



## CholPori: Ensuring proper educational resources for children nationwide

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AKHLAKUR RAHMAN

Zareen Mahmud Hosein, a chartered accountant by profession, founded CholPori, an e-learning platform for the children of primary school, in 2020. She aimed to enhance the grade competency of children through the platform using fun animations and illustrious content.

"The beginning of CholPori is connected with my project on women empowerment," said Zareen, who is also the founder of HerStory Foundation.

In 2016, Zareen organised an informal meeting inviting eighty female leaders and professionals from three generations just to hear their stories. "Aroma Dutta didi was there and the very next day she wrote to me suggesting the idea of designing a book," Zareen shared.

That same year, Zareen and her crew organised a competition on Mother's Day. About 200 girls, aged between 15 to 18 were asked to write about their role models.



Zareen Mahmud Hosein, founder of CholPori.

"Seventy percent of the participants chose their mothers as their role model and said that they wanted to be a 'sacrificing mother' just like theirs. However, I knew that there is more to a girl or woman's existence," added Zareen.

Addressing the lack of other role models and how it limited the children's visions of having dreams, or aspiring to be something more than 'sacrificing mother', Zareen launched the book, "Adventures of Supergirls" containing stories of twenty



aspiring women which received a great response in the 2017 Lit Fest.

The book garnered much attention from the attendees and soon went on to become a favourite among young readers. A couple of years later, Zareen and her team organised a fellowship programme 'Chol Pori HerStory'. The event featured training sessions where twenty students from University of Dhaka (DU) and Independent University Bangladesh (IUB) participated.

"The fellowship programme was the initial form of CholPori," mentioned Zareen. "It was a year-long programme where the participants from the training visited twenty underprivileged schools." The founder also informed that the students conducted small sessions on how they could increase their reading competency and in turn plan their future careers and life.

Due to the pandemic, CholPori soon had to transform their existence and go online. However, the schools offered very minimal resources and even the teachers were underequipped.

"The competency of these children was far off national or international standards as the students had very limited access to resources," added Zareen. "To address this problem, we initiated CholPori."

Alongside academics, CholPori also focuses on the emotional and individual growth for children.

"Our animations and story books intend to present lessons in an enjoyable manner to allow naturalistic input in our users' minds, leaving them more prompt, creative and capable," asserts Zareen.

"Through our cartoons and the narrations of illustrated storybooks in the classrooms, we try to instil good habits and qualities among the children."

Zareen believes that through this initiative, the children will be able to learn to respect others, be empathetic and leave behind any gender bias that might have entered their mind through social interactions.

CholPori currently provides content in both Bangla and English, in two categories - 'Pathshala' and 'Boighor'. While 'Pathshala' offers animation, narration, and delightful illustrations to aid practical learning, 'Boighor' presents illustrated, read-along and interactive books for children.

"CholPori's journey has just begun and we intend to bring these resources to every child in the nation because we believe it is their right," concludes Zareen.

## Handicrafts showcasing employment opportunities for gender-diverse individuals

FAHIN RAHMAN AUNGKITA

An initiative of TransEnd, a handicrafts fair was held on Friday afternoon, aiming to empower the marginalised transgender, hijra and gender-diverse community of Bangladesh.

The unique fair featured five stalls showcasing a wide range of products starting from colourful jewelries and dresses, tie dye and screen-printed t-shirts to tote bags, hand-poured candles, and jars of pickles, all of which were made by trained members of the gender-diverse community. The proud makers of the products were present to display their artisries to the invited guests and the intrigued crowd.

Under the "Improving Livelihood of the Transgender Community" project of Transend supported by Youth Co:Lab, 20 transgender



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individuals were provided with Handicrafts and Beautification training to help them seek employment or entrepreneurship opportunities.

In the presence of Daniel J. Buchman, Consular Officer, US Embassy Dhaka, transgender rights activist Shanjiboni; Mahmudul Hasan, Programme Officer and Youth Coordinator, UNDP; Mozammel Haque, Programme Analyst, UNDP Bangladesh; employers and beneficiaries of the training programs shared their experiences in a formal sessions.

"Due to the downpour, a few guests could not make it but the event was purposefully successful due to the presence of so many individuals from so many marginalized communities," remarked Lamea Tanjin Tanha, Founder & CEO of TransEnd.

Supported by UNDP, Youth Co:Lab and Citi Foundation, the fair took place at the Muzaffar Ahmed Chowdhury Auditorium, Social Science Building, Dhaka University.



## Forbes 30 Under 30 Asia 2022

The story of Shuvo Rahman, founder of Alice Labs

LABIBA ANJUMI KABIR

Shuvo Rahman, the founder of Alice Labs, an AI-based multi-channel customer service platform for online businesses, was recently nominated for the Forbes 30 under 30, Asia Class of 2022. He made it to the list under the Enterprise Technology category.

The flagship product of Alice Labs is MyAlice, a SaaS product which allows eCommerce platforms to automate their customer service across different mediums.

Shuvo grew up in Dhaka and graduated from BUET in 2015, majoring in CSE. Following his graduation, he and his friends created MisFit Communications. However, the co-founders branched out soon, giving time to their own

ventures, while Shuvo focused on MyAlice, a product-driven SaaS startup.

While operating an online boutique store, Shuvo and his wife Anika realised that managing client data on social networking sites is difficult. This made them come up with the idea of creating a platform that will help eCommerce platforms convert the data at scale and accumulate the customer service across all the mediums. With this aim, Shuvo started using MyAlice with their own product service, marketing, and finance team. Even though MyAlice was

registered in 2018, the product really came into play in 2020. "The pandemic may have resulted in slow growth in many aspects, but it accelerated the eCommerce growth," mentions Shuvo.

As more and more people were habituated with buying products online, there was a huge shift in the ecosystem of eCommerce and these platforms were heavily relying on the correct understanding of customer behavior.

"Brands like Nike or Adidas do not have to worry about their products' sales as their production is in balance with their customer's

demand. However, it was specifically difficult for stores and eCommerce platforms in Bangladesh to keep up with the shift in ecosystem," mentions Shuvo. "That is why MyAlice had its own place in the market as it allows you to review all your customer concerns at one place."

MyAlice is working both locally and internationally, with FMCG, eCommerce companies and brands. Currently, 3500 companies, including Coca Cola, Nestle, Unilever, and Maybelline, from 100 countries are registered for MyAlice.

The startup recently closed a USD 500,000 seed round by Anchorless Bangladesh and HOF Capital.

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