

## A SPRIGHTLY MENTOR FOR THE YOUNG MINDS

# Digital Innovation Challenge for Women-2017

PRIYANKA CHOWDHURY

When she sat among the mentors, the participants were a little confused. She looked too young to be part of the challenge. However, when she spoke, it was clear that she was not a participant but an expert. Working as a Senior Graphic Designer in Magnito Digital, she is the youngest mentor at the Digital Innovation Challenge for Women-2017 in a pool of eleven. Jannat Ul Fardoush Hira shares her experience and expectations with Star Youth.

With a charming smile, Hira expresses her joy to be associated with this contest. "I have been working with Women in Digital for some time now. I was a mentor in the National Hackathon for Women and it is always a pleasure to work with young minds," she says.

To the participants, Hira offers mentorship for building UX, UI and web-designing. Dumbfounded with the technical terms, I ask what UX and UI stands for. Hira with her natural, smiling face explains that, it is the interface that the user would experience while using an application or the backbone of the app. So, the participants who will be building apps could take her suggestions on designing. While asking about the participants, she says that they have a lot of positive energy within them. She is also happy to see parents supporting their daughters in tech-based competitions and building potential careers in this field.

Talking about this innovative mentoring session, Hira says, "Being a mentor is not an easy task; we always have to stay updated to be able to support the participants." According to Hira, rather than criticising a budding idea or discarding it at the first go, it is better to show the participants how to improvise on it. That way, even if they fail in one, they will not lose the spirit to try again.

When asked what kind of a mentor Hira is, she replies, "Our first mentors are our parents; they help us to build confidence within us. I also try to be a similar kind of a mentor, who encourages participants to do new things." Hira believes that the digital era is here to stay, and if these girls work hard, there are immense opportunities waiting for them in the global arena. "Not just mentoring, I am also excited about learning from other mentors and the participants in this contest."



Jannat Ul Fardoush Hira

PHOTO: SUSNATA CHAKMA

# BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE AND EMPATHETIC SOCIETY

SHABABA IQBAL

People suffering from learning disabilities are often left surrounded by social stigma, and treated with indifference. This happens due to the fact that, most people are not aware of the horrors those with disabilities have to face. This is where InclusionX steps in, a youth initiative formed in July 2015, aiming to create an avenue to streamline interaction between people with and without disabilities. It allows the larger part of the society (consisting of abled people) to gain a better understanding of what it means to live with disabilities.

InclusionX is the brainchild of Labib Tazwar Rahman. Through this project, students from different mainstream schools and colleges visit a school for the disabled and spend a day with students suffering from the Down syndrome and the autism spectrum. Labib says, "There is an inefficiency of knowledge about people with disabilities that leads to the pervasiveness of negative attitudes among the general public; we must break the myth that people with disabilities can't learn or work."

InclusionX also arranges 'Joy of Computing'. It is a series of engaging, two-month long courses where students with special needs are taught basic computing skills and programmes such as Microsoft Office, e-mailing, and web surfing. They have further partnered with different schools and organisations to arrange art exhibitions and seminars, and incorporate music and dance performances by students with special needs in different

events. In 2015, Viqarunnisa Noon School and College invited many special needs students to partake in their art competition. InclusionX also co-hosted an art competition last year where people with and without disabilities participated together.

Despite these accomplishments, Labib and his team still face many hurdles, as

certain mainstream schools are still uncomfortable with having disabled students at their cultural events.

Volunteers at InclusionX share that, they have realised the importance of treating people of the disabled community with kindness and empathy. Ali Mashraf, a student volunteer who has been working with autistic children since 2014, says,

"The way these children treat others with love and affection makes me feel shameful for the way they are generally marginalised in the society."

Moving forward, InclusionX hopes to educate guardians on the proper way to raise a child with disability, and raise awareness all over Bangladesh about different disabilities.



PHOTO: COURTESY

## Project Pothchola's Hamba Hoi Choi!

AFSANA AZIZ NITOL

The excitement for Eid-ul-Azha is noticeable mostly among kids. Their enthusiasm surrounding animals before the Eid day is known to all. However, for underprivileged children, the scenario is a little different. They have to settle with petting others' cows or goats that they see on the streets and find joy in it.

This year, Project Pothchola, an initiative launched under Bandhu Foundation that works for the mental growth of a group of children of sex-workers, decided to gift these underprivileged children their very own cow. The project works in collaboration with Hazera Begum, from the Shishuder Jonno Amra organisation that takes care of 35 children living in a shelter home.

Previously, the project has conducted various events for the betterment of the mental health of children. The events have included concepts that are not usually taught in their schools, for exam-



PHOTO: FACEBOOK.COM/PROJECTPOTHCHOLA

*Project Pothchola, an initiative launched under Bandhu Foundation that works for the mental growth of a group of children of sex-workers, decided to gift these underprivileged children their very own cow.*

ple, dancing, painting, going to book-fair etc. In order to come up with something new, this Eid-ul-Azha, Project Pothchola took the kids to Gorur Haat. For safety issues, the older kids from shelter home were taken to Gorur Haat

while the little ones stayed back. After the cow had been bought, it was then taken to the shelter home. The kids got their own cow to take care of and slaughter. Thus, they did not have to rely on people to give them meat.

Raisa Mehbuba, one of the volunteers of Project Pothchola (who also worked as a co-ordinator of this event), says, "I have been working for this initiative for over 3 years now. Never have I ever felt this satisfied after an event. These children, being children of sex-workers, had little idea about the outside world. Project Pothchola has been aiming to teach them about the outside world. By giving them their own cow, we have taught them another aspect of the tradition of this country."

The fact that the kids named their cow 'Shanto' shows how happy they were about getting a new cow for this Eid. Project Pothchola wishes to organise more of such events that will double the happiness of the kids and boost their confidence level.

If anyone wants to know about the upcoming events of Project Pothchola, here is their Facebook page link: <https://www.facebook.com/projectpothchola>



www.youthop.com

## Youth Opportunities

### 1. Nokia Open Innovation Challenge 2017



The Nokia Open Innovation Challenge, in partnership with venture firm Nokia Growth Partners, is a call for ideas, technologies, and new

business models in IoT. If your product or technology is targeting markets in transportation, smart cities, safety and security, and connected industries, or if your solution enables a smart, safe, and sustainable world, they are looking for you.

Deadline: September 20, 2017

### 2. Harvard University: Knight Visiting Nieman Fellowships 2018 in U.S.A.

The Knight Visiting Nieman Fellowships at Harvard offer short-term research opportunities to individuals interested in working on special projects designed to advance journalism in some new way. Candidates need not be practising journalists but must demonstrate the ways in which their work at Harvard and the Nieman Foundation may improve the prospects for journalism's future. This may be related to research, programming, design, financial strategies or another topic.

Deadline: September 29, 2017



### 3. Paid Internship at the World Bank



The World Bank offers internship to exceptionally energetic and effective people. This is a chance for the interns to enhance their aptitudes while working in

a diverse environment. This is an interesting and rewarding scope for potential opportunity seekers. The World Bank Group offers unique programmes that provide learning, staffing, and capacity-building opportunities for junior and mid-career professionals to experience first-hand what working at the WBG is like. Deadline: October 31, 2017

### 4. Korean Government Scholarship Programme, 2018

The Korean Government Scholarship Programme (KGSP) supports the future global leaders and promotes the international cooperation in education by inviting talented international students to Korea for an opportunity to conduct advanced studies in higher educational institutions in Korea.

Deadline: Ongoing



### 5. Internship Opportunity at Alibaba.com, Bangladesh



The global partner office in Bangladesh of world's leading B2B platform Alibaba.com is looking for some young, and energetic female individuals as

interns. The intern will work at their customer service division. If you are interested in working with this renowned platform, then send your CV now and grab the opportunity!

Deadline: Ongoing