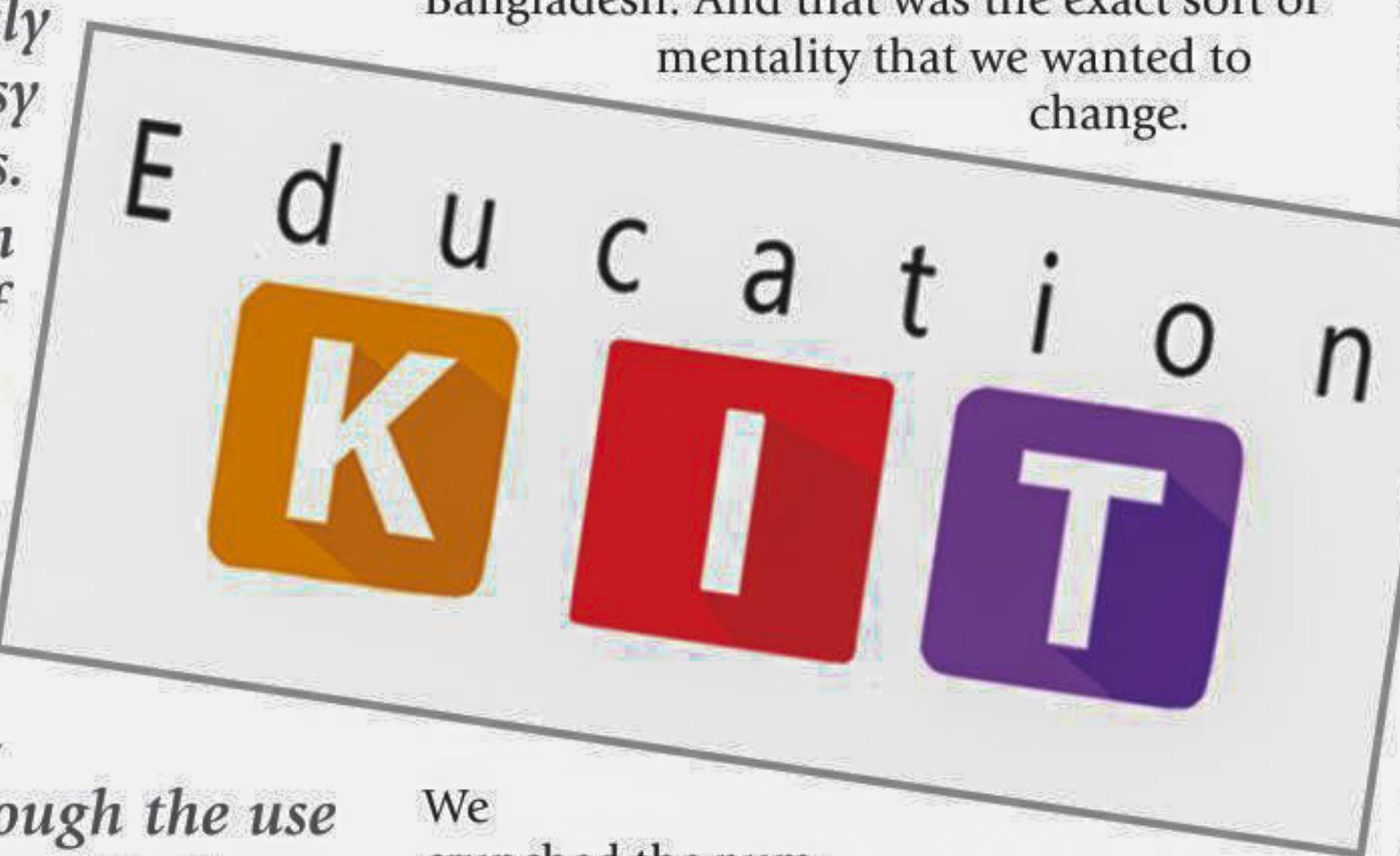


# TEACHING THE MASSES

NAZIFA RAIDAH

*We all want to remove illiteracy from the face of our country but not a lot of us can gather the time to help out as our lives are tightly knit in our busy schedules.*

*Education Kit, an initiative of Bangladesh Volunteer Society (BVS), a local non-profit organisation, tackles this problem brilliantly through the use of technology and a bit of perseverance. A conversation with Ali Mashraf, one of the co-founders of Education KIT, revealed more about the organisation and its functions.*



We crunched the numbers and found that out of 3.2 million child labourers in Bangladesh, 421,000 are employed as domestic help and the majority of them (79.2%) have no access to formal education. However, it was promising that 75.83% of these kids wish to continue their study and thus we had our target group identified. We primarily

## WHAT WAS THE INSPIRATION BEHIND EDUCATION KIT?

Ali: Initially Newaz Akbar Hossain and I wanted to start an online platform for underprivileged kids to avail primary education. The idea was shot down by most people saying it's a long shot for Bangladesh. And that was the exact sort of mentality that we wanted to change.

targeted them, since among all the underprivileged kids, they're the ones who usually don't have any recognised platform for primary education."

## HAS THIS INITIATIVE BEEN TAKEN ON BEFORE?

Ali: We wanted this platform to be similar to Coursera. There are online platforms for providing education in Bangladesh for primary level but those aren't open to the masses. We wanted Education KIT to be open and accessible from any part of the country.

## HOW DOES EDUCATION KIT WORK?

Ali: Anyone can visit our website – [educationkit.org](http://educationkit.org), login and go to the classes 1-5. They can download the PDFs of the NCTB books there and use lecture videos uploaded on our YouTube channel to teach the kids. At present we have uploaded all the lectures of class 1 and will be uploading video lectures of class 2 soon. We also have sample assessment materials and urge those using our service to assess the progress of these kids and send us report. Our team would help the kids in those households who require further assistance.

## HOW CAN THE YOUTH TAKE PART IN THIS INITIATIVE?

Ali: They can contribute directly as tutors explaining the contents of the textbooks, and the lectures will be recorded and uploaded to our platform. They can also contribute by ensuring that the children working in their household as well as other households of the society get to avail our service and thus build a network that ensures all underprivileged kids working as domestic help get primary education as prescribed by NCTB.

## CAN THE YOUTH CARRY THIS INITIATIVE FORWARD?

Ali: I personally believe the youth are not the future, rather they're the present. The youth can lead the society and change perspectives of people who think education for child domestic workers is a waste of time, and make a revolutionary impact in eradicating illiteracy in Bangladesh.

Education KIT has been launched all over Bangladesh. Visit [www.educationkit.org](http://www.educationkit.org) to be a part of the initiative.

*Nazifa Raidah loves sugar and spice and candy. Loads and loads of candy. Reach her at nazifa45678@gmail.com*

# Teaching Business Ethics with Comic Books

## Seminar and Workshop sponsored by ULAB School of Business

ARZOO ISMAIL

ULAB School of Business took the initiative to conduct a seminar and workshop on business ethics which was unique in nature and to the best of knowledge first of its kind in Bangladesh. The event took place on July 27, 2015 in ULAB auditorium. Undergraduate students from ULAB School of Business and Media Studies and Journalism participated in the seminar and workshop. Graphic novels were used because gone are the days when comic books were considered as entertainment for kids only. Comic characters are now not just limited to books only but have also breathed a new life into whole genres of TV shows, movies, animations, computer games, etc. Moreover, they have secured places on t-shirts, mugs, caps, rucksacks, bed covers, pillow cases and what not. On June 12, 2015, Centre for Language Studies, ULAB had organised the very first national conference on "Embracing Graphicdemia: The Role of Graphic Novels and Comics in Academia." Following the tune, ULAB School of Business (USB) implemented the concept and held a seminar and workshop on "Teaching Business Ethics with Comic Books".

The seminar started with welcome note from Prof. William Derrenger, Dean, ULAB School of Business (USB). After

that Prof. Imran Rahman, VC, ULAB shared his experience of having witnessed the practice of teaching with comics and graphic novels years back in the USA. Sajedul Haq, Assistant Prof. and Director, Center for Language Studies, ULAB gave his talk explaining the role and importance of comic studies/graphic novels in academia. The talk was followed by Tahseen Salman Choudhury, Director, Paricharja (a local NGO providing low-cost outdoor medical service) and a comic researcher. Many examples from the pages of international comics like DC Comics, Marvel Comics, Dynamite Entertainment as well as the ones from the local publishers like Dhaka Comics and Mighty Punch Studios were used to identify the ethical dilemmas people faced in business situations. He ended the talk wishing the educated new-generation to make a change in the local business scenario and to practice ethical business practices. After the keynote presentation, Asifur Rahman, writer and artist from Dhaka Comics talked about the comic industry of Bangladesh and Dhaka Comics. The seminar ended with the talk by Samir Asran Rahman, Creative Director, Mighty Punch Studios where he shared his own experience in this industry and a short story on the journey of his studio.

The workshop was conducted in the second part of the event. Students were



divided into groups and were instructed to identify ethical issues in business in the context of Bangladesh and create a comic story about it. With the guidance from the guest speakers, the students were successful in creating interesting comic stories where they talked about the use of cow-fattening tablets to boost the sale of cows, the use of formalin in fruits and selling unsafe products by hiding information from the consumers, the

overall practice of bribing across different industries and many other similar examples. The comic stories were displayed and Prof. Jahirul Haque, Pro-VC, ULAB handed over certificates and awards to the best three teams for their comic stories about business ethics. The event ended with a vote of thanks.

*The writer is Lecturer and Assistant Proctor, ULAB.*