



Shikho aspires to make learning more accessible



The Bangladeshi EdTech is ticking all the boxes necessary to provide affordable online learning solutions to communities across the country. Their efforts are attracting oversea investments through which they plan on further developing their platform and content, and catering to more students across Bangladesh.

Education technology (EdTech) company, Shikho, is building a hyper-localised digital learning ecosystem that will focus on the modernisation of the delivery of lessons and subjects from the Bangladeshi national curriculum to make it fit for the 21st century.



The platform utilises a variety of modern learning methods to make its content more enjoyable, engaging, and effective. Their efforts are not just focused on their content and instructions, but also using media and technology to deliver effective lessons. Shikho adapts materials from the national curriculum and presents them in a way that allows students to pay more attention. In a way, the platform makes those lessons more interesting as well as engaging. That is something most of these students are not used to, given that they spend much of their academic lives in traditional classrooms.

"Shikho is a purpose-driven company focused on enabling access to exceptionally high-quality learning

content and instruction and transforming how Bangladesh learns by leveraging modern technology," said Shahir Chowdhury, Co-Founder and CEO of Shikho. "We are very proud to have pioneered the introduction of animated video content to aid visual learning and for launching the first and only personalised, data-driven learning app available in Bangladesh."

Shikho launched the first version of its mobile learning app in November 2020 and currently has over 350,000 active users spread across 64 districts of Bangladesh, with paid subscribers currently spending an average of 68 minutes on the app daily.

Using Shikho, a student can access unique on-demand animated video lessons; learn by solving a large bank of in-app questions with detailed solutions; track performance and progress using data analytics on a real-time basis; review summarized "smart notes" that include definitions, formulae, proofs and "hacks"; and finally, attend live classes with expert tutors. Students can learn at their own pace with Bangla learning content accessible anytime and anywhere at a fraction of the cost of traditional tutoring services.

Shikho comes as a blessing to students who reside away from the capital or major cities, or in remote corners of the country where quality tutoring services are hard to find. Never in their lives would these students have thought that they would get the chance to learn or interact with tutors from institutions like BUET or the University of Dhaka. Shikho made it possible for them and turned their wildest imaginations into a reality.

At present, Shikho provides academic courses for SSC, HSC, and competitive university entrance exams. With the arrival of fresh funding from various overseas sources, the platform plans on covering Classes 6, 7, and 8, as well as adding a more comprehensive and enhanced offering for vocational and language skill-building.

In addition, Shikho is already working on relaunching Bohubrihi, a well-known Bangladeshi professional courses platform it had acquired, with new and improved features.

Shikho recently raised USD 4 million in new seed funding. This, in addition to the USD 1.3 million it raised in August 2021, bringing its total round to USD 5.3 million, is the largest seed funding a Bangladeshi start-up has raised to date.

The investment was led by Wavemaker Partners, a leading venture capital firm in Southeast Asia, with participation from seven other global investors. These include returning investors LearnStart, the seed fund of Learn Capital, Anchorless Bangladesh, and Vibe Capital. The company has also added new backers in DSG Consumer Partners, Black Kite Capital, Ratio Ventures, and Julian Shapiro, the founder of Demand Curve.

Regarding the investment, Paul Santos, Managing Partner at Wavemaker Partners, said, "Not all Bangladeshi students have equal access to remote learning tools or high-quality education. Many feel they have to pay for expensive private tutoring to pass highly competitive national examinations. With Shikho, students can access high-quality educational content from top teachers on their phones and computers at a reasonable price. We're inspired by Shikho's mission and excited to continue supporting them to democratise access to quality education for students across Bangladesh."

"Since August 2021, the team has grown from 60 to over 300 strong spread across four different locations and we plan to continue strengthening several departments," said Shahir. "It is truly humbling to have the support of such an established and experienced group of global investors who believe in our mission and purpose as much as we do. We have incredibly exciting and ambitious plans for 2022 and look forward to working with all our strategic partners."

Before this round of financing, Shikho raised USD 275,000 in a pre-seed financing from LearnStart and strategic angel investors, including Zubair Siddiky and Ambareen Reza, the Managing Directors of Foodpanda Bangladesh, and Adeeba Khan, Director of Summit Power International Limited.

With additional funds, Shikho plans on coming up with more content that will not only cater to students but to also those who are eager to develop professional skills like programming. In a way, the platform wants to prepare its students for the real world by first helping them succeed in their academics, and then preparing them for their jobs or higher studies abroad. And given how Shikho has been living up to its promises till now, it is needless to say that they will surely achieve their goals in the years to come.

To find out more visit shikho.tech