

## SIDW 2017 - Introducing Human Centred Design

NAFISA FARUQUE

*There is an increasing interest worldwide in the methodology of Human Centered Design that puts people, their experiences and behaviours at the centre of the entire design process. The approach comes from a place where empathy and business feasibility intersect to create solutions that are tailoured not just to fit their needs but fit into their lives.*

In April 2017, Social Innovation Design Week (SIDW) - a co-designed workshop - was conducted by Toru in partnership with IDEO.org and with the support of Levi Strauss Foundation. SIDW 2017 was conducted as a week-long workshop with Mohammadi Group, introducing Human-Centred Design (HCD) through presenting a prevalent problem to a multidisciplinary team of 20 Fellows. This year's focus had been on



improving the work and life experience of RMG workers. The Fellows were immersed into the RMG community at the Mohammadi Group's factory.

The workshop was led by IDEO.org's Rob Gradoville, who has had a phenomenal career in implementing design challenges and teaching human-centric design tools. Rob's knowledge of the human-centric processes coupled with Toru's grasp on curating those processes into a more localised, approachable context, resulted in gen-

erating an engaging space for design and collaboration.

"The Fellows on the first day were really excited to come up with solutions. But the first day was about slowing down and starting by observing people and then as a team reflecting on what you've observed, understanding how there might be themes in the observations you've seen, how that might relate to some insight that you think you can say about what might be going on in their limits and maybe how to solve some of the issues. So I think it was challenging yet necessary for people to slow down and pull out ideas organically from the big sea of opportunity as opposed to saying something and then challenging themselves to pinpointing the solution right away," Rob explains about the workshop.

SIDW was stretched across 5 days with 5 teams working in - developing day care system, improving living facilities, worker's happiness, creating a staff shop and improving health and hygiene in the RMG community. The workshop took Fellows through the intensive process of HCD - immersing, ideating, inspiring and prototyping.

"It was an extremely positive week of learning new things. It also pushed me to come out of my comfort zone. I learned the importance of design thinking and the procedures of working within a framework. Now I think deeply about a problem rather than jumping into the solution," says Tanvir Hassan, one of the Fellows, who is currently a UX Consultant at iQuantile.

The Fellows also reflected that spending time at the Mohammadi Group factory, understanding its founda-



Fellows identifying problems and creating solutions for improving the work and life experience of RMG community.

tions, operations and spending time with the workers were critical in breaking down the stereotypical perspective of how a Bangladeshi RMG factory operates.

"I think part of the (RMG) challenge was kind of having a client relationship with the factory and using that environment as a case study. In this 5 day long workshop, they're (the participants) not only trying to learn design thinking but

also its applications with regards to value per client - that's both the RMG workers and the factory itself and honestly, that is a challenge worth exploring. There is no question that the entire workshop has given them something solid to reflect upon," says Rob.

SIDW had sprung from the intention of sparking new ideas that open up the possibilities of creating solutions through design and collabora-

tion. The human-centric lens that Toru intends to cultivate from the workshop is becoming increasingly necessary at a time when the world faces fundamental shifts with the growth of technology. This initiative was in a manner, an example of how the power of multi-sector collaboration can enable the creation of more human-centric and long term solutions for a sustainable future.

## A School of change

RASMIA RAHMAN AMREEN



Children of LEEDO with their care-givers or their mothers, as they affectionately call them.

Local Education and Economic Development Organisation, in short LEEDO, began operating in 2000. This charity organisation's main aim is to protect and bring back into the mainstream community highly vulnerable underprivileged children, whose lives are being shattered by poverty, domination, exclusion, abuse and conflicts. It also works to provide suitable opportunities for the betterment of these children's future.

The plight of underprivileged children is something that changed the course of Mr Murshida Kanta's life, one of the founders. "I have always had a privileged life, where my parents met all my needs. When I was in my early 30s, seeing young souls succumb to poverty, abuse, and drugs made me decided that I will spend the rest of my life working to make a difference to the lives of as many children as I can," she says.

"Drawing inspiration from my late elder sister, Advocate Rashida, I decided long back that if Mother Teresa can dedicate her entire life for the betterment of people, I too would shape my life accordingly."

LEEDO Peace Home is an attempt taken by the organisation to rehabilitate children left on the streets and disowned by their families. It can accommodate 50 children. Currently,

Peace Home holds 45 underprivileged children of whom 18 are special children. It even hosts a 12-year-old special child along with her a year and half old son who was left on the streets by her family while 5 months pregnant. "After finding her, we gave her shelter in our home and nursed her. Once she gave birth, I was the first one to hold the baby in my arms," recalls Ms Kanta, with tears twinkling in the corners of her eyes.

Other initiatives taken by LEEDO also include Rescue from Street, Transitional Shelter SETU, School Under the Sky, Mobile School and more. School Under the Sky runs informal schools conducted in areas where underprivileged children are concentrated, such as train and bus stations, market areas and launch terminals. Mobile School is an innovative project that educates and makes underprivileged children aware of how to keep safe and develop a goal for life. The education system is based on games and entertainment. Mobile schools are also a means of rescuing children.

"After waking up and brushing teeth, each day starts with PT at 7:10 am. After breakfast, the children attend schools and come back by noon. Once back to their home, the children get done with their homeworks. After shower, we feed lunch.

Next, one after another, the English, Math, Religion, Music and Dance volunteer tutors start to arrive. We also arrange for piano, karate and swimming lessons," says Tania, one of the care givers. "At 9pm, dinner is served. Afterwards, we spend time together until 11pm. After drinking a glass of milk, it is now their bedtime," adds Bulu.

Mr. Forhad Hossain, the executive director of LEEDO, says, "It all began with a sudden epiphany while walking on the streets one night, some 25 years back. While observing the children left alone, I thought to myself that whether I could come of some use to ease their lives. Initially, I would leave food for them to eat and try to educate them on the streets. However, I soon realised that it would not be enough. With the generous help from a British couple, the Liz and Carl family, we were enabled to build LEEDO Peace School. They also host 25 of our children." LEEDO is harboring dreams Mother Teresa might have dreamt when alive. While they serve silently to the nation without asking for anything in return, they are shaping the future where perhaps one day, no more children would have to suffer.

For more information, visit their website: [www.streetchildrenleedobd.org](http://www.streetchildrenleedobd.org)

## Project Attorokkha: Empowerment with a punch

OSAMA RAHMAN

Zaiba Tahyya is engrossed watching the next phase of her brainchild, Project Attorokkha, a self-defense training program for women from low-income background, a project of Zaiba's own Female Empowerment Movement (FEM). She seems almost like an unassuming, modern day version of television's Daenerys Targaryen minus the temperament and dragons but with the same zeal when seen overseeing the training of an "army" in the making. The second phase of Project Attorokkha is taking place in the capital city's Rayerbazaar, Korail and Shattola. The work so far seems to be tremendous.

Four participants out of the 16 from the first phase of the project are teaching around 40 girls in their communities the importance of self defense along with basic self defense skills. Many of the ones in the first phase had gone on to gain employment in the security sector owing to their newly learnt prowess. This was like a passing of the torch ceremony but one packed with a lot more punch.

When queried why Zaiba had taken this particular approach, her answer was simple and one that seemed to address a question everyone forgot to ask. "Years of research on working with violence against women, I only saw awareness cam-

paigns on what happened but never any preventive measures. Women were mentally empowered but lacked physical empowerment which is important for mobility within their community," she said.

FEM began in early 2016. Project Attorokkha was one of its first projects. The project sought to train women from vulnerable classes the basics of self-defense. These girls would then be offered employment opportunity in the security sector. The job would be the first time many of them had enjoyed job security while having the knowledge that they no longer had to be worried about not being able to physically defend themselves.

Phase II of this noble and novel initiative is taking place in Shokhi (a project by Marie Stopes, We Can, Bangladesh Women's Health Coalition, Bangladesh Legal Aid Services Trust and Embassy of Kingdom of Netherlands) hubs across Dhaka. The first hub and class started in Rayerbazaar's Shokhi hub. The participants present are aged between 10-16 years and will be taught the importance of strength, self defense and how to protect themselves in difficult situations. The classes are to be monitored by the previous black belt instructor, S Islam Shuvo of Bangladesh Karate Federation every week.

