



Documenting life to create awareness

Digital Storytelling Workshop for YES Alumni

ZARIN M. CHOWDHURY

In today's multimedia environment, activism and community service require a range of communication and media skills. As the YES Alumni population continues to grow, so does its work and impact, and we believe it is crucial to share out stories to gain momentum for YES alumni projects and initiatives. That is why we felt it necessary to hold the "Digital Storytelling Workshop", and I can confidently say on behalf of all the foreign participants, it was a delight to be able to hold such an event in Bangladesh.

iEARN BD team and iEARN US team have been planning the workshop since May 2018 and the workshop took place in BRAC

CDM, Savar, from October 2-7, 2018.

Over the four days, 18 alumni members from 11 countries including Bahrain, Tunisia, Lebanon, Libya, West Bank, Nigeria, Kenya, Ghana, the Philippines, South Africa, and Bangladesh, learned about story arcs, interviewing, production and editing, and gained technical skills to create powerful digital stories to document life – the good and the bad in their communities. One of YES Alumni roles is to be involved in the community and respond to the needs and the demands to make life easier and better for everyone. Digital storytelling is a powerful tool to raise awareness and spread knowledge and ideas.

The goal of this workshop was to enhance and expand YES Alumni's techni-

cal skills in video, photography, storytelling, and social media. Three talented videographers from New Jersey and Texas of USA lead the workshop, giving participants a range of communication and media skills required for activism and community service.

Importantly, this workshop went beyond documentation and taught YES Alumni how to present their work to peers, community leaders, and decision-makers to build awareness and share the impact of the YES Alumni projects happening around the world.

During the closing ceremony of the workshop, YES Alumni showcased the videos that they produced to the invited guests. Guests included Kelly Ryan,

Cultural Affairs Officer, U.S. Embassy Dhaka; Tahnia Shahid, Program Manager, Student-Teacher Exchange Programs, U.S. Embassy Dhaka; Shahed Ali, teacher and Brand Ambassador of GEIST; journalists; research assistants; writers; teachers; Alumni from both YES and other State Department-sponsored programmes, entrepreneurs; and the Campus Superintendent of BRAC University Savar Campus among others. The hard work of the participants was recognised by awarding them with certificates. At the end of the workshop, they were all very inspired and excited to take their newly learned skills back to their home communities and use it to improve their community and share the impacts of their projects.

PATHSHALA HOSTS ONE: A PHOTOGRAPHIC EXHIBITION

MOHUA MOULI

Pathshala South Asian Media Institute is hosting "One: A Photographic Exhibition" at their Dhanmondi premises from September 19 to October 10, 2018. The exhibition featured selected works by first semester students of three previous batches of the institute.

The exhibition's focus was to showcase works by novice students who are enrolled in the three-year professional photography program. Throughout the three years, the students explore the various facets in the field of photography that are organised into 23 courses. One of the courses is Techniques of Photography I; the exhibited photographs are part of the different assignments students had to do for this particular course.

Upon entering the premise, I could see the photo frames neatly organised against the white-washed walls of the gallery. Each photograph told a story of



not only the subject of the image, but also of the photographer. There were photographs of construction sites, animals, worn-out cars, people on the streets, and even dirty plastic bags that looked nothing short of artistic. They all range from street to abstract genre – each student showcased their creativity through unique subjects and composi-

tions and use of colour contrasts.

After looking into all the photographs in the exhibition, I got a chance to speak with Ashraful Awal Mishuk, faculty member at Pathshala South Asian Media Institute to ask about what it's like to teach freshmen and about the structure they follow in the three-year program.

"The entire program is designed to help anyone interested in photography to have a better understanding on the subject," said Mishuk.

When asked about the students who usually enrol for this program, he said, "We get around 15-20 students during each intake that takes place every six months. They range from school students to middle-aged professionals. Some are simply keen on learning more about photography while others want to take it up as a full-time profession. This is why we have evening classes on weekdays, as it ensures everyone can participate."

However, of all those who enrol do not end up graduating because of a number of factors that include financial problems, or being unable to commit for a length of time. Through it all, however, Pathshala makes sure to never compromise with quality. The institution also welcomes students from other countries.