Youth as smart economic investment

If we look at Bangladesh from the demographic perspective, it is evident that is has a significant number of youth population, constituting to one third of the total population. Although much of the attention in the development sector is focused on building local capacities; it must be noted that youth is also an increasingly visible and active component in community development efforts.

SNV believes that investing in youth is a smart investment as they are the ones who will take this country forward in the near future. SNV created a platform for the young minds to incorporate fresh, innovative and creative ideas into film making and empower youth in a way that creates value for development sector and the Youth of Bangladesh.
The program was designed in a unique way, so that it enables students to be involved from the beginning to end. The students played their roles in designing marketing materials and the event itself.

Development or corporate we always require communication materials including short documentaries, video clips for our projects. We usually depend on professionals for such materials because it reduces any risk regarding the quality of the materials. But this time it was different; we thought of engaging youth in the development sector and give young passionate film maker a chance to showcase their talent for a greater cause.

When young students get engaged and create communication materials, it increases the value of the communication materials itself. Three days of training on the development sector has opened the window of knowledge for young students and they connected with the world of development sector. Students gained first-hand experience of the professional world as they will face the challenge to make quality product as we are not doing competition, rather we want to use the outputs for professional purpose. Our belief in them drove them to take the challenge to prove their mettle.

Professionals exactly know the type of documentary the development sector wants and they think from that angle which sometime becomes monotonous but young minds will look at it from a different lens with a fresh look at the development sector which will create short films that will be unique and innovative and will give a new perspective. We could formulate fresh ideas for the materials while ensuring better utilization of funds and achieve higher social impact through our projects.
Youth as smart investment

**Fresh Ideas** - Young minds can incorporate fresh, innovative and creative ideas into film making which may not always be the case with professional firms.

**Minimum deviation** - The gap there is between professional and young film makers can be minimized by a great extent through including professional film makers as technical partners.

The communication materials developed by these young filmmakers will also pass through rigorous filtering process through which experienced judges and professional technical teams will scrutinize the content to ensure a high quality output has been achieved. Also, according to veteran film maker and analyst Manzarehassin Murad, the amateur hand of these young filmmakers add artistic value and is free from the monotony of professional material, which would be more impactful for SNV as it represents the youth’s voice in society.

It would also build interest among the targets, which would later transform to awareness and, the engagement of youth into the issues of the development sector and the creative process of developing the materials will grant them an opportunity to showcase their skills on a validated platform.
How the program was designed

Initially the plan was of inviting students only from reputed universities with film schools or media departments. The plan started off with six universities on March 2015, however the wide interest and excitement created by the initiative brought in many requests from students studying in other universities. The resultant hype among the students led to the decision of opening the opportunity for all university students in Bangladesh. Then we realized that many universities have talented and qualified students for the competition, even though they do not come from big name universities. So afterwards, the whole program was designed and implemented in the format illustrated as follows:

Concept notes were received from all the students who wanted to participate. Of the 117 applications from 35 universities, the top 20 teams had been chosen after evaluation of their concept note and judging by the quality of the team’s previous work (if they had any).
Since the participants are young and do not know much about SNV projects or development sector in general, a three day training workshop was arranged for the top 20 teams at the auditorium of the partner university (Independent University, Bangladesh, IUB). The training sessions were conducted by SNV’s project staff and discussed on SNV’s current projects in Bangladesh, the challenges it faces and the various opportunities there are in the development sector as a whole.

The interactive training days were divided into two sessions each day. While the first sessions focused on interactive sessions with the participants on informing them about SNV and the development sector, the second sessions focused on the various elements of filmmaking and provided on hand training to the participants on the technical sides of being a filmmaker.
The participants basically got an opportunity to glimpse into the professional side of the development sector. While other competitions focus on quick solutions and correct answers, our program focuses on providing a formal experience to the participants in a professional work environment.

These learning sessions were useful to the participants as they received practical insights into the professional arena and got chances to develop their skills in a competitive environment. The experience gained from the filmmaking sessions conducted by professionals of the industry added knowledge and skills which they would be able to use later.
Students’ experience after the three days’ workshop

**Team Creative Eyes:**
[Green University]

“It was great for an organization to believe in our capabilities for a change. They are giving us a chance to prove ourselves in a healthy, competitive environment among our peers. We are getting exposure to real life experiences and learning professional work.”

**Team Next Level:**
[Bangladesh University of Professional]

“SNV’s training was an eye-opening experience for us. Our idea about development sector has changed. We used to think it was only about aid and microcredit but now we know that even helping businesses can translate to development opportunities for people through SNV’s Inclusive Business Model. It is a great experience for us.”

**Team Project BE:**
[Independent University, Bangladesh]

“It is a very interesting initiative and has given us an opportunity to learn professional work. Also, if our work is chosen, it will be used in various places to create an impact and it means a lot more to us than any other prize.”
Posters
After three days long training students development their concept note on different projects of SNV. The students made us look at our project from a new fresh angle. Afterwards, based on the evaluation of the 20 concept notes received from the teams, we selected the best 9 concept notes on which the students will make the short films.
Emma is a foreign fish which travel to Bangladesh River. Emma and her friends went on an outing and although her friends left due to the stench of all the garbage and filth, Emma kept on wandering. While walking beside the piles of garbage, she suddenly falls and loses her consciousness. [After becoming conscious]

Katla (A local fish) :
Are you alright?

Emma :
Oh! Yes, somewhat now. Who are you?

Katla :
I am Katla. I live here. Where did you come from?

Emma :
I’m Emma. I came here on an outing but suddenly fell unconscious due to the stench. Why is this whole place filled with garbage and faeces? How do you live here?

Katla (fish):
Hahaha, this is not new, it has been this way for as long as I can remember.

Emma :
Don’t they use septic tanks or pits here?

Katla:
Huh! It would have been something if they were so aware. Most of it is directed to the rivers and lakes.
Emma:
What! What are you saying?

Katla :
Hahaha. Some houses do have septic tanks but once they get filled up, there is no specific place to dump that waste, so it’s thrown in the river as well. It’s all the same.

Emma:
Ohh! This is harmful for people!!!

Katla:
That it definitely is, because in the houses where there are no pits, the faeces goes through the ground and mixes with the water supply; which people drink haha. The people have filled the rivers with faeces and they shower and clean their pots there, hahaha.

Emma:
Ewww! *wretching* Why doesn’t someone clean it?

Katla(fish):
Hahaha. That’s Rocket Magur’s job. They come every day and somewhat clean it by eating the faeces. Here’s Rocket Magur.....

[Katla whispered to Emma that he eats small fish sometimes when his head is not in the right place. Emma got a bit scared and Katla laughed mischievously.]

Rocket Magur (A catfish talks in a Barisal accent)
Listen, we do the most important work around here. We have a lot of work, our band of magurs clean by eating the faeces every day. Even though cleaning it completely is not possible for us.
Emma:
Okay so why don’t they use septic tanks? Don’t they know about the damages they are causing?

Rocket Magur:
I don’t know!!!! They don’t use them, so we eat the faeces and make them eat it.

Emma:
How?

Rocket Magur:
Think of it this way, we eat faeces everyday and our stomachs are filled with faeces. When they eat us, they are basically eating faeces, hahahaha!!

Emma:
Oh it stinks so much; I don’t think I can stay here for another moment. I’ll be on my way now. You come along as well, how much longer will you suffer in this stench?

Katla:
But I grew up here, how can I leave everyone?

Emma:
What did you get after remaining here all this time for the sake of love! Instead you’re dying in the stench! Does anybody even think about you guys?! [Katla becomes silent. He starts following Emma’s path]

[Both of them turn to leave when a fish hook falls and catches Rocket Magur. Afterwards, some people sit down to eat and the magur fish is being served to them]
Place: Tomato Field
Time: Mid of the Day

(Two Tomato fields are placed Side by Side. There are two scarecrows standing in two fields. The financial situation of the owners of these two fields is reflected in the dress of the two scarecrows. As there is nobody around, the two scarecrows will suddenly make movements.

**The Rich scarecrow:**
(Bangla Song) PORENA COKHER POLOK, KI AMAR TOMATO’R JHOLOK (গড়ে লা চোখের পলক, আহা কি আমার টমেটোর ঝলক...)

**The Poor scarecrow:**
Hei, looks like you are in a jolly mood??... Oh, What a hot weather!!! The sun is really burning!!! Wish I had a cap to wear on.

**The Rich scarecrow:**
(Taking a sidelong look to the other one) Your owner will give you a cap? Huh! He even doesn’t have the money to put fertilizer in the field, and you are thinking about the cap? How funny!! Hah ha ha...
The Poor scarecrow:
How can you say that? Just yesterday he put cow dung compost in the field. Just Look at the field!

The Rich scarecrow:
Ha ha ha.. Your owner is a poor beggar. He has no ability to put fertilizer in the field. That's why he is putting cow dung, ash in the field and naming it compost.

The Poor scarecrow:
you are insulting my owner. He produces hygienic crop.

The Rich scarecrow:
Its Hygienic but people won’t believe this. Ha ha ha..

The Poor scarecrow: (Feeling sad)
People don’t understand which one is pesticide or formalin added and which one is not. That’s why things are going this way.

The Rich scarecrow:
At last you have come to the point.. (Bangla Song) PORENA COKHER POLOK (পড়ে না চাওঁর পলক....)

The Poor scarecrow:
Hei, keep silence. Someone is coming here.

Two scarecrows stay still static. The owner of the poor scarecrow and some other people stand by the field. Some of them are wearing Shirt-Pant and they have some paper in their hand.

Person one:
Is this your field? Wow, Wonderful!!

Farmer:
yet to understand one thing. How will you inform the people that my crop is chemical free?

Person Two:
Look, you are producing hygienic food, and now a days people are more concerned about hygienic and chemical free food. But because of absence of proper management this food is not reaching to the consumers. That is why we are trying to develop such a media so that safe and hygienic food will be collected regularly from the producers like you and this food will be reached to the consumers after it is tested by CEAFS’. Beside this, we will work to raise consumer awareness so that the consumers can identify safe food.
Person One:
As a whole, the distance between you and the consumers will be removed completely.

Farmer: (Gladly)
Really?? It will be great !!! This news has to be communicated to everyone. Lets go to Mr. Baker Mia. He is cultivating Mango using Compost Fertilizer.

Person One:
Lets go.

Once all the people leave the field the scarecrows will again make movements. The rich scarecrow will be leaning forward looking down. The poor scarecrow will be dancing and singing song (Bangla Song) PORENA COKHER POLOK, KI AMAR JOIBO-SARER JHOLOK (পড়ে না চোখের পলক, জৈব সারের ফসলের ঝলক)
Up scaling the youth engagement Program

Even though this started off as a pilot project back in March 2015, it started to scale up very fast. Dhaka Tribune (A reputed English Daily) and Ekattor Television (A leading news channel) partnered up with SNV to provide coverage of the program multiple times. The radio station 89.2 covered a one hour interview on the event.

The media Advisor of Prime Minister stated “We want development and corporate sector to engage the youth of Bangladesh in their sector as they will be the future leaders. Bangladesh government sector always prioritized youth development program. We are glad that our development sector is engaging youth and giving them the opportunity to not only learn but create something that will add value to the sector and to their future.”

The students are in a process of making short documentaries and the final winner will be selected after a rigorous filtering process conducted by experienced judges and professionals. The journey to create a smart development story is in the making.
Our Partners and Team,

We had a young voluntary team of students who were actively involved in designing marketing materials and event promotions. Multazim Tasmia, Anwar, Rakib Hassan Tushar, Anan Wazed Shikdar, Tanzila Mahmud, Faisal Hasan, Mehti, Hasan, Ashfaq Nabil and Shulagna Ahmed were few volunteers who contributed their ideas and took up a leadership role. Our technical partner for the ‘film making’ programme was Enliven, led by Adnan Kabir who provided professional assistance to students in developing the concept note and making of short documentary. Asif Yeasin Kabir, project coordinator of Enliven worked with this young team and provided them necessary assistance.

Independent University of Bangladesh (IUB) were our host partner university and we have 20 participating university. Our partnering Universities were University of Dhaka, Bangladesh University of Engineering & Technology [BUET], Green University of Bangladesh, Pathshala, United International University [UIU], BRAC University, North South University, Stamford University Bangladesh, University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB), Govt. Shahid Sohrawerdi College, BGMEA University of Fashion & Technology & Others

Dr Sarwar Ahmed, Dean (School of Business) of Independent University Bangladesh, showed particular interest in this initiative. Among others who supported this event and provided assistance were Dr G M. Shahidul, Alam (Head of Media and Communication Department), Md Rajib Rahman (Senior Lecturer), Suman Saha (Lecturer), Md Nazmul (BBA programme manager) and Tawseef Ahmed Mullick (Programme manager). Ekattor Television, Dhaka Tribune and 89.2 Radio Today were our media partners.
Pitch perfect at IUB
Suman Rahar
Young filmmakers in development

Twenty groups of participants from various universities, narrowed down from 100 applicants gathered at Independent University Bangladesh (IUB) to pitch their video presentations highlighting development on October 1.

The idea behind this initiative was to provide the youth with an opportunity to thrive and contribute in this particular field. “Dubbed to provide a platform for passionate young filmmakers from various universities to showcase their talent and prove their mettle,” said Dr. Zaineb Zabeen Khan, Communication Advisor, SNV Netherland Development Organisation and Adjunct Faculty, Independent University of Bangladesh.

“We welcomed young filmmakers with a vision to create their very own short documentary. The program was designed in a unique way so that it enables students to be involved from the beginning to the end. The students played their roles in designing, marketing materials and event promotions.”

The pitching session followed an interactive 3-day workshop on the development sector, assisted by Asif Yaseen Kabir, Project Coordinator of Erth poised, and the event’s technical partner.

The illustrious panel of judges were made up of Manzurul Islam Moti, Film Analyst, Asif Ahsan, Cinematographer, Syed Muktazul Fizza, Director of News, Ekantor Television, Rezae Vankalnham, Senior Advisor and Team Leader, RMS, SNV, Partitwadka, Rahel Khan, Team Leader, Working with Women Project, Netherland Development Organization, SNV and Jamal Uddin, Inclusive Business Capacity Building Advisor, SNV.

Dr. Sarwar Ahmed, Dean, School of Business, IUB showed particular interest in this initiative. Among the others who supported the event and provided assistance were Dr. GM Shahidul Alam (Head of Media and Communication Department, IUB), Mr. Md. Rajib Rahman (Senior Lecturer, IUB), Mr. Suman Saha (Lecturer, IUB), Mr. Md. Nazmul (Program Manager, BBA, IUB) and Mr. Towheed Ahmed Mullick (Program Manager, IUB).

Among the judges was Adhik Kabir, who recently won a prestigious production fund for his film from D NF Foundation’s “Young Filmmaker Initiative” provided technical assistance.

Some of the highlights that the participants will be able to take away from this project are the abilities to build bridges between students and professionals by creating a network with corporate warriors. This will aid in their preparation and grooming for employment after graduation. The material collected from the entries will be promoted on an international level and be used in various development proposals. Additionally, the program will also offer two students paid internships with SNV — working with an international organisation in the development sector of Bangladesh will surely give them valuable experience. The sector, in return, will benefit by receiving fresh ideas from young filmmakers.”
Film-making workshop at Smart Development Works
Zarin Zeba Khan

If we look at Bangladesh from the demographic perspective, then it is evident that is has a huge youth population, constituting to one third of the total population. SNV values youth involvement and believes it acts as an engine for economic growth and drives initiative for the development sector. Although much of the attention in the development sector is given to building local capacities, it must be noted that youth is also an increasingly visible and active component in community development efforts. SNV believes that investing in the youth is the way to go as they are the ones who will take this country forward in the near future. SNV created a platform for the young minds to incorporate fresh, innovative and creative ideas into film-making through an event that welcomed passionate young film-makers from various universities to showcase their talent and prove their mettle. They were requested to create their very own short documentary. The students have been actively involved in designing marketing materials and event promotions as well. Asif Yeasmin Kabir, project coordinator of Enliven worked with this young team and provided them assistance. The young team consisted of the following people: Muntasim Tasmia Amwar, Rakib Hassan Tushar, Anan Wazed Shikdar, Tanzila Mahmud, Faisal Hasan, Meheddi Hasan, Ashfaq Nabil and Shulagna Ahmed.

The technical partner of the programme was Enliven, that was held at IUB. Dr Sanwar Ahmed, dean, School of Business Independent University, Bangladesh showed particular interest in this initiative. Among others who supported this event and provided assistance were Dr G M Shahidul Alam (head of Media and Communication Department), Md Rajib Rahman (senior lecturer), Suman Saha (lecturer), Md Nazmul (BBA programme manager) and Tawseef Ahmed Mullick (programme manager). Another dynamic young talent Adnan Kabir who is a film-maker and recently won a prestigious production fund for his film from Bengal Foundation’s “Young Filmmakers Initiative” provided technical assistance. Moreover, Adnan’s organisation Enliven is dedicated to working with young film-makers; leveraging national and international support to develop capacity in film-making. The project leader designed an interactive three day workshop on the development sector.