want to conduct basic English spoken courses for people of all ages," concluded Fahim.



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YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES

2020 GCSP Prize for Innovation in Global Security

Apply for the 2020 GCSP Prize for Innovation in Global Security. The prize is designed to reach across all relevant disciplines and fields. It is intended to encourage and recognize excellence in contributing to new approaches to enhancing sustainable global security. A broad range of projects could qualify for consideration, including, but not limited to, technological and conceptual innovations, original research, or grassroots initiatives.

DEADLINE: September 25, 2020 | Competitions



Schwarzman Scholars Program 2021-22 in China (Fully Funded)

Designed to prepare young leaders to serve as a bridge between China and the rest of the world, Schwarzman Scholars is the first scholarship created to respond to the geopolitical landscape of the 21st Century. Whether in politics, business or science, the success of future leaders around the world will depend upon an understanding of China's role in global trends.

DEADLINE: September 22, 2020 | Scholarships

World Meteorological Organization Calendar Competition 2021

World Meteorological Organization is looking forward to high-quality and artistic photographs, and especially those which illustrate the theme of World Meteorological Day 2021, "The Ocean, our climate and weather" for the Calendar Competition 2021.

DEADLINE: September 15, 2020 | Competition



A ray of hope for the less fortunate

Sombhabona is a registered social welfare organisation that works for underprivileged children in Bangladesh. Ever since their inception in 2011, they have been providing quality education to children, to shape them into productive members of the society. They also aim to build shelter homes for underprivileged communities. "We believe these children are an asset to our country," says Sombhabona's Co-founder, Ariful Islam. "If we can ensure their quality and skill-based education, we can build a bright future for them. We are developing an ecosystem where a child will grow up in a nurturing environment."

SADIA TAHSIN

Sombhabona's Pushpokoli School is a free, open institute for underprivileged children. Their lessons revolve around patriotism, discipline and health awareness, among other things. They have two branches of the school, one in Mirpur 2 and another in Dhanmondi, facilitating education for 200 children. Their institute, Pushpokoli Academic School Kalsi, is in Mirpur 12, where they currently have 95 students. This project has a duration of five years, after which the children are enrolled into secondary education programmes.

Sombhabona's Mahafuz Merit Scholarship is named in memory of Mahafuz, a volunteer of the organisation, who passed away in a road accident in 2014. Through this scholarship, they help underprivileged children to continue their studies, by distributing educational materials among them and paying their



Sombhabona's team distributed cooked meals among 500 underprivileged kids on Eid, earlier this year.

tuition fees. The students further receive school admission and exam fees as well as free house tuitions. So far, this scholarship has been awarded to 10 students. "We want to rehabilitate our students, especially those who have no homes and families.



Sombhabona's team provided food packages to 6,000 people across 1,335 underprivileged families in urban and rural areas, amid the pandemic.

PHOTOS: COURTESY

We want them to be able to go to school and have a place to live," says Mushfika Nishat, Secretariat of Organisational Relation, Sombhabona. Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, the teachers of Sombhabona's schools have been visiting their students in the slums on a weekly basis to check on them and remind them and their families about the health risks related to the coronavirus disease. They have further delivered solutions of the course materials to their students, facilitating a study-from-home initiative. Since March, they have been providing grocery packages to the families of their students. They are also accommodating some students for the time being at their open school in Dhanmondi.

Sombhabona's project, Onindito Naree, is for underprivileged women, especially the mothers of their students, facilitated at Pushpokoli School. It trains women in tailoring, showpiece making, boutique management and handicrafts making for small, cottage industries, providing them

with job opportunities. Currently, this project is serving 15 women.

Sombhabona arranges different events, including Pushpokoli Book Festival, Sports Festival, Eid Festival and Boshonto Boron for the children. Every Eid-ul-Azha, their volunteers distribute meat among underprivileged communities. At their annual event, 'Esho Moja Kore Khai', they distribute beef and polao among destitute children in Dhaka. They also run different awareness, cleanliness and blood donation campaigns. In this pandemic, the organisation provided food packages to nearly 6,000 people across 1,335 families. This year, they plan to ensure skill-based jobs for 100 unemployed women through Onindito Naree. Over the years, Sombhabona has come a long way, with unconditional support from their Chief Advisor, Mohammad Muslim Chowdhury, Comptroller and Auditor General of Bangladesh and Mohammad Tofazzal Ali, Executive Director of Standard Group.