



# Bringing ignorance into the light

TransEnd initiatives battling phobia and abuse against transgender and intersex people

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Transgender and intersex people experience shocking amounts of abuse and discrimination in their daily life. They get harassed and exploited at home, work or on the roads. But as most people have transphobia in our society, they overlook abuse or violence against transgender people. TransEnd, a non-profit and youth-led organisation, is working for these marginal communities since 2019. Apart from helping and empowering these individuals, they are trying to educate mass people regarding trans rights, misconceptions and other related issues.

**Transgender Awareness Week**  
The week before the Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDOR) on 20th November marks as Transgender Awareness Week. This is a time to memorialise victims of transphobic violence throughout the world and to recognise the progress made against transphobia. This year, TransEnd along with Swayong and Voice Your Story initiated 'Transforming Mindsets' to celebrate the Transgender Awareness Week. This is to bring to light what types of sexual violence and harassment transgender and gender non-conforming people face.

#### Transforming Mindsets

According to a study, titled 'Political Economy Analysis for Gender Diverse Communities in Bangladesh', about 98% of the gender-diverse people face

harassment, discrimination, and stigma. 97% of them face police entrapment and harassment in public places. But in most cases, violence against transgender and gender-diverse people or their stories do not get acknowledged in conventional media.

Telling stories is one of the powerful means to educate people about any particular topic or to bridge the gap of misconceptions. This is why 'Transforming Mindsets' was projected to raise awareness. Through every story, they want to shed light into all the injustices and abuse tolerated by transgender people. They have reached over 8,900,000 audiences through their social media platforms and most of the responses are positive. The story collection was done by the communication officers of TransEnd. As they have a close connection with transgender people, they agreed to share their stories and with their consent, TransEnd posted their stories. The lead for 'Transforming Mindsets' project was Tabia Tahsin. Swayong, a platform to dismantle social injustices against women through storytelling and Voice Your Story, a platform to share stories of sexual assault regardless of gender supported the cause by helping them in editing, translating, and visualising the stories.

**Intersex Awareness campaign**  
Though intersex is a normal part of human diversity, they are often

ignored and stigmatised in our society. To make intersex people socially acceptable and to burst myths about them, TransEnd arranged a month-long "Intersex Awareness Campaign" named "Oshadharon Kichu Shadharon" (Extraordinary amongst the Ordinary) keeping Intersex Awareness Day (26th October) in focus. Throughout the campaign, they posted several posters, articles, videos, infographics and a webinar.

**Focusing on the basic knowledge and information related to intersex people**  
Have you ever thought who intersex people are or what intersex traits are? What is the difference among intersex, transgender and hijra? Or what is the outcome of intersex surgeries and why is it not the proper solution? Due to lack of the basic knowledge, intersex people are often being denied fundamental rights and isolated from the society because of their different traits. "Oshadharon Kichu Shadharon" tried to highlight these common information as well as human rights issues faced by intersex people. A special episode of their 'Break the Taboo' webinar series was the kick-start of the campaign where Lamea Tanjin Tanha, the founder and CEO of TransEnd and Noor Alom, an intersex rights activist were present. The webinar focused on issues like the definition of intersex, intersex surgeries, the experience of

being a Bangladeshi intersex person, the state of intersex awareness movement in Bangladesh. To give a heads up about the campaign, eye-catching and thought-provoking teasers were provided in the primary stage of the campaign. For the first time in Bangladesh, TransEnd has created a stop motion video in Bangla language to portray the basic knowledge about intersex community. They have also made a comic strip to illustrate how much verbal abuse and bully an intersex individual goes through on a regular basis just because of their different characteristics. The lead for this campaign was Zohan Araz Khan. All of the details and facts used throughout the campaign were taken from reliable sources and organisations that work for these people and a team of local representatives was always there to guide TransEnd. Fact-checking was done for each of these to ensure authenticity. TransEnd team itself has members from different educational backgrounds and trans people too. They have reached over 9,700,000 people through social media platforms.

While sharing the backstories of these campaigns, Lamea Tanjin Tanha also mentioned many times they faced backlash due to their activities supporting trans rights. But you cannot step back just because a group of people are resistant to what is right.