



Team members and volunteers of Share Your Closet.

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF SHARE YOUR CLOSET

# SHARE YOUR CLOSET, SHARE HAPPINESS

MAISHA ISLAM MONAMEE

Share Your Closet, a youth organisation, intends to bridge the nationwide clothing divide, and ensure that the less fortunate communities have enough clothes, especially during winter. It addresses the discrimination associated with the lack of proper clothing. Despite the fact that Bangladesh is the second largest exporter of ready-made garments in the world, a substantial part of our population lives in extreme poverty, without adequate clothing. "Apart from being the first visible sign of poverty, lack of clothing leads to health challenges during winters. Access to adequate clothing is a basic human right," asserted Reesha Ahmed, the Founder of Share Your Closet.

Through this initiative, Reesha wants to lend a voice to the underprivileged communities. "In our country, those in need of help are neglected, and are unable to demand their rights," she added. The team of Share Your Closet has organised four events till date. They distributed clothes among slum dwellers and transgender people in Dhaka at their first event. For their second



Volunteers distributing clothes during an event.

event, they reached out to Chingrakhali, a remote, flood-affected village in Bagerhat, where they provided winter clothes and other accessories to the underprivileged communities.

Their third event was a winter exclusive donation drive, through which they gave out packages containing thermal blankets, sweaters and cardigans to beggars and people with disabilities, in the capital. Their last distribution was a continuation to the third, as they sent these packages to Chattogram. "We follow physical distancing protocols at every event and begin by handing out masks to the recipients," Reesha shared.

Share Your Closet has inspired many through social media platforms. The organisation's posts have reached nearly 30,000 people online, encouraging them to join the noble campaign. Interested donors can either drop off their clothes at the organisation's collection booth in Banani, or send money to fund the distribution drives through bKash.

The author is a freelancer who likes reading, planning and scribbling. Follow her @monameereads on Instagram.



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## YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES

### Youth Economic Forum 2021

Striving to create critical, intellectual and meaningful discourse on current issues and global trends, the Youth Economic Forum – founded in 2016 by the Perdana Fellows Alumni Association (PFAA) – aims to promote new perspectives and insights on the state of the world, the economy, and society through constructive and fact-based discussions.

DEADLINE: March 4, 2021 | Conferences



A Brave New World



### Never Such Innocence Competition 2020/21

An international educational charity, 'Never Such Innocence', is running poetry, art, speech, and song competitions to give young people around the world a voice on conflict. The theme is 'The Unheard Voices of Conflict: Stories From Around The World' - share your reflections on conflict or give a voice to those who may not have one. The theme can be interpreted in many ways, looking at historical or contemporary conflicts of any kind.

DEADLINE: March 19, 2021 | Competitions

### UNESCO is looking for Programme Specialist 2021 in Dhaka

Under the overall authority of the Assistant Director-General, Education (ADG/ED), the functional authority and direct supervision of the Head of Office, as well as in collaboration with the Regional Office for Education and UNESCO Education Institutes based in the region, the incumbent is responsible for programme and project work, advice, research and knowledge management, networking, partnerships and resource mobilization for the Education Programme of UNESCO Dhaka Office.

DEADLINE: February 13, 2021 | Jobs



## A ray of hope for vulnerable children

ZAREEN NAWAR

APON Foundation, a government approved charitable organisation, was formed in 2006, with the aim of facilitating education for underprivileged children. Since their inception, the organisation expanded their reach by providing necessary winter gear to those in need, and also organising flood relief programmes. They also house homeless children in their Thikana Shelter.

Teaching volunteers for APON Foundation used to teach at Rabindra Sarobar, among other places. However, since the beginning of the pandemic, they have been keeping in touch with the students by sending essential books for them to study from home. The volunteers also communicate with the students digitally.

Around the Rayer Bazar slum area, APON Foundation had established APON Girls Club to educate young girls about necessary rights so that they are able identify discrimination against women in their communities. It is a necessary tactic by APON Foundation to empower women of the upcoming generation.



APON Foundation provides winter clothes to those in need.



Team members of APON Foundation with children at a mask and sticker distribution programme.

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF APON FOUNDATION

In the slum area, they also have an established computer training programme for the vulnerable youth.

The training programme is for youths who want to learn fundamental computing skills to find jobs.

Throughout 2020 and especially during the pandemic, APON Foundation not only focused on providing education to deprived children, but also distributed food packages to around 1,000 people. Members of the foundation distributed masks to around 300 families alongside raising awareness about the dangers of the virus. They also provided monetary assistance to around 50 struggling families.

Every year during Eid-ul-Azha, APON Foundation aims to provide meat to those in need. Members of the foundation distributed meat to around 200 families in 2020. They had also participated in helping the Rohingya camp refugees and organising disaster relief programmes last year.

"We hope to reopen our learning centres this year, and organise events that will stimulate the economic development in our community," said Mohammad Aftabuzzaman, Executive Director, APON Foundation. "We already have several regular donors but more corporate houses and financially solvent donors are welcome to contribute to our cause. We dream of motivating vulnerable youths and families to become independent in their own way."

Members of the police force get in touch with APON Foundation's Thikana Shelter, if they find a missing child in need of care and protection. During the pandemic, the shelter adhered to strict hygienic protocols before introducing any newly found missing children to the shelter. So far, they have reunited around 400 children with their families and rescued around 1,000 children from unpleasant and uncertain circumstances.

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