

A day for the less fortunate

Universal Children's Day Event by JAAGO



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How much thought do we give to the little children in ragged clothing who knock on our car windows or approach us while we're on rickshaws, to sell us flowers? How much do we really care? How many times have we snapped at them for no apparent reason or watched someone yell at them? This Universal Children's Day (November 20), JAAGO invited volunteers from all over Bangladesh to step into the shoes (figuratively, as most of them don't have shoes) of these less fortunate children.

The main goal of the campaign led by JAAGO – on the platform of Volunteer for Bangladesh – was to raise awareness for child education and child rights. While handing out leaflets, flowers and information on how to invest in a child's education, the awareness not only reached the people the volunteers approached, but the reality of the day-to-day harshness the underprivileged children face was experienced by the 10,000 (approximately) volunteers.

During a workshop at ISD on November 15, Korvi Rakshand, founder of JAAGO Foundation, briefed the volunteers, saying, "No matter how nice your shoes are, or how nice your bags are, once you ask someone to invest, to actually do something, the chances of the people walking away or misbehaving are quite high." There were cases where the eager volunteers were fiercely shot down; however, the kindness that exists in people's hearts shone through in the end. The following day, Abdullah Al Wasif, President of Volunteer for Bangladesh, Dhaka District, was overjoyed to be able to say that the event had been a complete success in his eyes.

"The UCD event is happening in 28 districts of the country this year. The motive behind our event is to create a sense of involvement in everyone. We want more people to actively take part in helping us secure more resources for the thousands of children deprived of education. Our way of achieving this is by making our volunteers spread awareness. We believe it wholeheartedly that children are the future and therefore something must be done for them," said S.M. Faheem Alam, a core Committee Member of Volunteer for Bangladesh, Dhaka District.

Tasnim Anan Raisa, a volunteer working at the Banani point, said, "It has been a humbling experience. We had a tough day and it taught us much. I can't think of a better way to understand what these children on the streets go through everyday; it did change us in a way I can't quite explain."

The day, despite the many challenges, held some moments of resplendent joy for most of the volunteers. To close it all off, all the volunteers of Dhaka met up at a Carnival Point, which was essentially an amusement park. The organisers were happy to see that the day ended with laughter and smiles of both the volunteers and street children.

The Daily Star was the media partner for the event.

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